









THE UNIQUE LOGO

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ABSTRACT

The , it is pronounced by many Sikh theologians as 'Ek Oankaar' or 'Ek Aumkaar' because they consider the open 'Oora' is the abbreviation of 'Oankaar' used in Gurbani. Many Sikh scholars relate 'Oankaar' to 'Aum' according to Vedic and Vedantic philosophy. This paper presents the findings of our continuous research into the meanings of the logo, , coined by Guru Nanak. Here it has been fully documented that  stands for 'Ek Oh Beant' (One and Only, Oh, Infinite).

INTRODUCTION

The  designed by Guru Nanak is most misunderstood logo by many Sikh theologians, scholars and researchers since a long time, which has been accepted widely as "Ek Oankaar" or "Ek Aumkaar" by the Sikhs at large. I have discussed  as an original logo designed by Guru Nanak that it has nothing to do with "Ek Oankaar" or Ek Aumkaar" in some papers [2-6]. Now some more documents to re-affirm my previous findings that  stands for 'Ek Oh Beant' (One and Only, Oh, Infinite) have been reported in this paper.

What does 'Logo' mean?

Logo is defined as:

- i) A design used by an organization on its letterhead, advertising material, and signs as an emblem by which the organization can easily be recognized [8].
- ii) It is a *graphic* mark or *emblem* commonly used by commercial enterprises, organizations and even individuals to aid and promote instant public recognition [15].

Examples of some Logos:

1. Northwest Airline



This logo reflects a clever way of presenting the 'Northwest'. North is represented by letter "N" and West with an "arrow" pointing to West in the upper left corner [15].



2. ZIP Logo



Designer – Mike Erickson Zip – The "I" has been replaced with a zipper to connect the Z & P [15].

The 'logo' should not be confused with 'symbol' or 'emblem'.

The 'symbol' is something that stands for or represents something else, especially an object representing an abstraction.

The 'emblem' and 'symbol' are interchangeable in many ways. Examples,

1. Indian Rupee



The Indian rupee is represented with a new symbol, which is - a blend of the *Devanagari* 'Ra' and Roman 'R' - joining elite currencies like the US dollar (\$), euro (€), British pound (£) and Japanese yen (¥) in having a distinct identity. Before this Indian Rupee had no symbol and was represented as 'Rs' [12].

2. The 'Christian Cross' is a *symbol* of the Crucifixion. It is an *emblem* of sacrifice.
3. The 'Red Cross' is a *symbol* to humanitarian spirit.
4. The 'Crescent shape' is a *symbol* of the moon; it is an *emblem* of Islam.
5. The 'Skull and Crossbones' is a *symbol* identifying a poison or danger.

Let us come back to < . The < is an original and unique 'logo' designed by Guru Nanak to represent his concept of God and it has been used at the very beginning of the AGGS and before every major sections and subsections of the AGGS. It is also used by almost all the Sikh organizations on their letterheads, on the title page of numerous books on Sikhi or Sikhism, and is used where easy recognition of its message is required.

Since it is an important logo, therefore, it necessitates that the Sikh theologians, scholars, and researchers should look into what it really stands for and what message is being given in it. If it is not understood in its real meaning then a wrong message of Guru Nanak will be delivered to the humanity. Therefore, it is utmost necessary to work out what does it stand for and what the message is being conveyed by this 'logo'. This is my latest article in which I have tried to explore the real message in this logo, designed by Guru Nanak. This 'logo' forms the first part of 'Commencing Verse' (which is erroneously called as Mool Mantra) of the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) [1].

COMMENCING VERSE

The Commencing Verse of the AGGS is as follows:

ੴ¹

ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ

ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ²

ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥³

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

1. The first part is ੴ¹.
2. The second part is from ਸੈਭੰ² to ਸੈਭੰ².
3. ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ³ is the third part.

In fact all the three parts make one unite of the 'Commencing Verse'. Only the first part ੴ will be discussed in this paper. The second and third parts distinguish it from other descriptions of God found elsewhere.

