

MYTHOLOGICAL REFERENCES IN GURBANI

1. VEDAS AND YUGAS

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ABSTRACT

Mythological references have been used extensively in the Gurbani. Many theologians consider such references as true and interpret Gurbani accordingly, which is eroding the originality and uniqueness of Nanakian philosophy embodied in the Gurbani. Consequently, Sikhism is being represented as a mythical and ritualistic religion. In this article we have tried to explain that mythical references have been used allegorically, metaphorically, and symbolically and their use does not make them true. It has been discovered that some Sikh theologians are introducing new practices in Sikhism based on mythological references, which are contrary to basic principles of Nanakian philosophy. Therefore, it is very important to interpret Gurbani in its real perspective on which constructing of an integrated and precise philosophy of Sikhism is to be based. The current article clears a number of misunderstandings about Vedas, Yugas, and various gods in mythical works referred to in the Gurbani.

George Bernard Shaw said:

Take the utmost trouble to find the right thing to say, and say it with the utmost levity.

That is what we, the authors, have done in this article.

INTRODUCTION

Mythology is defined as a group of myths that belong to a particular people or culture and tell about their ancestors, heroes, gods and other supernatural beings, and history; a body of stories, ideas, or beliefs that are not necessarily true about a particular place or individual (Encarta Dictionary).

Mythology is also defined as a traditional story about heroes or supernatural beings, often explaining the origins of natural phenomena or aspects of human behavior; somebody or something whose existence is or was widely believed in, but who is fictitious; and it also means an allegory or parable – a story that has hidden meanings, especially one that is meant to teach a lesson.

According to Storm [11] the themes of great myths are universal. The myth of creation had evolved in every culture with striking similarity. The other major myth, 'Life after death' originated in Egypt and Western Asia. The spirit/soul after death either goes upward (sky/heaven) or descends downward (underworld or netherworld or hell). In Western Asia and Egypt the concept of life after death remains almost in the same state where the deeds of the spirit/soul are to be evaluated by gods/angels and depending on deeds the spirit either goes to heaven or to hell for continuous

torture. (However, the Judgment Day has not occurred for the last many millenniums and nobody knows when it is going to fall in the future).

The above concept of 'Life after death' was introduced in India by Aryans. Here this concept has gone further developments when the Upanishads were composed between 8th and 15th centuries BCE (Before Current Era). The deeds are examined by the Dharam Raj from the data collected by Chandragupta then the spirit/soul either goes to heaven or to hell or to 8.4 million life-cycles. The type of next life is decided according to the deeds of the spirit/soul.

The concept of reincarnation has been so strongly established in Eastern philosophy is apparent from the following observation of Storm [11]:

Although both Buddhism and Jainism deny the existence of a creator god, they have rich mythology and now Buddha has become the incarnation of Shiva.

According to Storm [11] now the significant feature of Indian belief is the desire to transcend the chaos and unpredictability of the world in order to find the truth, nirvana (spiritual ecstasy) or enlightenment. From earliest times, evidence suggests that people believe that they might achieve this goal through the practice of meditation.

Besides the above major myths there are many more myths and gods and goddesses reported by Storm [11] in her book, *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Mythology*.

At the end of the PREFACE of her above book she writes as follows:

“Thus do the myths peculiar to each culture and religion point to the essential truth common to all humanity.”

While reciting the Gurbani from the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) [1] one comes across a number of mythological references. The irony is that many theologians and scholars accept such references in Gurbani as true. Acceptance of these mythological references as true is eroding the uniqueness of Nanakian philosophy embodied in the Gurbani, which is incorporated in the AGGS.

The purpose of this article is to explore answers to the following questions:

- i) Do the references of mythological concepts in the Gurbani of the Sikh Gurus make them true?
- ii) If these are not true then why have such mythological concepts been referred to in the Gurbani?

In the present article only some of mythological references of Vedas, Yugas and Avatars (gods) have been discussed.

DISCUSSION

1. Vedas

i) Meanings of Ved (ਵੇਦ)

The word ‘Ved’ (Veda) has been commonly used in the Gurbani. There are four Vedas in Hinduism and these have also been referred to a number of times in Gurbani. The word ‘Ved’ in Gurbani is interpreted as one of the four sacred books in Hinduism by many theologians. However, one has to be careful to interpret this word keeping in view in which context it has been used. In some cases it means Vedas (Sacred Texts of Hindus) while in other cases it means as ‘wisdom’ or ‘knowledge’. This meaning is also accepted by many Hindu scholars. Guru Nanak has used ‘Veda’ meaning ‘wisdom’ and/or ‘knowledge’ in his Bani. For example,

ਅਹਰਣਿ ਮਤਿ ਵੇਦੁ ਹਥਿਆਰੁ ॥

ਅਗਰਾਸ, ਜਪੁ, ੩੮, ਪ - ੮.

Wisdom should be anvil, and knowledge should be the tools.

AGGS, Jap 38, p 8.

ii) The Vedas – The Sacred Texts of Hinduism

(From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.)

The Vedas refers to collectively a corpus of Old Indo Aryan religious Literature, the newest parts of which

probably date back to around 500 BCE. There is some controversy about the upper limit; dates around 1,500 BCE have been advanced by mainstream scholars. The word ‘Veda’ means Knowledge, and is cognate with the word “wit” in English (as well as “vision” through Latin). They represent the oldest stratum of Indian Literature and are written in forms of a language which evolved into Sanskrit. Strictly speaking the use of Vedic Sanskrit for the language of the texts is an anachronism, but is generally accepted.

iii) Contents of Vedas

The Vedas consist of several kinds of texts. The core is formed by the Mantras which represent hymns, prayers, incantations, magic and ritual formulas, charms, etc. The hymns and prayers are addressed to a pantheon of gods (and a few goddesses), important members of which are Varuna, Indra, Agni etc. The mantras are supplemented by texts regarding the sacrificial rituals in which these mantras are used as well as texts exploring the philosophical aspects of the ritual tradition and speculative works, narratives, etc.

iv) Organization of Vedas

The Mantras are collected into anthologies called *Samhitas*. There are four Samhitas, the Rk (= Poetry), Sāman (=Song), Yajus(=Prayer) and Atharvan (=A kind of priest) commonly referred to as the *Rig Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Sama Veda* and *Atharva Veda*. Each Samhita is preserved in a number of versions, the differences among them being minor, except in the case of the Yajur Veda, where there are the “Black” and “White” versions, with the Black also containing explanatory material apart from the Mantras. The Rig Veda contains the oldest part of the corpus, and consists of 1028 hymns. The Sama Veda is mostly a rearrangement of the Rig Veda for musical rendering. The Yajur Veda gives Sacrificial Prayers and the Atharva Veda gives charms, incantations, magic formulas etc. Apart from these there are some stray secular material, myths, legends, etc.

The next categories of texts are the ‘*Brahmanas*’. These are ritual texts that describe in detail the sacrifices in which the Mantras were to be used, as well as commenting on the meaning of the sacrificial ritual. The ‘*Brahmanas*’ are associated with one of the ‘*Samhitas*’. The ‘*Brahmanas*’ may either form separate texts, or in the case of the Black Yajur Veda, can be partly integrated into the text of the Samhita. The most important of the ‘*Brahmanas*’ is the ‘*Shatapatha Brahmana*’ of the White Yajur Veda.

