

# PUNJABI LANGUAGE IS 5,500 YEARS OLD

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**Dr Jaspal Singh Mayell**

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## BOOK REVIEW

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Many International Punjabi Conferences have been held in Canada, India, Pakistan, UK, and USA which were attended by experts of Punjabi spoke about Punjabi and recited poems some were honored for writing books and novels in Punjabi, nevertheless, nothing have been talked about to discover the origin of Punjabi Language. I have not come across any systematic study and research on the origin of Punjabi language. It was Chahal [1, 2] in 2016 who did some preliminary research about the origin of Punjabi language and about the language of the Holy Scriptures (*Aad Guru Granth Sahib*) of the Sikhs.

Recently Dr. Jaspal Singh Mayell has come up with origin of Punjabi language from the time of excavation of Harappa civilization about 3,500 BCE (5,500 years ago). Dr. Mayell was born in 1929 in Sialkot about 318 Km from Harappa now in Pakistan. He moved to India in 1947 after partition of India into Pakistan and India. He obtained his MSc in Chemical Engineering from Delhi Polytechnic Institute, Delhi in 1952 and PhD in Chemistry from the University of Texas, Austin, Texas in 1962. His first book, *Universality of Sikh Religion*, 2006 and the current book, *Punjabi Language is 5,500 Years Old*, 2017 were published by the Mayell Publishers, Stamford, Connecticut, USA. Dr. Mayell was founding members of Sikh Cultural Society, New York and President of Relief Committee of Greater New York for 28 years from 1984-2012.

Another French Chemist, Antoine Lavoisier (1743-1794), disproved the Classical Elements, earth, air, fire, and water (called *Panj Tatt* – earth, air, fire, water and ether/sky, in Eastern Religions) are not elements instead discovered about 55 substances, which could not be decomposed into simpler substances by any known chemical means were provisionally listed as **elements**. [3]

On the other hand, Dr. Mayell, being Chemist busted the myth that Punjabi was originated from Sanskrit instead from

language spoken by the people of Harappa about 5,500 years ago. Chahal calls the old Punjabi as “Proto-Punjabi”, which actually became the language of the land of five rivers, Punjab. The name, “Punjab”, was given to the land of five rivers by Persians, which means “*Panj aab*” (five rivers) and the language of its people was called “Punjabi”. [1]

The first Chapter deals with deciphering of symbols of Harappa people inscribed on different pots or on walls. Dr. Mayell gives 11 reasons for Punjabi to be 5,500 years old:

1. The people living in Harappa were speaking Punjabi and so the people of present Punjab speak Punjabi. He further says that languages like Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic came from foreign countries. Some reader may not digest that Sanskrit came from some foreign country. According to Chahal [1] the Vedas were written by sages of Punjab in the language of Punjab people. This language was named as “*Prakrit*” by Panini, and same language when put under thousands of rules of Grammar was called “Sanskrit”. The first Veda, Rig, was composed around 1,500 to 600 BCE when there was no Sanskrit. Some scholars called that language of Veda a Proto-Sanskrit or Vedic Sanskrit. Panini lived around 600 to 500 BCE at Attoch on the bank of Sind river of Punjab, then called Sept Sindhu. This *Prakrit* is the same proto-Punjabi which was called *Pali* when used by Buddhists to write their scared books. However, the language spoken by the people of Punjab remained same – the Punjabi. [1]
2. Harappa’s people and people of today’s Punjab have the same culture.
3. Harappa people used symbol language Dr. Mayell has deciphered these symbols into Punjabi language. However, the other researchers say that these symbols are very difficult to decipher till today.
4. Multan and Harappa, just 24 miles apart, are oldest cities in the world about 4,000 to 6,000 years old as reported by Kenoyer. The Punjabi language (Multani dialect) spoken today might be the same spoken by Harappa people.
5. The entire area of Punjab has the same traditions, customs and culture as originated in Harappa and Multan.
6. Although there is no solid proof of Punjabi being spoken by Harappa people, Dr. Mayell’s deciphering of symbols of Harappa indicates that it is Punjabi language of today.

7. Kanoyer says that manufacturing seals at various times and their inscriptions are still not decipherable but Dr. Mayell says it is possible that it is Punjabi language.
8. Prof. Dales says that there is no influence of Aryan language on the language of Harappa people.
9. Enamel part of teeth of Harappa people were studied in the University of Florida. The results proved that enamels were of the people of Harappa and there was no mix up from any other outsiders.
10. Dr. Mayell says that the skeleton of Harappa is the same as that of Punjabi people, therefore, they spoke Punjabi language. I do not think it is a good reason since Skelton of humans from different places is same for the last many thousands of years.
11. Finally , Dr. Mayell says that Harappa people were peaceful and had no distinction of any class.

In Chapter 3 Dr Mayell says that 150 million people speak Punjabi Language in the world. For example, 107 million in Pakistan, 35 million in India and 8 million in rest of the world.

In Chapter 4 Dr. Mayell gives very clear cut examples of Punjabi language spoken by Baba Farid during 1173-1266 about 200 years before Guru Nanak. It means the Punjabi language was well spoken in the Punjab much earlier than the time of Baba Farid. Then some poets at that time also spoke and wrote in Punjabi.

However, Chahal [2] has reported that the language spoken by different Bhagats from different part of India is very much comparable to the Punjabi of Baba Farid and that of Guru Nanak (1469-1539) and of today except with some dialect differences. For example,

- Baba Farid (1175-1265) from Punjab,
- Bhagat Kabir (1399-1495) from Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh),
- Bhagat Ravidas (1458-1520) also from Varanasi,
- Bhagat Dhanna ( 1415 - ) from Rajastan,
- Bhagat Jaidev (1142 -1180) from West

Bengal,

- Bhagat Trilochan (1267-1335) from Maharashtra, and
- Bhagat Namdev (1270-1350) also from Maharashtra.

It clearly indicates that during the period around the 12<sup>th</sup> century from Baba Farid to the 16<sup>th</sup> century to Bhagat Ravidas Punjabi was spoken by people of whole India except the Southern part where the language was quite different.

In Chapter 5 Dr. Mayell says that Puru/ Porus ( 341-317 BCE ) spoke Punjabi.

Buddhists about 550 BCE and Jain people spoke Punjabi but called it *Pali* and *Agamas*, respectively. *Pali* and *Agamas* are actually *Prakrit* (Proto-Punjabi).

In Chapter 6 Dr. Mayell talks about thirty dialects of Punjabi language which have been listed in Table 22. Unfortunately many researchers called different dialects of Punjabi as the different languages.

Chahal [1] has noticed that the language of the Holy Scripture of the Sikhs (*Aad Guru Granth Sahib*) is Punjabi having different dialects. But many famous Sikh scholars erroneously report about 22 languages, in fact, these are 22 dialects of Punjabi as reported by Dr. Mayell.

In Chapter 7 Dr. Mayell discusses that Punjabi is a unique and tonal language. Thus Punjabi language is very good for music and dancing.

In Chapter 8 Dr. Mayell discusses past and future of Punjabi language in details.

The study on the origin of Punjabi language reported by Dr. Mayell is worth reading by the linguists especially by the Sikh researchers on Punjabi language. Just imagine that this language survived for such a long period of about 5,500 years in spite no support by any government at any time. This is because of its uniqueness and being a tonal language. The alphabet of Gurmukhi script in which the Holy

Scriptures of the Sikhs (*Aad Guru Granth Sahib*) is written was modified from “*Takri*” alphabet by Guru Nanak. But some scholars are propagating that it was developed by Guru Angad. This is the script with which any word as spoken can be written easily. [2]

## REFERENCES

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