HOW WAS THIS LOGO MISUNDERSTOOD?

The first part ੴ is generally pronounced by many Sikh theologians and scholars as ਏਕੁ ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ (*Ek Oankaar*) or ਏਕੁ ਓਮਕਾਰ (*Ek Aumkaar*). The survey of the available literature indicates that the early Sikh theologians under the heavy influence of ancient philosophy have pronounced it as such because writing of 'Oankaar' or 'Aumkaar' or 'Aum' or 'Om' on the top of every writings was very common in ancient literature. Giani Harbans Singh [20] says that it is not known who first started to pronounce ੴ as ਏਕੁ ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ (*Ek Oankaar*) or ਏਕੁ ਓਮਕਾਰ (*Ek Aumkaar*). However, I have noticed that Bhai Gurdas might be the first Sikh scholar who has pronounced ੴ as ਏਕੁ ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ (*Ek Oankaar*) as is evident from his *Pauri* 15 of *Vaar* 3. Thereafter, other Sikh scholars followed Bhai Gurdas' pronunciation of ੴ. Let us discuss Bhai Gurdas' *Pauri* 15 of *Vaar* 3 [30]:

ਮੂਲ ਮੰਤ੍ਰ ਦਾ ਗੁਹਝ ਭੇਦ

The Deep Secret of Mool Mantra

ਏਕਾੴ ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁੲ ਲਿਖੳ ਦਿਖਾਲਿਆੳ ॥

ਊੳਪ ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁੲ ਪਾਸੁੳ ਬਹਾਲਿਆੳ ॥

ਸਤਿਨਾਮ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਭਾਲਿਆ ॥

ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਜੈਕਾਰੁ ਅਜੂਨਿ ਅਕਾਲਿਆ ॥

ਸੱਚ ਨੀਸਾਣ ਅਪਾਰ ਜੋਤ ਉਜਾਲਿਆ ॥

ਪੰਚ ਅੱਖਰ ਉਪਕਾਰ ਨਾਮ ਸਮੂਲਿਆ ॥

ਪਰਮੇਸ਼ਰ ਸੁਖ ਸਾਰ ਨਦਰਿ ਨਿਹਾਲਿਆ ॥

ਨਉ ਅਮਗ ਸੁੰਨ ਸੁਮਾਰ ਸੰਗ ਨਿਰਾਲਿਆ ॥

ਨੀਲ ਅਨੀਲ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਪਿਰਮ ਪਿਆਲਿਆ ॥੧੫॥ ਵਾਰ ੩॥

First of all the heading of this *Pauri* indicates that 'Commencing Verse' has been declared as 'Mool Mantra' by Bhai Gurdas according Vedic philosophy.

Parma Nand [16] has confirmed 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 conditions forces the deities to perform miraculous work to fulfill the desires of the performers (devotees). Under this influence the 'Commencing Verse' is recommended by many Sikh preachers to be recited again and again to fulfill their wishes.

Bhai Gurdas has pronounced ਏਕਾ^੧ (one) as ਏਕੰਕਾਰ^੨ (*Ekankaar*) and ਊੜਾ^੩ (*Oora*^੩) as ਓਅੰਕਾਰ^੪ (*Oankaar*^੪). Therefore, ਐੳ should be pronounced as ਏਕੰਕਾਰ ਓਅੰਕਾਰ (*Ekankaar Oankaar*) according to Bhai Gurdas' interpretation. But ਐੳ is being pronounced as ਏਕੁ ਓਅੰਕਾਰ (*Ek Oankaar*) in general by the Sikhs at large. Nevertheless, it becomes clear that Bhai Gurdas was the first scholar, who declared open ਊੜਾ^੩ (*Oora*^੩) as ਓਅੰਕਾਰ^੪ (*Oankaar*^੪).

