

SCIENTIFIC INTERPRETATION OF GURBANI

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ABSTRACT

The various schools of Sikh studies and individual researchers have been interpreting Gurbani differently creating numerous controversies and confusions over a period of time. These controversies and confusions relate to the interpretation of content and linguistic elements. The primary language of Aad Guru Granth Sahib is *Puratan* Punjabi with a sprinkling of other prevalent languages of the period's style which differ from the modern Punjabi. In addition meanings of myths, the allegories, metaphors, and similes etc. too have changed over the period. Hence there is a requirement of scientific interpretation of the old material in new colours. This study is an attempt to explore the methods of interpretation of *Gurbani* with scientific methodology. In scientific research, interpretation is the task of drawing inferences. It is the device through which the factors that seem to explain what has been observed by researcher in the course of the study can be better understood. It also provides a theoretical conception which can serve as a guide for further studies. Analytical information and consequential inferences are to be communicated to the targeted audience or readers to represent the true picture. The researcher exemplifies the interpretation on scientific lines and established that such briefest, to the point and exact reporting of the experiments available in SGGS is rarely seen in any other text. He used hypothesis testing method, questionnaire method, and independent content analysis methods to find the subject treatment and found it to be the most scientific, clearly stated, developed and discussed logically and systematically covering the gaps of previous researches. Hypothesis is formulated, tested and modified effectively and conclusion drawn step by step. The reliability and validity of the research findings are duly tested through practice. Presentation is most lucid and artistic through poetry and music; a rare thing in research. This provides guidelines for future writers and researchers for being brief, to the point, exact, scientific, logical, systematic, reliable, valid, lucid, artistic, graceful, poetic and musical.

INTRODUCTION

The various schools of Sikh studies and individual researchers have been interpreting Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) here referred to as Gurbani also, differently creating controversies and confusion over a period of time. These controversies and confusions relate to the interpretation of concept, content and linguistic elements of AGGS. Punjabi and other languages of Gurbani differ from the modern Punjabi. In addition meanings of myths, the allegories, metaphors, and similes etc. too have changed over the period. Hence there is a requirement of

scientific interpretation of the old materials in new colours to remove controversies and confusion and making AGGS understood to the followers in all ages.

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines "scientific" as 'of doing something or thinking carefully and logically'.(1) Collins thesaurus gives out the characteristics of "scientific" as: systematic, accurate, exact, precise, ordered, controlled, rational, mathematical, rigorous, analytical, methodical.(2) *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the scientific method as: "a method or procedure

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consisting of systematic observation, measurement, and experiment, and the formulation, testing, and modification of *hypotheses*."(3) A study is deemed to be "scientific" when: There are a clear set of testable questions underlying the design; The methods are appropriate to answer the questions and falsify competing hypotheses and answers; The study is explicitly linked to theory and previous research; The data are analyzed systematically and with the appropriate tools; and the data are made available for review and criticism.(4) The scientific method is a body of techniques for investigating phenomena, acquiring new knowledge, or correcting and integrating previous knowledge.(5) To be termed scientific, a method of inquiry must be based on empirical and measurable evidence subject to specific principles of reasoning (6). In scientific research, interpretation is the task of drawing inferences. It is the device through which the factors that seem to explain what has been observed by researcher in the course of the study can be better understood. It also provides a theoretical conception which can serve as a guide for further studies. Analytical information and consequential inferences are to be communicated to the targeted audience or readers to represent the true picture.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Interpretation of *Gurbani* originated along with the compilation of *Gurbani* itself. Aad Guru Granth Sahib contains detailed interpretations of key concepts. The Gurus, the Saints and the Bhattas themselves can be quoted as the first interpreters of *Gurbani*. Guru Nanak himself did interpretation of his thought process, principles and concepts. The *Manglacharan* (sometimes called *Moolmantar* also) in JAP is further explained in AGGS. *Siddh Gosht* is a dialogue pattern of explanation of Guru Nanak's philosophy. Similarly, *Slokas* and *paudis* in AGGS are the interpretations of *Vaars*. *Chhake*, *Chhant* and *Sloka* provided interpretations of *Vaar Assa*. Guru Nanak gave interpretation of philosophy in his hymns during his meetings with saints, *yogis* and *mahants*. Later Gurus too adopted this method in their hymns. Following this pattern, books like '*Gurmat(i) Nirnai Sagar*', '*Gurmat (i) Parbhakar*' and '*Gurmat(i) Nirnaya*' adopted the methodology using *Gurbani* lines for interpretations. Baba Sri Chand, the elder son of Guru Nanak, who became recluse (*Udasi*), took upon himself to interpret hymns of Guru Nanak all over India in first Guru's later period and his followers known as *Udasis* interpreted *Gurbani* in their own way and spread Guru's teachings with a mix of myth prevalent at the time in other religions. Inclusion of myths based on Hindu mythology by *Udasis* is considered as the first mix which altered the sense of *Gurbani* at times.

