

UNDERMINING OF GURU NANAK

1. Bhae (B) and Bhau (Bha)

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INTRODUCTION

A critical analysis of literature on Sikhism reveals that history of the Sikhs and Gurbani, incorporated in the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) [1], are continuously, subtly, stealthy, and insidiously being undermined by Sikh as well as by the non-Sikh scholars. Some scholars are doing it intentionally to undermine the uniqueness and universal acceptability of the Nanakian philosophy. Others are following such scholars without testing their writings on Gurbani, science, and logic – the touchstones of truth.

There are many such examples of undermining Gurbani. Here we will report only one, which is very old one and has been perpetuating for the last 100 years now. Recently it came up in our **Discussion Group**. This group has been meeting on first Sunday of every month but now it has been shifted to the second Sunday of every month after the *langar* at 1:30 PM in the Diwan Hall of Gurdwara Sahib Quebec, Montreal. This is a forum, which is open to the whole Sikh youth and the elders of Montreal.

UNDERMINING OF GURBANI IN SATYARTH PARKASH

The current topic of 'Undermining of Gurbani' by Swami Daya Anand {in his book, *Satyarth Parkash* (in Hindi)} was brought in for discussion by Mr Prithipal Singh Saluja. Although *Satyarth Parkash* was first published about a hundred years ago but still its reprints are appearing and spreading misinformation about the Gurbani and Guru Nanak. Therefore, it was decided to make the Sikhs aware of Swami Daya Anand's nefarious activities of undermining of Gurbani and ridiculing Guru Nanak.

REMARKS OF SWAMI DAYA ANAND

He wrote the Commencing Verse (commonly called Mool Mantra) of AGGS as follows (Hindi in Roman):

"Oum satnaam karta purakh nirbhau nirvaer akal murat ajuni sebhhan gur parsad. Jap adi such jugadi such hai bhi such Nanak hosi bhi such."

Then he wrote: *"Nanak has good thought but was without any education. He knew the Bhasha (language) of the villagers. He did not know Veds and Shashstars, and Sanskrit. If he knew Sanskrit he would have not written 'nirbhau' instead of 'nirbhae'. This shows that he did not know Sanskrit. He wanted to enter into Sanskrit scholars but how can he learn Sanskrit without studying it. He wrote some Sanskriti words to impress the villagers, who had never heard Sanskrit."*

Dr Sahib Singh [Ref # 3 Vol. 10 – Pp 731-746] had tried to justified the use of ਭਉ by Guru Nanak by saying the ਭਮ, ਭੇ, ਭਉ are Prakrit and Punjabi forms of Sanskrit word ਭਯ. We do not agree with his justification because Prakrit and Punjabi are ancient languages older than Sanskrit. It is based on the fact that Panini codified the spoken language of the Punjab (ancient Punjabi) and named it *Sanskrit* (adorned) and the spoken language was named as *Prakrit* (not adorned). Therefore, *Punjabi and Prakrit* are older languages than Sanskrit. (See article on "Language and Script of the AGGS" on page 7 of this issue.)

Our Response (OR) to the above criticism of Swami Daya Anand (SDA) are given as follows:

SDA: He used '*Oum*' instead of ਐ (should be pronounced as 'Ik Oh ∞', but commonly pronounced as '*Ik Oanakaar*') while writing the Commencing Verse.

OR: He intentionally used '*Oum*' instead of ਐ because many Hindu scholars had refused to except that ਐ is a unique and original logo devised by Guru Nanak. They have undermined it to the level of '*Oum*' the ancient name (ਕਿਰਤਮ ਨਾਮ – specific/descriptive name) for God, which indicates the Trinity, a combination of Brahma – the Creator, Vishnu – the Sustainer, and Shiva –the Destroyer. On the contrary Guru Nanak has challenged the existence of God as

Editorial Note: 'Undermining of Guru Nanak' is another approach by the Biprans to belittle the scientific and logical Nanakian philosophy, which has universal acceptability. Prof D S Chahal and his Co-authors in this article and Dr Baldev Singh in the next article have tried to expose the nefarious activities of Biprans in their articles. DSC

Trinity because for him God is ੴ ('Ik Oh ∞' - One and Only, Oh, Infinite) [2]. It is unfortunate that many Sikh scholars of Gurbani have accepted ੴ as 'Oum' to which ੴ has been added by Guru Nanak. Their concept is absolutely wrong. (For more details on this issue please see Chahal [2]).

