CHANTING WAHEGURU

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ABSTRACT
Chanting of the Name of the God as ‘Waheguru’ is very common among all the Sikhs all over the world. History of custom of chanting of ‘Waheguru’ has been traced out in this paper.

INTRODUCTION
Dr Sarjit Singh Sandhu, Former Prof. Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar now settled in USA [4], commenting on Naam in Sikh Theology, has stated that ‘Waheguru’ has not been used by Gurus or Bhagats for God. It is the same opinion of McLeod that ‘Waheguru’ was never a part of Vocabulary of Guru Nanak [8]. It was S. Kapur Singh, Professor of Sikhism, who declared that “Waheguru is the focal word around which the Sikh Yogic discipline of Name revolves. It was adopted as the basic concept of Sikh theology and the esoteric essence of Sikhism, from the times of Guru Nanak [2]. Sandhu says that this error was first made by S. Kapur Singh, Professor of Sikhism in 1958 (to use Waheguru as the Name of God) [4].

First Use
Chanting of the Name of the God as ‘Waheguru’ is very common among all the Sikhs all over the word. Are they doing so due to an error caused by S. Kapur Singh? Let us study the Sikh chronicles to find the truth.

This word was no doubt used by Bhatt Gyand in the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) [1]:

Wahegurum retaliation, exist as that of which they have been separated by Guru Amardas

1) Use of वह (Wah) by Guru Amardas in Gurbani:

Waheguru, Waheguru, Waheguru, Wah Jee-o.
AGGS, Bhatt Gian, p 1402
And

Your servants are totally fulfilled, throughout the ages: O Wahguru, it is all You, forever.
AGGS, Bhatt Gian, p1403.

Bhatt Gyand, however, used the word ‘Waheguru’ in appreciation of Guru Ramdas.

Use of two parts of Waheguru as ‘Wah’ and ‘Guru’
In the AGGS ‘Wahguru’ has not been used by any Sikh Guru as such; however ‘Wah’ and ‘Guru’ have been used separately. by Guru Amardas

EDITORIAL NOTE: Dr DS Grewal has justified the chanting of ‘Waheguru’ by quoting a lot of references extraneous to the AGGS. He has also tried to justify that although ‘Waheguru’ as such is not found in the Bani of the Sikh Gurus still ‘Waho’ and ‘Guru’ occur many times in their Bani. It is a fact that neither Guru Nanak nor any other Sikh Guru has coined or used ‘Waheguru’ in their Bani, then the question is:
Should the Sikhs follow the writings of others than that of the Sikh Gurus?
I think it is necessary for the Sikh theologians to look into this issue.

DS Chahal
Editor
Chant Wao! Waho! to the Lord, who is the Giver of virtue, intelligence and patience.
Chant Waho! Waho! to the Lord, who is permeating and pervading in all.
Chant Waho! Waho! to the Lord, who is the Giver of sustenance to all.
O Nanak, Waho! Waho! - praise the One Lord, revealed by the True Guru. \(\text{AGGS, M 3, p 515.}\)

And

\(\text{AGGS, M 3, p 515.}\)

Waho! Waho! The Lord is unfathomable and inaccessible. Wao! Waho! He is the True One.
Waho! Waho! He is the self-existent Lord. Waho! Waho! As He wills, so it comes to pass.
AGGS, M. 3, p 515.

And

\(\text{AGGS, M 5, p 49.}\)

I serve the Guru, the Transcendent Lord, the Dispeller of fear; my suffering has been taken away. \(\text{AGGS, M 5, p 49.}\)

And

\(\text{AGGS, M 5, p 53.}\)

The Guru and the Transcendent Lord are one and the same, pervading and permeating amongst all.
(AGGS, M 5, p 53.)

Other references where Guru or Gur is used to depict the God can be seen at p. 2, 35, 61, 74, 202, 208, 234, 245, 310, 397, 408, 489, 624, 800, 809, 1271 and 1401.