Bhai Gurdas who caligraphed AGGS and helped Guru Arjan with its compilation and editing has the honour to be recognised as the "Key to Aad Guru Granth Sahib." Following him were the writers of *Janamsakhis*. Meharban, Meenas and Bhai Mani Singh interpreted *Gurbani* with reference to context, giving the details of events and the hymn sung by Guru Nanak at any point; and provided interpretation of the hymn. Subsequently we have 8 lineages of *Gurbani* interpretations: 1. Sahaj lineage 2. Bhai lineage 3. Parmarth lineage 4. Udasi lineage 5. Nirmala lineage 6. Sampardai lineage 7. Singh Sabhai lineage 8. other lineages or individual efforts. These lineages had their base in *Gurdwaras*, *Dhmsals* and *Deras*. All these lineages developed their philosophy on Vedanta philosophy though way of life and cultural content was distinct from any other way of life or culture.

The modern system of interpretation started with the advent of the British. A few British interpreters of *Gurbani* such as Trumpp and Macauliffe who tried their hand at translating *Gurbani*, but were unable to reach the real essence, though they provided sufficient insight into fundamental philosophy and knowledge about Sikhism. Max Arthur Macauliffe, felt impelled to translate AGGS because he felt that Trumpp's translation was "highly inaccurate and unidiomatic, and furthermore gave mortal offense to the Sikhs by the *odium theologicum* introduced into it. Whenever he saw an opportunity of defaming the *Gurus*, the sacred book and the religion of the Sikhs, he eagerly availed himself of it."(7) He hoped by his own work to make some reparation to the Sikhs for the insults which Trumpp offered to their *Gurus* (8) and their religion. He wrote an extensive life of each of the *Gurus*, and translated most, though not all, of the *Rags*. The unfortunate feature of his book is that the translated portions are given without exact designation of just whence they are taken, so that they cannot be easily compared with any other translation. Trumpp does this. Nevertheless, the Macauliffe translation is much more readable. Since he secured the approval of the best Sikh scholars before publication, it may be safely assumed that the translation is more nearly accurate than that of Trumpp, but it still have weaknesses.

Gurdwara and *dera* system of education was gradually replaced by school, college and university system following the British pattern of teaching and research. Prescribing *Gurbani* for various courses like *Budhimani*, *Vidwani* and *Gyani*, opened flood gates for new type of scholastic interpretations on European pattern which ultimately lead to the university research for M.Phil and PhD. The research work in Punjab University, Guru Nanak Dev University and Punjabi University on the interpretation of AGGS has been continuing. A new University, Sri Guru Granth Sahib World Sikh

University at Fatehgarh Sahib primarily set up for the research on AGGS as the name implies, got involved in controversies from the beginning itself and has not been able to even start research in the direction of interpretation of AGGS till date. Later books like 'Gurmat(i) Nirnai Sagar', 'Gurmat(i) Parbhakar' and 'Gurmat(i) Nirnaya' adopted the same methodology using Gurbani lines for interpretations. Quite a number of *tikas* of AGGS and its various *bani* have been done by learned men of yesteryears, but surprisingly meaning in one *tika* differ from others generally.

Since Gurbani became a global need with the spread of Sikhism, translation and transliteration of Gurbani too have become important but there has been lot of comments against these. Dilgeer (2009) considers "only one translation worthwhile and while commenting upon the translations of Nitnem in English, he considers them not upto the mark and finds most of them replete with incorrect meanings; and the transliterations too are very faulty. Since very large number of western readers had been demanding genuine, correct and intelligible translation and transliteration" (9), there is need to provide standard translations and transliterations.

Scientific interpretation

Scientific interpretation started with evaluating of the origin of universe on scientific lines. Grewal's "Scientific Vision of Guru Nanak" (2008), Virk's treatise 'Scientific Vision of AGGS and Interfaith Dialogue' (2008) and edited book 'Harmony in Science and Sikh Religion' (2012), Dr Grewal wrote: "Guru Nanak's version appears to be unique, scientific, truthful and logical. He has explained the origin, development and existence of universe very vividly. His description also weighs rightly on the balance of scientists. hence the writing of Guru Nanak must be treated seriously for any future research on science or for any field as the entire perimeter has to be done within the perimeters of universal existence (Grewal:2008, p.20). He further said: During Guru Nanak's era scientific approach was a neglected field... and science was a casualty of orthodoxy... Guru Nanak had not only a great vision but also a very scientific and analytical mind. Through his knowledge and analytical and scientific vision, he propounded certain doctrines which were very new to the world....His approach to the study of universe was analytical, systematic and scientific and his propagation of scientific was realistic and humane... through inquisition, experience, intuition and super consciousness guru Nanak has answered the most difficult questions which the modern science has not been able to answer so far and is not likely to provide

the answer if it does not change the methodology of inquiry. Guru Nanak's answers to the various questions, theories, concepts and doctrines are certainly going to be the guiding light for the future inquiries hence need the due attention of the scientific world at large." (in Harmony in science and Sikh religion: 2012, p. 55). (Editorial Note: References to Grewal and Virk are missing.)

