

FEATURE ARTICLES

THE COMMENCING VERSE OF THE AAD GURU GRANTH SAHIB* A Scientific and Logical Interpretation

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ABSTRACT

The Commencing Verse of the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) is commonly called Mool Mantra. It becomes evident from the survey of available literature that the pronunciation of < as eyku EAMkwru (Ik Oankaar] or eykMkwru (Ikankaar) and the interpretation of whole Commencing Verse are the result of influence of ancient philosophy that has been strongly imprinted in the minds of some scholars. Consequently, it has lost its originality and the main theme expressed in it by Guru Nanak. Such amalgamation of extraneous philosophy is going on intentionally or unintentionally at a very large scale by the Sikh as well as by the non-Sikh scholars. Thus, the Gurbani and Sikhism are being undermined and are being equated to the ancient philosophy. It is the duty of the scrupulous Sikh intelligentsia to understand, and to interpret and represent Gurbani and Sikhism in their originality and entirety. The present article is one of those efforts starting with the interpretation of very Commencing Verse of the Nanakian philosophy scientifically and logically to represent its originality and uniqueness.

INTRODUCTION

The Commencing Verse of the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) [1] is commonly called as *Mool Mantra* by the Sikhs at large and by almost all the Sikh scholars. The irony is that no such title was assigned either by Guru Nanak when it was composed or by Guru Arjan at the time of compilation of the AGGS. Let us examine the Commencing Verse of the AGGS scientifically and logically to find out whether it is a Mool Mantra or a definition of the Almighty (God). The word 'science' used here means an organized body of knowledge, body of fact; the state of knowing: knowledge as distinguished from ignorance and misunderstanding. And the word 'logic' used here means the science of correct reasoning; a science that deals with the principles and criteria of validity of inference and demonstration: the science of formal principles of reasoning.

THE COMMENCING VERSE

The Commencing Verse of the AGGS is as follows:

ੴ¹ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ
ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ² ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ³ ॥

INTERPRETATION

The Commencing Verse has been divided into three parts for the sake of easy interpretation:

1. The first part is ੴ
2. The second part is from ਸਤਿ to ਸYBM
3. ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ as the third part.

In fact all the three parts make one unit of the Commencing Verse.

1. The first part ੴ is generally pronounced by many theologians and scholars as ਏਕੁ ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ (*Ik*

[* Since the *Commencing Verse* is the most important piece of philosophy of Guru Nanak, therefore, it becomes imperative for the Sikh scholars to represent its interpretation in its originality and uniqueness to the humanity. Although every article is open for discussion, the author, being the Editor, requests the readers to study this article seriously. Their comments and suggestions are invited to interpret the Commencing Verse as close to its original philosophy as possible. Their comments and suggestions, well documented with authentic references and logic, must reach the Editor-in-Chief before the end of April 2000.

Dr Amar Singh Dhaliwal, Dr Hardev Singh Virk, Dr Harban Lal, and Dr Jodh Singh have reviewed it before its publication as a policy of the Journal and their suggestions have been added. Now suggestions from the readers are invited for further improvement. The comments received from Dr Jodh Singh are worth considering. Some of his comments are reproduced at the end of this article.

Oankaar) or **ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ** (*Ikankaar*). The survey of the available literature indicates that this pronunciation might have been coined by the early Sikh scholars under the heavy influence of ancient philosophy because writing of 'Oankaar' or 'Om' before every writing was very common in the ancient literature.

The study conducted by Dr Joginder Singh [13] indicated that almost all early interpretations of *Jap* (Sodhi Meharban, Swami Anand Ghan, Santokh Singh, Pandit Tara Singh, and many more) are dominated by Vedic and Puranic philosophy. Even some modern scholars like Dr Sahib Singh [19], Principal Harbhajan Singh [16], and Bhai Jodh Singh [in Ref. 13] are not free from the influence of Vedic and Puranic philosophy. Since the word 'Oankaar' ('Om') was common in the ancient philosophy, thus, these Sikh theologians erroneously started to pronounce **ੴ** as '*Ik Oankar*' (*Ik + Oankaar*) or *Ik Omkaar* (*Ik + Om + Kaar*).

This happened so because the words *Oankaar*, *Ikankaar* or *Omkaar* are found in a long *Bani* of Guru Nanak called **ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ** (*Oankaar*) (AGGS, M1, Pp 929-938). There are 54 verses in this *Bani*. The word *Oankaar* has been used as a **ਕਿਰਤਮ ਨਾਮ** (descriptive name) of the Almighty only in the first verse. **ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ** (*Oankaar*) means the 'Creator'. Similarly, the word *Ikankaar* has been used in the same sense as a descriptive name meaning the 'Creator is One'. Since the attribute of 'Creator' has been used as 'ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ' (*Karta Purkh*) in the second part of the Commencing Verse, therefore, its interpretation as 'Creator' in the first part is not very logical. It means this attribute must be different than that of 'Creator' because the same attribute 'Creator' cannot be repeated two times in the same description of the Almighty.

To pronounce **ੴ** as **ਏਕੁ ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ** or **ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ** (*Ik Oankaar* or *Ikankaar*) cannot be justified based on the fact that a *Bani* at pages 929-938 in AGGS is entitled as **ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ** (*Oankaar*). If Guru Nanak can use **ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ** in this *Bani* then he would have used it also in the Commencing Verse. Kalsi [5] has also pointed out that if open 'Oora' in **ੴ** is **ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ** then in the rest of the *Bani* open 'Oora' with extended end should have been used in place of **ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ**. But it is not so. Therefore, **ੴ** cannot be pronounced as **ਏਕੁ ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ** or **ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ** (*Ik Oankaar* or *Ikankaar*) under any circumstances. **ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ** has been used as one of the many descriptive names as a metaphor for the Almighty only in the first verse of this long *Bani*. In the next 53 verses of the same *Bani* other descriptive names, e.g. **ਕਰਤੇ**, **ਕਰਤਾਰਿ**, **ਓਨਮ**, **ਰਾਮ**, **ਹਰਿ**, **ਠਾਕੁਰੁ**, etc. have been used as metaphors of the

Almighty. However, in the *Rahaoo* (Pause) of the same *Bani* Guru Nanak has condemned the use of descriptive names:

ਸੁਣਿ ਪਾਡੇ ਕਿਆ ਲਿਖਹੁ ਜੰਜਾਲਾ ॥
ਲਿਖੁ¹ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮ² ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ³ ਗੋਪਾਲਾ⁴ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

AGGS, M 1, P 930.

(Note:1. Metaphor for understanding; 2,4. Metaphors for the Almighty; 3. One who follows the Guru's philosophy)

"Hey! Pundit listen: What is in writing the ritualistic confused word (Om, Oankar or Omkar)?"

Oh Gurmukh! ³ Understand¹/comprehend¹ the Almighty ^{2, 4}."

It is important to note that whenever '**Ik Oankar**' or '**Ikankar**' has been used in the *Gurbani* (AGGS Pp: 916, 929, 930, 1003, 1061, 1310) it represents metaphoric name of the Almighty, but it does not represent it as a pronunciation of **ੴ**.

In fact, Guru Nanak has not coined any **ਕਿਰਤਮ ਨਾਮ** (descriptive name) for the Almighty because according to him the Almighty is ineffable, thus, no descriptive name can be assigned to the Almighty (It needs to be discussed in the other article.). Therefore, Guru Nanak in the same verse has also used non-descriptive names, e. g. **ਓਹੁ**, **ਆਪਿ**, **ਆਪੇ**, **ਏਕੁ**, **ਤੁ**, **ਤੁ**, **ਤੁਹੀ**, **ਅਗਮ**, **ਬੇਅੰਤੁ**, etc. At many places Guru Nanak even did not use any non-descriptive name. For example, in: **ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ ॥ ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥** (The second verse on the first page of the AGGS. It has been interpreted in English later). There is neither descriptive nor non-descriptive name, even it is without any indication to whom it is being addressed.