Use of ‘Waheguru’ out side of the AGGS
The use of Waheguru for the God is first seen in Bhai Gurdas’s Varan [11]. Bhai Gurdas has cited in Vaar 11/3 & 24/1 that it was Guru Nanak who had first initiated ‘Waheguru’ as the True Mantra. The true form was got chanted as The True Name, Satnam, by the true Guru Nanak.
In the congregation of saintly people in the place of worship at Kartarpur, he established the region of the truth. The Guru chanted the Word Wah(i)guru therin. (Vaar 24/1/2)

And

\(\text{AGGS, M 5, p 53.}\)

Having been pleased, the True Guru recited the true mantar ‘Waheguru’ (Vaar 11/3)

First Description of ‘Waheguru’ by Bhai Gurdas
Bhai Gurdas has described the implication of various letters of the Waheguru in Vaar 1/49:

\(\text{AGGS, M 5, p 53.}\)

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\(\text{AGGS, M 5, p 53.}\)
Bhai Gurdas linked Waheguru with the characteristics of Ikomkar given in the beginning Jap:

\[
\text{siq\qum krqw purKu vwihgurU ivc irdY smwxY} \quad \text{(vwr 40/22)}
\]

Use of Waheguru by Guru Gobind Singh and others in Hukamnamas

In Hukamnamas [Dr. Ganda Singh] Guru Hargobind, Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh have been shown using ‘\(\text{iE guru siq}'' \quad \text{(Ikomkar  Guru sat(i))} \quad \text{and} \quad \text{‘gurUu siq'} \quad \text{(Guru sat(i)).} \]

While Gur Harikishan, Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh are shown using ‘\(\text{iE siqgurU}'' \quad \text{also for the God. (5)} \]

In Hukamnama Patshahi 10, Chet 6, Samat 1762 Bikrami, Guru Gobind Singh used the word ‘Waheguru’ (\(\text{iE vwhgurU  jI kI Pqih}\)) later Mata Sahib Devi Ji also used the word Waheguru (\(\text{iE vwhgurU  jI kI Pqih}\) ). While Gur Harikishan, Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh are shown using ‘\(\text{iE siqgurU}'' \quad \text{also for the God. (5)} \]

Before Guru Gobind Singh merged himself into light for ever, he said the following

\[\text{‘...siqgurw khw, dXw isMGw ! Asw ko mhw kwl kI qrP sy sdw Awie igAw hY, qusw DIrj sy kwm lYnw, AsI hux aus drgwh my jwie rhy hw [vwhgurU  jI kw  Kwlsw vwhgurU  jI kI Pqy]} \quad \text{(Satigur said, “Daya Singh, I have got the call from the God. You must have patience. I am now leaving to the court of the God. Wahguru ji ka Khalsa Wahguru ji ki Fate.”)} \]

Date of recording of this entry in Bhatt Wahis is shown as Samvat 1847 Jeth Maas ki Pandrami ke diwas (1790 AD) [3]

First regular use of Waheguru after Gurus was by Kavi Sainapat.

Word Waheguru is found frequently used in Sri Guru Sobha [6] completed on ‘Fagn(i) Samat 1875, Privish(i) Shukal Pakh thit 14, vaar budh’, (1818 AD) by Sainapat(i) one of the 52 poets in Guru Gobind Singh’s Darbar.

Hukka na peevai sees dadhi na mundavai, so to Wah(i) guru Wah(j)guru Guru ji ka khalsa. (p.24)

The one who does not smoke or does not cut his hair from beard or head is the pure one (khalsa) of the God and the guru.

Use of Waheguru in Janamsaakhis.