SDA: Guru Nanak did not Know Sanskrit.

OR: SDA should be aware of the fact that Guru Nanak specifically selected Punjabi, the spoken language of the masses of the Punjab to convey his philosophy, over Sanskrit. However, he had also used some Sanskrit-like words, which were commonly used by the then common people in one of his Bani. That Bani has been entitled as *Sehskriti Sloks* on page 1353-1360 of AGGS to distinguish it from the rest of his Bani written in Punjabi. (For details discussion, please see article on "Language and Script of the AGGS" on page 7 of this issue.)

SDA: Had Guru Nanak known Sanskrit he would have not written 'nirbhau' instead of 'nirbhae'.

OR: SDA has shown his poor knowledge of Punjabi language as if ਨਿਰਭੈ 'nirbhae' is a Sanskrit word and ਨਿਰਭਉ 'nirbhau' as a Punjabi word. Any person with little knowledge of Punjabi can find out that these words are negative forms of two Punjabi words, ਭੈ 'bhae' and ਭਉ 'bhau' which have been extensively used in Gurbani. In fact ਭੈ has been used many more times than ਭਉ. An intelligent scholar will not criticize the work of others if he is not expert in the language in which the work to be criticized is written. It is a pity that SDA has failed very badly to understand the following Punjabi words and their meanings when used in Gurbani:

1. Bhau (ਭਉ) and Nirbhau (ਨਿਰ + ਭਉ = ਨਿਰਭਉ),
2. Bhae (ਭੈ) and Nirbhai (ਨਿਰ + ਭੈ = ਨਿਰਭੈ), and
3. Dar (ਫਰ)

Let us discuss these Punjabi words as used in the Gurbani.

Bhae (B) and Bhau (Ba); Nirbhae (inrB) and Nirbhau (inrBa)

In general 'Bhae' and 'Bhau' both means 'fear' and their negative forms 'Nirbhae' and 'Nirbhau' both mean 'without fear'. But according to Dr Sahib Singh [3] 'Bhae' means 'fear' but this 'fear' also means 'fear of respect or love or regard'. For example,

ਮਨ ਰਿਸ੍ਠਿਮਿ ਯਭੈ ਜਿਐ]

Bf ibnuinrBaif ikauQIA'gmiK sbid smwie] rhau]

AGGS, M 1, p 18. [1]

Hey mind! On realizing Ever-Existing Entity one can get rid of fear¹.

Without love/respect², how can one comprehend the Fearless One³;

To achieve this the Guru-oriented must immerse in (understand) the Sabd.

In the above phrases Bauhas been used as 'fear' and Bf as 'fear for love/respect, and inBau as 'Fearless' for God. Same meanings are applied for Bf and inBau in the following phrases:

Bf ivic inrBaif pwieAw]

AGGS, M 1, p 599.

Through the love/respect¹ one attains the Fearless One² (the God).

Bf ric rh'isuinrBauhie]

AGGS, M 1, p 223.

Those who remain immersed in the love/respect of God become fearless.

khqunwkuBYBw k krysigrw]

AGGS, M 1, p 357

Nanak says! Adorn yourself with the love/respect (to realize the God).

Bf(Bhae) also Means Laws of Universe

Bhae (ਭੈ) has been used to symbolize the Laws of Universe as is evident from the following verse of Guru Nanak:

Bfivic pvxuvh'sdvwau] Bfivic cl ih I K drIAwau]

Bfivic Agin kFyvgwir] Bfivic Drql dbl Bwir]

Bfivic ielluiPrYisr Bwir] Bfivic rwj w Drm dAwwu]

Bfivic sfj uBfivic cllw] ਕੋਰ ਕਰੋਤੀ ਚਲਤ ਨ ਅੰਤੁ ॥

AGGS, M 1, p 464.

The wind and breeze blow under the Laws of Universe.

Thousands of rivers flow under the Laws of Universe.

Fire performs work under the Laws of Universe.*

The earth is holding together (in a compact form) under the Laws of Universe (with the gravitational pull in the center).

The clouds move across the sky under the Laws of Universe.

The (so-called mythical) Righteous Judge of Dharma is also under the Laws of Universe.