Guru Arjan has emphatically condemned the use of **ਕਿਰਤਮ¹ ਨਾਮ** (descriptive Names) for the Almighty:

ਕਿਰਤਮ¹ ਨਾਮ² ਕਥੇ³ ਤੇਰੇ ਜਿਹਬਾ⁴ ॥ ਸਤਿ⁵ ਨਾਮੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਪਰਾ⁶ ਪੂਰਬਲਾ⁷ ॥ AGGS, M 5, P 1083

"Your tongue⁴ recite³ the descriptive names¹ of That (the Almighty).

(In fact the Almighty is without any descriptive name) That existed⁵ even before⁶ the beginning of the time and space⁷.)

It is clear from the above verse that Guru Nanak is not in favor of giving any descriptive or specific name to the Almighty. According to him it is of no avail to write any descriptive name like 'Oankar' or 'Om' before any writing. The most important thing is to understand/comprehend the Almighty. Thus, under no circumstances **ੴ** could be considered as an abbreviation of '**Ik Oankaar**' or '**Ikankaar**', therefore,

it should also not be pronounced as '*Tk Oankaar*' or '*Tkankaar*'. In fact, it is a new word, ੴ, i. e. '**One**' + '**Oora** with an open end and that is extended, coined by Guru Nanak to explain the '**Oneness**' and '**Infiniteness**' of the '**Oh**', the Almighty, to whom no descriptive or specific name can be assigned.

I may mention here that Oosho [8] described ੴ as follows:

"..ਨਾਨਕ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਉਸ ਇੱਕ ਦਾ ਜੋ ਨਾਉਂ ਹੈ ਉਹੀ ੴ ਹੈ, ਹੋਰ ਸਾਰੇ ਨਾਮ ਤਾਂ ਆਦਮੀ ਦੇ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਹਨ। ਰਾਮ ਕਹੋ, ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਕਹੋ, ਅਲਾਹ ਕਹੋ, ਇਹ ਨਾਮ ਆਦਮੀ ਦੇ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਅਸੀਂ ਬਣਾਏ ਹਨ, ਸੌਂਕੇਤੱਕ ਹਨ। ਪਰ ਇੱਕ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਨਾਉਂ ਹੈ ਜਿਹੜਾ ਅਸੀਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਉਹ ੴ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਓਮ ਹੈ।"

"... Nanak says that the name of that One is ੴ, all other names are given by man, whether one says Ram, Krishan or Allah, are the names given by man. These are descriptive (reference) (*ਕਿਰਤਮ*) names. But there is one name that has not been given by man, that is ੴ. That is 'Om'."

In spite of the above fact explained by him, Oosho fell back to Vedic philosophy and declared that ੴ is 'ਉਮ' (Om) at the end of his statement. 'Om' is considered as the sum of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, (descriptive names) by many Sikh scholars [13, 14, 16, 19].

The irony is that the extended end of 'Oora' has been interpreted as *ਕਾਰ* (*kaar*) by Dr Sahib Singh [19] and by Parma Nand [7]. Therefore, it appears that interpretation of extended end of 'Oora' lead to the pronunciation of '*Oankaar*' or '*Omkaar*'. According to Dr Sahib Singh [19] '*kaar*' is a suffix of some Sanskrit words and it means ਇਕ - ਰਸ, ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਤਬਦੀਲੀ ਨਾਹ ਆਵੇ. (*The One that is unchangeable*). Then he quotes some words with '*Kaar*' as suffix from *Gurbani*, for example, ਨੰਨਾਕਾਰ (means to refuse), ਨਿਰਤਿਕਾਰ (means dancer), and ਧੁਨਿਕਾਰ (means musician who make the tune, melody), to indicate that '*kaar*' means ਇਕ - ਰਸ, but actual meaning of these words are written in the parentheses above based on the following information:

In fact, these words do not convey any sense of ਇਕ - ਰਸ (unchangeable) because '*kaar*' means 'work' or 'line'. Contrary to Dr Sahib Singh's [19] meanings, '*kaar*' in Punjabi Dictionary (4) means 'work' and also according to Bhai Kahn Singh [14] '*kaar*' means 'work': ਕਾਰ ਕਮਾਵਹਿ ਸਿਰਿ ਧਣੀ ਲਾਹਾ ਪਲੈ ਪਾਇ ॥ *Work for (serve) the Almighty and get the benefit.* (AGGS, M 1, P 936). Even Prof Sahib Singh himself [19] has shown 'ਕਾਰ' means 'work/service': ਮਾਇਆ ਦਾਨੀ ਭਗਤਾ ਕੀ ਕਾਰ ਕਮਾਵੇ ॥ *Servant money (maya) does service for Bhagats.*

(AGGS, M 3, P 231); and 'ਕਾਰਿ' means 'useful' as in: ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਮਤਿ ਜੀਇ ਆਈ ਕਾਰਿ ॥ *Guru's philosophy become useful for mind.* (AGGS, M 1, P 220). The word ਕਾਰ ਸੇਵਾ (*Kaar Saewa*) (means work performed for Gurdwaras without any monetary benefit) also indicates that *Kaar* is work not ਇਕ - ਰਸ (unchangeable) as coined by Dr Sahib Singh [19]. According to Bhai Kahn Singh [14] it also means a 'line' based on the verse: "ਦੇਕੈ ਚਉਕਾ ਕਵੀ ਕਾਰ" in *Asa Raag*.

If the meaning of '*kaar*' is taken as 'work' then it does not fit in the interpretation of Dr Sahib Singh [19]. Beside this, if the meaning of '*kaar*' is taken as a line as explained above then, it means line is drawn to limit the area. Then, it again fails to convey 'openness' and 'infiniteness' attributes of '*Oora*' shown graphically by Guru Nanak.

Thereafter, Dr Sahib Singh [19] explains ੴ as ਇਕ + ਓ or ਓਅੰ or ਓੰ (Oam or Om) + ਕਾਰ and pronounces ੴ as 'ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ' or 'ਏਕ ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ'. Finally, he interprets it as: ਜੋ ਇਕ-ਰਸ ਹੈ; ਜੋ ਹਰ ਥਾਂ ਵਿਆਪਕ ਹੈ. (*One, Unchangeable, is prevalent everywhere.*)

His interpretation clearly takes us back into the ancient philosophy that ੴ originated from '*Om*', '*Oankar*', '*Omkar*', the ancient descriptive or specific names for the Almighty. There are many scholars like, Bhai Kahn Singh [14], Principal Harbhajan Singh [16] who follow Dr Sahib Singh [19]. However, their interpretation is contrary to the Nanakian Philosophy.

Dr Sher Singh [20] accepted that Guru Nanak did not believe in the philosophy of Vedas, nevertheless, he (Dr Sher Singh) still compared ੴ with that of ਓਅੰ (*Om*) that it is composed of ਓ, ਅ, ਮ representing Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, respectively. He said that Guru Nanak added numeral '1' before 'Om' to confirm that Brahma is One. It is hard to understand the philosophy of Dr Sher Singh that how ੴ is composed of ਓ, ਅ, ਮ and how can these letters stand for Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, respectively? Parma Nand [7] also says that 'Om' is a compound word of letter 'A' (*Vaishvanara*), 'U' (*Tajasa*), and 'M' (*Prajna*) in Upanishads and are identified as Vishnu, Brahma, and Mahesh, respectively.

Contrary to all the above description of ੴ, Guru Nanak does not accept the trinity of the Almighty, i. e., Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva (AGGS, Jap 30, P 7). It appears that most of the Sikh scholars including Bhai Kahn Singh [14], Dr Sahib Singh [19], Dr Sher Singh

[20], etc. are under the strong influence of ancient mythology as they put aside all the logic while equating ॐ with 'Om', the sum of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva?