Problems of Existing Interpretations

Bhai Gurdas: While discussing the content, Bhai Gurdas can be considered as the first interpreter of Gurbani. His interpretations concentrate on central theme contained in JAP, but at times, he entertained Hindu myth excessively confusing the reader and changing the direction of interpretation. For example, in Var 1, Paudi 49, Wahiguru Mantar is explained with mythical elements which do not rightly interpret the Gurbani version about the anthology of word 'Wahiguru'.(10)

ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਵਾਸਦੇਵ ਵਾ ਵਿਸਨਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਾਵੈ।।
ਚਾਰੇ ਅਛਰ ਇਕੁ ਕਰਿ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜਪੁ ਮੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਜਪਾਵੈ।
ਵਾਰਾਂ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਵਾਰ ੧ ਪਉੜੀ ੪੯

'In Satyug, Visnu in the form of Vasudev had incarnated and 'V' of Wahiguru reminds of Visnu...The recitations of all the four ages subsume in the soul of the common man

Meenas: The interpretations by Sodhi Meharban and Sodhi Har(i) Ji too used myth extensively to explain Gurbani concepts in Janamsakhis. They also created a great confusion by naming their own verses under the name Nanak, Nanak Das as used by the 6 Gurus in AGGS.

1. (a) **Gurbani:** dwsu dws ko dws krlAhu jn nwnk hir srxeI] (ਆਦਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਅੰਕ 402)
- (b) **Sodhi Meharban:** ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਿਨੀ ਜਾਣਿਆ ਆਏ ਤੇ ਪਰਵਾਣ । (੧੧)
੨. (a) **Gurbani:** ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਅੰਤਰ ਜਾਮੀ। ਦਾਸ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਰਣਿ ਸੁਆਮੀ। (ਆਦਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਅੰਕ 623)
- (b) **Sodhi Meharban:** ਦਾਸ ਨਾਨਕ ਏਕੇ ਸਿਮਰੋਐ ਅਵਰ ਛਾਡਹਿ ਬਿਉਹਾਰਿ (੧੨)

There are numerous examples of such plagiarism whereby Gurbani was mixed up with the verses of writers of Janamsakhis. Meenas not only created duplicate *Bani* but used name of Nanak in the last lines to prove their verses as original. They also did the interpretations of Gurbani according to their viewpoint. (13) Meharban however helped to provide answers to key scientific questions 'why', 'when', 'where' and 'how' to some of the verses of Guru Nanak which are not found in other sources. His interpretation of JAP,

Sidh Gosht and Assa di Var are worth mentioning in this regard.

Udasis: The followers of Baba Sri Chand are called *udasis*. Swami Anand Ghan is the most versatile *udasi* in interpretation of AGGS. He interpreted JAP but he too used ancient myths extensively. His penchant for writing exhaustively got him into wrong interpretations at times e.g., while explaining ‘ਆਖਹਿ ਸਿ ਭਿ ਕੇਟੀ ਕੇਇ’ (JAP step 25) his interpretation has gone wild. (14)

Nirmalas: Nirmalas, trained in Sanskrit tradition, interpreted Gurbani keeping Vedic thought process into their background. They at times, overlooked the original thought process of the writers of Gurbani and linked the interpretations to Vedantic or ancient myths. They considered Ram, Krishan etc., as Avatars, and believed in *aarti* with lamps rather than the one described by Guru Nanak. Their interpretation too was thus Vedantic in nature. They gave many meanings to each line and then suggested the best one according to their Vedantic thought process. Interpretations by Nirmalas, Bhai Santokh Singh, Tara Singh Narotam, Sant Gulab Singh and Giani Gian Singh is affected by this Vedantic thought and do not rightly represent the Sikh thought occasionally.

Gianis: Bhai Mani Singh interpreted parts of AGGS based on his learning from Guru Gobind Singh. His followers known as Gianis translated AGGS, popularly known as ‘Faridkot Valla Tika. Gianis like Nirmalas, give out many meanings of the same line; considering one as the main and the others as supplementary. They too give examples from legendary myths and use question answer method to clarify the meanings. This lineage is however more scientific but the use of myth often affects their meaning. They however dominate the Sikh interpretation system now. The missionary colleges, the taksals and independent granthis interpret AGGS on their line.

Sewa Panthis: The followers of Bhai Ghaniya Ji; though originally concentrated on service to the people but also got into interpretation of Gurbani. Bhai Ram Kishan (1788 to 1954 AD) was stated to be the first to interpret JAP, but the same is not available. This writer has interpretations of JAP and Sidh Gosht by Mahant Teerath Singh Ji Sewa Panthi. These interpretations are very simple and straight but do not adopt scientific interpretation process.