The ‘*Aranyakas*’ and Upanishads are theological and philosophical works. Aranyakas and Upanishads often form part of the ‘*Brahmanas*’ (e.g. the *Bṛhadaranyaka Upanishad*). They are the basis of the Vedanta school of Darsana.

v) Reference of Vedas in the Gurbani

The following verse of Guru Nanak has references to all the above Vedas and different reincarnations of God during these Vedic Periods:

ਸਾਮ ਕਹੈ ਸੇਤੰਬਰੁ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਸਚ ਮਹਿ ਆਛੈ ਸਾਚਿ ਰਹੇ ॥
 ਸਭੁ ਕੇ ਸਚਿ ਸਮਾਵੈ ॥
 ਰਿਗੁ ਕਹੈ ਰਹਿਆ ਭਰਪੂਰਿ ॥ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮੁ ਦੇਵਾ ਮਹਿ ਸੂਰੁ ॥
 ਨਾਇ ਲਇਐ ਪਰਾਛੁਤੁ ਜਾਹਿ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਤਉ ਮੋਖੰਤਰੁ ਪਾਹਿ ॥
 ਜੁਜ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਰਿ ਛਲੀ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਾਵਲਿ ਕਾਨ੍ ਕ੍ਰਿਸਨੁ ਜਾਦਮੁ ਭਇਆ ॥
 ਪਾਰਜਾਤੁ ਗੋਪੀ ਲੈ ਆਇਆ ਬਿੰਦ੍ਰਾਬਨ ਮਹਿ ਰੰਗੁ ਕੀਆ ॥
 ਕਲਿ ਮਹਿ ਬੇਦੁ ਅਥਰਬਣੁ ਹੁਆ ਨਾਉ ਖੁਦਾਈ ਅਲਹੁ ਭਇਆ ॥
 ਨੀਲ ਬਸਤ੍ਰੁ ਲੇ ਕਪੜੇ ਪਹਿਰੇ ਤੁਰਕ ਪਠਾਣੀ ਅਮਲੁ ਕੀਆ ॥
 ਚਾਰੇ ਵੇਦ ਹੋਏ ਸਚਿਆਰ ॥ ਪੜਹਿ ਗੁਣਹਿ ਤਿਨ੍ ਚਾਰ ਵੀਚਾਰ ॥
 ਭਉ ਭਗਤਿ ਕਰਿ ਨੀਚੁ ਸਦਾਏ ॥ ਤਉ ਨਾਨਕ ਮੋਖੰਤਰੁ ਪਾਏ ॥ ੨ ॥
 ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪ - ੪੭੦.

The Sama Veda says that the Swan god (means the god who is dressed in white) was the god of that Age, to whom everybody desires to merge with.

(White represents the purity or truth)

The Rig Veda says that Rama is the god of this Age, who is the most exalted god of that Age; who pervades everywhere; and chanting of Rama sins depart.

During all these Ages of Vedas people are taught that salvation is attained by repeating the specific names of different gods (Swan God, Rama, Krishna, Allah, etc.) of specific Age. Contrary to the above philosophy Guru Nanak says:

Realizing and understanding the God and Laws of Universe can resolve all the problems, therefore, one can attain salvation.

(This covers response of Guru Nanak to all the phrases: above and below).

In the Jujar Veda, Kan Krishna of the Yadva tribe seduced Chandravali by force.

He brought the Elysian Tree for his milk-maids, and reveled in Brindaban (Garden).

In the Dark Age (Kali Yuga), the Atharva Veda appeared; Allah became the Name of God. Men began to wear blue robes and garments;

Turks and Pathans assumed power.

Here Guru Nanak narrates another concept about Vedas:

It is said (by Brahmans) that the four Vedas are truth (and people at large accept this).

(But) after reading them critically one finds four different doctrines.

(It means philosophy in each Veda differs with that of other three Vedas.)

Finally, Guru Nanak advises:

With loving devotional service to the humanity, being the humblest, one can get salvation. 2.

AGGS, M 1, p 470.

Many Sikh theologians quote, ਚਾਰੇ ਵੇਦ ਹੋਏ ਸਚਿਆਰ ॥, to show that Guru Nanak has accepted that the four Vedas are true by ignoring the next sentence, ਪੜਹਿ ਗੁਣਹਿ ਤਿਨ੍ ਚਾਰ ਵੀਚਾਰ ॥, but after reading them critically one finds four different doctrines. It means the philosophy in one Veda is not in agreement with that of the other three Vedas. Read more about this aspect in Prof Ramendra Nath's article at page 8. Therefore, Guru Nanak is not preaching that Vedas are true. He explains that the Vedas are considered to contain the truth but critical analysis indicates that the Vedas contain different doctrines full of various types of mantras, sacrifices, life styles of various deities and different philosophies. Different gods with different names appeared in different times of the four Vedas. It means consistency in philosophy is lacking. Guru Nanak says that it is not by repeating the names of these gods but by developing humility (*neeche sadaae*) and serving the humanity one can get salvation* (*mookhantar*).

***Salvation:** *Whenever this word is used in my interpretation it means: Liberation from ignorance or illusion; preservation from destruction or failure; and deliverance from danger or difficulty.*

The above theme of attaining salvation by repeating particular name during particular Age is not accepted by Guru Nanak. It is apparent from his advice in the above verse. Guru Nanak has further strengthened this principle in the following Verse (*Pauri*):

ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਵਿਟਹੁ ਵਾਰਿਆ ਜਿਤੁ ਮਿਲਿਐ ਖਸਮੁ ਸਮਾਲਿਆ ॥
 ਜਿਨਿ ਕਰਿ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ਗਿਆਨ ਅੰਜਨੁ ਦੀਆ ਇਨ੍ਹੀ ਨੇੜੀ ਜਗਤੁ
 ਨਿਹਾਲਿਆ ॥

ਖਸਮੁ ਛੋਡਿ ਦੂਜੈ ਲਗੇ ਭੁਬੇ ਸੇ ਵਣਜਾਰਿਆ ॥
 ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬੋਹਿਥਾ ਵਿਰਲੈ ਕਿਨੈ ਵੀਚਾਰਿਆ ॥
 ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਪਾਰਿ ਉਤਾਰਿਆ ॥੧੩॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪ - ੪੭੦.

I sacrifice myself on that true Guru (Satguru) by meeting whom I could understand the Eternal Entity.

(Who is the Satguru here?)

(Satguru) Who has given me the collyrium (wisdom), by putting that in my eyes it made me to understand teaching/knowledge that how the world is going on (under the Laws of Universe).

The researcher who ignores the wisdom of the True Guru but follows that of others will be drowned.

The True Guru is the boat through which one can swim across the sea of life, but only rare persons have

realized this fact.

(The Eternal Entity) has blessed me to cross the sea of life with that wisdom.

AGGS, M 1, p 470.

vi) Can God be Named?

The critical analysis of above verse and the *Pauri* clearly indicates that Guru Nanak is condemning the repetition of any *kirtam* (descriptive or specific) name of God, mentioned in various Ages in Vedas, to attain salvation. According to Guru Nanak's philosophy it is only the development of humility and service to the humanity, which would lead towards the path of attaining salvation.

The above Nanakian philosophy has been further strengthened by Guru Arjan as follows:

ਕਿਰਤਮੀ ਨਾਮ ਕਥੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਜਿਹਬਾ ॥

ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮ ਤੇਰਾ ਪਰਾ ਪੂਰਬਲਾ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪ - ੧੦੮੩.