Strangely to all the above descriptions of ॐ, Pritam Singh [15] describes the open 'Oora' with extended end to the normal propensity of calligraphist to be more ornamented with opening letters but not to any doctrinal or mystical importance. This statement of Pritam Singh [15] brings Guru Nanak's philosophy down to the lowest level

Parma Nand [7] goes a step further from Pritam Singh's [15] statement to undermine originality in the philosophy of Guru Nanak by declaring that ॐ is not a new word coined by Guru Nanak but he borrowed it from Upanishads because 'Oankaar' or 'Omakar' has been used in various Upanishads. The only thing Guru Nanak did was to add numeral '1' to confirm the 'Oneness' of God, which is also found in the Upanishads. Parma Nand [7] has also tried to portrayed that the commencing verse is called Mool Mantra according to the rules of Vedas for declaring a word or sentence as Mantra, Beej Mantra or Mool Mantra. Mantra, according to Vedas, is a word or sentence repeated again and again under certain condition forces the deities to perform miraculous work to fulfil the desires of the performers (devotees).

According to Parma Nand [7] 'Ik Oamkaar' (Om) means 'One God'. 'Om' is a descriptive name for God and 'kaar' is grammatically a suffix added to denote the sound of 'Om'. But it is hard to understand that how 'kaar' can be considered the sound of

'Om'. Moreover, if 'Om' is a descriptive name of God, then it is against the philosophy of Guru Nanak because he has not assigned any descriptive name to the Almighty (God). Although in his Bani Guru Nanak has used Ram, Gobind, Gopal, Har(i) Raghunath, Allah, Rahim, etc. as the metaphoric names for God, it does not mean that he accepts these names as the real names for God. Although the words 'Ik Oankaar' or 'Ikankaar' are descriptive names for the Almighty that have been used in the Gurbani by Guru Nanak, it does not support in any sense that open 'Oora' with extended end can be pronounced as 'Ik Oankaar' Or 'Ikankaar'.

Teja Singh (from Ref. # 7) says that ॐ was already being used and Guru Nanak added 'kaar' and a new

word, 'ॐकार' was coined. However, Parma Nand [7] refuted this claim of Teja Singh saying that 'ॐकार' was already used in various Upanishads, therefore, 'ॐकार' was not created or introduced during the time of our Gurus.

Bhai Vir Singh [from Ref. # 15] considers numeral '1' as an independent entity, not as adjective for 'Open Oora'. Pritam Singh [15] emphasizes that in spite of unmistakable figure 1 which proceeds 'O' in the Mool Mantra, the commentators, who possess even a smattering of Sanskrit, do not forget to refer to the trinity of gods. The trinity is represented by the sounds, of which 'Om' is believed to be constituted, namely, a, u, and m. Bawa Hari Prakash, for example, explains that: *akar* (a), *ukar* (u) and *makar* (m), with half *mantra* added to them, make *Oankaar*. *Akar* (a) means Brhma (the Creator), *ukar* (u) stands for Vishnu (the Sustainer) and *makar* (m) represent Shiva (the Destroyer), while the half *matra* is to be understood as the Fourth State.

The following observation of Parma Nand [7] about the addition of numeral '1' is worth noting:

"This figure '1' placed before 'Oankar' serves another purpose also. In the common conception of the then current Hinduism, when Guru Nanak appeared on our soil, that there were many gods, Shiva, Brahma and

Vishnu formed the trinity as creator, preserver and destroyer. It was also held that God took birth not only in human form but Himself comes into the world in various forms, such as, *Matsya* (shark), *kurma* (boar), *nara-simha* (partly human, partly tiger) and finally, in human forms.

Twenty-four incarnations

of God Vishnu were accepted, besides other too many to be enumerated here. Some believed that Rama, the son of Dasharatha, was the incarnation of God, while others held Lord Krishna, the son of Vasudeva to be so. Countless male and female divinities were also regarded as Gods. Even Lord Buddha who did not believe in Vedic religion was accepted as one of the main ten incarnations of God. Thus, the total number of gods came to 33 crores (330,000,000)."

From the presentation of Parma Nand [7] it becomes clear that the interpretation of ॐ by the Sikh scholars as *Ik Oankaar* or *Ikankaar* has been done under the influence of philosophy given in Vedas and

ॐ : The open end of 'Oora' has been extended to characterize it as बेअंत (Beant - Infinite). Thus, it should be pronounced as ਇਕੁ ਓ ਬੇਅੰਤ (Ik Oh Beant) (Ik + Oh + Beant = One and Only, Oh, the Infinite.

Upanishads. The irony is that the Sikh scholars like, Bhai Kahn Singh [14], Dr Sahib Singh [19], Dr Sher Singh [20], and Principal Harbhajan Singh [16], the learned and modern scholars, failed to understand the characteristics of open 'Oora' with open extended end. They jumped into bandwagon of scholars of ancient philosophy given in Vedas and Upanishads and accepted the open 'Oora' as 'Oam' or 'Om' and extended end as 'kaar' and started to pronounce **ੴ** as **Ik Oankaar** or **Ikankaar**. Consequently, they have encouraged Parma Nanad [7] to declare that **Guru Nanak had no originality in his philosophy of coining ੴ as a new term or word because it is already found in the form of 'Oam' ('ੴਕਾਰੁ') in Upanishad and in declaring it as Mool Mantra according to Vedic formula of declaring a word or phrase as mantra or Mool Mantra.**

Natural Pronunciation (Pronounced as Written)

I have been working with many scholars on the pronunciation of **ੴ** and interpretation of the Commencing Verse since a long. It was Dr Parminder Singh Chahal (personal discussion) who gave very simple and convincing logic that **ੴ** is composed of two parts, i.e. numeral '1' and the first letter of Gurmukhi alphabet, **ੳ**, with an open end. The numeral '1' should be pronounced as 'Ik' and the letter **ੳ** (Oora) with open end as 'Oh'. Our further research lead us that the letter open 'Oora' means 'Oh' in Punjabi-English Dictionary [4] and in Mahan Kosh of Bhai Kahn Singh [14]. 'Oh' of Punjabi and 'Oh' of English means 'That' in English. The open end of '**Oora**' has been extended to characterize it as **ਬੇਅੰਤ (Beant - Infinite)**. Thus, it should be pronounced as **ਇਕੁ ਓ ਬੇਅੰਤ (Ik Oh Beant) (Ik + Oh + Beant = One and Only, Oh, the Infinite)**. In some verses in Gurbani the Almighty has also been addressed as **One and Only, Oh, and the Infinite**:

i) Oneness:

ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਏਕੈ ਹੈ ॥ ਏਕੈ ਹੈ ਭਾਈ ਏਕੈ ਹੈ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

AGGS, M 1, P 350.

"The Almighty is One and Only, Hey Brother!"

ਏਕੈ ਰੇ ਹਰਿ ਏਕੈ ਜਾਨ ॥ ਏਕੈ ਰੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਜਾਨ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

AGGS, M 5, P 535.

"Hey Gurmukh! Comprehend the Almighty as One and Only."

ਏਕ ਮਹਿ ਸਰਬ ਸਰਬ ਮਹਿ ਏਕਾ ਏਹ ਸਤਿ ਗੁਰਿ ਦੇਖਿ¹ ਦਿਖਾਈ² ॥

AGGS, M 5, P 907.

"The True Guru has shown² me the vision¹ that the One is in everything and everything is the One."

ਨਾਨਕ ਵਰਤੈ ਇਕੋ ਇਕੁ ਤੂੰ ॥ AGGS, M 5, P 966.

"Nanak Says: " You, the One and Only, pervades everywhere."

ii) Oh:

ੳਹੁ¹ ਬਿਧਾਤਾ² ਮਨੁ³ ਤਨੁ⁴ ਦਇ⁵ ॥ AGGS, M 1, P 931.