The exact date of writing of *Vaaran* by Bhai Gurdas is not known. However, it could be considered as the first writing dealing with Gurbani in Sikh literature after the compilation of the AGGS in 1604. Bhai Gurdas is accepted as a great scholar of Gurbani and his *Vaaran* are considered next to the Gurbani by many Sikh theologians. Moreover, his *Vaaran* have been declared as the **KEY** to the Gurbani by Guru Arjan as reported by Bhai (Dr) Veer Singh [30]. Critical analysis of *Vaaran* of Bhai Gurdas indicates that none of the *Vaar* interprets any Sabd of Gurbani. Rather he used Gurbani in his own way to discuss various topics [30].

The fact is that the **KEY** to the Bani of Guru Nanak is the Bani of Guru Nanak itself and the Bani of the Sikh Gurus, who succeeded to the 'House of Nanak', which is incorporated in the AGGS [28, p 23-25]. This fact has been ignored by many Sikh theologians and researchers. Chahal [6] has further quoted a number of such examples throughout his book, *Nanakian Philosophy - Basics for Humanity*. In fact the researchers working on the interpretation of Bani of Guru Nanak should look for a **KEY** in the Bani of Guru Nanak and that of other Sikh Gurus.

The truth is that no *Teeka* (exegesis) of AGGS (compiled in 1604 CE) was written until 1883 CE. The first formal *Teeka* in line with the traditional interpretation of Sikh scriptures was written by Sant Giani Badan Singh Ji of Dera Sekhwan at the request and encouragement of Maharaja Bikram Singh of Faridkot. It took him six and a half years to complete it. It was completed in 1883 CE. This *Teeka* was further reviewed by a committee appointed by Mahant Bawa Shamer Singh of Patna. After incorporating the comments of this committee, the first edition of this *Teeka* was published by funds provided by the Maharaja Balvir Singh of Faridkot in 1906. It was printed by the Wazir Hind Press (started by Bhai Vir Singh) at Amritsar. The second edition of this *Teeka* was published by Maharaja Harinder Singh of Faridkot in 1928 [28 – pp 205-206]. Therefore, this formal *Teeka* became available in printed form only in 1928 (about 324 years after the compilation of the AGGS in 1604).

This *Teeka* is considered as a classical exegesis of the AGGS in 'Braj Bhasha' by a team of scholars of the *Nirmala Sect*. This *Teeka* is known as the "*Faridkoti Teeka*" or "*Faridkot Wala Teeka*." For all future attempts on interpretation of the AGGS it became an ideal *Prototype Teeka* [6]. In this *Teeka* the *Oora* in ਐੳ has been equated with ਓ (Om / Aum), the **Trinity of God**, which is a compound word formed with A (*Akaar*), AU (*Aukaar*), and M (*Makaar*). It is mentioned in this *Teeka* that Bhai Gurdas has pronounced *Open Oora* (ਓ) as ਓਅੰਕਾਰ (*Oankaar*), which means *Aum* or *Om* [9]. But Guru Nanak is against the concept of **Trinity of God** [3].

Nirakari [17], a retired Professor of Philosophy from the Punjabi University, Patiala is of the opinion that ਓਅੰਕਾਰ (*Oankaar*) is Om, which has been mentioned in almost all the Upanishads. The description of Om given by Nirakari is same as described in the *Faridkot Wala Teeka* [9] and by Parma Nanad [16].

Bhai Kahn Singh [23] says that:

- i) ਓ (Open *Oora*) with extended end,
- ii) ਓਅੰ (*Aum*), and
- iii) ਓਅੰਕਾਰ (*Oankaar*).

all the three forms represent ਓਅੰ (Om / Aum) as in *Faridkot Wala Teeka* and pronounced it ਓਅੰਕਾਰ (*Oankaar*) as has been pronounced by Bhai Gurdas. Bhai Kahn Singh follows Bhai Gurdas to interpret ਓਅੰ (Aum) as 'Protector'. It is evident from the above information that Bhai Kahn Singh has reported exactly what is represented in Upanishads and which has been confirmed by Bhai Gurdas and by *Faridkot Wala Teeka*.