Your tongue⁴ recite³ the descriptive names^{1,2} of That (Almighty).

That (Almighty) existed⁵ even before⁶ the beginning of the time and space⁷.

AGGS, M 5, p 1083.

In fact God existed before the appearance of time and space and throughout all Ages even when there were no humans during certain Ages. Moreover, God exists in the present and will exist in the future. Therefore, no name can be assigned to God according to any Age. Since according to Nanakian philosophy God is ineffable (ਅਗੋਚਰ), therefore, no specific or descriptive name could be assigned.

Guru Nanak further explains that God is not only without specific or descriptive name, God is also inaccessible, ineffable, imperceptible, and without any form or feature:

ਅਗਮ ਅਗੋਚਰ ਰੂਪੁ ਨ ਰੇਖਿਆ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪ - ੮੩੮.

God is inaccessible and ineffable and also without any form or feature.

AGGS, M 1, p 838.

ਅਗਮ ਅਗੋਚਰੁ ਅਲਖੁ ਹੈ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਹਰਿ ਜਾਣੁ ॥੧੧॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪ - ੭੮੯.

God is inaccessible, ineffable and imperceptible; Oh Guru-oriented! Understand this fact.

AGGS, M 1, p 789.

ਸੰਤ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਹਰਿ ਅਗਮ ਅਗਾਹੁ ॥੨੦॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪ - ੫੫੬.

Nanak says:

“Oh dear Saints of the infinite (God)! The God² is inaccessible³ and infinite⁴.

AGGS, M 1, p 556.

ਅਗਮ ਅਗੋਚਰ ਅਲਖ ਅਪਾਰਾ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਕਰਹੁ ਹਮਾਰੀ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪ - ੭੯੫.

The inaccessible, ineffable, Invisible and infinite (God) takes care of us.

AGGS, M 1, p 795.

ਅਣਮੰਗਿਆ ਦਾਨੁ ਦੇਵਸੀ ਵਡਾ ਅਗਮ ਅਪਾਰੁ ॥੩੪॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪ ੯੩੪.

The inaccessible and infinite God will give (everything) without asking for.

AGGS, M 1, p 934.

(Meaning God has already provided everything in this world to be used by humanity.)

ਅਗਮ ਅਗੋਚਰੁ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਨਹੀ ਪਾਇ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪ ੯੩੧.

The God is inaccessible and ineffable, Who cannot be evaluated.

AGGS, M 1, P 931.

ਅਗਮ ਅਗੋਚਰੁ ਤੂ ਧਣੀ ਅਵਿਗਤੁ ਅਪਾਰਾ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪ - ੧੦੦੯.

You are inaccessible and ineffable; You are imperishable and infinite.

AGGS, M 1, p 1009.

ਓਹੁ ਅਗਮੁ ਅਗੋਚਰੁ ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ ॥੫॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪ - ੧੧੮੮.

The Oh (God) is inaccessible¹, ineffable², and One and Only Creator³. ||5||

AGGS, M 1, p 1188.

ਤੂ ਅਲਖ ਅਗੋਚਰੁ ਅਗਮੁ ਹੈ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਦਿਖਾਈ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪ - ੧੨੯੧.

Guru's Teachings have made me seen (understand) that You (God) are imperceptible, ineffable, and inaccessible.

AGGS, M 1, p 1291.

According to the above discussion it becomes very clear that God is inaccessible, ineffable, imperceptible, infinite and without any form and shape. Moreover, God is ਅਜੂਨੀ (*Ajuuni*), meaning, which does not come into anthropomorphic form. Therefore, no descriptive or specific name can be assigned to God. Then Guru Arjan confirms that no *kirtam* (descriptive/specific) name can be assigned to God. This is also evident from the Gurbani incorporated in the AGGS that neither Guru Nanak nor

any other Sikh Guru has assigned any name to God.

vii) Introduction of WAHEGURU as the New Name for God

In spite of the above fact, that no name could be assigned to God, Bhai Gurdas has assigned a new name of his own, 'WAHEGURU', to God, which is being used to repeat again and again by many Sikhs to attain salvation.

Bhai Gurdas has coined, 'Waheguru' by combining the first letters of various deities of different Yugas in Vedantic philosophy in his Pauri # 49 in Var # 1 as follows:

ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰ ਮੰਤ੍ਰ

ਸਤਿਜੁਗ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਵਾਸਦੇਵ ਵਾਵਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਨਾ ਨਾਮ ਜਪਾਵੈ॥
 ਦੁਆਪਰ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਹਰੀਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਹਾਰਾ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮ ਧਿਆਵੈ॥
 ਤ੍ਰੇਤੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਰਾਮ ਜੀ ਰਾਚਾ ਰਾਮ ਜਪੇ ਸੁਖ ਪਾਵੈ॥
 ਕਲਿਜੁਗ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਗਗਾ ਗੋਵਿੰਦ ਨਾਮ ਜਪਾਵੈ॥
 ਚਾਰੇ ਜਾਗੇ ਚਹੁ ਜੁਗੀ ਪੰਚਾਇਣ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਇ ਸਮਾਵੈ॥
 ਚਾਰੇ ਅਛਰ ਇਕ ਕਰ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜਪ ਮੰਤ੍ਰ ਜਪਾਵੈ॥
 ਜਹਾਂ ਤੇ ਉਪਜਿਆ ਫਿਰ ਤਹਾਂ ਸਮਾਵੈ ॥

Bhai Gurdas, Pauri 49, Var 1. [9]

Bhai Gurdas says:

Satguru (Nanak) in Satyuga was Vasdeva and his name as 'Vava' Vishnu Nam was made to be repeated by people.

Satguru (Nanak) in Duapar Yuga was Hari Krishna and his name as 'Haha' Har Har was made to be repeated by people.

Satguru (Nanak) in Traeta Yuga was Rama and his name as 'Rara' Rama was made to be repeated by people.

In Kali Yuga Guru Nanak was Gobind and his name as 'Gaga' Gobind was made to be repeated by people.

He (Nanak) gathered four letters (Vava, Haha, Rara, and Gaga of all the reincarnated gods) created a Jap Nam 'Waheguru' as mantra to be repeated by people.

Those who will repeat this Jap Mantra 'Waheguru' will be merged back into God.

In this Pauri Bhai Gurdas has explained that it was Guru Nanak, who has coined 'Waheguru' by taking first letter 'Vava' of Vishnu, 'Haha' of Hari (Krishna), 'Rara' of Rama and 'Gaga' of Gobind – all the important gods in Vedantic philosophy. So much so Bhai Gurdas also said that Guru Nanak himself was the Satguru as the incarnations of God as Vishnu, Hari (Krishna), Rama, and Gobind during different Vedantic Ages.

This word, Waheguru, has been accepted by Bhai Santokh Singh, Pundit Tara Singh Narautom, and Bhai Vir Singh as reported by Bhai Hazara Singh [9]. Even

Bhai Hazara Singh [9] has also hesitantly accepted that this Var is written by Bhai Gurdas, although some theologians have stated that it was not written by Bhai Gurdas.

Now this word 'Waheguru' has become a truth as the name for God in the psyche of the Sikhs. Now many Sikhs repeat Waheguru, Waheguru, Waheguru at home and in Gurdwara, even the *Kirtanwalay* (who recite Sabds) repeat it many times even during recitation of almost every Sabd in Gurdwaras.