Oh¹, Destiny-Scriber² blesses³ the mind⁴ and body⁵.

iii) Infiniteness:

ਗੁਮੁਖਿ ਬੇਅੰਤੁ ਧਿਆਈ ਅੰਤ ਨ ਪਾਰਾਵਾਰੁ ॥ AGGS, M 1, P 936.

Gurmukh (the Sikh) contemplates the Infinite, Who has no limit or end.

ਤਾ ਕੇ ਅੰਤ ਨ ਪਾਏ ਜਾਹਿ ॥ ਏਹੁ ਅੰਤ ਨ ਜਾਣੇ ਕੋਇ ॥

(AGGS, Jap 24, P 5.)

"The infiniteness of That cannot be comprehended.

(In fact) Nobody knows its infiniteness."

(Meaning the Almighty is Infinite).

iv) No Other:

ਵੰਞੈ ਨਦਰਿ ਕਰੇ ਜਾ ਦੇਖਾ ਦੂਜਾ ਕੋਹੀ ਨਾਹੀ ॥

ਏਕੋ ਰਵਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਸਭ ਥਾਈ ਏਕੁ ਵਸਿਆ ਮਨ ਮਾਹੀ ॥

AGGS, M 1, P 433.

Nanak says: "When blessed, I saw that there is no second.

The One pervades everywhere and the One also pervades in my mind."

ਜਿਨਿ ਸਿਰਿ ਸਾਜੀ ਤਿਨਿ ਫੁਨਿ ਗੋਈ ॥

ਤਿਸੁ ਬਿਨੁ ਦੂਜਾ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ॥

AGGS, M 1, P 355.

"The One, Who has created, the same One can destroy. There is no other than the One."

If we examine the above phrases, it is clear again that Guru Nanak has addressed the Almighty as 'One and Only', 'Oh', and 'Infinite'. He did not use any descriptive or specific name for the Almighty.

Recently, Nirmal Singh Kalsi [5] has done a lot of research to find out the real pronunciation of **ੴ**. His views about the pronunciation of **ੴ** are as follows:

"ੴ ਨੂੰ ਓਮ ਜਾਂ ਓਕਾਰ, ਜੇਹੜਾ ਕਿ ਵੇਦਾਂ ਦਾ ਮੰਤਰ ਹੈ, ਨਾਲ ਤੁਲਨਾ ਦੇਣੀ, ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਬਖਸ਼ੀ ਵਸਤੂ ਨਾਲ ਬੇਇਨਸਾਫੀ, ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਨਰਾਦਰੀ, ਸਤਿਗੁਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਅਵਗਯਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਡੀ ਅਗਿਆਨਤਾ ਦਾ ਸਬੂਤ ਹੈ। ਕਈ ਸੱਜਣ ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਫਿਲਹਾਲ ਸਹਿਮਤ ਨਾ ਹੋਣ ਪ੍ਰਤੂ ਅਖੀਰ ਵਿਚ ਉਹ ਅਸਲੀਅਤ (reality) ਨੂੰ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਸਵੀਕਾਰ ਕਰਨਗੇ।"

"To equate ੴ as 'Om' or 'Oankaar', which is a Vedic Mantra, is to do injustice to the priceless and unique thing given by Guru Sahib, is blasphemy of Gurbani, is defiance of Satguru and is proof of our ignorance. Perhaps many friends may not agree now but finally they will accept the reality."

After thorough investigation from Gurbani he [5] has come to the conclusion that **ੴ** is one word and should be pronounced as **ਇਕ + ੴ**.

i. e. '**Ekooooo**'. His idea is commendable but he leaves 'oora' with open and extended end without giving any interpretation. The explanations of Nirmal Singh Kalsi [5] and Dr Chahal, appears to be the most logical to pronounce **ੴ** as **Ekooooo or Ik Oh Beant**. As the pronunciation, **Ekooooo**, covers the numeral '1', therefore, **ੴ** can more accurately be pronounced as **Ik Oh Beant**, thus it can be interpreted in English as '**The One and Only, Oh, the Infinite**'.

If we examine the concepts of God given in the other religions of the world it would indicate that many religions believe in Trinity of God and polytheism, having many descriptive names. Although in Islam God is One but it has specifically been named as Allah: "**There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the apostle of Allah.**"

Finally, it can be concluded that the **ੴ** can be pronounced as **Ik Oh Beant** ('**The One and Only, Oh, the Infinite**') that portrays the characteristics of **Oneness and Infiniteness of Oh**, the Almighty.

In the context of **Ik Oh Beant** it is important to quote a thought of Einstein (1879-1955), "**If he had a God it was the God of Spinoza.**" [3]. {Spinozism: (1728) The philosophy of Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) who taught that reality is one substance with an infinite number of attributes of which only thought and extension are capable of being comprehended by the human mind.} I am proud to say that this is very close to **ੴ** of Guru Nanak, prophesied about 200 years before Spinoza. After about 450 years Einstein, a scientist, realized the same concept of God defined by Guru Nanak, whereas, many Sikh theologians and scholars failed to understand the original and unique definition of the Almighty in the Commencing Verse.

2. The second part of the verse describes the following attributes:

ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ (Sat Naam): Before interpreting it, it is necessary to mention that '**satt**' and '**naam**' are two separate words. '**Naam**' is an indication that there is no descriptive or specific name of the Almighty that is why It (God) is addressed as **Naam** by Guru Nanak. Guru Arjan has explained this fact as follows:
ਕਿਰਤਮ¹ ਨਾਮ² ਕਥੇ³ ਤੇਰੇ ਜਿਹਬਾ⁴ ॥

ਸਤਿ⁵ ਨਾਮੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਪਰਾ⁶ ਪੂਰਬਲਾ⁷ ॥ AGGS, M 5, P 1083.

"Your tongue⁴ recite³ the descriptive names¹ of That (the Almighty).
(In fact the Almighty is without any descriptive name)

That existed⁵ even before⁶ the beginning of the time and space⁷.)

Moreover, the words, '**satt**' and '**sach**', are commonly used in the Gurbani and both means '**true or truth**' and/or '**exist or existence**' depending on the context these words have been used. Here the word '**satt**' means '**exists**'. Therefore, **naam**, means the **One**, Who has no specific name, **exists**.

This has been explained in details in the slok following the title 'Jap' on the first page and in Sukhmani at page 285 of the AGGS with an exception that the spelling of **ਭੀ** is changed to **ਭਿ** :

ਆਦਿ¹ ਸਚੁ² ਜੁਗਾਦਿ³ ਸਚੁ॥

ਜੈ⁴ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ⁵ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥

AGGS, Jap, P 1 & AGGS, M 5, P 285

Was in existence² before the beginning of the time and space¹;

Was in existence in the past³;

Is in existence in the present⁴;

Will remain in existence forever⁵ (in the future)."

Dr Sahib Singh [19] also interpreted '**sach**' as '**exists**'. Jodh Singh [from Ref # 15] also agrees that the main thing about Him (the Almighty) is that He has no name that is why we always call Him by the name of **Satt** (Exists for ever). (ਇਹ ਹੀ ਇਕ ਗੁਣ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਉਹ ਦਾ ਕਦੀ ਨਾਸ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਲਈ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਦਾ ਉਹ ਨੂੰ "ਸਤਿ" ਦੇ ਨਾਮ ਨਾਲ ਪੁਕਾਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ).

Therefore, it clearly indicates that **ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ** means that Entity or Ultimate Reality (ਨਾਮੁ), which has no name, does exists (ਸਤਿ). This attribute is necessary to show that although this Entity is unknowable / inaccessible (ਅਗੰਮੁ), still It does exists.

ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖ (Karta Purkh): '**Karta**' means a Creator and '**Purkh**' is a metaphor for the Almighty, because there is no descriptive name for the Almighty. '**Purkh**' has also been used in Gurbani in the same context, i. e., as a metaphor of the Almighty as indicated in the following stanzas:

ਤੂੰ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਅਗੰਮੁ ਹੈ ਆਪਿ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਉਪਾਤੀ ॥

AGGS, M 1, P 138.