New Interpreters: Hindu Mythology has been dominating in all the above interpretations. New writers lineage like Bhai Veer Singh, Dr Balbir Singh, Bhai Jodh Singh, Dr Mohan Singh Diwana, Dr Gurbachan

Singh Talib, Dr Taran Singh, Dr Surain Singh Bilkhu, Principal Teja Singh, Prof Sahib Singh, Prof Surinder Singh Kohli, Dr Gopal Singh, Manmohan Singh -etc. have interpreted AGGS in relatively more scientifically. But they have their own road blocks.

Dr Chahal points out that “In most interpretations of Gurbani by some scholars, allegories, metaphors and similes have been considered as a factual part of the verse rather than in their respective expressions. By doing so such interpretations go far away from its real perspective’ (15).

Dr. Mann pointed out that even very reputed Sikh scholars, e.g., Dr Gopal Singh, and Dr G S Talib have not been able to free themselves from the dominance of Hindu mythology while rendering the translation of stanza 37 of Jap. They could not resist bringing Prince Rama and his wife, Sita, into the picture. The word ‘*sito-sita*’ has been confused with Prince Rama's wife, Sita, and the word ‘Ram’ which actually stands for the Almighty, for Prince Rama. However, in common Punjabi folklore ‘*sito-sita*’ means fully sewn or stitched. Interpretation of Gurbani under the influence of ancient mythology is very common with many theologians (16).

Dr Mann has again expressed his disappointment in the interpretation of ‘*Gur Prasad*’ in the UNESCO Collection (17) by the most reputed theologians, e.g., Bhai Jodh Singh, Kapur Singh, Trilochan Singh and Bawa Harkrishan Singh and a Sikh historian, Khushwant Singh. They have translated ‘*Gur Prasad*’ in *Moolmantra* as: “By the Grace of the Guru made known to man.” This interpretation is accepted by almost every Sikh theologian. But Dr Mann interpreted it as: *Gur* = Great and *Prasad* = Bountiful/merciful. However, logically *Gur Prasad* stands for “Grace of the Almighty” with which Guru Nanak revealed the *Moolmantra*.(18) Unfortunately, it is termed as *Moolmantra* by almost all the Sikh scholars and they justify its title by quoting the verses where the word ‘mantra’ has been used, forgetting that ‘mantra’ has been used as simile or metaphor in such verses. In fact there is no place of mantra in the Gurbani. Scientific and logical analysis of this verse clearly indicates that it is a definition of the Almighty not a *Moolmantra* (19).

Similarly, scientific and logical interpretation of the first verse of Japuji AGGS, Jap 1, p 1: *Aad such jugad such hai bhi such Nanak hosi bhi such*. is given as: “The Almighty was in existence before the time, during the times, at present, and will exist forever.” The word ‘*such*’ is usually translated as ‘true’ in this verse. Actually ‘*such*’ here means ‘existence’.(20) Here Dr Mann’s interpretation too appears unscientific, since meaning of ‘*such*’ are not ‘truth’ or ‘existence’ but ‘The true One’ or ‘The True God’, since ‘The God (to differentiate it from

gods), it is elaborated The True God: (Only God is True and none else; everything else being of transitory nature.)

Thus numerous faults are found with the previous interpretation and there is a need to have a proper process of interpretation. Problems of existing interpretations lie in interpreting all the three i.e., philosophy, meaning and content and the linguistics. In linguistics the problems lie in rightly interpreting the language, the poetics, the symbols, metaphors, similes and symbols while in content the problem is of understanding the underlying philosophy, myths and the context.

Though Dr Sahib Singh's work on lexis and grammar of Gurbani is monumental yet Dr Sidheshwar Varma pointed out that 'comparative vocabularies have been given by mere juxtaposition of Panjabi and Sanskrit form' (21). Harbans Singh (22), Dr Harkirat Singh and others have dealt with usages in original and modified form keeping in mind the fundamentals of the linguistics, yet the essence and scientific parameters of analysis of the Panjabi of Guru Period is not fully treated.

Research Gaps

From the above it is obvious that interpretation of AGGS has quite a number of gaps in all the fields: context, concept, content and linguistics. This is so because no standard methodology has been adopted for the interpretation of AGGS and there remains the need to set a standard methodology on scientific lines. Local concepts, languages and myths become barriers for global understanding; however if the interpretation is done scientifically, it becomes easier for global understanding. This makes scientific interpretation of Gurbani all the more important.

RELEVANCE OF PRESENT STUDY

Due to the globalization, the impact of every concept and activity is liable to be considered globally. Since the followers of AGGS are now found globally, there is a need to provide a methodology of interpretation of AGGS so that it is accepted globally without inconvenience of misunderstanding. In earlier interpretations of AGGS, myths and local meanings dominated. For global application; the content has to be truthful and scientific; interpreting the truthfulness and scientific character of AGGS thus is essential.

Scope, Objectives and Limitations

Scope of the study

This study aims at laying out methodology for universally applicable and acceptable scientific

interpretation of AGGS.

Objective of the Study

1. To evaluate the scientific nature of Gurbani.
2. To explore the methods of interpretation of *Gurbani* scientifically.

Limitations of the Study

The study will limit to scientific interpretation of examples selected at random.