On the other hand Bhai Kahn Singh [23] also explains that ਓ (Open *Oora*) is ਅਚਰਜ ਬੋਧਕ 'ਓਹ'. ਅਚਰਜ means astonishing, marvellous or wondrous. For example,
ਅਚਰਜ ਰੂਪੁ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੇ ਗੁਰਿ ਮੇਲਾਇਆ ਮਾਇ ॥੧॥

Guru Arjan Says:

O my mother! I have found an astonishing Immaculate One through the Guru.

AGGS, M 5, p 416 [1].

According to Bhai Kahn Singh ਓ (Open *Oora*) is also ਓਹ ਦਾ ਸੰਖੇਪ {abbreviation of ਓਹ (Oh)}. The open *Oora* (ਓ) has been used as ਉਹ (Oh meaning 'that') by Bhagat Naam Dev for the flute of Rama as follows:

ਧਨਿ ਧੰਨਿ ਓ ਰਾਮ ਬੇਨੁ ਬਾਜੈ ॥

ਮਧੁਰ ਮਧੁਰ ਧੁਨਿ ਅਨਹਤ ਗਾਜੈ ॥੧॥ ਰਚਾਉ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਨਾਮ ਦੇਵ, ਪੰਨਾ ੯੮੮.

Blessed is that (ੳ - Oh) flute of Ram, which is played by him.

Then pleasant but unbeaten sound vibrates.

AGGS, Naam Dev, p 988 [1].

Moreover, according to Bhai Kahn Singh ੳ (Open Oora) also means 'and'. For example,

ੳੳੳੳ ੳ ਰਾੳੳ ਲਹਰੀ ਵਹਨਿ ਲਖੇਸਰੀ ॥

AGGS, M 1, p 1410.

Note: Bhai Kahn Singh keeps 'Open Oora' separate from 'O Haarh' ੳ ਰਾੳੳ but in the AGGS 'Open Oora' is not separated (*padshaed*) from 'Haarh'.

Faridkot Wala Teeka interprets the above phrase as follows:

(ੳੳੳ (ਮੇਹਿ ਰੂਪੀ ਅੰ ਲੇਭ ਰੂਪੀ ਪਵਨ ਕਾ ਚਲਨਾ ਅੰ)ੳੳੳੳ (ਕਾਮ ਰੂਪੀ ਰੳੳ ਜਿਸਮੇਂ ਵਾਸਨਾ ਰੂਪੀ ਲਹਿਰਾਂ)ਲਖੇਸਰੀ (ਲਾਖੇਂ ਹੀ ਚਲਤੀਆਂ ਹੈਂ॥

Metaphorical Rain, storm and flood, thousands of waves are arising and subsiding.

AGGS, M 1, p 1410.

Here open Oora (ੳ) has been used as ਅੰ meaning as ',' (comma) and also as 'and' as is done in English punctuation. According to Mahan Kosh: ਅੰ is an abbreviation of ਅੰਦ (and).

Nowhere else in the AGGS I could find that Open Oora (ੳ) used to show that it is an abbreviation of 'Oankaar' or 'Aumkaar' except the above example where it has been used as 'ਉਹ' (Oh) meaning 'Astonishing', 'That' and 'and' or ',' (comma).

I wonder why this explanation of 'ੳ' (Open Oora) in ੳੳੳ representing 'ਉਹ' (Oh) meaning 'Astonishing' and 'That' has not been used by Bhai Kahn Singh [23] to eliminate the influence of Vedantic philosophy introduced by Bhai Gurdas and by Nirmalas in *Faridkot Wala Teeka*?

I can imagine how difficult it is for some researchers to go against the well-established authorities in Sikhism, like Bhai Gurdas and the authors of *Faridkot Wala Teeka* because nobody likes to lose their prestigious status in Sikhism. Therefore, the *Faridkot Wala Teeka* has become Prototype *Teeka* (exegesis) for further translation of the AGGS in Punjabi, English and other languages. Since the exegesis of *Faridkot Wala Teeka* has been done under the influence of Vedic and Vedantic philosophies by Nirmalas, therefore, the Vedic and Vedantic influence also

became a permanent feature for future interpreters of Gurbani [6].