"You (Purkh), are Creator and Unknowable / Inaccessible, and created the universe Yourself."

ਤੂੰ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਅਲੇਖੁ ਅਗੰਮੁ ਨਿਰਾਲਾ ॥ AGGS, M 1, P 1038.

"You (Purkh) are Ineffable, Inaccessible and Detached."

Macauliffe [from Ref. # 15] considers *Karta Purakh* as one word and ignores the translation of *Purakh*. His interpretation of *Karta Purakh* is 'Creator'.

ਨਿਰਭਉ (*Nirbhau*): Literally it means without any fear. In other words the one who is without any fear means there is nobody else who controls that person. Therefore, '*Nirbhau*' means there is none who controls the Almighty. A fearlessness attribute of the Almighty is confirmed in the following verses:

ਏਕੇ ਕਉ ਨਾਹੀ ਭਉ ਕੋਇ ॥ ਕਰਤਾ ਕਰੇ ਕਰਾਵੈ ਸੋਇ ॥

AGGS, M 1, P 796.

"The One has no fear of anybody. (The One does not take any order from any other, therefore.)

The Creator does Itself and make the others to work (under Its Laws)."

ਨਾਨਕ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਹੋਰਿ ਕੇਤੇ ਰਾਮ ਰਵਾਲ ॥

(AGGS, M 1, P 464.)

Nanak says: "The Formless alone is without any fear from anyone, other innumerable deities (who are called gods) like Rama, are just dust (nothing)."

ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ (*Nirvaer*): Many peoples believe that God could be revengeful and creates floods, causes earthquakes, causes deadly diseases, famines, etc. to punish the mankind. But according to Guru Nanak God cannot be revengeful. It is without any enmity with anyone. Einstein realized this attribute of God described by Guru Nanak after 450 years of Guru Nanak, when he remarked: "*Subtle is the Lord but malicious He is not.*" [9].

ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ (*Akal Murt*): Here the word '*Murt*' is an allegorical body and is usually ignored in interpretation. Therefore, most scholars interpret '*Akal Murt*' as immortal that means the Almighty does not die and take birth. It cannot be so because this attribute has already been given by using the next word "**ਅਜੂਨੀ**" (*Ajuni*) in the commencing verse. Here '*Akal Murt*' should be interpreted as that allegoric body (*murat*) of the Almighty on which there is no effect of time and space. It means It does not age and disintegrate with the effect of time and does not need any space to exist. For example,

ਤੂੰ¹ ਅਕਾਲ² ਪੁਰਖ³ ਨਾਹੀ ਸਿਰਿ⁴ ਕਾਲਾ⁵ ॥ AGGS, M 1, P 1038.

"You¹ are without any effect of time² and space², thus, there is no fear of death⁵ on Your head⁴ (of *Purkh*³). (Here *Purkh* has been used in place of *Murat* indicating Its (God's) body.)

ਅਜੂਨੀ (*Ajuni*): It is well established concept in the ancient philosophy of India that God appears in the

form of human again and again when the cruelty on human beings is on the increase. Contrary to this philosophy Guru Nanak describes that the Almighty does not come into any human form. According to Guru Nanak the Almighty neither takes birth nor dies. After about 450 years of Guru Nanak, Einstein (3) has also realized this attribute described by Guru Nanak **that the Almighty does not come into anthropomorphic forms**. This characteristic has been mentioned in Gurbani repeatedly:

ਜਨਮਿ ਮਰਣਿ ਨਹੀ ਧੰਧਾ ਧੈਰੁ ॥ AGGS, M 1, P 931.

"The Almighty is free from birth-death cycle nothing interferes."

ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ ਤੇ ਰਹਤ ਨਾਰਾਇਣ ॥ AGGS, M 5, P 1136.

"The Almighty is free from birth and death."

ਤੂੰ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ ਜੋਨਿ ਨਾ ਅਵਹੀ ॥ AGGS, M 5, P 1095.

"You are the Graetest and do not come in life-death cycle."

ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ¹ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੰਭਉ ਕਲਿ ਅੰਧਕਾਰ ਦੀਪਾਈ ॥

AGGS, M 5, P 916.

"The One (whose allegoric body)¹ is without any effect of time and space, is free from life-death cycle, is created by Itself and gives light to disperse darkness."

{Note: ਅੰਧਕਾਰ ਦੀਪਾਈ is equivalent to ਗੁਰੁ (Enlightener)}

ਅਮੋਘ¹ ਦਰਸਨ² ਆਜੂਨੀ ਸੰਭਉ ॥

ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ³ ਜਿਸੁ ਕਦੇ ਨਹੀ ਖਉ ॥

AGGS, M 5, P 1082.

"The Inexhaustible¹ Bounteous² is without life-death cycle and is created by Itself. There is no effect of time and space (on Its allegoric body)³ and is never destroyed."

(Note: ਦਰਸਨ is equivalent to ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ)

ਸੈਭੰ (*sabang*) : It means the One that is created by Oneself. It has been said in Gurbani many times:

ਬਾਪਿਆ ਨਾ ਜਾਇ ਕੀਤਾ ਨਾ ਹੋਇ ॥

ਆਪੇ ਆਪਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨ ਸੋਇ ॥ AGGS, Jap 5, P 2.

"(It) can neither be structured nor created. The Pure One is created by Itself."

ਨਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਬਾਪ ਨਾ ਮਾਇ ਕਿਨਿ ਤੂੰ ਜਾਇਆ ॥

ਨਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਰੂਪੁ ਨਾ ਰੇਖ ਵਰਨ ਸਥਾਇਆ ॥ AGGS, M 1, P 1279.

"You have no father and no mother, who have given you a birth?

You are without any form and without any sign of any caste."

3. The Third part is ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ (*Gur Parsad*):

The interpretation of the third part, ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ (*Gur Parsad*), is also as controversial as is the first one, ਯੋਧੇ (*Ik Oh Beant*). Pritam Singh [15] in his analysis sums up views of some scholars as follows:

Bhai Vir Singh, Dr Sahib Singh, Parma Nand, and a number of earlier scholars such as Hari Ji and Anand Ghan interpret *Gur Parsad* as "God is achievable through the Grace of the Guru." Sohan Singh Galhotra chooses to join 'Saibam' with 'Gur Parsad' and make this combination yield the following meanings: "...born itself, He is my Guru, through whose courtesy I have been able to say and am going to say or write more of it now." Prof. Teja Singh interprets it as "I begin with the Grace of the Guru whose attributes have been given from Ik Oankar to Saibam." These imaginative interpretations are devoid of truth.

Dr Mann [6] has expressed his disappointment that in the UNESCO Collection [21], the most reputed theologians: Trilochan Singh, Bhai Jodh Singh, Kapur Singh, Bawa Harkrishan Singh, and a historian, Khushwant Singh, have interpreted 'Gur Prasad' as 'By the Grace of the Guru made known to man'. Dr Joginder Singh [13] reported that many early Sikh scholars have given the same interpretation. Similarly, Principal Harbhajan Singh [16] also interpreted as done by the other scholars [13, 15, 19, 20]. Now almost every Sikh theologian and scholar accepts this interpretation. The irony is that there is no such word that could be interpreted as 'made known to man'. It is simply 'Gur Prasad'.

Dr Mann [6] interpreted it as 'Great and Bountiful'. Dr Gopal Singh [11] has interpreted it as 'Enlightener'. Baldev Singh [10] interprets it as 'Enlightener'. He has even gone to that extent to suggest that there should be a seminar to find out the real interpretation of 'Gur Prasad'.

Let us take **Gur** and **Prasad** as two independent words as are the other attributes of the Almighty discussed in part 2 of the Commencing Verse.

(a) Gur:

Gur is spelled in the following four forms in the Gurbani:

- i) ਗੁਰ,
- ii) ਗੁਰੁ,
- iii) ਗੁਰੂ, and
- iv) ਗੁਰਿ.