Research Hypothesis

1. Gurbani is scientific i.e., logical, systematic, precise, ordered, controlled, rational, analytical & methodical and universal
2. Interpretation of Gurbani can be done scientifically.

Research Methodology

The research is exploratory in nature since not much is available scientific interpretation methodologies of *Gurbani*. The methodology adopted is systematic observation, measurement, and experiment, and the formulation, testing, adoption or modification of *hypotheses*.

Samples

The samples have been taken from AGGS and other texts at random; taking care of the appropriateness of the sample for proper interpretation

Parameters

Scientific parameters for analysis of AGGS include logical, systematic, precise, ordered, controlled, rational, analytical & methodical presentations of the text

Techniques and tools of Analysis

- (a) Reference to context with the help of Gurbani
- (b) Question-Answer
- (c) Rahao providing central theme and interlocutor.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis is tested based on empirical results, analysis and interpretations.

RESULTS & ANALYSIS

To establish universal application of Gurbani there is a need to evaluate its universality. To establish the scientific nature and scientific interpretation of Gurbani, scientific parameters for evaluation are its being systematic, logical, truthful, precise, rational, analytical and methodical nature and logical and systematic development of thought. The methodology adopted is of systematic observation, measurement, and experiment, and the formulation, testing, adoption or modification of *hypotheses* through (a) content analysis with examples from Gurbani itself through reference to context; (b)

Question-Answer and (c) through the method adopting Rahao as interlocutor. The last two are discussed further.

QUESTION ANSWER TECHNIQUE

Another method employed for interpretation by the way question- answer method employed by Gurbani. Here the questions are given out followed by their answers. This way the most difficult concepts are explained in a very understandable manner.

ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨ: ਕਿਵ ਸਚਿਆਰਾ ਹੋਈਐ ਕਿਵ ਕੂੜੈ ਤੁਟੈ ਪਾਲਿ।। (ਮ:੧, ਪੰਨਾ ੧)

ਉਤਰ: ਹੁਕਮ ਰਜਾਈ ਚਲਣਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਲਿ॥

It is further explained in AGGS at p 468

ਉਤਰ: ਸਚੁ ਤਾ ਪਰੁ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਜਾ ਰਿਦੈ ਸਚਾ ਹੋਇ ॥
ਕੂੜ ਕੀ ਮਲੁ ਉਤਰੈ ਤਨੁ ਕਰੇ ਹਛਾ ਧੋਇ ॥
ਸਚੁ ਤਾ ਪਰੁ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਜਾ ਸਚਿ ਧਰੇ ਪਿਆਰੁ ॥
ਨਾਉ ਸੁਣਿ ਮਨੁ ਰਹਸੀਐ ਤਾ ਪਾਏ ਮੋਖ ਦੁਆਰੁ ॥
ਸਚੁ ਤਾ ਪਰੁ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਜਾ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਜਾਣੈ ਜੀਉ ॥
ਧਰਤਿ ਕਾਇਆ ਸਾਧ ਕੈ ਵਿਚਿ ਦੇਇ ਕਰਤਾ ਬੀਉ ॥
ਸਚੁ ਤਾ ਪਰੁ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਜਾ ਸਿਖ ਸਚੀ ਲੇਇ ॥
ਦਇਆ ਜਾਣੈ ਜੀਅ ਕੀ ਕਿਛੁ ਪੁੰਨੁ ਦਾਨੁ ਕਰੇਇ ॥
ਸਚੁ ਤਾਂ ਪਰੁ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਜਾ ਆਤਮ ਤੀਰਥਿ ਕਰੇ ਨਿਵਾਸੁ ॥
ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਨੋ ਪੁਛਿ ਕੈ ਬਹਿ ਰਹੈ ਕਰੇ ਨਿਵਾਸੁ ॥
ਸਚੁ ਸਭਨਾ ਹੋਇ ਦਾਰੁ ਪਾਪ ਕਢੈ ਧੋਇ ॥
ਨਾਨਕੁ ਵਖਾਣੈ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਜਿਨ ਸਚੁ ਪਲੈ ਹੋਇ ॥ ੨ ॥ (ਮ ੧, ਪੰਨਾ ੪੬੮)

Question: So how can you become truthful? And how can the veil of illusion be torn away?

Answer is in next line: The answer is also written alongwith: Accept and follow the God's Order.

This has been further explained at p.468.

Answer: One knows the Truth only when the Truth is in his heart. The filth of falsehood departs, and the body is washed clean. One knows the Truth only when he bears love to the True Lord. Hearing the Name, the mind is enraptured; then, he attains the gate of salvation. One knows the Truth only when he knows the true way of life. Preparing the field of the body, he plants the Seed of the Creator. One knows the Truth only when he receives true instruction. Showing mercy to other beings, he makes donations to charities. One knows the Truth only when he dwells in the sacred shrine of pilgrimage of his own soul. He sits and receives instruction from the True Guru, and lives in accordance with His Will. Truth is the medicine for all; it removes and washes away our sins. Nanak speaks this prayer to those who have Truth in their laps. ॥ 2 ॥

There are numerous other examples. Sidhh Gosht can be quoted as one such Bani where the entire discussion

is through question answers. Some of the question answers are given below:

Q 1: "Who are you?"

