

Discovering the Wisdom of Guru Granth Sahib

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LET US FIRST CLEARLY understand what 'revelatory' means. The word **reveal** means unveiling or discovering, (uncovering of knowledge previously unknown, or secret), or to announce, and promulgate a dramatic disclosure of the '**Divine**' (the word divine is derived from Latin 'divinus' meaning God). Thus revelation **in this paper deals with the supernatural communication of divine Truth proceeding directly from only one God.**

The Divine Truth has been beautifully revealed to Guru Nanak in exceptionally inspiring hymns of universal appeal, so that people of the world may follow it for all times - present and future - regardless of one's faith, religion, or philosophy. Indeed, they are **divinely transmitted immutable Spiritual Laws of God and/or of Absolute Truth.** That makes these hymns come alive, illumined by divine knowledge in a timeless frame.

Guru Nanak Dev (1469-1539), Guru to the whole world, and founder of the Sikh Faith described the godly revealed hymns during his lifetime as "Banee and Shabads" and wrote them in his own handwriting in a "Pothi" (sacred book). It is obvious that **Guru Nanak had a far-reaching and enduring vision. He was aware that these hymns would have universal appeal to all the people of the world. He carefully preserved them and handed these down to the next Guru, Angad Dev, who later handed down the Pothi containing his hymns along with those of Guru Nanak Dev to Guru Amar Dass who, in turn handed it down to Guru Ram Das and then to Guru Arjun Dev.**

It was Guru Arjun Dev who in 1604, assembled and collated hymns, also with meticulously selected hymns of saints and faqirs whose philosophy was in agreement with that of our Gurus. Their names are: Bainsi, Jai Dev, Parmanand, Trilochan, Pipa, Ramanand, Sur Das, Dhanna, Kabir, Nam Dev, Ravi Das, Sadhna, Sheikh Bhikan, Sheikh Farid - as also - Bhai Mardana, Baba Sundar and minstrels Rai Balwand and Satta. It may be noted that some of these holy men, (Jai Dev, Sheikh Farid, Nam Dev, Trilochan, Parmanand, Sadhna, Ramananda, Dhanna, Pipa, Kabir and Rav Das) preceded or were contemporary with Nanak (1170-1430 AD). Guru Arjun then organized all the collected hymns in a rag-wise system and called it "The Adi Granth" (sacred, divinely revealed original book).

Just before his passing away, **Guru Gobind Singh Ji – on Oct. 06, 1708 - proclaimed the Granth as the living Guru having added the Bani of Guru Tegh Bahadur.** He renamed it as Guru Granth. He thus abolished the concept of a personal human Guru, declaring **"from now onwards, Guru Granth shall be the living Guru for all Sikhs. From the holy Granth will they seek all guidance and answers to their questions."**

It is, therefore, with unwavering faith and unflinching devotion that – today - **Guru Granth studied revered and regarded as Guru-incarnate, the living Guru. It has the same absolute Authority as the "living Guru" and commands total reverence as the living Guru.**

It may be of interest to note that the word **Guru** is derived from 'ਗੁ' (which means dispeller of darkness) and 'ਰੂ' or (enlightenment) **Thus the Guru imparts spiritual**

knowledge and leads one from darkness (ignorance) to enlightenment. The word **Granth** signifies its spiritual origin, and the word **Sahib** connotes majestic reverence. Incidentally, the Supreme Court of India in 1999 ruled that, “**Aad Guru Granth Sahib is held to be a juristic person and thus a Living Guru**”. (Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee Vs. S. N. Dass, All India Reporter, 2000 Supreme Court 1421, Para 29).

The revealed hymns (Word) of the divinely inspired writings in SGGS are centuries old and yet amazingly alive and relevant in the present. Having been written a few centuries ago, and to know that they will be here many centuries from now, points to the ever fresh nature and appeal of the teachings contained in SGGS.