At the completion of Chaturbhuj Pothi in Samvat 1885 (1828 A.D.) following is found recorded at the end.

\[\text{‘VwihgurU sIhW qy gjx donoN cwcy qwey dw pu~qr sI [ jd bwby (gurU nwnk dw) aunHW dy drSn kIqw qW auhnW Ardws kIqI [ ijs krky AsWfw jnm mrn kutIAY q cwry pdwrQ AsW nUM pRwpq hoveI qW} \quad \text{(Sitigur said, ‘Seehan and Gajan were cousins. When they had the meeting with the Baba (Guru Nanak) they prayed, “Our transmigration must end; we must get all the four materials of the world.” The Baba said, “You can get all the four materials of the world by chanting the Name of Waheguru”. They requested to know the meaning of Waheguru. The Baba explained, “‘Wahe’ means ‘wonder’, ‘Gu’ means ‘dark’ and ‘ru’ means ‘light’ in which we know Him. We have thus Waheguru meaning the wonder which can be known with the light of knowledge provided by the Guru’)}] \]

A Hukamnama issued from Takhat Sri Harimandir Patna Sahib on Magh Sudi 5, Samvat 1918 Bikrami (4 February 1862) at p. 87 of the Hukamname also uses ‘\(\text{iE vwhgurU  jI kI Pqih}\)’. (5)

Bhai Mani Singh explained the importance of word ‘Waheguru’ in ‘Sikhan Di Bhagat Maala’ [10]

\[\text{‘MeeN dE kaaM dE} \quad \text{‘vwhgurU’ dw nwm}\]

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or true guide. By chanting and knowing Him we get all the four materials of the world. They enquired further, “How do we get these four materials by chanting the name of the Waheguru?” Guru Nanak explained. “When one goes walking towards the congregation of the saintly person, every step equates to hundred Ashwmedh Yag (Burning in fire of hundred of horses after sacrifice). The wealth, for which the people yearn, is offered to the worshippers of the God. Whatever the worshippers of God wish, the same is fulfilled. If you understand the meaning of Waheguru, you get the true knowledge and get emancipated. All the four materials of the world are also achieved.”

After having bath in the last hours of the night, you must recite the Guru’s word along with your work, when your breath goes down you must chant ‘Wahe’; when your breath goes up you must chant ‘Guru’. You must live your life this way. On the occasion of ‘sangrand’ Masya, Bisakhi or Dewali, you must prepare the sweet pudding of three equal items ghee, sugar and water and serve as ‘prasad’ among the congregation (Sikhan di Bhagat Mala by Bhai Mani Singh edited by Bhai Veer Singh p.45-46)

Bhai Ram Singh wrote in Suniti Prakash (1825), ‘Bhai Santokh Singh in Mahima Prakash and Desa Singh in Rehatname have used wahiguru. Gurbilas and Gur Pad Prem Prakash have also used it.

Use of Waheguru for chanting
By the time of nineteenth Century chanting of Waheguru has been in regular practice. Gyani Gyan Singh initiated his Panth Prakash (7) by chanting Waheguru.

Waheguravaran mantar saaj ucharn te agh ogh nasai hain.
(p.10)
By chanting the mantra of waheguru all the evils run away. (p. 10)

There are numerous reference available from 19th century onwards and are not cited due to lack of space. Now every Sikh chants Waheguru at the beginning of the Sikh prayer. He also recites ‘Khalsa Ji, Bolo Waheguru Ji ka Khalsa Waheguru Ji ki Fateh’ after every step of the prayer and chanted Waheguru, and sings ‘Waheguru nam jahaz hai chadhai so utrai paar.’ This is the tradition of chanting Waheguru as the name of the God.

CONCLUSIONS
• The word ‘Waheguru’ as such has not been used by any Sikh Guru in their Bani, however, ‘Wah’ and ‘Gu’ have been used separately.
• ‘Waheguru’ has been used for the first time by Bhatt Giand in the AGGS.
• Then it was defined and used many times by Bhai Gurdas in his Vaaran.
• Later on it was found in many writings on Sikhism.

REFERENCES
1. AGGS = Aad Guru Granth Sahib. 1983 (reprint). Publishers: Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar. (M = Mahla, i.e., succession number of the Sikh Gurus to the House of Nanak, M is replaced with the name of Bhagat/ Bhat for their Bani, p = Page of the AGGS). (English Translation of Gurbani is by Dr Sant Singh Khalsa in Gurbani CD of Dr K. S. Thind.