Ans 1: I am ever an obeyer of God's order.

Q 2: What is your name?"

Ans 2: I am Nanak

Q 3: Where is your sect?

Ans 3: I walk in the True Guru's will and this is my sect.

Q 4: What is the aim of your life?

Ans 4: My aim of life is to understand and attain God.

Q5: Where is your seat. (dera)

Ans5: My seat is in God's home.

Q 6: Where is your abode?

Ans 6: My abode is in God.

Q 7: Where did you come from?

Ans 7: I came from God.

Q 8: Where are you going?

Ans 8: I shall go where God orders me to go according to His Will.

Q 9: What is your way? What is your path?" What is your goal?

Ans 9: I walk in harmony with the Will of God. I remain forever under the command of His Will. I sit in the posture of the eternal, imperishable Lord. These are the Teachings I have received from the Guru. As Gurmukh, I have come to understand and realize myself, I merge in the Truest of the True.

'Rahao' Technique

Interpretation of scientific method compositions in AGGS (23) is done based systematic observation, measurement, and experiment, and the formulation, testing and modification of *hypotheses* for concept and content analysis. Two hymns are selected as examples at random. The technique employed is that of Rahao (break). The lines upto Rahao provide guidelines for the following matter. Rahao has the central meaning which is developed later in the hymn (24).

Example 1 from Raag Aasaa (p 9)

ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ॥

ਸੁਣਿ ਵਡਾ ਆਖੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੋਇ ॥

ਕੇਵਡੁ ਵਡਾ ਡੀਠਾ ਹੋਇ ॥

ਕੀਮਤਿ ਪਾਇ ਨ ਕਹਿਆ ਜਾਇ ॥

ਕਹਣੈ ਵਾਲੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਰਹੇ ਸਮਾਇ ॥ ੧ ॥

ਵਡੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਸਾਹਿਬਾ ਗਹਿਰ ਗੰਭੀਰਾ ਗੁਣੀ ਗਰੀਰਾ ॥

ਕੋਇ ਨ ਜਾਣੈ ਤੇਰਾ ਕੇਤਾ ਕੇਵਡੁ ਚੀਰਾ ॥ ੧ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

ਸਭਿ ਸੁਰਤੀ ਮਿਲਿ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਕਮਾਈ ॥
 ਸਭ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਪਾਈ ॥
 ਗਆਨੀ ਧਿਆਨੀ ਗੁਰ ਗੁਰਹਾਈ ॥
 ਕਹਣੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ ਤੇਰੀ ਤਿਲੁ ਵਡਿਆਈ ॥ ੨ ॥
 ਸਭਿ ਸਤ ਸਭਿ ਤਪ ਸਭਿ ਚੰਗਿਆਈਆ ॥
 ਸਧਾ ਪੁਰਖਾ ਕੀਆ ਵਡਿਆਈਆ ॥
 ਤੁਧੁ ਵਿਣੁ ਸਿਧੀ ਕਿਨੈ ਨ ਪਾਈਆ ॥
 ਕਰਮਿ ਮਿਲੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਠਾਕਿ ਰਹਾਈਆ ॥ ੩ ॥
 ਆਖਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਕਿਆ ਵੇਚਾਰਾ ॥
 ਸਿਫਤੀ ਭਰੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਭੰਡਾਰਾ ॥
 ਜਿਸੁ ਤੂ ਦੇਹਿ ਤਿਸੈ ਕਿਆ ਚਾਰਾ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚੁ ਸਵਾਰਣਹਾਰਾ ॥ ੪ ॥ ੨ ॥
 (ਆਦਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਅੰਕ ੯)

The above hymn is divided into two parts for the purpose of interpretation: Part 1, one before break (*Rahao*) and part 2, after the break (*Rahao*) for ease of understanding

Part 1: Before the break (*Rahao*)

Asa, First Mehl: Hearing of His Greatness, everyone calls Him Great. But just how Great His Greatness is—this is known only to those who have seen Him. His Value cannot be estimated; He cannot be described. Those who describe You, Lord, remain immersed and absorbed in You. ॥ 1 ॥

O my Great Lord and Master of Unfathomable Depth, You are the Ocean of Excellence. No one knows the extent or the vastness of Your Expanse. ॥ 1 ॥ Pause ॥

Part 1 is introductory; introducing (a) the type of composition, (b) the composer, (c) the topic, (d) the content introduced.

Following is the Introduction about the Raag, the author, the topic, subject statement and the hypothesis given before the break (*Rahao*):

1. The **Raag** (*Aasaa*), 2. **Composer** (First Guru): 3. **Topic: Knowledge of God** 4. **Content** (a) Hearing of His Greatness, everyone calls Him Great. But just how Great His Greatness is—this is known only to those who have seen Him. (b) His Value cannot be estimated (c) He cannot be described. He is the master of unfathomable depth 5 No one knows the extent or the vastness or expanse of God; the ocean of excellence.