The irony is that Prof Sahib Singh [26] also followed *Faridkot Wala Teeka* that Open Oora in ੳੳੳ is Om (Aum) and further explains ੳੳੳ as ਇਕ + ੳ or ੳਅੰ or ੳ (Aum or Om) + ਕਾਰ (extended end of Oora) and pronounces ੳੳੳ as 'ਏਕੁ ੳਅੰਕਾਰੁ' (*Ek Oankaar*) or ਏਕੁ ੳਮਕਾਰ (*Ek Omkaar*).

The 'Extended End of Open Oora' has been declared as 'Kaar' by Prof Sahib Singh [26]. He further takes the aid of Sanskrit to explain that '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 to indicate that ਕਾਰ (*kaar*) means ਇਕ-ਰਸ. For example, ਨੰਨਕਾਰ (which means who refuses), ਨਿਰਤਕਾਰ (which means dancer), and ਧੁਨਿਕਾਰ (which means musician who makes the tune, melody) but none of these words indicate anything like, ਇਕ-ਰਸ, ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਤਬਦੀਲੀ ਨਾਹ ਆਵੇ, because 'kaar' in Punjabi Dictionary [13] and according to Bhai Kahn Singh [23] means 'work': ਕਾਰੀ ਕਮਾਵਹਿ ਸਿਰਿ ਧਣੀ ਲਾਹਾ ਪਲੈ ਪਾਇ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪ-੯੩੬.

One gets the reward³ from the Master for performing² work¹.

AGGS, M 1, p 936.

Even Prof Sahib Singh himself [26] has shown 'ਕਾਰ' means 'work/service':

ਮਾਇਆ^੧ ਦਾਨੀ^੨ ਭਗਤਾ^੩ ਕੀ ਕਾਰ^੪ ਕਮਾਵੇ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੩, ਪ-੨੩੧.

Money¹ (Maya) is Servant², which performs⁵ work⁴ for devotees³.

AGGS, M 3, p 231.

'ਕਾਰਿ' also means 'helpful' as in:

ਗੁਰੀ ਕੀ ਮਤਿ ਜੀਇ ਆਈ ਕਾਰਿ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪ-੨੨੦.

Guru's¹ philosophy² became helpful⁴ for people³.

AGGS, M 1, p 220.

The word ਕਾਰ ਸੇਵਾ (*Kaar Sewa*) (means work performed for Gurdwaras without any monetary benefit) also indicates that *Kaar* is work, not ਇਕ-ਰਸ (unchangeable) as coined by Prof Sahib Singh [26]. According to Bhai Kahn Singh [23] it also means a 'line' based on the verse: "ਦੇਕੈ ਚਉਕਾ ਕਰੀ ਕਾਰ" (*They draw line around them after*

plastering the ground with cow-dung (AGGS, M 1, p 472.).

If the meaning of 'kaar' is taken as 'work' then it does not fit in the interpretation of Prof Sahib Singh [26]. Besides, 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 'Open Oora' shown graphically extended by Guru Nanak.

I do not understand why some scholars intentionally try to interpret Gurbani under the influence of Vedic and Vedantic philosophies.

Furthermore, such interpretations are used by non-Sikh scholars to portray that there is no uniqueness or originality in the philosophy of Guru Nanak. According to Parma Nand [16] 'Ek Omkaar' (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 as the sound of 'Om' by a Hindu scholar and on the other hand Prof Sahib Singh [26] interprets ਕਾਰ (Kaar) as: ਜੋ ਇਕ-ਰਸ ਹੈ; ਜੋ ਹਰ ਥਾਂ ਵਿਆਪਕ ਹੈ (One, Unchangeable, is prevalent everywhere). How strange it is that two theologians of two different religions are interpreting ਕਾਰ (Kaar) according to their own whims rather than on any solid documentation. Here again I wonder why Prof Sahib Singh is forcefully interpreting ਕਾਰ (Kaar) as ਇਕ-ਰਸ (unchangeable)?