The sun and the moon are moving millions of miles without any end under the Laws of Universe.

** Fire can be used to create energy to perform various works.*

fr (Dar)

In addition to 'Bhae' and 'Bhau' there is another word 'Dar', which has been used as 'fear' in Gurbani at most of the places in the AGGS. For example,
 hir iqsuibnukel nihi frubhuBaudir kir]

AGGS, M 3, p 83.

There is no other than that of God who can remove your fear, superstition and dread.

In the above phrase 'ਡਰ' and 'ਭਉ' have been used and both words means 'fear', however, 'ਭਉ' means 'fear, intense fear, dreadful or even mixed feelings of fear, wonder and reverence'. There are some more examples of ਡਰ as 'fear' as follows:

siq¹ kryij in girUpCiqw² sokwihykaurdw j lau]3]

AGGS, M 1, P 101.

One who has recognized² the Guru by practicing the righteousness¹; why should he be afraid.

sofrukhw ij qufir frupwie]

AGGS, M 1, p 151.

What sort of fear is that, which is attained with fear?

frIAIjyfruhw/hru]

fir fir frxw mn kw sru]1] rhwau]

AGGS, M 1, p 151.

Be afraid, if you have fear other than that of fear (of love/regard) for God.

(Otherwise) Living in fear, the mind is held in emotional turmoil.1. Pause.

sofrIij pwp kmwvdw Drml ivgsqu]

AGGS, M 3, p 84.

The one who commits sins lives in fear, while the one who lives righteously rejoices the life.

qllscw Awip inAwawsciqw frIAIkyu]

AGGS, M 3, p 84.

You (God) are True, and true is Your justice; why should anyone be afraid of You?

siqgruij nl iDAwieAw iqn j m frunwhl]

AGGS, M 3, p 88.

Those, who have realized the True Guru, are not afraid of the messenger of death.

CONCLUSIONS

The above discussion clearly indicates that ਭਉ, ਭੈ, ਡਰ are Punjabi words meaning 'fear' and according to Dr Sahib Singh [3] ਭੈ also means 'fear of regard, respect'

that means 'love'. ਨਿਰਭਉ and ਨਿਰਭੈ are the negative forms meaning 'without fear'. All these are common Punjabi words, which were commonly spoken by the masses at the time of Guru Nanak. And Guru Nanak used the language spoken by the masses for writing his Bani. ਨਿਰਭੈ is not a Sanskrit word as had been claimed by SDA and suggested that Guru Nanak should have used ਨਿਰਭੈ in place of ਨਿਰਭਉ if he new Sanskrit. Although both these words means 'without fear' but ਨਿਰਭਉ covers broader spectrum of negative form of 'fear'— meaning 'without fear', 'intense fear', 'dread' or even 'mixed feelings of fear, wonder and reverence'. It could be easily inferred from the above discussion that Guru Nanak has used ਨਿਰਭਉ as the most appropriate word of Punjabi as an attribute for God in the Commencing Verse.

SDA also intentionally refused to accept ੴ (pronounced as 'Ik Oh ∞') as a unique and original logo devised by Guru Nanak instead he replaced it with 'Oum', which represents God in Trinity, whereas God in Trinity is not recognized by Guru Nanak. Similarly, many Hindu scholars have followed SDA to equate ੴ to Oum (see Ref # 2 for details)

We strongly condemn the irresponsible, illogical, un-academic and unethical act of Swami Daya Anand (SDA) by which he tried to undermine the Gurbani and ridicule Guru Nanak. We also request the Sikhs in general and the Sikh scholars in particular to be vigilant about such work of undermining Gurbani and Sikhism, which is being carried on very actively in these days in the media as well as in Gurdwaras throughout the world.

We recommend that the *Sangat* (congregation) of each Gurdwara should have such Discussion Groups to understand Gurbani and Sikhism in their real perspective and make the *Sangat* aware of such nefarious activities of preachers in Gurdwaras.

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 Guru Nanak, p = Page of the AGGS).
2. Chahal, D. S. 2000. The Commencing Verse of the Aad Guru Granth Sahib. Understanding Sikhism Res. J. 2 (1): 8-19 & 29.
3. Singh, Sahib (Dr). 1972. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib Darpan*. (in Punjabi). 10 Vols. Raj Publishers (Reg.), Jalandhar.