Part 2: After the break (*Rahao*)

All the intuitive met and practiced intuitive meditation. All the appraisers met and made the appraisal. The spiritual teachers, the teachers of meditation, and the teachers of teachers—they cannot describe even an iota of Your Greatness. ॥ 2 ॥ All Truth, all austere

discipline, all goodness, all the great miraculous spiritual powers of the Siddhas—without You, no one has attained such powers. They are received only by Your Grace. No one can block them or stop their flow. ॥ 3 ॥ What can the poor helpless creatures do? Your Praises are overflowing with Your Treasures. Those, unto whom You give—how can they think of any other? O Nanak, the True One embellishes and exalts. ॥ 4 ॥ 2 ॥

Part 2: After the break (*Rahao*)

The subject is discussed step by step after the break: System Observation (b) measurement (c) experiment (d) formulation (e) testing and (f) modification of hypothesis

System observation (Survey of literature)

Step 1: 1. Measurements (a) All the intuitive met and practiced intuitive meditation. (b). All the appraisers met and made the appraisal. (c) The spiritual teachers, the teachers of meditation, and the teachers of teachers (d) They all cannot describe even an iota of God's Greatness.

Step 2: Methodologies earlier adopted for finding out truth about God's vastness and expanse are (a) disciplining oneself; (b) doing good to others, (c) gaining miraculous powers (d) obtaining God's Grace 2.

Methodology adopted: Since Grace of God cannot be blocked or stopped by anyone, methodology of obtaining God's Grace through meditation on His name is adopted.

Formulation of hypothesis; God's Grace is achieved through meditation on His Name.

Step 3: Testing Results, analysis and interpretation (discussion) 1. God's Grace can be obtained by praising God. (b) All treasures are available with the Grace of God. 3. Those who get these treasures cannot think of anyone else other than the God.

Reliability and validity Check questions 'What can the poor helpless creatures do?' and 'How can they think of any other?' are put to check the validity and reliability. Is there any other method with the man than to meditate on His Name and obtain His Grace? There is none. Can a man think of anyone else who can provide the Grace and all the treasures? No! Since no one else has the power to do so, one has to meditate on Him alone.

Modification of adopted Hypothesis after the experiment is done to state that: (a) By meditation on God, God's grace can be obtained and (b) with the grace of God all the treasures (including knowledge about his vastness and expanse) can be obtained.

Step 4: Conclusion: The True One embellishes and

exalts through His Grace achieved through meditation on Him (to let the meditating person on His name to know about His vastness and expanse).

Part 2: After the Break

ਮਾਇਆ ਸੰਚਿ ਰਾਜੇ ਅਹੰਕਾਰੀ ॥
 ਮਾਇਆ ਸਾਥਿ ਨ ਚਲੈ ਪਿਆਰੀ ॥
 ਮਾਇਆ ਮਮਤਾ ਹੈ ਬਹੁ ਰੰਗੀ ॥
 ਬਿਨੁ ਨਾਵੈ ਕੇ ਸਾਥਿ ਨ ਸੰਗੀ ॥ ੨ ॥
 ਜਿਉ ਮਨੁ ਦੇਖਹਿ ਪਰ ਮਨੁ ਤੈਸਾ ॥
 ਜੈਸੀ ਮਨਸਾ ਤੈਸੀ ਦਸਾ ॥
 ਜੈਸਾ ਕਰਮੁ ਤੈਸੀ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਵੈ ॥
 ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਪੂਛਿ ਸਹਜ ਘਰੁ ਪਾਵੈ ॥ ੩ ॥
 ਰਾਗਿ ਨਾਦਿ ਮਨੁ ਦੂਜੈ ਭਾਇ ॥
 ਅੰਤਰਿ ਕਪਟੁ ਮਹਾ ਦੁਖੁ ਪਾਇ ॥
 ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਭੇਟੈ ਸੋਝੀ ਪਾਇ ॥
 ਸਚੈ ਨਾਮਿ ਰਹੈ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਇ ॥ ੪ ॥
 ਸਚੈ ਸਬਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਕਮਾਵੈ ॥
 ਸਚੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਵੈ ॥
 ਨਿਜ ਘਰਿ ਵਾਸੁ ਅਮਰ ਪਦੁ ਪਾਵੈ ॥
 ਤਾ ਦਰਿ ਸਾਚੈ ਸੋਭਾ ਪਾਵੈ ॥ ੫ ॥
 ਗੁਰ ਸੇਵਾ ਬਿਨੁ ਭਗਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥
 ਅਨੇਕ ਜਤਨ ਕਰੈ ਜੇ ਕੋਈ ॥
 ਹਉਮੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਸਬਦੇ ਖੋਈ ॥
 ਨਿਰਮਲ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਸੈ ਮਨਿ ਸੋਈ ॥ ੬ ॥
 ਇਸੁ ਜਗ ਮਹਿ ਸਬਦੁ ਕਰਣੀ ਹੈ ਸਾਰੁ ॥
 ਬਿਨੁ ਸਬਦੈ ਹੋਰੁ ਮੋਹੁ ਗੁਬਾਰੁ ॥
 ਸਬਦੇ ਨਾਮੁ ਰਖੈ ਉਰਿ ਧਾਰਿ ॥
 ਸਬਦੇ ਗਤਿ ਮਤਿ ਮੋਖ ਦੁਆਰੁ ॥ ੭ ॥
 ਅਵਰੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਕਰਿ ਦੇਖਣਹਾਰੇ ॥
 ਸਾਚਾ ਆਪਿ ਅਨੁਪੁ ਅਪਾਰੇ ॥
 ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮ ਉਤਮ ਗਤਿ ਹੋਈ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਖੋਜਿ ਲੈਰੈ ਜਨੁ ਕੋਈ ॥ ੮ ॥
 (ਆਦਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਅੰਕ ੧੩੪੨)
 AGGS, M 1, p 1342.

