

Faith in the Age of Science: A Study of Gurbani

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BEFORE WE STUDY GURBANI FROM the angle of modern science we shall first understand what religion as well as science is. Religion is a belief in a Divine or super human power or principle. Science is an intellectual and practical activity encompassing the systematic study of the structure and behavior of the physical and natural world through observation and experiment.

Science and religion go parallel, sometime converging, sometime diverging but craving to reach the same destination, that is avoidance of pain. Science helps in discovering the methods to avoid pain, whereas in religion the ultimate goal is avoidance of pain, and the attainment of permanent bliss.

Our mind loaded with burden of the past lives, will not buy the idea of God and we are born in these days when science is ruling everywhere, it has penetrated so deep into the human psychic, as all the things in the school are taught in a manner involving whole lots of audio visual aids, charts, pictures, presentations, multimedia, supported by facts and figures, proved mathematically what not, so as the mind receives and stores it permanently. If this is the way we accept and study the things, then mere mention of God in the religious houses will not penetrate deep into the mind unless religion is also presented in a similar manner.

Further as the science is the religion of known and the religion is the science of the unknown, these unknowns are required to be made known to understand the religion fully, hence religion shall have to be presented in the platter of science. Since science and religion both are trying to discover the source of power, the same should go parallel helping and supplementing each other to reach and achieve the goal.

Further move, everything that we experience as material reality is born in an invisible realm beyond space and time, realm revealed by science to consist of energy and information. The invisible source of all that exists is not an empty void but the womb of creation itself. Something creates and organises this energy, that is God, who is known through the study of religion. Guru Granth Sahib is the latest holy scripture (not so old, few hundreds years), whereby the contents have descended from eternity (*dhur ki bani*), the same have unique fusion of the ideas and vision of the gurus, bhagats and other enlightened great contemporary souls. The contents of Gurbani have touched all the possible and available fields in life including the very important field that is science. Gurbani is full of scientific contents which got place in Guru Granth Sahib. Had the same been taken note of during proper period, it would have been of immense inspiration and help to the scientific fraternity in India to strengthen their work.

Period of Gurbani (Gurmat poetry, Adi Granth Sahib plus bani of Bhagats) is falling between 12-17th century. In this period even the foundation stone of modern science was not laid. In India no one was even aware of what the science is, in Europe the period was known as the dark age (where the science flourished later).

While the forefathers of Britons, Greeks and Latinos were still roaming the vast forests of Europe in search of food, our gurus were already enlightened.

Historically till 16th century science revolved around what Aristotle (384-322 BC, Greek philosopher, pupil of Plato), Copernicus (Polish astronomer, founder of modern astronomy, propounded earth revolves around sun) and Galelio (a devout Catholic and fearless scientist, he is regarded as a father of modern experimental science) said, they may be considered to be contemporary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. In fact they liberated science from the conventional ruts of thinking and laid the stone of modern science.

This period in Europe is known as Renaissance, not only science but also art and literature flourished in this period. Thus, period of Gurbani is very much ahead of the period of modern science, even far - far ahead of 20th century when most of the wonders of science appeared.

In fact Gurbani may be said to have shown the path to the modern science quite ahead, facts mentioned in Gurbani later tested and worked on and proved to be true by modern science. Gurus discovered the things with inner knowledge, they were enlightened to perceive the truth and highlight the facts, which ultimately supported discoveries and invention. Einstein rightly said, "great discoveries are a matter of religious insight." The main thing is thought which has the potential to materialise, these thoughts are thought by holy souls which materialises in due course. Gurbani carried the thoughts, facts and secrets too, which were later unfolded by modern science. Lets see how Gurbani showed the path to the modern science quite ahead of time.

Theory of evolution (proposed by Darwin, 1809-1882) says that life has evolved through lacs and crores of years, it has started developing from the unicellular amoebae to reach unto human stage and the survival of the fittest. Gurbani says,

*Kai janam bhaei keet patanga, kai janam gaj meen patanga,
Kai janam pankhi sarap hoeau, kai janam hever birkh joeau.
Kai janam sakh kar upaiya, lukh chorasi joni bharmaiya.*

(SGGS: M5, 176)

*Sache te pavna bhaya pavne te jal hoe
Jal te tribhavan sajiya ghat ghat jot samoe.*

(SGGS: M1, 19)

Before the universe started expanding it is said and proved that there existed the state of vacuum and silence, which is mentioned in Gurbani as,

*Arbad narbad dhandhukara
Daran na gagna hukum apara,
Na din ren na chand na suraj
Sunn samadh lagaida.*

(SGGS:M1, 1035)

When universe expanded,
Kai kot khani ar khand
Kai kot akas brahmand.

(SGGS:M5, 275)

*Kai kot des bhoomandal
Kai kot sasiyar sur nakhatra.*

(SGGS: M5, 275-276)

Patala patal lukh agasa agas.

(Japji Sahib, page 5)

As per modern science, the universe is said to be passing through a series of expansions and contractions. Gurbani says,

Sarisht upai kiya pasara.

(SGGS: 1038)

On this subject, Gurbani further says,

*Kai baar pasario pasar
sada sada ek ekankar.*

(SGGS:M5, 276)

(Pasario means passed through, pasar means expansion)

Modern science in the study of cosmology says that the rules that can be applied on macrocosm (universe or cosmos) are proportionately and appropriately applicable to the microcosm(miniature part of cosmos). As the macro is nothing but the larger collection of micros, as the macro so is the micro; Gurbani says,

Jo brahmand khund so jane

(SGGS: M1, 1041)

(Brahmand is macro, khund is part that is micro)

Jo brahmande soi pinde jo khoje so pave.

(SGGS: 695)

Nirankar meh akar samave.

(SGGS: 414)

Modern spiritual science has proved that body consists of light. In our body basic unit is life cell, body consists of numerous collections of cells tied by soft tissues and each cell is nothing but collection of an atom of hydrogen, oxygen and sodium, phosphorus, carbon and so on. Carbon or any other metal at atomic and sub-atomic level is nothing but a basic atom, configured with intelligence to perform specific function, consisting of center (proton and neutron) surrounded by electrons revolving around it. If we go on observing our body through a powerful microscope we will ultimately see an electron flying past the nucleus leaving a trail of light as left by a shooting star entering into earth's atmosphere. Body which seems solid material is nothing but light, it is also proved that body is constantly emitting infra red radiation (that is a form of light), light is also a form of energy (an illusion). Gurbani refers the same as,

Ek joti joti he sarira.

(SGGS: 125)

Sab me jot jot he soi.

(SGGS: 414)

Biologists have failed to estimate the number of species existing or have existed on the earth, or how many have become extinct; Gurbani says the number to be eighty four lac, Namdev says this number to be 42 lac in water and equal on earth.

Bialis lukh jee jal meh hote bithal bhaila kai karo.

(Namdev Ji, SGGS: 485)

It may be concluded that Gurbani is a valuable treasure, whose study can lead a scientist to the innovative ideas which ultimately may be the initiation of great inventions/discoveries or scientists (or seekers) may get innovative clues to get their studies further to accomplish the goals for the ultimate benefit of the society.

In the western countries our Indian scriptures were thoroughly researched but in India prevailing “isms” at that time got heavier on supreme knowledge of Gurbani and the same could not flourish as it was intended to be. Gurus were inspirational and true in their knowledge, vision and observations, as compared to the western scriptures, which could not exactly perceive the universe and heavenly bodies, though Galelio told that truth was penalised by religious folks. Deep study (*chintan*) of Gurbani can still lead us to various innovative ideas and undiscovered areas for the benefit of world society as a whole. (*sarbat da bhala*)

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