According to Bhai Kahn Singh [14] all these forms are pronounced as ਗੁਰੂ (**Guru**). He [14] explains that **Guru** means that devours and is enlightening/enlightener. Another scholar [2] also interpret it as follows:

GU = means darkness, and

RU = means light.

Thus, **Guru** is Light that dispels darkness (ignorance). It means **Enlightener**.

Before we interpret the meanings of '*Gur Parsad*', it is necessary to have some discussion about the meanings of *laga* or *matra* attached to the last letter in certain words. If the last letter is *mukta*, i. e. without any *laga* or *matra*; with *onkar*; with *dolankar*; or with *sihari* these *matra* indicate singular or plural number, or denotes different prepositions as explained by Principal

Harbhajan Singh [17] For example,

ਆਹਰ ਸਭਿ ਕਰਦਾ ਫਿਰੈ ਆਹਰੁ ਇਕੁ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਜਿਤੁ ਆਹਰਿ ਜਗੁ ਉਪਰੈ ਵਿਰਲਾ ਬੂਝੈ ਕੋਇ ॥

AGGS, M 5, P 965

ਆਹਰ = *Rara* is *mukta* here, it is plural because it is followed by *sab* (all), it means *Dhandae* (works/methods). Therefore, if the last letter is *mukta* without any *laga* or *matra*, it is a plural word.

ਆਹਰੁ = *Rara* with *onkar* here, it is singular because it is followed by *Ik* (one), it means *Dhanda* (work). Therefore, if the last letter is with *onkar* it is a singular word.

ਆਹਰਿ = *Rara* with *sihari* here, it is a singular word and it means '**through this dhanda**'. Therefore, if the last letter is with *sihari* it carries a preposition, like with, through, from, to, of, etc.

The word '**Guru**' used in Gurbani with *Rara* as *mukta*, with *onkar*, with *dolankar*, or with *sihari* does not follow the above principles of grammar propounded by Principal Harbhajan Singh [17] and Dr Sahib Singh [18]. For example,

i - a) ਗੁਰ (**Gur** or **Guru**) **Rara** without any *laga* and *matra*, means **Rara** as *mukta*, followed by some

proposition:

ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਧਿਆਨੁ ॥
 ਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਸਬਦਿ ਮੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਨੁ ॥
 ਗੁਰ ਕੇ ਚਰਨ ਰਿਦੇ ਲੈ ਧਾਰਉ ॥
 ਗੁਰ ਕੇ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਗਲ ਨਿਸਤਾਰਾ ॥
 ਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਸਬਦੁ ਨ ਮੇਟੈ ਕੋਇ ॥
 ਬਨਿ ਗੁਰ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨ ਪਾਈਐ ਭਾਈ ॥
 AGGS, M 5, P 864.

Here 'Gur' (ਗੁਰ) in all the stanzas is singular, not plural, and it can be pronounced as Gur or Guru. However, prepositions like ਕਾ, ਕੀ, and ਕੋ have been used. It clearly indicates that there is no hidden preposition with Gur when the *Rara* is in the *mukta* form. Therefore, it is not right to add any preposition (of or through) with Gur (ਗੁਰ) as generally added by them and by many other scholars, while interpreting '*Gur Parsad*'.

i - b) ਗੁਰ (Gur or Guru) Rara without any laga and matra, mean Rara as mukta, followed by a noun as one of the attributes of the Almighty:

ਗੁਰ ਪੂਰੇ ਕੀ ਬੇਅੰਤ ਵਡਾਈ ॥
 (The Guru that is Complete or Complete Guru)
 ਗੁਰ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਗੁਰ ਕਰਣੈ ਜੋਗ ॥
 (The Guru that is Creator or Creator Guru)
 ਗੁਰ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਹੈ ਭੀ ਹੋਗੁ ॥
 (The Guru that is the Almighty or Almighty Guru)

ਗੁਰ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਤੇ ਮੁਗਧ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਨਿਆ ॥
 (The Guru that is Benevolent or Benevolent Guru)
ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਊਰਧ ਕਮਲ ਬਿਗਾਸ ॥
 (The Guru that is Bounteous or Bounteous Guru)
 AGGS, M 5, P 864.

Here again ਗੁਰ (Gur) is singular, not plural as propounded by Principal Harbhajan Singh [17] and Dr Sahib Singh [18], and is followed by attributes of the Almighty, like Complete, Creator, Almighty, Benevolent, and Bounteous. There is no indication to use any preposition when the *Rara* is in *mukta* form as is done while interpreting '*Gur Parsad*'.

It is very important to understand the interpretation of the above second set of stanzas. This set has also been interpreted in the similar way as the above three were interpreted and there was no need to add any preposition like, from, of, through with Gur. Therefore, ਗੁਰ ਕਿਰਪਾ is

interpreted as "The Guru that is Benevolent or Benevolent Guru." Similarly, ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ is interpreted as "The Guru that is Bounteous or Bounteous Guru." It clearly indicates that ਗੁਰ and ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ are two independent attributes of the Almighty, i.e. ਗੁਰ (Gur or Guru) as 'Enlightener' and ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ (*Parsad*) as 'Bounteous'.

ii) ਗੁਰੁ (Gur or Guru) having onkar with Rara:

ਗੁਰੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗੁਰੁ ਭਗਵੰਤੁ ॥
 (My Guru is Parbrahm and Bhagwant or Guru is my Parbrahm and Bhagwant)
 ਗੁਰੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਰਿਦੈ ਧਿਆਨੁ ॥
 (My Guru is Wisdom and Attention/meditation/contemplation or Guru is my Attention/meditation/contemplation)
 ਗੁਰੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗੁਰੁ ਭਗਵੰਤੁ ॥
 (My Guru is Parbrahm, and Bhagwant or Guru is my Parbrahm, and Bhagwant)
 ਗੁਰੁ ਮੇਰੀ ਪੂਜਾ ਗੁਰੁ ਗੋਬਿੰਦੁ ॥
 (Here ਮੇਰੀ indicates that it is with ਪੂਜਾ not with ਗੁਰੁ, therefore, there could be only one interpretation: Guru is my Devotion and Gobind.)
 AGGS, M 5, P 864.

ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਰਹਿਆ ਸਮਾਇ ॥
 (Parbrahm Guru)
 ਗੁਰੁ ਪ੍ਰੇਸਰੁ ਏਕੋ ਜਾਣੁ ॥
 (Guru Parmeshvar or Parmeshwar Guru)
 AGGS, M 5, P 864.

Here again ਗੁਰੁ (Guru) is noun and is in singular number that is followed by another noun, like Parbrahm, Bhagwant, Wisdom, Devotion, Gobind, Bhagwant. It means whether *Rara* is as *mukta*, as in examples given in (i -a and i - b) or with *onkar* it is in singular number. Here again there is no indication of the use of any preposition.

iii) ਗੁਰੁ (Gur or Guru) having dolankar with Rara:

ਗੁਰੁ ਬਿਨਾ ਮੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਹੋਰ ॥
 (There is no other than Guru for me.)
 AGGS, M 5, P 864.

Here it is clear that ਗੁਰੁ (Guru) having *dolankar* with *Rara* is also in singular number. And there is no indication of use of any preposition.

iv) ਗੁਰਿ (Gur or Guru) having sihari with Rara:

ਭੁਲੇ ¹ ਕਉ ¹ ਗੁਰਿ ² ਮਾਰਗਿ ³ ਪਾਇਆ ⁴ ॥

AGGS, M 5, P 864.