System Observation

Measurement: (a) Gathering the wealth of Maya, kings become proud and arrogant. But this Maya that they love so much shall not go along with them in the end. (b) There are so many colors and flavors of attachment to Maya. Except for the Name, no one has any friend or companion. ॥ 2 ॥

Experiment:

Results of previous experiments (Survey of Literature) (a) According to one's own mind, one sees the minds of others. (b) According to one's desires, one's condition is determined. (c) According to one's actions, one is focused and tuned in. (c) Seeking the advice of the True Guru, one finds the home of peace and poise. ॥ 3 ॥ (d) In music and song, the mind is caught by the love of duality. (e) Filled

with deception deep within, one suffers in terrible pain. (f) Meeting with the True Guru, one is blessed with clear understanding, and remains lovingly attuned to the True Name. ॥ 4 ॥

Experiment Planned: Contemplating on Word of God.

Methodology (a) Through the True Word of the Shabad, one practices Truth. (b) He sings the Glorious Praises of the Lord, through the True Word of His Bani. (j) He dwells in the home of his own heart deep within, and obtains the immortal status. (k) Then, he is blessed with honor in the Court of the True Lord. ॥ 5 ॥ (l) Without serving the Guru, there is no devotional worship, even though one may make all sorts of efforts. (m) If one eradicates egotism and selfishness through the Sabd, the Immaculate Naam comes to abide in the mind. ॥ 6 ॥

Formulation of Hypothesis: By contemplating on the Word of God, mind and *maya* can be subdued.

Testing (Result Analysis & Interpretation): (a) In this world, the practice of the Sabd is the most excellent occupation. (b) Without the Sabd, everything else is the darkness of emotional attachment. (c) Through the Sabd, the Naam is enshrined within the heart. (d) Through the Sabd, one obtains clear understanding and the door of salvation. ॥ 7 ॥ (e) There is no other Creator except the All-seeing Lord God. (f) The True Lord Himself is Infinite and Incomparably Beautiful. (g) There are only rare ones who seek and find the God

Reliability and Validity test: Guru Nanak meditated on true God throughout his life and controlled his mind and remained found detachment from *maya* and attachment with God and remained blessed with God's Grace.

Modification of hypothesis: Through the Lord's Name, one obtains the most sublime yet only rare ones can attain this.

Conclusion: Meditation on God's Name weans away the mind from the world of Maya and gets one attached with God. To attain Him one must meditate on Him; this however only rare ones can do.

Overall effects

The reliability and validity of the research findings are duly tested through practice. Presentation is most lucid and artistic through poetry and music; a rare thing in research. This provides guidelines for future writers and researchers for being brief, to the point, exact, scientific, logical, systematic, reliable, valid, lucid, artistic, graceful, poetic and musical.

CONCLUSIONS

It is thus established that Gurbani is truly scientific in nature and its interpretation be done scientifically.

It proves true on all the scientific parameters for evaluation i.e., it is systematic, logical, truthful, precise, rational, analytical, methodical and of universal nature.

Its scientific interpretation can be done through systematic observation, measurement, and experiment, and the formulation, testing, adoption or modification of *hypotheses* for concept, and content in Question - Answer method and Rahao as interlocutor.

AGGS is thus proved to be truly scientific and has universal acceptability. It thus goes to prove the entire alternative hypothesis.

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Duaapar(i) sat(i)gur Haree Krisan haha Hari Hari nam(u) japavai.
Tete sat(i)gur Ram jee rara Ram japai sukh(u) pavai.
Kal(i)jug(i) Nanak Gur Gobind gaga Gobind nam (u) alavai.
Chare jage chahu jugee panchain vich(i) jai samavai.
Charo achhar Ik(u) Kar(i) Vahaguroo jap(u) mantr japavai.
Jaha te upajia phir(i) taha samavai ||49||(Bhai Gurdas Var 1:49)
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