This way it links one generation to the next, and the future generations will surely benefit from the superb, ever-fresh and eternal instructions from SGGS. We owe it to Guru Nanak Dev to spread his divine message to all the people in the world seeking a truthful and righteous lifestyle. This is so because *there is no more spiritually powerful and enlightening sacred Scripture than SGGS, for it contains only the original, authentic, and divinely revealed Truth.* Just to cite one example, Guru Nanak says: “***there is no Hindu and there is no Musalman***”. Clearly what he is referring to is that all human beings are children of One God, without any denomination demarcation. He is not asking people to abandon their faith, but ***emphasizing the oneness of all humanity.***

This is a ***fundamental truth, which lays the foundation of a universal belief that all human beings are equal irrespective of creed, caste, sex or national origin.*** This remains the most revolutionary statement, - since an era when the basic human rights, (with which we are now familiar) were unheard of. His deep insight into this very fundamental truth on basic human rights over 500 years ago demonstrates Guru Nanak's prophetic wisdom. This fact alone makes ***Guru Nanak the Divine Savior of all mankind.***

Universality:

The teachings, and message of SGGS are for all humanity. A focused recitation, reflection, deliberation - and singing of the **hymns – in classical mode generates exquisite inspiration within one. It surrounds one with peace and joy, helps one develop a spiritual link with God.** Just as a rock candy tastes sweet from all sides, in the same way each hymn, no matter to which part of the Holy Granth it belongs, provides the same feeling of inner tranquility and divine bliss. Beyond doubt the ***Scripture is a panacea ensuring health, peace, serenity, and union with God.*** Its captivating and universal message ***provides a profoundly remarkable blueprint for joyful everyday living.*** The more you live it, the more you relish it and the more blissful you become. Therefore, any person who attentively and with focused mind reads, recites, studies, sings, reflects, understands, and practices **the musical hymns from SGGS** will become spiritually enlightened. Its message is succinctly described below: as **Eternal Commandments, - or God's Laws:**

- Unwavering Belief in one God, the Creator of the vast universe, and to earnestly seek God's Love and Grace, so that the God's Supreme Light can reside in your heart and mind, at all times - to enable you to be blessed.
- Seeking Divine Grace and Forgiveness.
- Acceptance of Divine Will makes life easier.

- Offering your deep gratitude and sincere thanks to God for the gift of life and all the worldly blessings - through Meditation, Prayers, Reflection, and Contemplation on Naam (Word)
- Praising and glorifying God through earnest Prayer and Recitation and/or Singing of Hymns with music (Keertan)
- Earn your own livelihood by leading a life of Truthful, Righteous, and Humble Living – in cheerful Spirits
- Altruistic Service: Sharing your Divine Knowledge, Food, Worldly Gifts and Blessings, and Possessions with others
- Control and Elimination of Lust, Anger, Greed, worldly Attachments and Arrogance from within yourself, so that you may only do virtuous and noble deeds
- Live a life of Contentment and gentle, Humility, so you may have meaningful, and positive approach in all your daily actions and thought.
- Regard all human beings as equal, and demonstrate Love, Compassion, and Goodwill towards all the people of the world -because we are all children of the same God.

One of the key features from the above messages is not only **getting the right instructions but also getting the instructions right** so that you can develop a worthy conduct of life. Morality and virtue are aided with religion **because right philosophy advocated by a religion can provide meaning, hope, direction and guidance to its votaries**. Further, **getting the philosophy right can provide the answers to what is life, what is the meaning and purpose of it, and how to live a physically, mentally, and spiritually productive life**. These messages (instructions, teachings) are disseminated throughout SGGS as Divine Principles or Laws.