Here ਗੁਰਿ (Gur or Guru) is singular. Here the *sihari* with last letter *Rara* of ਗੁਰਿ and *sihari* with the last letter *Gaga* of ਮਾਰਗਿ (*maarg*) indicates that the use of a preposition, like 'from', 'of' or 'through' should be used for both the words for their interpretation as suggested in the grammar rule of Principal Harbhajan Singh [17] and Dr Sahib Singh [18] discussed earlier for ਆਹਰਿ (*Ahhar*). Therefore, ਗੁਰਿ and ਮਾਰਗਿ can be interpreted as 'through the Guru' and 'through the path', respectively. Now the above stanza can be interpreted as 'The strayed¹ found⁴ the path³ through the Guru² (ਗੁਰਿ)'. Or 'The strayed¹ found⁴ Guru² through the path³ (ਮਾਰਗਿ)'. Which interpretation is right? None of them is right. **The right interpretation could be obtained by ignoring the grammar rule of *sihari* [17, 18]:**

"The Guru² puts⁴ the strayed¹ on the path³."

Here is another example that violates the same grammar rule of the *sihari*:

ਬਿਨੁ ਗੁਰ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨ ਪਾਈਐ ਭਾਈ ॥

AGGS, M 5, P 864.

Here again *Rara* in ਗੁਰ is *mukta* and *Tatta* in ਮੁਕਤਿ is with *sihari*. If we follow the grammar rule for *sihari* then ਮੁਕਤਿ should be interpreted as "through slavation" then it will not make any sense. The right interpretation will be by ignoring the rule of *sihari*: "Salvation cannot be attained without Guru."

The above discussion indicates that ਗੁਰ, ਗੁਰੂ, ਗੁਰੂ, and ਗੁਰਿ are the different forms of ਗੁਰੂ (Guru) and all are in singular form and are pronounced as ਗੁਰੂ (Guru). All of them, therefore, can be interpreted as, 'Enlightened', 'Enlightenment' or 'Enlightener' as discussed earlier under subsection (a. Gur).

It also indicates that the grammar rule of *laga* and *matra* as propounded for ਆਹਰਿ (*Ahhar*) by Principal Harbhajan Singh [17] are not applicable with any form of ਗੁਰੂ (Guru). Similarly, *sihari* with last letter of ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ and ਮੁਕਤਿ does not need any preposition for its interpretation. The above discussion indicates that the grammar rules propounded by Dr Sahib Singh [18] and Principal Harbhajan Singh [17] appear to be not applicable at some places, although they are very useful tools for interpreting Gurbani at most of the places. Therefore, there is a great need of further research to evolve a standardized grammar for interpretation of *Gurbani*.

(b) ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ (*Parsad*):

Since the last letter *Dadda* of ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ carries *sihari*, therefore, a preposition 'from', 'by', 'of' or 'through' is applicable according the grammar rules [17, 18]. Since *Rara* of ਗੁਰ (**Gur**) is without *sihari* and it is **Dadda of ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ (*Parsad*)** that is with *sihari*, therefore, ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ should be interpreted as 'Guru through the Grace. However, many scholars have interpreted it as 'By the Grace of the Guru made known to man.' indicating as if the *sihari* is with the *Rara* of ਗੁਰ (**Gur**).

In the above subsection (a-i-b) about the presence of *sihari* with ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ and in the subsection (a-iv) presence of *sihari* with ਮਾਰਗਿ and ਮੁਕਤਿ clearly indicates that it is not necessary to add any preposition like, from, by, of, or through, etc. in their interpretation. Therefore, ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ (*parsad*) should be interpreted as 'Bounteous' without the use of any preposition. Since ਗੁਰ (**Gur**) is already without any *sihari*, therefore, it should also be interpreted as 'Enlightener' without any preposition.

Moreover, where does the "made known to man" come from? There are only two words, ਗੁਰ and ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ. There are no other words in the whole Commencing Verse that can be interpreted as "made known to man". Therefore, interpretation of ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ as 'By the Grace of the Guru made known to man.' is absolutely wrong because ਗੁਰ and ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ are two distinct attributes of the Almighty like others given in the part 2 of the Commencing Verse. These words should be interpreted as two different attributes of the Almighty: ਗੁਰ as 'Enlightener' and ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ as 'Bounteous' without the use of any preposition like: from, of, or through.

Macauliffe [from Ref # 15] translates 'Gur Parsad' as "by the favor of the Guru". But he had explained it in his footnote, he does it under a sort of duress. He says: "We have translated this word (*Gur Parsad*) in deference to the opinions of the majority of the Sikhs, but with several learned *gianis*, we have no doubt that they were intended as epithets of God - **The Great and Bountiful.**"

Dr Gopal Singh [11] interpreted ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ (*Gur Parsad*) only as **Enlightener**.

FINAL INTERPRETATION

Now if we put everything, as discussed above, together then a scientific and logical interpretation of the Commencing Verse of the AGGS could be as follows, nevertheless, still a better interpretation than this may

become available in the future:

***The One and Only, Oh, the Infinite¹;
Exists;
Creator;
Without fear (Not governed by any other);
Without enmity;
Timeless (Without effect of time and
space);
Neither takes birth nor dies;
Created by Itself²;
Enlightener; and Bounteous³.***

The above scientific and logical analysis of the Commencing Verse of the AGGS clearly indicates that it is not a mantra or Mool Mantra in any respect but a precise and concise definition of the **Transcendent (Abstruse / Abstract) Entity**. Although the God of Guru Nanak is Transcendent still It **exists (satt / sach)** hence the word 'Entity' has been used. Again It is a unique Entity and there is no other like It, therefore, It is designated as 'ੴ' (One and Only). Since there is no descriptive name for the God of Guru Nanak, therefore, It is addressed as 'It'. In Punjabi a definition is called **Manglacharan**. *Manglacharan* according to Dr Sahib Singh [19] and Bhai Kahn Singh [14] is that phrase in which the poets often describe the one in which they have full confidence or faith. The phrase or verse used to describe that one is called *Manglacharan* in Punjabi. In other words it means a definition in English. Therefore, if the Commencing Verse is to be identified for any purpose, it could be called **Manglacharan**, or it may be called simply the **Commencing Verse** of the AGGS. But definitely not as **Mool Mantra** because there is no place of any type of Mantra in the Gurbani:

ਤੰਤੁ¹ ਮੰਤੁ² ਪਾਖੰਡੁ³ ਨ ਜਾਣਾ ਰਾਮੁ⁴ ਰਿਦੈ⁵ ਮਨੁ⁶ ਮਾਨਿਆ ॥
ਅੰਜਨੁ⁷ ਨਾਮੁ⁸ ਤਿਸੈ ਤੇ ਸੂਝੈ⁹ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦੀ¹⁰ ਸਚੁ¹¹ ਜਾਨਿਆ ॥
AGGS, M 1, P 766.

"I (Nanak) do not believe in magical formulae¹, magical hymns², (including diagrams of mystical characters - yantar - Yantra) and religious hypocrisies³, because my mind⁶ is imbued⁵ with the Almighty⁴). The collyrium⁷ is the teachings of the Guru⁸, that made (me) capable to understand⁹ the Almighty¹¹ through the teachings of the Guru¹⁰."