It is inconceivable why did Bhai Gurdas has assigned a new name, Waheguru, for God?

Although S Gurmit Singh, S Jarnail Singh of Australia (Personal communications) and many other theologians do not accept that the above *Pauri, Waheguru Mantar*, was written by Bhai Gurdas, they do accept that at pages # 153, 226, 478, 514, 515, 521, 565, 754, 755, 788, 947, 1276 and 1421 of the AGGS 'Gur' and 'Wah' are found as separate words but not as 'Waheguru' as one word for God anywhere in the AGGS. But many theologians say that this word, Waheguru, will stay in the psyche of the Sikhs.

viii) 'Waheguru' in Bhatt Bani

On the other hand many Sikh theologians also misunderstand Bhatt Gyand's Swayiae for Guru Ramdas at pages 1402-1403 of the AGGS that 'Waheguru' has been used to address God. However, critical analysis of Swayiae indicates that Guru Ramdas has been addressed as ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ, ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ, ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਬਿੰਦ ਜੀਉ, ਸਿਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਤਿ ਜੀਉ, and ਵਾਹੁ ਵਾਹੁ ਕਾ ਬਡਾ ਤਮਾਸਾ as follows:

ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੁ ਸੇਵਿ ਅਲਖ ਗਤਿ ਜਾ ਕੀ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਰਾਮਦਾਸੁ ਤਾਰਣ ਤਰਣੰ ॥
 ੩॥, ॥੪॥

ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਹਿ ਜੀਉ ॥

ਕਵਲ ਨੈਨ ਮਧੁਰ ਬੈਨ ਕੋਟਿ ਸੈਨ ਸੰਗ ਸੋਭ ਕਹਤ ਮਾ ਜਸੋਦ ਜਿਸਹਿ ਦਹੀ
 ਭਾਤੁ ਖਾਹਿ ਜੀਉ ॥

ਸਤਿ ਸਾਚੁ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਨਿਵਾਸੁ ਆਦਿ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਸਦਾ ਤੁਹੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ
 ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਹਿ ਜੀਉ ॥੧॥੬॥, ॥੨॥੭॥, ॥੩॥੮॥

ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਬਿੰਦ ਜੀਉ ॥

ਨਾਮੁ ਸਾਰੁ ਹੀਏ ਧਾਰੁ ਤਜੁ ਬਿਕਾਰੁ ਮਨ ਗਯੰਦ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ
 ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਬਿੰਦ ਜੀਉ ॥੪॥੯॥, ॥੫॥੧੦॥

ਸੇਵਕ ਕੈ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਜੁਗੁ ਜੁਗੁ ਵਾਹਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਰਾ ਸਭੁ ਸਦਕਾ ॥੧॥੧੧॥

ਵਾਹੁ ਵਾਹੁ ਕਾ ਬਡਾ ਤਮਾਸਾ ॥

ਕੀਆ ਖੇਲੁ ਬਡੁ ਮੇਲੁ ਤਮਾਸਾ ਵਾਹਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਰੀ ਸਭ ਰਚਨਾ ॥੩॥੧੩॥੪੨॥

ix) Some Questions

a) Can one reach God through repetition of some descriptive or specific name?

Guru Nanak says no one can reach or comprehend God

by repetition of any descriptive or specific name in his following phrase:

ਜਪੁ ਤਪੁ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਸੰਜਮ ਥਾਕੀ ਹਠਿ ਨਿਗ੍ਰਹਿ ਨਹੀ ਪਾਈਐ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪ-੪੩੬.

By practicing recitation, austerity, and self-disciplining, people have grown weary; even after stubbornly practicing these rituals, they still have not been able to realize God.

AGGS, M 1, p 436.

Guru Ramdas has strengthened the above philosophy of Guru Nanak as follows:

ਜਪੁ ਤਪੁ ਸੰਜਮ ਵਰਤ ਕਰੇ ਪੂਜਾ ਮਨਮੁਖ ਰੋਗੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ੭੩੨.

The self-oriented recites mantras or verses, practices austerity and self-discipline, and fasts but his sickness had not gone away.

AGGS, M 4, p 732.

b) Then how can one reach God?

If according to Nanakian philosophy one can neither use descriptive nor specific name to praise God; cannot practice austerity and self-discipline to attain salvation then how can one reach God? In fact Guru Nanak has already posed this question in his Bani as follows:

ਤਿਤੁ ਅਗਮ¹ ਤਿਤੁ ਅਗਮ¹ ਪੁਰੇ² ਕਹੁ ਕਿਤੁ ਬਿਧਿ³ ਜਾਈਐ⁴ ਰਾਮ⁵ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪ - ੪੩੬.

With which method³ one can reach⁴ the inaccessible¹ in the inaccessible¹ world²?

AGGS, M 1, p 436.

{5. Ram has been used as God symbolically to address the ਅਗਮ (Inaccessible) to make it easily understood that God is inaccessible.}

c) Then what is the advice of Guru Nanak to resolve this issue?

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਹਜਿ¹ ਮਿਲੇ ਜਗਜੀਵਨ² ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਬੁਝ ਬੁਝਾਈਐ³ ॥੨॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ੪੩੬.

Nanak says: Only those persons can reach (understand) God² who can attain the state of tranquility¹ as made to understand³ by the True Guru.

AGGS, M 1, p 436.

d) How is the state of tranquility and understanding of God attained?

According to Nanakian philosophy it is attained as follows:

ਕਾਮੁ ਕਰੇਧੁ ਕਪਟੁ ਬਿਖਿਆ ਤਜਿ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਉਚਿ ਧਾਰੇ ॥

ਹਉਮੈ ਲੋਭ ਲਹਰਿ ਲਬ ਥਾਕੇ ਪਾਏ ਦੀਨ ਦਇਆਲਾ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰ ਸਮਾਨਿ ਤੀਰਥੁ ਨਹੀ ਕੋਈ ਸਾਚੇ ਗੁਰ ਗੋਪਾਲਾ ॥੩॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪ-੪੩੭.

By renouncing sexual desire, anger, deceit and corruption, one understands God.

When the waves of ego, greed and avarice subside, then one finds the gracious God.

Nanak says: There is no pilgrimage which can be compared to the True Guru. 3.

AGGS, M 1, p 437.

Further Guru Nanak explains that the best service (pilgrimage) to Guru is to comprehend his philosophy and do good deeds:

ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ¹ ਸਬਦੁ² ਵੀਚਾਰੁ³ ॥

ਹਉਮੈ ਮਾਰੇ ਕਰਣੀ ਸਾਰੁ ॥

ਜਪ ਤਪ ਸੰਜਮ ਪਾਠ ਪੁਰਾਣੁ ॥

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਅਪੰਰਪਰ ਮਾਨੁ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪ-੨੨੩.

The service¹ to the Guru is to comprehend³ the philosophy² of the Guru.

What is that philosophy?

Getting rid of ego and to do good deeds (is the philosophy of the Guru).

What is the benefit of good deeds and getting rid of ego?

Doing good deeds and knowing the Almighty is equal to all types of meditation, austerities and reading of Puranas.

AGGS, M 1, p 223.

The service to the Almighty is, comprehending the Sabd (Nanakian philosophy) and practicing what is given there. The main principle of the Nanakian philosophy given here is that performing good deeds for the humanity are the greatest service of all.