One may wonder **why one needs a Guru!** According to SGGS, God resides within you, and the Guru alone awakens and sustains the spiritual energy, inner enlightenment - and union with God. You know your mind is constantly vacillating, under negative influence of the five **hidden enemies: greed, lust, anger, arrogance and worldly attachments**. **Every action you take under the influence of these impulses results in the covering of your mind with a veil of darkness**. Pretty soon this dark veil becomes so thick that it creates utter darkness within. This results in a diseased mind whose cure is obtained only from a Guru, as is illustrated in the hymn:

ਜੇ ਸਊ ਚੰਦਾ ਉਗਵਹਿ ਸੂਰਜ ਚੜਹਿ ਹਜ਼ਾਰ

।ਆਸਾ ਮਹਲਾ ੧, ਸ਼ਘਘਸ਼: ੪੬੩॥

ਏਤੇ ਚਾਨਣ ਹੋਦਿਆ ਗੁਰ ਬਿਨ ਘੋਰ ਅੰਧਾਰ

“If hundred moons and thousand suns were to rise, then with that much light there will be total darkness (within) without a Guru”.

What makes SGGS unique as Guru-Eternal:

We revere SGGS as our living Guru because we are repeatedly told in SGGS that **Guru, Guru's Word (Voice, Hymns) and God are one and the same**. The following hymns beautifully demonstrate, in no uncertain terms, that the revealed Word is indeed from God, and is nothing but the Absolute Truth:

ਪੋਥੀ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਕਾ ਥਾਨੁ

[ਸਾਰਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੫, SGGS: ੧੨੨੬]

“The holy book (SGGS) is the abode of God”.

ਸਚੁ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਆਖੇ ਸਚੁ ਸੁਣਾਇਸੀ ਸਚੁ ਕੀ ਬੋਲਾ [ਤਿਲੰਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧, SGGS: ੭੨੨]

“Nanak speaks Word of Truth, Nanak (will keep) speaking truth, this is the time for truth”.

ਪੁਰ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਆਈ ਤਿਨਿ ਸਗਲੀ ਚਿੰਤ ਮਿਟਾਈ [ਸੋਰਠਿ ਮਹਲਾ ੫, SGGS: ੬੨੮]

“Banee (Word in poetry) has emanated from Divine One, and it has effaced all anxiety”.

ਵਾਹੁ ਵਾਹੁ ਬਾਣੀ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਹੈ, ਤਿਸ ਜੇਵਡ ਅਵਰ ਨ ਕੋਇ [ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੩, SGGS: ੫੧੫]

“Hail the Scripture (Holy Word) which is Divine”.

Surely, then, SGGS, a supremely universal and universally supreme scripture is the Guru because it provides you with the right guidance, direction, wisdom and inspiration to help you lead a spiritually holy, contented, blissful and peaceful life.

The beauty and splendor of SGGS is that the revealed Word and Reason are consistent. There are no stories, no biographies, no dogmas and no rituals – only universal and eternal rational beliefs and practices. Its contents are comprehensible in relation to the world and to our senses, i.e. , to our rational thinking. It proclaims that God dwells both within and outside us, and radiates its many manifestations throughout the universe and the cosmos.

This spiritual resource of Divine wisdom must be read attentively, comprehended thoughtfully, reflected deeply, and practiced daily. Then alone can it be propagated to the spiritually bereft people of the world. It is the ultimate living Guru-God not only for the Sikhs but also for the entire world. God has blessed us with a wonderful gift of life. What we make of our life by following the Eternal Commandments mentioned earlier is our gift to God.

Of great significance **is the fact that the text pertains to no particular sect, caste, region or even religion.** In this sense it is truly a unique Scripture and a canonical treatise, the kind of which does not exist in this world. It is a most beautiful repository of divinely inspired holy hymns of instant spiritual appeal, whose divine principles in the service of man have the power to direct all kinds of people, regardless of their faith, belief, creed, sex or national origin, to lead a pious life of truth and righteousness.

Rightfully, then, SGGS is for the entire human race to read, comprehend, contemplate, reflect upon, and to follow, so that there can be righteous living, peace, holiness, and truthfulness in the world. Other religious Scriptures also contain truth, but it is only in holy SGGS that you find the perfect fullness of the truth because it was written and composed by the then living, Divinely inspired Gurus themselves.

Doubtless SGGS serves as a wondrous ship to ferry us across the worldly ocean into God's kingdom.

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