

# Gift of Optimism: Why a Sikh says: “Waheguruji ka Khalsa, Waheguruji ki Fateh”

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THE GREETINGS “**Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh**” is to be exchanged whenever two Sikhs meet each other. Guru Gobind Singh Ji has said, “**My face will be towards that person who says it first. My back will be towards that person who says it afterwards. I will be in between both of them, if both of them says it together.**” Hence, in order to spread the message of brotherhood, we should say *Fateh* together.

The traditions set by Guru Sahibs, whether they are documented or not, can be derived from Gurbani, provided we try to delve into the depths of Gurbani. However, we are nobody to alter, modify, change, and add to the Gurbani or basic Sikh traditions. We are not qualified to question Guru Granth Sahib, as this has been well documented, classified, and sealed by Guru Sahib. Since other traditions are not well documented, classified and sealed by Guru Sahib, so we try to give all sorts of suggestions and modifications.

The basic reason for most of our misconceptions is that, in Gurbani, the terminology, or the words, used are those that were prevailing at that time. Many expressions belonging to various languages prevailing at that time have been used in Gurbani. A limited number of new words have been added by Guru Sahibs in Gurbani like, (ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖੁ, ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ, ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਵੇਲਾ, ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ, ਜੀਵਨ ਮੁਕਤਿ,). But Guru Sahibs have clearly given their own definition for all the words (prevailing at that time) used in Guru Granth Sahib. For example:

ਨਾਮੁ = ਜੇਤਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਤੇਤਾ ਨਾਉ ॥ ਵਿਣੁ ਨਾਵੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਕੋ ਥਾਉ ॥ (੪)

ਸਤਸੰਗਤਿ = ਸਤਸੰਗਤਿ ਕੈਸੀ ਜਾਣੀਐ ॥ ਜਿਥੈ ਏਕੋ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਖਾਣੀਐ ॥ ਏਕੋ ਨਾਮੁ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਹੈ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਦੀਆ ਬੁਝਾਇ ਜੀਉ ॥੫॥ (੨੨)

ਮੰਤੁ = ਸਲੋਕ ਮਃ ੫ ॥ ਜਿਨਾ ਸਾਸਿ ਗਿਰਾਸਿ ਨ ਵਿਸਰੈ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮਾਂ ਮਨਿ ਮੰਤੁ ॥ ਧੰਨੁ ਸਿ ਸੋਈ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਪੂਰਨੁ ਸੋਈ ਸੰਤੁ ॥੧॥ (੩੧੯)

ਤੀਰਥੁ = ਤੀਰਥਿ ਨਾਵਣ ਜਾਉ ਤੀਰਥੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਹੈ ॥ ਤੀਰਥੁ ਸਬਦ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਹੈ ॥ (੬੮੭)

ਗਿਆਨੀ = ਭੈ ਕਾਹੂ ਕਉ ਦੇਤ ਨਹਿ ਨਹਿ ਭੈ ਮਾਨਤ ਆਨ ॥ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨਿ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਤਾਹਿ ਬਖਾਨਿ ॥੧੬॥ (੧੪੨੭)

Because of our limited knowledge of Gurbani, we use the definitions given by other sects or religions and try to apply them to Sikhism. This is the basic reason why some of us are often confused and bewildered.

Unless we delve into the depths of Gurbani and are able to give solid reasons as quoted in Gurbani, we should not try to question the traditions. We have forgotten the tradition of meeting each other by saying “**Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh**”. Instead we have started the tradition of greeting each other by saying “**Sat Sri Akal**”. Sat Sri Akal is the ending response to the slogan, “**Bole So Nihal, Sat Sri Akal**”. This slogan is used in Sangat for the *Chardi Kala* (ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀ ਕਲਾ); to give courage for some achievements, conclusion of some program or function.

Let us try to understand the significance of “**Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh**” according to Gurbani. The meaning of this slogan is that **Khalsa belongs to Waheguru and also the victory (Fateh) belongs to Waheguru**. This is a simple way of teaching the basics of Sikhism to a lay man. The word *Waheguru* is used to specify God. However, the basic definition of *Waheguru* is as given below:

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥ (੧)

One Universal Creator, God. His Name Is Truth. Creative Being Personified. Without Fear or Hatred. Image Of The Undying, Beyond Birth, Self-Existent. By Guru's Grace (1)

For specifying the name of God, the word Akal Purkh (ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖੁ) or Waheguru (ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ) have been used in Sikhism. There are countless names by which Akal Purkh have been used in Gurbani. According to the ancient tradition, the names of God have been linked with some material, person, animal, etc. However, in Sikhism this concept of relating with some living being or material have not been used. But this is related to the state of mind or spirituality. Literal meaning of Waheguru can be done as: (ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ = ਵਾਹਿ + ਗੁਰੂ). When NAAM (ਨਾਮੁ) resides in one's mind, one achieves the state of peace. Then an internal (inherent) felicity is developed in one's mind (ਅਨੰਦ), which we generally express in our common language by saying as, Wah Wah (ਵਾਹ ਵਾਹ). This state is achievable with the help of Guru only. Hence, a combination of these two, Wah and Guru, have been used to call the name of God, as Waheguru.