From the above discussion it is evident that according to Nanakian philosophy God is inaccessible, ineffable, imperceptible, infinite and without any form and shape. God is also ਅਜੂਨੀ (Ajuuni – God does not come into anthropomorphic form, such as Rama, Krishna, Gopal, etc.). Moreover, repetition of descriptive or specific name does not help to understand God and to attain salvation. Understanding of God and salvation can only be achieved through good deeds by following message (philosophy) of the True Guru (Guru Nanak).

2. Yugas

In the previous verses Guru Nanak is referring to the prevalent and accepted concepts about the appearance of various incarnations of God during different Ages of Vedas. Since it is a myth, thus, he emphasized that salvation cannot be achieved by just repetition of various names of these incarnations of God during different Vedic Periods. Moreover, Guru Nanak does not believe in reincarnation of the God (Avatarvad) as is indicated in his Bani, for example, the Commencing Verse (commonly called as Mool Mantra). Guru Nanak says that God is ਅਜੂਨੀ (Ajuuni) (does not come into anthropomorphic

forms). Albert Einstein also admits that God does not come into anthropomorphic forms [5]. Guru Arjan also confirms this philosophy of Guru Nanak that God does not come into anthropomorphic form while explaining the birth of Krishna as the reincarnation of God:

ਸੋ ਮੁਖੁ ਜਲਉ ਜਿਤੁ ਕਹਹਿ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਜੋਨੀ ॥੩॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ, ੧, ੫ - ੧੧੩੬.

Let that mouth be burnt, which says that God comes into anthropomorphic form by taking birth. 3. AGGS, M 1, p 1136.

In the following verse Guru Nanak again explains that the brain controls the body and development of humility and service to the humanity can achieve salvation and all other methods are in vain.

ਨਾਨਕ ਮੇਰੁ^੧ ਸਰੀਰੁ^੨ ਕਾ ਇਕੁ ਰਬੁ^੩ ਇਕੁ ਰਬਵਾਹੁ^੪ ॥

ਜੁਗੁ ਜੁਗੁ ਫੇਰਿ ਵਟਾਈਅਹਿ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਬੁਝਹਿ ਤਾਹਿ ॥

ਸਤਜੁਗਿ ਰਬੁ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਕਾ ਧਰਮੁ ਅਗੈ ਰਬਵਾਹੁ ॥

ਤ੍ਰੇਤੈ ਰਬੁ ਜਤੈ^੫ ਕਾ ਜੋਰੁ ਅਗੈ ਰਬਵਾਹੁ ॥

ਦੁਆਪੁਰਿ ਰਬੁ ਤਪੈ^੬ ਕਾ ਸਤੁ ਅਗੈ ਰਬਵਾਹੁ ॥

ਕਲਜੁਗਿ ਰਬੁ ਅਗਨਿ ਕਾ ਕੂੜੁ ਅਗੈ ਰਬਵਾਹੁ ॥ ੧ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ੫ - ੪੨੦.

Nanak says that there is one great (complex)¹ body², which is a chariot³, and it has one charioteer⁴ (brain) to drive it. (All complex thoughts originate from the various actions of neurons and synapses in the brain command the body. The centre of consciousness that generates thoughts, feelings, ideas, and perceptions and stores knowledge and memories is the mind.)

During various Ages the body and brain evolved steadily to higher states of development of thought; this fact is known only to wise men.

When the body (chariot) is contented; and righteousness in the brain (mind) is the charioteer then it is called as the Age of Truth (Sat Yuga).

When the body has full control over passion (morality)⁵ as directed by the power of mind⁴ then this is called the Silver Age (Traeta Yuga).

When the body is in penance⁶ (who gives self punishment for evil committed) and ability of mind, Charioteer, to distinguish right and wrong (to find the truth) then this is called as the Brass Age (Duapar Yuga).

When the body is like a fire (full of bad deeds) and the falsehood is the mind (Charioteer) then this Age is called as the Age of Calamities (Kali Yuga). 1.

AGGS, M 1, p 470.

The above verse clearly indicates that Vedantic Yuga-system is not accepted by Guru Nanak. According to his philosophy good and bad time is due to the state of mind (Charioteer), which drives the body (chariot).

i) Yuga-system

Let us now look into Yuga-system in ancient philosophy.

Yuga-system explained by Dr Sahib Singh [10] is as follows:

1. *Sat Yuga* was of 1,728,000 years and ‘Saetember’ (Swan god – god of whiteness) was the god of this Yuga.
2. *Traeta Yuga* was of 1,596,000 years and ‘Rama’ was the god of this Yuga.
3. *Duapar Yuga* was of 864,000 years and ‘Krishna’ was the god of this Yuga.
4. *Kali Yuga* was of 472,000 years and ‘Allah’ (Muhammad) was god of this Yuga.

According to Hinduism:

1. *Satya Yuga* or *Krita Yuga* was of 1,728,000 years.
2. *Treta Yuga* was of 1,296,000 years.
3. *Duapar Yuga* was of 864,000 years.
4. *Kali Yuga* is of 432,000 years. It started 3,102 BCE and now it is 5,107 years old and the world would end in 426,993 CE. But scientific evidence indicates the life may disappear from earth after about 500,000,000 years however the earth may take about 7 billion years to disappear.

There are some differences in the age of Traeta Yuga between the two above sources. Ignoring these differences, and according to the above Yuga-system in Hinduism:

‘Saetember’ appeared about 3,893,207 years ago;

‘Rama’ appeared about 2,165,107 years

‘Krishna’ appeared about 869,107 years ago; and

‘Mohammed’ appeared sometime during *Kali Yuga*, which started about 5,107 years ago.

It is worth noting that in the *Kali Yuga* of Vedantic philosophy, which started about 5,107 years ago, there is no mention of Buddha (560-483 BCE), who appeared about 2,565 years ago, and Jesus, who appeared about 2,005 years ago, the founders of two great religions of the world. But only Mohammed, who was born recently in 569 CE about 1,436 years ago, has been mentioned in the *Kali Yuga*. On the other hand Bhai Gurdas has mentioned that it was Gobind who appeared in *Kali Yuga* and there is no mention of Buddha, Jesus and Mohammed. One can easily guess how much truth could be there in this Vedantic Yuga-system when there is no truth even in the latest *Kali Yuga*.

ii) The Origin of Man [6]

Now let us consider the Origin of Man according to the evidence of fossils.

1. *The ancestor of man*, the primate, who walked on four legs (from which modern apes and man appeared) appeared about 40,000,000 years ago.
2. *Ramapithecus*, who walked on his two feet, appeared in Siwalik Hills in India about 14,000,000 years ago.

3. *Australopithecus*, Man-like ape appeared in South Africa about 5,000,000 years ago.
 4. “1470 Man” appeared in East Africa about 2,500,000 years ago.
 5. *Homo erectus* is the first representative of the genus, *Homo*. It was widespread in Asia, Africa, and Europe. It appeared about 500,000 years ago.
 6. *Homo sapiens*, the first form of wise man, appeared in Europe, Asia, and Africa about 250,000 years ago.
 7. *Neanderthal Man* (between *Homo sapiens* and the Modern Wise Man), that could not survive, appeared in Europe about 70,000 years ago.
 8. *Homo sapiens sapiens*, the Modern Wise Man (the present man belongs to this species), appeared outside of Europe about 35,000 years ago.
- The above evidence based on fossils indicates that the new genus (*Homo*) and its first species the ape-like man (*Homo erectus*) appeared about 500,000 years ago and the *Homo sapiens sapiens*, the current species of man appeared very recently, i. e. about 35,000 years ago.

