

QUESTIONING-ANSWERING SYSTEM IN JAP

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ABSTRACT

In the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) Guru Nanak's Bani is presented in Jap, under 17 Ragas, in Sloks Sehskriti, and Varan Te Vadhik. Guru Nanak has adopted different methods to convey his spiritual philosophy. One of the methods he used is the 'Questioning-Answering System'. This system has also been used by other authors who's writings are included in the AGGS. In the AGGS, Guru Nanak's verses appear in question and answer style more than hundred times. Guru Nanak has used this method very effectively in Jap.

INTRODUCTION

Critics have analyzed poetic compositions in many different ways. Hymns in the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) [1] are not an ordinary poetry and their analysis is lot more intriguing. Compositions written by poets like Guru Nanak are unique as those are expressions of higher truths as revealed when he was in tune with the almighty. The critics may analyze his poetry and may make some conclusions about the methodology used to express higher truths but that does not mean that the Guru first planned those methods and then expressed the ideas through those methods. The methods probably got used through him just as the ultimate truths. Nevertheless any exercise that analyzes his hymns is very useful.

The 'Questioning-Answering System' has been used extensively in AGGS by various authors. A nice compilation of those is done by Parminderjit Singh [2].

A sentence with a question always heightens a need for search for an answer in the reader's mind, which in the case of the AGGS means the quest for an ultimate truth. Not every sentence containing a question is followed immediately by an answer. Some times the answer has to be found elsewhere. The answer may be contained in many sentences. Sometimes the question itself contains the answer.

The composition of Jap by Guru Nanak may have as many as six questions in seven sentences of his Bani.

DISCUSSION

Question 1:

ਕਿਵ ਸਚਿਆਰਾ ਹੋਈਐ ਕਿਵ ਕੂੜੈ ਤੁਟੈ ਪਾਲਿ ॥

AGGS, Jap 1, p 1.

How can one purify oneself? And how can one remove the veil of falsehood/doubts?

The answer to this question is as follows:

These sentences deal with the subject of "Hukm/Command" (Laws of Nature). Under these laws whole universe and life forms were created. Every thing that happens is due to these laws. What we receive in life is all according to these laws. It is not possible to fully understand these laws. The acceptance of these facts makes a human being humble and truthful.

ਹੁਕਮਿ ਰਜਾਈ ਚਲਣਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਲਿ ॥੧॥

AGGS, Jap 1, p 1.

By accepting the fact that every thing happens according to these Laws of Nature. ||1||

This has been confirmed in the next stanza as follows:

ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੋਵਨਿ ਆਕਾਰ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਨ ਕਹਿਆ ਜਾਈ ॥

ਹੁਕਮੀ ਹੋਵਨਿ ਜੀਅ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਮਿਲੈ ਵਡਿਆਈ ॥

ਹੁਕਮੀ ਉਤਮੁ ਨੀਚੁ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਲਿਖਿ ਦੁਖ ਸੁਖ ਪਾਈਅਹਿ ॥

ਇਕਨਾ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਬਖਸੀਸ ਇਕਿ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਸਦਾ ਭਵਾਈਅਹਿ ॥

ਹੁਕਮੈ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਹੁਕਮੈ ਜੇ ਬੁਝੈ ਤ ਹਉਮੈ ਕਹੈ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥੨॥

AGGS, Jap 2, p 1.

Under these laws the living beings are created. These laws cannot be described/known easily.

Under these laws the living-beings get created and some obtain honor.

Under these laws the living beings become high or low (in social status etc) and under these laws they are sad or happy.

Under these laws some are liberated from the cycle of birth & death while others are trapped in that cycle.

All are under these laws and none is out of it.

O Nanak! If one understands these facts about the Laws of Nature then the egoism is eradicated. ||2||

Question 2:

ਆਖਹਿ ਮੰਗਹਿ ਦੇਹਿ ਦੇਹਿ ਦਾਤਿ ਕਰੇ ਦਾਤਾਰੁ ॥

AGGS, Jap 4, p 2.

The People pray, beg, and ask for His Boons; every thing is provided by the Giver; the Lord.

ਫੇਰਿ ਕਿ ਅਗੈ ਰਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਦਿਸੈ ਦਰਬਾਰੁ ॥

AGGS, Jap 4, p 2.

(When everything belongs to God) Then what can be offered to God to enter into Its court?

The answer to this is contained inside the question itself.

Question 3:

ਮੁਹਿ ਕਿ ਬੋਲਣੁ ਬੋਲੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਸੁਣਿ ਧਰੇ ਪਿਆਰੁ ॥

AGGS, Jap 4, p 2.

What should we utter from the mouth that on hearing God may start loving us?

