

Perception of Guru Nanak's 'Japji'

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Japji is an ocean of *Amrit*. It is the nectar offered to humanity through Guru Nanak. It has an oceanic depth, in its simplicity. To comprehend - and swim across - this ambrosial reservoir of celestial knowledge is a Herculean task. One must, however, make an effort in one's life to follow the precepts of the Guru, if one wishes to achieve peace that "passeth understanding".

Japji being the word of *Akalpurkh (Dhur ki bani)*, it's beauty lies in the fact that it speaks and conveys it's message to one and all. It is simple yet mystic, spiritually allegorical and esoteric. Even an uneducated person understands the *bani* when he listens to it and feels exuberated. A learned person is able to beautifully interpret the message, as the Guru guides the learned person at his plane of consciousness. Sant Mahatmas recite the same Gurbani and receive the Celestial communication of spirituality at the still higher plane of consciousness. 'Truth' emerges in different forms. Truth is Akalpurkh and Akalpurkh is Truth.

ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ ॥ ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥

He was true in the prime, He was true when began the time, He is true today, true He verily shall be.

'Mool Mantra', the credal pronouncement of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, glimmers with *Akalpurkh's* transcendental and immanent traits.

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

This reflection of Guru's mind enlightens the mortal in his effort to reach out the Divine.

Akalpurkh the cosmic creator is one and the only one, with multifarious names – ਗੁਰਾ ਇਕ ਵੇਰਿ ਬੁਝਾਈ ॥ ਸਭਨਾ ਜੀਆ ਕਾ ਇਕੁ ਦਾਤਾ ਸੋ ਮੈ ਵਿਸਰਿ ਨ ਜਾਈ ॥ Being omnipresent, immortal and self illuminated, one need not run hither and thither in search of Him. Look within your ownself. He is 'fearless' and sans 'enmity'. These are two vital traits sermoned by Guru Nanak. Fear is a painful emotion caused by impending danger or evil, weakening the capacity and efficacy of an individual. One gradually becomes a non-achiever. Fear cannot be unraveled because the mind becomes apprehensive. Guru advises to obliterate fear from within us and the way to destroy fear is to have complete faith in the fearless one. 'Enmity' is a negative trait sprouting from 'Ego' in oneself. Humanity is a universal brotherhood lovingly created by God. It is the essence of all religions and all ages. If one aspires to reach out the Divine by spiritual ecstasy, one must free oneself from the shackles of circumferential thinking, to become a part of the brotherhood so dear to the Almighty. Theosophy envisages living together in this world in harmony. There are no enemies. Guru Nanak implies that it is only when one assimilates the traits of Akalpurkh that one can hope for a union with Him.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji, in the very first Pauri of Japji Sahib, lays down a precept for reaching out the Divine. The Guru sermons, develop faith in the Lord and surrender to His Will - ਹੁਕਮਿ ਰਜਾਈ ਚਲਣਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਲਿ ॥ Surrender with faith takes you beyond the human frontiers - ਮੈਨੈ ਸਗਲ ਭਵਣ ਕੀ ਸੁਧਿ ॥ Everyone is bound to the Lord's command. Everything is 'happening'. Nothing is done by the mortal. These are preconditions to understanding Gurbani in 'Japji Sahib.'

Guru urges, accept the Will of Akalpurkh in ethereal silence, heavenly silence, Godly

silence *within*. The 'Will' of the Lord shall prevail in any case. We mortals have no choice. If we accept His doings in Godly silence, we shall come closer to God. To create ethereal silence within, one has to live a life of 'Detached Attachment'. What pleases Him is the right action – ਜੋ ਤੁਧੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਸਾਈ ਭਲੀ ਕਾਰ ॥

In my life I have experienced many happenings which apparently look unbelievable but each episode augmented my belief in Akalpurkh. Before partition of India my *Mama ji* used to live with us in Lahore. My personality developed under his guidance. After partition in 1947, our family shifted to Shimla and *Mama ji* went to his son in Jagraon (Pb.). We lost the link. A time came when we had not met each other for more than 10 years! He had attained the age of 100 years! Akalpurkh be praised. One night while lying in my bed, a thought flashed in my mind about *Mama ji*. Next morning I felt an urge to ring up Jagraon and communicate with him. I did and both myself and my soulmate conversed enquiring about his health; We felt gratified that he was well. You will not believe it, the very next day we received a call from *Mama ji's* son that *Mama ji* is no more and has moved on to his heavenly abode!! I interpret this as a gift to me from Akalpurkh offering an opportunity to talk to the revered one prior to his departure from this world. One may term it as a coincidence. But no, instinct within recognizes it as His benevolence. One should always perceive such experiences with the perception of an innocent child. Its only then that the belief in the 'Ineffable One' gets strengthened, bringing you closer to Him.

We pray and beg. The benevolent Lord goes on bestowing – ਆਖਹਿ ਮੰਗਹਿ ਦੇਹਿ ਦੇਹਿ ਦਾਤਿ ਕਰੇ ਦਾਤਾਰੁ ॥ By singing and reflecting upon the magnificence of Akalpurkh at Amritvela, one learns that the path to salvation and fulfillment of life lies in inner bliss, thankfulness for His bounty while being saturated with love for Him in one's heart – ਗਾਵੀਐ ਸੁਣੀਐ ਮਨਿ ਰਖੀਐ ਭਾਉ ॥

Creation, sustenance and destruction are three facets of the same phenomenon i.e. Life created by Akalpurkh, the fount of virtues. Always pray, pray that He may never abandon you. Seek His grace alone. Let your soul be the soul of a beggar.