The above evidence based on fossils indicates that the new genus (*Homo*) and its first species the ape-like man (*Homo erectus*) appeared about 500,000 years ago and the *Homo sapiens sapiens*, the current species of man appeared very recently, i. e. about 35,000 years ago.

iii) Appearance of Civilization [6]:

The Modern Wise Man started farming about 12,000 years ago and stopped roaming from forest to forest in search of food. This was the first sign of civilization:

First civilization appeared in Near East about:	10,000 BCE
In South East Asia about:	6,000 BCE
In Mexico and Peru about:	5,000 BCE
In Far East about:	3,000 BCE
In Indus Valley about:	2,500 BCE

The earliest civilization in India is of Indus Valley civilization. The Aryans settled in North Western India (Punjab and Sindh) about 1750 BCE. Hindu state were developed during 1,000 - 600 BCE. Therefore, the Hindu philosophy could be only 2,600 to 3,000 years old. Under these conditions it is inconceivable that Vishnu, Krishna, Rama, etc., the Hindu deities could have appeared about 1.3 to 4.6 million years ago (as reported in Hindu literature about various Yugas). During this period there was no man or any civilization. Therefore, it is inconceivable to understand that these deities could have appeared during this Yuga-system.

iv) Geological Time [13]

Let us examine the Geological eras, which are based on scientific evidence:

1. *Cenozoic Era*: From today to about 70,000,000 years. Evolution of man from a primate occurred during this era starting about 40, 000,000 years ago.

2. *Mesozoic Era*: From 70,000,000 to 230,000,000 years. Placental mammals and grasses and cereals appeared during this era.
3. *Paleozoic Era*: From 230,000,000 to 620,000,000 years ago. Mammals, bird, insects, reptiles, amphibians, fishes, and conifers, gymnosperms, vascular plants appeared during this era
4. *Proterozoic Era*: From 620,000,000 to 1,420,000,000 years ago. Invertebrates, spore-forming marine algae appeared during this period.
5. *Archeozoic Era*: from 1,420,000,000 to 3,800,000,000 years ago. Single-celled microorganisms, the first organic molecule, and the DNA appeared during this period.
6. *The earth and our solar system* were formed about 4.5 billion years ago.
7. *The Big Bang* occurred about 15 billion years ago.

3. More about Yugas in Gurbani

i) Four Yugas

ਬੇਦੁ ਪੁਕਾਰੇ ਵਾਚੀਐ ਬਾਣੀ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਬਿਆਸੁ ॥

ਮੁਨਿ ਜਨ ਸੇਵਕ ਸਾਧਿਕਾ ਨਾਮਿ ਰਤੇ ਗੁਣਤਾਸੁ ॥

ਸਚਿ ਰਤੇ ਸੇ ਜਿਣਿ ਗਏ ਹਉ ਸਦ ਬਲਿਹਾਰੈ ਜਾਸੁ ॥੬॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪ - ੫੭.

Byas (Vyas Rishi) recommends to study the Bani of Brahma in Vedas.

But Guru Nanak says:

Hey sages and devotees, imbibe the treasured principles in the attributes of the Nam (God).

I sacrifice on those who have understood the Truth (God).

AGGS, M 1, p 57.

ਚਹੁ ਜੁਗਿ* ਸੈਲੇ ਮਲੁ ਭਰੇ ਜਿਨ ਮੁਖਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥

ਭਗਤੀ ਭਾਇ ਵਿਹੂਣਿਆ ਮੁਹੁ ਕਾਲਾ ਪਤਿ ਖੋਇ ॥

ਜਿਨੀ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਿਸਾਰਿਆ ਅਵਗਣ ਮੁਠੀ ਰੋਇ ॥੭॥

ਖੋਜਤ ਖੋਜਤ ਪਾਇਆ ਡਰੁ ਕਰਿ ਮਿਲੈ ਮਿਲਾਇ ॥

ਆਪੁ ਪਛਾਣੈ ਘਰਿ ਵਸੈ ਹਉਮੈ ਤ੍ਰਿਸਨਾ ਜਾਇ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਊਜਲੇ ਜੋ ਰਾਤੇ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਇ ॥੮॥੭॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪ - ੫੭.

Those who have not understood Nam (God) they are soaked in the filth of the four Ages (long time).*

Such a person who has not understood the Nam (God) will remain drenched in filth. 7.

Those who failed to understand God will repent for their evil deeds.

Nanak says:

Those who have understood about themselves and got rid of ego have understood Nam (God) by conducting research after research with devotion (strong desire); their faces radiate their purity. 8. 7.

AGGS. M 1, p 57.

* ‘Four Yugas’ symbolically used to indicate ‘long time’

not as Yuga-system.

In the following Sloka Guru Nanak has used a number of stories found in Hindu literature. Let us find out why these stories have been used in this Bani?

ਸਰੰਸਰ ਦਾਨ ਦੇ ਇੰਦੂ ਰੋਆਇਆ ॥ ਪਰਸ ਰਾਮੁ ਰੋਵੈ ਘਰਿ ਆਇਆ ॥
ਅਜੈ ਸੁ ਰੋਵੈ ਭੀਖਿਆ ਖਾਇ ॥ ਐਸੀ ਦਰਗਹ ਮਿਲੈ ਸਜਾਇ ॥
ਰੋਵੈ ਰਾਮੁ ਨਿਕਾਲਾ ਭਇਆ ॥ ਸੀਤਾ ਲਖਮਣੁ ਵਿਛੁੜਿ ਗਇਆ ॥
ਰੋਵੈ ਦਰਸਿਰੁ ਲੰਕ ਗਵਾਇ ॥ ਜਿਨਿ ਸੀਤਾ ਆਦੀ ਡਉਰੂ ਵਾਇ ॥
ਰੋਵਹਿ ਪਾਂਡਵ ਭਏ ਮਜੂਰ ॥ ਜਿਨ ਕੈ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਰਹਤ ਹਦੂਰਿ ॥
ਰੋਵੈ ਜਨਮੇਜਾ ਖੁਇ ਗਇਆ ॥ ਏਕੀ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਪਾਪੀ ਭਇਆ ॥
ਰੋਵਹਿ ਸੇਖ ਮਸਾਇਕ ਪੀਰ ॥ ਅੰਤਿ ਕਾਲਿ ਮਤੁ ਲਾਗੈ ਭੀੜ ॥
ਰੋਵਹਿ ਰਾਜੇ ਕੰਨ ਪੜਾਇ ॥ ਘਰਿ ਘਰਿ ਮਾਗਹਿ ਭੀਖਿਆ ਜਾਇ ॥
ਰੋਵਹਿ ਕਿਰਪਨ ਸੰਚਹਿ ਧਨੁ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਰੋਵਹਿ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਗਵਾਇ ॥
ਬਾਲੀ ਰੋਵੈ ਨਾਹਿ ਭਤਾਰੁ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਦੁਖੀਆ ਸਭੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ॥ ਮੰਨੇ ਨਾਉ ਸੋਈ ਜਿਣਿ ਜਾਇ ॥
ਅਉਰੀ ਕਰਮ ਨ ਲੇਖੈ ਲਾਇ ॥੧॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪ ੯੫੩-੯੫੪.

