

# Anand Sahib: A Study

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ANAND SAHIB, a composition by Guru Amar Das, in Rag Ramkali, is one of the most significant compositions of *Guru Granth*, and is included in the *Banis* that are recited daily. It contains forty stanzas and is recited at a number of occasions. It is believed that the composition was uttered at the time when his son Mohri was blessed with a son in 1554 A.D. But the theme of the composition suggests that it is about a mystical experience and a not a mundane one. The present paper aims at thematic survey of the composition in order to underline its significant ideas.

The word 'Anand' has a philosophical connotation and has been discussed in the Indian philosophical literature in a variety of meaning. The philosophers have differentiated 'Anand' from the word "Sukh" (comfort). According to them 'Sukh' is a physical comfort which is felt by the sense organs but Anand is a spiritual bliss which is not experienced by the senses. Anand is concerned with the soul's spiritual experience. It is a blissful state of mind and heart achieved by a person when his soul unites with God. The worldly comfort is immaterial and insignificant. A true devotee is not induced by the mammon and other worldly affairs; rather he would always earnestly seek the blessing of the True Guru. He realizes that without complete devotion to God and meditation on his Name the spiritual Bliss can not be achieved. It is a Grace of God and is not a matter of right. It is His Choice to give the Grace to whom he likes. Guru Amar Das says that one achieves the spiritual Bliss when one gets the True Master. But the achievement is intuitively spontaneous and is the Grace of God. In this manner the Guru narrates the wonderful spiritual experience of Bliss when a devotee achieves a perfect union with God.

It is appropriate to discuss the thematic ideas of Guru Amar Das as expressed in the Anand Sahib before appreciating its salient doctrinal idea of spiritual Bliss. It is being described stanza wise:

1. The spiritual Bliss is obtained by the Grace of God. The divine music is sung by the gods and goddesses as well as other celestial beings.
2. God is omnipotent and omnipresent. He destroys all distress.
3. Constant singing and contemplating on His praise and glory unite the devotee with Him. His Name settles in the heart of the devotee.
4. Meditation on His Name is the crux of human life. The True Guru blesses with the name.
5. Divine Bliss helps the devotee to keep him away from five evil passions.
6. Only wisdom does not lead to love with God. True attunement with God is obtained by His Grace.
7. Salvation is attained by continuous meditation of Lord's Name. It eventually kills worldly lust.
8. God's Name purifies devotee's heart and prevents him to wander aimlessly in various directions. He makes him accept His Will.

9. Gurbani provides knowledge of the Almighty and helps the devotee to shun the worldly cleverness and lead the life according to the Will of God.
10. Maya or worldly illusion is the creation of God. It bewitches all. To get rid of Maya and to achieve divine Bliss, one has to surrender to the Will of God.
11. The Guru can enlighten the devotee about the Truth. Lord's grace does not let him entangle in family affairs only and helps him concentrate on the True Guru.
12. Following the Will of God helps a man attain the spiritual Bliss.
13. The Divine Nectar which even sages and angels yearn to obtain can be attained only through the God. It destroys greed, ego and avarice.
14. The true Sadhus and Saints shun the pride and worldly desires to remain attached with God and to obtain supreme Bliss.
15. Through Gurbani one succeeds in achieving the path of Name.
16. Shabad or Divine Word can be realized with God's Grace. It is enshrined in the mind of those are predestined.
17. Who ever remained attached with God are Pure. Their hearts purify with kindness of the True Guru. They make others pure.
18. The Divine Bliss is achieved when true divine awareness is at your command and all doubts, superstitions and base rituals have vanished away.
19. By renouncing falsehood and adopting the Purest Name of God one can achieve Divine Bliss.
20. Those who are pure from within as well as from outside can achieve the True Bliss. Leading life in accordance with the instruction of the True Guru makes their hearts pure and kind.
21. The company of the True Guru and his obedience elevates a devotee to saintship.
22. One who turns away from the Guru never obtains salvation. True Bliss can be had if one has the sight of the True Guru.
23. Singing the True Bani is a way to be in sight of the Guru.
24. All Bani except the True one are false and those who utter, hear and recite such Bani are also false.
25. The True Shabad is that of the True Guru and one who is blessed knows the true value of the Shabad.
26. To understand and abide by the Divine Will is difficult without the Guru's Grace. Eternal Bliss can only be achieved by following the will of Almighty.
27. The world is asleep. One who remains awake and aware by Guru's grace the Lord abides in his heart. Only he knows the Real Thing i.e. Lord's Name. Simrities and Shastras do not know it. They can only discriminate between good and evil.
28. The God is a great Benefactor who nourishes a child in mother's womb. He provides a blissful life. Why to forget Him? Remember His Kindness.