ਪਵਨ ਅਰੰਭੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਮਤਿ ਵੇਲਾ ॥ ਸਬਦੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਧੁਨਿ ਚੇਲਾ ॥ (੯੪੩, ਰਾਮਕਲੀ, ਮਃ ੧)

From the air came the beginning. This is the age of the True Guru's Teachings. The Shabad is the Guru, upon whom I lovingly focus my consciousness; I am the follower, the disciple. (943)

Only physical body changed from Guru Nanak Dev Ji to Guru Gobind Singh Ji. But the soul ( *jyoti* ) Nanak was same throughout, and now it is present in Guru Granth Sahib - as word of God:

ਜੋਤਿ ਓਹਾ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਸਾਇ ਸਹਿ ਕਾਇਆ ਫੇਰਿ ਪਲਟੀਐ ॥ (੯੬੬-੯੬੭)

Since, Khalsa belongs to Waheguru. A person having achieved this state of mind, does not have any difference with Waheguru as far as mental state is concerned. But, mind you, a person can never 'become' Akal Purkh or Waheguru who is like the ocean. He can only merge with Him, like water mixes with water in the sea.

ਗੁਰ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਜਿਹ ਨਰ ਕਉ ਕੀਨੀ ਤਿਹ ਇਹ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਪਛਾਨੀ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਲੀਨ ਭਇਓ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿਉ ਜਿਉ ਪਾਨੀ ਸੰਗਿ ਪਾਨੀ ॥੩॥੧੧॥ (੬੩੩, ਸੋਰਠਿ, ਮਃ ੯)

When a person becomes a Khalsa, then he does not differentiate between other human beings. He sees every one, as children of one Father. There is no difference of caste or creed. He sees the same light ( *jyoti* ) in every one:

ਏਕੁ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਤੂ ਮੇਰਾ ਗੁਰ ਹਾਈ ॥ ਸੁਣਿ ਮੀਤਾ ਜੀਉ ਹਮਾਰਾ ਬਲਿ ਬਲਿ ਜਾਸੀ ਹਰਿ ਦਰਸਨੁ ਦੇਹੁ ਦਿਖਾਈ ॥੧॥ (੬੧੧, ਸੋਰਠਿ, ਮਃ ੫)

The second part of this greetings says, “**Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh**”. That means the victory, or achievement, belongs to Waheguru and not to any person. This

greeting completely eliminates the ego from the person who is saying, as well as who is listening. Once ego is gone, then one can achieve anything in life.

ਆਪੁ ਸਵਾਰਹਿ ਮੈ ਮਿਲਹਿ ਮੈ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਸੁਖੁ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਫਰੀਦਾ ਜੇ ਤੂ ਮੇਰਾ ਹੋਇ ਰਹਿ ਸਭੁ ਜਗੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਹੋਇ ॥੯੫॥  
(੧੩੮੨, ਸਲੋਕ, ਸੇਖ ਫਰੀਦ ਜੀ)

God says, "If you reform yourself, you shall meet me, and meeting me, you shall be at peace. O Fareed, if you will be mine, the whole world will be yours."||95||  
(1382)

There is another psychological effect of using the word "**Fateh**". When a person utters the word "**Fateh**", an inherent impression is created in his mind to always strive for success. This becomes one's habit, to always work hard to achieve the set goals. Hence, the person always remains in "**Chardi Kala**". This is the reason, why Sikhs could sacrifice for the sake of their religion and successfully complete difficult tasks, which normal persons may not have the capacity to achieve.

Every axiom has a great treasure hidden within it. Gurbani transforms us from an ordinary person to a great soul.

ਸੁਣਿਐ ਅੰਧੇ ਪਾਵਹਿ ਰਾਹੁ ॥ (੩)

Listening - even the blind find the Path.

Because of our five sensory organs (eyes, ears, tongue, nose and skin), we are able to see and think to a limited extent. That also depends on how much of our self, we have offered to the teachings of Gurbani; how much of our intellect (ਮੱਤ) we have forgiven before the wisdom (ਮੱਤ) of our *Shabad Guru* - Guru Granth Sahib! So let us follow the teachings of Gurbani to achieve the ultimate aim of our life "*Gobind milan kee eh teri bariya*". We should commit ourselves to exchange the appropriate greetings whenever we meet one another.

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