God Indra wept when thousands of marks of vulva appeared on his body.

(Rishi Gautam cursed Indra for having illicit union with his wife Ahalya.)

Paras Ram returned home crying.

Ajai wept when he was made to eat the manure he had given, pretending it was charity.

Such is the punishment received in the Court of Justice for evil deeds.

Rama wept when he was sent into exile, and separated from Sita and Lakhshman.

The ten-headed Rawana, who kidnapped Sita in disguise of a saint with the beat of his tambourine, wept when he lost his Lanka (kingdom).

The Pandavas once lived in the Presence of the God.

They wept when were kept as slaves.

Janmayja wept, that he had lost his way.

With one mistake he became a sinner.

The Sheiks and Pirs (spiritual teachers) wept when they had to face agony in their lives.

The kings wept when they had to make holes in their ears for earrings as the code of Jogis for begging from house to house.

The miser wept when he saw that all his wealth is lost.

The Pundit, the religious scholar, wept when his literature, Holy books, were lost because he could not use his holy books to perform various ceremonies for his clients to earn his living.

The young woman wept because she has lost her husband.

Guru Nanak has quoted above examples from ancient

literature that everybody whether one is a god or a king or sheik or *pir* (Muslim spiritual person) or Pundit or as powerful as Pandavas or an ordinary person, wept for their bad deeds. Keeping in view the above stories Guru Nanak declared that:

It looks as if the whole humanity is suffering with some sort of a problem.

Guru Nanak further says:

Those who have comprehended God and the Laws of Universe will understand that for every suffering there is a cause. Bad actions bring problems. The above examples are quoted to show that every body suffered because of the action of their bad deeds since such bad deeds are not beneficial at all.

AGGS, M 1, p 953-954.

Here are some more examples on the use of ancient philosophy to show to the Sikhs that bad deeds begets bad consequences:

ਗੋਤਮੁ ਤਪਾ ਅਹਿਲਿਆ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ ਤਿਸੁ ਦੇਖਿ ਇੰਦੂ ਲੁਭਾਇਆ ॥

ਸਹਸ ਸਰੀਰ ਚਿਹਨ ਭਗ ਹੂਏ ਤਾ ਮਨਿ ਪਛੋਤਾਇਆ ॥੧॥

ਕੋਈ ਜਾਣਿ ਨ ਭੂਲੈ ਭਾਈ ॥

ਸੋ ਭੂਲੈ ਜਿਸੁ ਆਪਿ^੧ ਭੁਲਾਏ ਬੁਝੈ ਜਿਸੈ ਬੁਝਾਈ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

ਤਿਨਿ ਹਰੀ ਚੰਦਿ ਪ੍ਰਿਥਮੀ ਪਤਿ ਰਾਜੈ ਕਾਗਦਿ ਕੀਮ ਨ ਪਾਈ ॥

ਅਉਗਣੁ ਜਾਣੈ ਤ ਪੁੰਨ ਕਰੇ ਕਿਉ ਕਿਉ ਨੇਖਾਸਿ ਬਿਕਾਈ ॥੨॥

ਕਰਉ ਅਢਾਈ ਧਰਤੀ ਮਾਂਗੀ ਬਾਵਨ ਰੂਪਿ ਬਰਾਨੈ ॥

ਕਿਉ ਪਇਆਲਿ ਜਾਇ ਕਿਉ ਛਲੀਐ ਜੇ ਬਲਿ ਰੂਪੁ ਪਛਾਨੈ ॥੩॥

ਰਾਜਾ ਜਨਮੇਜਾ ਦੇ ਮਤਾ^੧ ਬਰਜਿ ਬਿਆਸਿ ਪੜਾਇਆ ॥

ਤਿਨਿ ਕਰਿ ਜਗ ਅਠਾਰਹ ਘਾਏ ਕਿਰਤੁ ਨ ਚਲੈ ਚਲਾਇਆ ॥੪॥

ਗਣਤ ਨ ਗਣਾ^੧ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਪਛਾਣਾ ਬੋਲੀ ਭਾਇ ਸੁਭਾਈ ॥

ਜੇ ਕਿਛੁ ਵਰਤੈ ਤੁਧੈ ਸਲਾਹਾ^੧ ਸਭ ਤੇਰੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ ॥੫॥

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਅਲਿਪਤੁ ਲੇਪੁ ਕਦੇ ਨ ਲਾਗੈ ਸਦਾ ਰਹੈ ਸਰਣਾਈ ॥

ਮਨਮੁਖੁ ਮੁਗਧੁ ਆਗੈ ਚੇਤੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਦੁਖਿ ਲਾਗੈ ਪਛੁਤਾਈ ॥੬॥

ਆਪੇ ਕਰੇ ਕਰਾਏ ਕਰਤਾ ਜਿਨਿ ਏਹ ਰਚਨਾ ਰਚੀਐ ॥

ਹਰਿ ਅਭਿਮਾਨੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ ਜੀਅਹੁ ਅਭਿਮਾਨੇ ਪੈ ਪਚੀਐ ॥੭॥

ਭੁਲਣ ਵਿਚਿ ਕੀਆ ਸਭੁ ਕੋਈ ਕਰਤਾ ਆਪਿ ਨ ਭੁਲੈ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚਿ ਨਾਮਿ ਨਿਸਤਾਰਾ ਕੋ ਗੁਰ ਪਰਸਾਦਿ ਅਘੁਲੈ ॥੮॥੪॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪ - ੧੩੪੪.

Ahalya was the wife of Gautam the seer. Seeing her, Indra was enticed. When Indra received a thousand marks of vulva on his body due to the curse of Gautama, then he regreted in his mind.1.

No one knowingly makes mistakes. It is the ego in a person which makes him to make mistake.

(Some interpret it as that God make them to make mistakes since ਆਪਿ is taken as God. In fact ਆਪਿ means ego here).

He alone understands, who himself tries to understand.
1.Pause.

(Here again *ਆਪਿ* is applicable to the second part of the sentence meaning as 'himself'. Many interpreters consistently interpret *ਆਪਿ* as God irrespective of context in this phrase and in other phrases.)

Hari Chand, the king and ruler of earth, gave so much in charity that cannot be written on papers.

If he had known the ineffectiveness of such charity he would have not given so much that nothing is left with him. Then he was sold as a slave in the market since his 'given charity' did not help him in adversity. 2.

God Vishnu took the form of a dwarf, and begged a piece of land about 2.5 steps. If Bal, the king, had recognized the disguised god Vishnu, he would have not been deceived, and sent to the underworld. 3.

(Notice the deceitfulness of the god (Vishnu) of ancient philosophy.)

Vyas taught and warned the king Janmayja not to do any Yag (feast) even then he performed yag and also killed eighteen Brahmins; such actions cannot go away without leaving their reations. 4.

After quoting ancient philosophy now Guru Nanak explains his own philosophy as follows:

One cannot keep up the account of Your Laws of Univers. I ask you to make me understand these laws so that I can understand what is going on according to these laws. I praise You for that attributes. 5.

The Gruu-oriented is free from illusion since he always understands and follows Your Laws of Univers (symbolizing under Your shelter). 6.

God, the Creator, is performing every action under these laws. We cannot get rid of ego until we comprehend the God. 7.

Everyone can err but the God is free from such errs. It is through the wisdom of the Guru that one understands the Ever-existing Nam (God). 8. 4.