For effectively listening to Gurbani, one has to rein one's mind and achieve *Dhyan*. Silence is a prerequisite to listening. By listening and meditating on Gurbani, the devotee becomes a 'yogi' and fathoms the Lord's 'Srishti' - ਪਾਤਾਲਾ ਪਾਤਾਲ ਲਖ ਆਗਾਸਾ ਆਗਾਸ ॥ One becomes truthful, ever blissful and gay, coming closer to Akalpurkh by apprehending that the 'Creator' and the 'Creation' are mingled with each other – ਨਾਨਕ ਭਗਤਾ ਸਦਾ ਵਿਗਾਸੁ ॥

Akalpurkh is ineffable and cannot be described. He is beyond comprehension. *Gurparsad* is the key to perceive the unmanifest one.

All of us have two sides to our personality, like a coin minted by God. The mortal's own vision is narrow when he relates good and evil as per his own views and desires. There is so much of good among the worst and so much evil in the best. Guru urges, never, never slander anyone, even mentally. We should only appreciate and praise the good side of others. As for the bad side, let each individual himself settle the score with Akalpurkh. Reining of one's mind reduces negative thoughts which are an impediment in achieving peace and tranquility.

All names of the Lord and His abodes are sacred. So also all the scriptures, irrespective of caste or creed. Let the humanity follow the holy Scriptures. We must not denigrate other faiths. The defiled souls get transformed into a truthful one with the grace of the One and the only One.

Pilgrimage, penance, ostentatious compassion and other ceremonial rituals do not lead one to the Supreme Lord. The Lord abideth within. For emancipation develop virtues and dispel

vices. If you wish to establish communion with 'Satguru', sing His virtues; for when you sing virtues, they permeate within. Then alone the virtuous one is revealed.

The Lord's greatness and His creation is beyond human comprehension. Entire Srishti reflects His glory. Wondering in awe (ਵਿਸਮਾਦੁ) at his omnipotence is peeping into spirituality. Never, never, never forgetting God is the key to His comprehension.

Guru Nanak sermons in 'Japji' - transcend the reflections of your physical self and by reining your mind, colour yourself in ethical values. If one is to achieve salvation, one must detach one's mind from worldly riches. Live a life of 'Detached attachment.'

Obliteration of one's 'Ego', a prolonged illness (ਦੀਰਘ ਰੋਗ), leads to Supreme Spirituality. The Lord is omnipotent and omniscient. Only His grace can help you to achieve salvation. The mortal cannot depend upon his own strength. To achieve this, one must focus attention on self in solitude, introspecting and trying to visualize one's failings. The worldly acquisitions do not elevate one's status. In fact they distance you from God. The mighty and the rich possessing oceanic wealth equal not the humble and the meek who in their mind forget Him not.

The five milestones glittering on the 'Divine Path' are:

- Dharam Khand
- Gyan Khand
- Saram Khand
- Karam Khand
- Sach Khand

These are the five stages of inner development of the devotee, in this life itself. To travel across these milestones one must develop the capacity to look into one's ownself. 'Know thy self and nothing more' is the core.

Dharam Khand is the period of Dharma when the devotee truthfully discharges his responsibilities in this world religiously, developing into a virtuous and a righteous person. It is the first step towards spiritual ascent. Dharma is your duty to yourself, to your family and to your fellow beings. Ritualistic activity is not Dharma. One who is a believer, treads not the ritualistic religious path. He is fearlessly devoted to Dharma - ਮੈਨੈ ਮਗੁ ਨ ਚਲੈ ਪੰਥੁ ॥ ਮੈਨੈ ਧਰਮ ਸੇਤੀ ਮਨੁਬੰਧੁ ॥ Ritualistic activity entangles you to the materialistic world. Thus distancing you from Akalpurkh. In this era of Dharma, all are judged by the Lord, based on the karmas of the mortals in this world. Good karmas bring peace and tranquility. Bad karmas automatically bring distress. It is the era of practicing righteousness.

Gyan Khand is the period of acquiring 'Guru's Gyan' and understanding Gurbani. One must recite 'Japji Sahib' with an understanding and not merely as a daily ritual. By meditating on 'Japji', one comprehends the innerself which is vital when traversing the Divine Path. It is of utmost importance to grasp the import of the Guru's precepts. In *Kalyug*, pitch darkness of ignorance abound. Guru's gyan is the lamp which enables one to cross this milestone and move on in the company of men of divine knowledge.

Saram Khand is when having acquired the knowledge of good and bad, right and wrong, the devotee *works hard* to follow the righteous path. Thus achieving transformation. Unmatched is the beauty of this era of spiritual effort by the mortal.

Karam Khand comes about with Akalpurkh's Grace after the devotee crosses the milestone of *Saram Khand*. He starts having glimpses of the Lord who drenches the devotee with His spiritual grace.

Sach Khand is the 'ultima Thule' of the mystical experience when the devotee merges with 'Truth'. Then the vices – *kaam, krodh, lobh, moh* and *hankar* simply evaporate and the

'Divine' light shines within. The mortal becomes immortal.