29. The fire is in the womb and the Maya is outside. Both are the same. After the birth the God is forgotten and the Maya takes over. The person living in the midst of Maya can realize Him only by the divine Grace.
30. God is immanent. No one can find out His beginning and end. Even this knowledge does not help the man to achieve the Divine Bliss.
31. The Lord is capital and mind is the trader. Worshipping and repeating His Divine Name is a true trade. This is the way to attain Real Bliss.
32. The craving of mortal tongue will come to halt when it tastes Divine Nectar of Name. Worldly tastes are endless. All other tastes are forgotten when the Lord comes to reside in the heart.
33. The Real Bliss is felt only when one understands that God has infused His light in him. Body is mortal but the light in the body is immortal.
34. The devotee gets his Divine Goal when God resides within him and his inner self becomes a True Temple. All sorrow and grief are gone. When there is a complete union with God the soul sings divine songs in the Lord's Praise.
35. God has created the body, but you have ignored to enshrine the Lord in it. One who performs good deeds attains Salvation. One who attaches his heart to the True Guru is approved in the Court of Almighty.
36. God has infused light into your eyes to see Lord in everything. The Guru's Grace has enabled the devotee to see that God exists in every place and everyone. The whole world is the manifestation of the Lord.
37. God has given you ears only to listen to the Truth. God is unseen and wondrous. He is indescribable. Hear His Divine Name and become holy.
38. God has put soul to the cave of the body and blew breath in it like a musical instrument. God has kept the nine doors opened in the body, but the tenth one is concealed.
39. The true devotee sings True Songs in the True Temple. God showers His grace on them who meditates on Him and is blessed.
40. True Songs of Divine Bliss fulfills all desires. Grieves and pains have gone away and the devotee is absorbed in the feet of the True Guru.

Anand Sahib is significant because it propounds the essence of Sikh theology. It contains 40 stanzas and is composed in such a manner that every stanza deals with the central theme of Divine Bliss in one way or the other. It describes the various stages of this mystical experience that a devotee passes through and at last achieves the Supreme Bliss. The composition opens with description of ecstasy. A devotee is in ecstasy or in a state of Divine Bliss when he finds his True Guru with intuitive ease. The Bliss is not a physical experience but a divine musical one that vibrates in the soul. It is jeweled melodies and their related harmonies that sing the Shabad of the True Guru. The first stanza not only contains the mystical experience but also the Sikh theology. According to the Guru the state of Divine Bliss is achieved by the Grace of God. The expression used here is 'Sahaj Seti' to suggest that the Grace of God unites a devotee with Him with intuitive ease. The composition narrates the various facets of this mystical experience with its doctrinal aspects. The

stanza is so composed that the central concept is repeated in it to inspire the devotee. Name is one of the theological concepts. It is said that one who abides Name in the mind achieves the vibration of the Divine melody.

Anand Sahib also emphasizes the surrender to the Guru as it is the Guru who makes the mind immaculate and pure to follow the Will of God. The emphasis on surrender to the Guru suggests the need to adopt a new way of living after shedding the craving for worldly pursuits. It is said time and again that the boon of Divine Bliss is with God. Guru Amar Das also suggests that the Bani of the True Guru are the giver of spiritual Bliss. Indirectly, it seems to suggest that the Bani are considered to be the Guru and the recitation of Bani has become a part of the daily ritual in the Sangat. In the last stanza the idea of Divine Bliss is discussed in brief. If one listens to the Songs of Bliss and obtains the Supreme Lord, all his sorrow will depart. The devotee is suggested to listen to the True Bani.

Anand Sahib is a melodious doctrinal composition which narrates mystical experience of Tranquility and Bliss.