AGGS, M 1, p 1344.

In the above verse Guru Nanak has indicated that even gods like Indra cheated a Rishi Gautam to have illicit union with his wife, Ahalya, by disguising as Gautam. And god Vishnu deceived king Bal by disguising as dwarf and demanded only 2.5 steps of land from his kingdom. Then he took his whole kingdom by covering it with one step by enlarging his legs.

From the above discussion it is evident that:

1. God is inaccessible, ineffable, impersceptible, infinte and without any form and shape. God is also *ਅਜੂਨੀ* (Ajuuni – God does not come into anthropomorphic

form, such as Rama, Krishna, Gopal, etc.). Moreover, repetition of descriptive or specific name does not help to understand God and to attain salvation. Understanding of God and salvation can only be achieved through good deeds by following message (philosophy) of the True Guru (Guru Nanak).

2. The service to the Almighty is, comprehending the Sabd (Nanakian philosophy) and practicing good deeds for the humanity are the greatest service of all.

The Effect of Influence of Vedantic philosophy on Interpretation of Gurbani

Let us take an example of interpretation of the following verse. It has been interpreted by many theologians under the influence of Vedantic philosophy in which recitation of Name of God is important to attain salvation:

ਸਰਬ ਧਰਮ ਮਹਿ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਸਟ ਧਰਮੁ ॥ ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਨਾਮ ਜਪਿ* ਨਿਰਮਲ ਕਰਮੁ ॥
ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੫, ੫ – ੨੬੬.

Dr Sahib Singh [10]

Recitation of name of God and making your character pure is the greatest religion of all.

Giani Harbans Singh [8]

The greatest religion of all and greatest karam (duty) of all to recite the Name of God.

Gopal Singh [7]

Of all the religions, this one is the purest. That one Meditates on the Lord's Name and does what is holy.

Talib [12]

Of all religions the most exalted, And of all the ritual actions, the purest, Is contemplation (meditation) of Name of Divine.

Dr Sant Singh Khalsa [4]

Of all religions, the best religion is to chant the Name of the Lord and maintain pure conduct.

In Vedantic philosophy recitation / repetition of name of God or of certain deities or certain mantra is considered the highest of all religious duties. But according to Nanakian philosophy all such acts are of no avail. Conducting a good deed is the highest social responsibility. Under the principles of Nanakian philosophy the above phrase would be interpreted as follows:

The highest religion of the human is to do good deeds. The above action is equivalent to the repetition of God's name.*

AGGS, M 5, p 266.

* ਜਪੁ: Means repetition as well as comprehension und understanding as discussed by Chahal [3]. Here ਜਪੁ means repetition since Guru Arjan is equating it with

good deeds.

The above phrase is from the eighth *Pauri* of third *Ashtpadi*. If we look into the first *Pauri* of the same (third) *Ashtpadi* it will become clear that Guru Arjan is condemning the repetition/recitation, meditation, reading of *shashtras*, etc but emphasizing to comprehend God.

ਜਪ ਤਾਪ ਗਿਆਨ ਸਭਿ ਧਿਆਨ ॥
 ਖਟ ਸਾਸਤ੍ਰ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਵਖਿਆਨ ॥
 ਜੋਗ ਅਭਿਆਸ ਕਰਮ ਧੂਮ ਕਿਰਿਆ ॥
 ਸਗਲ ਤਿਆਗਿ ਬਨ ਮਧੇ ਫਿਰਿਆ ॥
 ਅਨਿਕ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਕੀਏ ਬਹੁ ਜਤਨਾ ॥
 ਪੁੰਨ ਦਾਨ ਹੋਮੇ ਬਹੁ ਰਤਨਾ ॥
 ਸਰੀਰੁ ਕਟਾਇ ਹੋਮੈ ਕਰਿ ਰਾਤੀ ॥
 ਵਰਤ ਨੇਮ ਕਰੈ ਬਹੁ ਭਾਤੀ ॥
 ਨਹੀ ਤੁਲਿ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮ ਬੀਚਾਰ^੧ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪੀਐ^੨ ਇਕ ਬਾਰ ॥੧॥
 ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ਪ, ਪ – ੨੬੫.

Chanting, intense meditation, reading the six schools of philosophy and sermons on the scriptures; the practice of Yoga; the renunciation of everything and wandering around in the wilderness; the performance of all sorts of works; donations to charities and offerings of jewels to fire; cutting the body apart and making the pieces into ceremonial fire offerings; keeping fasts and making vows of all sorts — none of these are equal to the comprehending^{1,2} and understanding^{1,2} the Name of God.

Nanak says:

Oh Guru-oriented! Try to comprehend^{1,2} and Understand^{1,2} God even once (is enough).

CONCLUSIONS

1. Appearance of various incarnations of God, for example: Vishnu or Saetember during Sat Yuga; Hari Krishan, Krishna or Kahna, or Yadva during Traeta Yuga or Duapar Yuga; Rama during Duapar Yuga or Traeta Yuga; and Muhammad or Allah or Gobind during Kali Yuga, is a mythological work. Because scientific evidence indicates that wise man appeared about 35,000 years ago and Hindu philosophy started about 3,000 years ago. It is inconceivable that above various reincarnations of God could have appeared during these Yugas when man has not appeared on this planet, the earth.
2. According to the available scientific evidence there is no such Yuga-system and it has no place in the scientific system of Geological Time of the earth.
3. According to Nanakian philosophy no *kirtam* (specific or descriptive) name can be assigned to God and there is no effect of repetition of such *kirtam* names. Even then Sikh theologians have assigned

their own new name, WAHEGURU, to God by ignoring the principle of Nanakian philosophy. Now this new name, WAHEGURU, is repeated by the Sikhs instead of the names of different Vedic Periods, like Rama, Hari, Krishna, Gobind, etc. However, now 'WAHEGURU' has become a part of Sikh psyche.

4. Unfortunately, many Sikh and non-Sikh theologians take such mythological works as truth and interpret Gurbani accordingly. Interpretations of Gurbani under the influence of Vedantic philosophy, is eroding the originality and uniqueness of Nanakian philosophy
5. Guru Nanak has referred to mythological stories allegorically, metaphorically, and symbolically to explain his philosophy.
6. Whenever, Guru Nanak used the mythological work or ancient philosophy in his Bani, he never meant that he believes in that philosophy.
7. It appears that many Sikh theologians have not understood Nanakian philosophy in its real perspective that is why there is misinterpretation of Gurbani and misrepresentation of Sikhism.
8. The irony is that after 536 years of Guru Nanak the Sikhs are doing exactly contrary to the basic principles of Nanakian philosophy.
9. By doing so the Sikh theologians have encouraged some Sikh and non-Sikh scholars to portray Sikhism either as syncretism (Islam & Hinduism) or a sect of Hinduism.

Now there is a big question:

Is discovering truth from the Gurbani a Blasphemy?

We, the authors, have discovered the above truth from Gurbani, which is contrary to the way the Gurbani is generally understood by the majority of the Sikh and non-Sikh theologians. We leave it to the readers, Sikh theologians, Sikh researchers, and the custodians of Sikhism to do further research to decide whether the above finding is truth or blasphemy? However, in the past many blasphemies proved to be great truth as pointed by George Bernard Shaw, the great philosopher of 19th and 20th centuries:

All great truths begin as blasphemies.

- George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950)

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