Answer:

ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਵੇਲਾ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਉ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ॥

AGGS, Jap 4, p 2.

(For this) Early morning, recite (deliberate/understand) God's name and indulge in God's praise.

Question 4:

ਕਵਣੁ ਸੁ ਵੇਲਾ ਵਖਤੁ ਕਵਣੁ ਕਵਣੁ ਬਿਤਿ ਕਵਣੁ ਵਾਰੁ ॥

ਕਵਣਿ ਸਿ ਰੁਤੀ ਮਾਰੁ ਕਵਣੁ ਜਿਤੁ ਹੋਆ ਆਕਾਰੁ ॥

AGGS, Jap 21, p 5.

What was the occasion, the time, the lunar day, the weekday, the season and the month, when the universe was created?

The answer to this question is given in the sentences that follow: Only the creator knows all this.

ਵੇਲ ਨ ਪਾਈਆ ਪੰਡਤੀ ਜਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਲੇਖੁ ਪੁਰਾਣੁ ॥

ਵਖਤੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਓ ਕਾਦੀਆ ਜਿ ਲਿਖਿਨਿ ਲੇਖੁ ਕੁਰਾਣੁ ॥

ਬਿਤਿ ਵਾਰੁ ਨਾ ਜੋਗੀ ਜਾਣੈ ਰੁਤਿ ਮਾਰੁ ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ॥

AGGS, Jap 21, p 5.

The pundits (Hindu scholars) cannot find out even if they search in Hindu religious scriptures called 'Puranas'.

Even the Qazis (Muslim religious scholars, who dispense justice according to the Muslim religious law) cannot know the time on searching the Holy Koran.

Neither the Yogis know this, such as what was the time or lunar-day; nor does any body else know this, such as what were the season and the month (of Creation).

Final Answer:

ਜਾ ਕਰਤਾ ਸਿਰਠੀ ਕਉ ਸਾਜੇ ਆਪੇ ਜਾਣੈ ਸੋਈ ॥

AGGS, Jap 21, p 5.

Only the Creator, who created the universe, knows all this.

Question 5:

ਕਿਵ ਕਰਿ ਆਖਾ ਕਿਵ ਸਾਲਾਹੀ ਕਿਉ ਵਰਨੀ ਕਿਵ ਜਾਣਾ ॥

AGGS, Jap 21, p 5.

How should I know, express, praise and describe You?

The answer to this question is given in the sentences that follow: No one knows every thing about God.

ਨਾਨਕ ਆਖਣਿ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਆਖੈ ਇਕ ਦੂ ਇਕੁ ਸਿਆਣਾ ॥

ਵਡਾ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਵਡੀ ਨਾਈ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਕਾ ਹੋਵੈ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਜੇ ਕੋ ਆਪੋ ਜਾਣੈ ਅਗੈ ਗਇਆ ਨ ਸੋਰੈ ॥੨੧॥

AGGS, Jap 21, p

O Nanak! People express different opinion about this and every one is wiser than the others.

Great is the Master, Great is His Name, and everything happens according to His Will.

O Nanak! Who claims to know everything shall not be decorated in the world hereafter. ||21||

Question 6:

ਸੋ ਦਰੁ ਕੇਹਾ ਸੋ ਘਰੁ ਕੇਹਾ ਜਿਤੁ ਬਹਿ ਸਰਬ ਸਮਾਲੇ ॥

AGGS, Jap 27, p 7.

What kind of door and house is that where God sits and takes care of all.

The answer to this question is given as follows:

In God's limitless court everyone sings of God and there is no limit to the kinds of instruments and kinds of music. The essence: He is limitless.

ਵਾਜੇ ਨਾਦ ਅਨੇਕ ਅਸੰਖਾ ਕੇਤੇ ਵਾਵਣਹਾਰੇ ॥

ਕੇਤੇ ਰਾਗ ਪਰੀ ਸਿਉ ਕਹੀਅਨਿ ਕੇਤੇ ਗਾਵਣਹਾਰੇ ॥

ਗਾਵਹਿ ਤੁਹਨੋ ਪਉਣੁ ਪਾਣੀ ਬੈਸੰਤਰੁ ਗਾਵੈ ਰਾਜਾ ਧਰਮੁ ਦੁਆਰੇ ॥

ਗਾਵਹਿ ਚਿਤੁ ਗੁਪਤੁ ਲਿਖਿ ਜਾਣਹਿ ਲਿਖਿ ਲਿਖਿ ਧਰਮੁ ਵੀਚਾਰੇ ॥

ਗਾਵਹਿ ਈਸਰੁ ਬਰਮਾ ਦੇਵੀ ਸੋਹਨਿ ਸਦਾ ਸਵਾਰੇ ॥

ਗਾਵਹਿ ਇੰਦ ਇਦਾਸਣਿ ਬੈਠੇ ਦੇਵਤਿਆ ਦਰਿ ਨਾਲੇ ॥

ਗਾਵਹਿ ਸਿਧ ਸਮਾਧੀ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਗਾਵਨਿ ਸਾਧ ਵਿਚਾਰੇ ॥