REPRESENTATION OF COMMENCING VERSE IN AGGS

The Commencing Verse (Manglacharan) has been represented by Guru Arjan many times throughout the AGGS before the beginning of the every *raag*, every

section and subsection of the AGGS as such without abridgement or in an abridged form as follows:

Different Forms of Commencing Verse as Appearing in the AGGS:

1. Complete Form:

ੴ¹ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ
ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ²
ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ³ ॥

33 times

*The One and Only, Oh, the Infinite¹;
Exists;
Creator;
Without fear (Not governed by any other);
Without enmity; Timeless (Without effect of time and
space);
Neither takes birth nor dies;
Created by Itself²;
Enlightener; and Bounteous³.*

2. Abridged Forms:

i) ੴ¹ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ² ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ³ ॥

*The One and Only, Oh, the Infinite¹.
Exists; Creator²;
Enlightener; and Bounteous³.*

8 times

ii) ੴ¹ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ² ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ³ ॥

*The One and Only, Oh, the Infinite¹;
Exists²;
Enlightener; and Bounteous³.*

2 times

iii) ੴ¹ ਸਤਿ² ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ³ ॥

*The One and Only, Oh, the Infinite¹;
Exists²;
Enlightener; and Bounteous³.*

523 times

iv) ੴ¹

*The One and Only, Oh, the
Infinite¹.*

This form is not found in the AGGS, published by the SGPC

It is worth noting that in the first abridgement {2- (i)}, "nirbhau, Nirvaer, Akaal Murt, Ajuni, Saibhang" have been deleted from the second part. In the second abridgement {2 - (ii)}, "Karta Purkh" has been deleted. In the third abridgement {2 - (iii)}, 'Naam', being a metaphor, has also been deleted. Thus, the most commonly used abridgement in the AGGS is {2 - (iii)}:

ੴ¹ ਸਤਿ² ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ³ ॥

That means ੴ¹ from the first part, only ਸਤਿ² from

the second part and ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ³ from the third part of the Commencing Verse have been retained.

The last form ੴ {2 - (iv)} does not exist in the present AGGS published by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC). But, Nirmal Singh Kalsi [5] claims that it is found at the bottom of the page 497/2 of the Kartarpuri Bir as reported by Dr Jodh Singh [12]. But according to Dr Jodh Singh [12] there is a *hartal* (crossing line) on the bottom half of the page where this form appears. If it were not crossed then this form would have been included in the present volume of the Granth, published by the SGPC. Nirmal Singh Kalsi [5] again points out that it is also found on page 934/1 as reported by Dr Jodh Singh [12].

Principal Harbhajan Singh [16] also accept that ੴ alone should have been printed on page 1353 of the AGGS published by SGPC, after the verse of Guru Nanak, ਪੜ੍ਹਿ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਸੰਧਿਆ ਬਾਦੇ...॥੧॥ and before the next verse, ਨਿਹ ਫਲੰ ਤਸੁ ਜਨਮਸੁ.....॥੨॥, because ੴ is present between these two verses on page 934/1 in the Kartarpuri Bir. It is difficult to accept the presence of ੴ between two stanza of the same Bani of Guru Nanak. According to Guru Nanak and Guru Arjan a new Raag, a new section of the Bani or new subsection of a Bani should carry a Mangalacharan either in full or in an abridged form but in no case Mangalacharan appears between two stanzas of the same verse. There is no such example found throughout the present form of AGGS. Now the question is why this ੴ is present

between stanza number # 1 and stanza # 2 of a verse composed of four stanzas. A thorough research is need to solve this mystery because it violates all the rules of the arrangements of the Mangalacharans in the AGGS.

There is another thing to be noted that 'ਸਤਿ' is joined with 'ਗੁਰ' to make 'ਸਤਿਗੁਰ' as one word in the AGGS published by the SGPC. Most probably the scholars, who were responsible for *padshaed* (separation) of joined words, failed to notice the fact that 'ਸਤਿ' is a separate and independent word rather than as a prefix of 'ਗੁਰ'. As 'ਸਤਿ', 'ਗੁਰ', and 'ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ' are three distinct independent attributes of the Almighty because 'ਸਤਿ' is from the second part and 'ਗੁਰ' is from the third part of the Commencing Verse. Therefore, 'ਸਤਿ' should be written separately from 'ਗੁਰ' as:

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥

Hence the shortest abridged form of Manglacharan, most commonly used (523 times) in the AGGS, is as

follows:

ੴ¹ ਸਤਿ² ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ³॥

"The One and Only, Oh, the Infinite¹;
Exists²;
Enlightener; and Bounteous³."

The irony is that the Sikh at large do not use this form in day to day lives, in their Gurdwaras, and in any writings on Gurbani or Sikhism. Instead a new form, coined by somebody, is used very commonly. The new form has been created by re-introducing 'ਨਾਮ' with ਸਤਿ and by replacing ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ with a new word 'ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ' that was never used by any Guru in their Bani in the AGGS. Now the new form is found written almost in every Gurdwara of the world and at various places in the Harmandar Sahib Complex, Amritsar. The new form is as follows:

ੴ ਸਤਿਨਾਮ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ॥

I could not trace out from the available literature that who could have coined this form. But I do wonder why the Sikhs at large like to follow the things that are not found or recommended in Bani of the Gurus, incorporated in the AGGS. It is becoming a common practice that Sikh scholars, preachers, Sants, etc. prefer to invent their own new terms, new phrases, new code of conducts, new rituals, etc. that may be contrary to the Gurbani incorporated in the AGGS. By and by such new terms, codes, rituals, etc. become part and parcel of Sikhism and the Sikhs will put all their forces to maintain them and to fight with the person, who would challenge such fictitious terms.

CONCLUSIONS

The scientific and logical analysis of the Commencing Verse of the AGGS indicates that it is a precise and concise definition of the **Transcendent (Abstruse / Abstract) Entity**. The definition in Punjabi is called **Manglacharan**. Under no circumstances it can be called Mool Mantra because Guru Nanak condemns the mantra-system (Mantra-Tantra-Yantra). Nevertheless, whenever, a word, mantra is used in Gurbani it has been used in an allegoric form that means teachings of the Guru to be followed to lead a good way of life to become a good citizen and to obtain salvation. It appears in the beginning of the AGGS, and in the beginning of a new Section, new Raag, and new subsection through out the AGGS either in full form or in an abridgement form. The shortest abridgement is ੴ ਸਤਿ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥ It is

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unfortunate that a fictitious abridgement, **ੴ ਸਤਿਨਾਮ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ॥**, created by somebody, is now found in every Gurdwara including the Darbar Sahib, Amritsar and before many publications of some scholars, *sants*, and organizations. And *sangat* (congregation) is made by many *sants*, preachers, *kathakaars* to repeat it again and again in the Gurdwaras.

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Comments from Dr Jodh Singh

"I must appreciate that you have put in a lot of labor to build an altogether different thesis and you claim that it has been built on the bedrock of science and logic. Here I am a bit bewildered to feel that how a work basically of spiritual experience could be reduced to the framework of science liable for the test in the laboratory which deals with matter dependent upon spirit for its illumination or revelation. I am also of the view that Sikhism is altogether a new religion and an original way of life but to prove that I don't think there is need to demolish every thing around. Of course, Sikhism is not syncretism of different religions and in your scientific language it could be said that it is not a physical change where the ingredients can be identified easily. It is a chemical change, which produces altogether new material out of different ingredients, which no longer remain to be identified. Your fear is not unfounded when you betray your allergy for the Vedic religion and consequent movements emerged out of it. But for putting forth the originality of Sikhism and its philosophy instead of the rejection of the Vedic way of life lock stock and barrel we have to delve deep into their literature also to show the clear-cut departures of the *Gurmat* propounded by the Gurus. Rejection is the very simple method which seems to have been adopted by most of the scholars."

Dr Jodh Singh,
Dean, Faculty of Humanities & Religious Studies,
Punjabi University, Patiala, India

Response by the Author:

Science is considered to be the biggest enemy of religion by the clergy of all the religions since scientists started to challenge the misconceptions in religions in Europe during the 17th century. The irony is that the clergy has not understood the fact that if a religion teaches that sun revolves around the earth the present generation of Science Age is not going to believe it when the scientific evidence indicates that it is the earth that revolves around the sun. The clergy must understand the quote of Albert Einstein that: "*All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree.*" The *Understanding Sikhism - the Research Journal* is very fortunate to have an Editorial Board composed of scientists of various fields, i.e. Physics, Chemistry, Life, and Social and Political Sciences; Medicine; Psychology; History; Law; Religion; Languages; etc. who are dedicated to present *Gurbani* and Sikhism in their real perspective. Many of the members of the Editorial Board are of the view that science and religion should go hand in glove to resolve the misconceptions in religion.