ਗਾਵਨਿ ਜਤੀ ਸਤੀ ਸੰਤੋਖੀ ਗਾਵਹਿ ਵੀਰ ਕਰਾਰੇ ॥

ਗਾਵਨਿ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਪੜਨਿ ਰਖੀਸਰ ਜੁਗੁ ਜੁਗੁ ਵੇਦਾ ਨਾਲੇ ॥

ਗਾਵਹਿ ਮੋਹਣੀਆ ਮਨੁ ਮੋਹਨਿ ਸੁਰਗਾ ਮਛੁ ਪਇਆਲੇ ॥

ਗਾਵਨਿ ਰਤਨ ਉਪਾਏ ਤੇਰੇ ਅਠਸਠਿ ਤੀਰਥ ਨਾਲੇ ॥

ਗਾਵਹਿ ਜੋਧ ਮਹਾਬਲ ਸੂਰਾ ਗਾਵਹਿ ਖਾਣੀ ਚਾਰੇ ॥

ਗਾਵਹਿ ਖੰਡ ਮੰਡਲ ਵਰਭੰਡਾ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਰਖੇ ਧਾਰੇ ॥

ਸੋਈ ਤੁਧੁਨੋ ਗਾਵਹਿ ਜੋ ਤੁਧੁ ਭਾਵਨਿ ਰਤੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਭਗਤ ਰਸਾਲੇ ॥

ਹੋਰਿ ਕੇਤੇ ਗਾਵਨਿ ਸੇ ਮੈ ਚਿਤਿ ਨ ਆਵਨਿ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਕਿਆ ਵੀਚਾਰੇ ॥

AGGS, Jap 27, p 5.

The Sound current of the Naad vibrates there, and countless musicians play on all sorts of instruments there.

So many musical measures and sub-measures are rendered, and so many are the singers!

The wind, water and fire praise You, and the Dharamraj (the mythical god of Justice) sings Your praise at Your door.

Chittar and Guptt (mythical record keeping messengers of Dharamraj) who maintain the records, and based on which

*Dharam-Raj makes judgments, also sing Your praise.
 Shiva, Brahma and the Goddess of Beauty, ever adorned,
 sing Your praise.
 Indar (God of rain), seated upon His Throne, sings with
 the deities at Your Door.
 The Siddhas in Samaadhi sing; the Saadhus sing in
 contemplation.
 The celibates, the fanatics, the peacefully accepting and
 the fearless warriors sing of You.
 The Pandits (Hindu Scholars who recite the Vedas) sing of
 You and the Rishis (Learned saints) read of You for ages
 from the Vedas.
 Also sing the Mohinis, the enchanting heavenly beauties,
 who entice hearts in this world, in paradise, and in the
 underworld of the subconscious.
 The celestial jewels created by You, and the sixty-eight
 holy places of pilgrimage sing of You.
 The brave and mighty warriors sing; the spiritual heroes
 and the four sources of creation sing of You.
 The planets, solar systems and galaxies, created and
 arranged by Your Hand, sing of You.
 Those devotees of You who enjoy reciting your name and
 whom You love, also sing of You.
 So many others sing of You, they do not come to mind.
 How can Nanak describe them?*

CONCLUSIONS

Guru Nanak has used 'Questioning-Answering Methodology' in Jap six times (in seven sentences) to illustrate ultimate spiritual truths. The first question-answer deals with the value of getting rid of ego by understanding that universe that includes all living beings is under God's command (Laws of Nature) and that man's fate also manifests as per God's will (Laws of Nature). The second question that contains the answer within itself explains that offering of goods to God is of little value because God is the giver and all things belong to God. The third question is about how to please God with our spoken words and Guru's answer is that by reciting God's name and by praising God. The fourth question is in two sentences and the answer to those is used to shatter the myths about creation as propagated by various religions. The fifth question-answer is used to challenge those who claim to know everything about God. The sixth question and answer is used to describe God's abode as limitless.

REFERENCES

1. AGGS = Aad Guru Granth Sahib. 1983. (Reprint) Publishers: Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar. [M = (Mahla) succession number of Sikh Gurus to the House of Guru Nanak, M is replaced with the name of Bhagat or Bhatt, p = Page number of the AGGS.
2. Singh, Parminderjit. 2003. Sri Guru Granth Sahib vichlay prashan-uttaran da kosh (Punjabi). Prof Sahib Singh Gurmat Trust (Reg.), Patiala, India.