The point is that no abbreviation of any word has been used throughout the Gurbani. Therefore, ੳ is not the abbreviation of ੴ + ੳਕਾਰੁ.

Nevertheless, Bhagat Naam Dev has used Open Oora (ੳ) which means 'that' as described above. However, this Open Oora is not an abbreviation of Oankaar. The only abbreviation used by Guru Arjan is 'ਮ:' (M) for ਮਹਲਾ (Mahla). Mahla is not a part of Gurbani but introduced by Guru Arjan; it is used to indicate the succession number of the Guru to the 'House of Nanak' to identify the Guru, for example, ਮ: ੧ (M 1) is Guru Nanak; ਮ: ੨ (M 2) is Guru Angad, and so on.

USE OF ੳਕਾਰ (OANKAAR)

Some Sikh theologians and researchers claim that ੳ is pronounced as 'ਏਕ ੳਕਾਰੁ' (Ek Oankaar) because ੳਕਾਰੁ (Oankaar) is found seven times in the Bani of Guru Nanak called ੳਕਾਰੁ ਬਾਣੀ (Oankaar Bani) at pp 929-938 of AGGS. Similarly, ੳਕਾਰੁ (Oankaar) has been used one

more time by Guru Nanak at page 1285; by Guru Arjan two times at page 885 and 1003; and by Guru Amardas and Guru Ramdas only once at page 1061 and 1310, respectively. Here the word ੳਕਾਰ (Oankaar) has been used as a ਕਿਰਤਮ ਨਾਮ (descriptive/specific name) for God, which means the 'Creator'. But nowhere in the AGGS it is evident that ੳ (Open Oora) is an abbreviation of ੳਕਾਰੁ (Oankaar) or ੳਮਕਾਰੁ (Aumkaar).

On the other hand, the word ਏਕੰਕਾਰ (Ekankaar) has been used extensively in the same sense as a descriptive name meaning the 'Creator – Who is One and Only'. This word has been used 13 times by Guru Nanak; 19 times by Guru Arjan; one time by Guru Amardas; and two times by Guru Ramdas. Since the attribute of 'Creator' has been used as 'ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ' (Karta Purkh) in the second part of the Commencing Verse, therefore, interpretation of ੳ as 'Creator' by many scholars cannot be justified. Moreover, the 'Commencing Verse' is considered as a definition of God, therefore, the same attribute, 'Creator', cannot be repeated two times in a definition. The irony is even then many Sikh scholars now have started to interpret ੳ as 'One Creator' since ੳਕਾਰੁ (Oankaar) means 'Creator' although the same attribute, 'ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ' (Karta Purkh) as 'Creator', is already present in the same 'Commencing Verse'.

To pronounce ੳ as ਏਕੁ ੳਕਾਰੁ or ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ (Ek Oankaar or Ekankaar) cannot be justified based on the fact that a Bani at pages 929-938 in AGGS is entitled as ੳਕਾਰੁ (Oankaar). If Guru Nanak can use ੳਕਾਰੁ in this Bani then he would have used it also in the Commencing Verse in place of ੳ . Or ੳ (Open Oora) could have been used in place of ੳਕਾਰੁ in rest of the Bani, but it is not so. Therefore, ੳ (Open Oora) is entirely different than ੳਕਾਰੁ (Oankaar) or ੳਮਕਾਰੁ (Aumkaar) in meaning as well as in pronunciation. Besides ੳ cannot be pronounced as ਏਕੁ ੳਕਾਰੁ or ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ (Ek Oankaar or Ekankaar) under any circumstances. ੳਕਾਰੁ (Oankaar) has been used as one of the many descriptive names as a metaphoric name for God only in the first stanza of this long Bani, ੳਕਾਰੁ. In the next 53 stanzas of the same Bani other descriptive names, e.g. ਕਰਤੇ, ਕਰਤਾਰਿ, ਓਨਮ, ਰਾਮ, ਹਰਿ, ਠਾਕੁਰੁ, etc. have been used as metaphoric names (ਕਿਰਤਮ ਨਾਮ) for God. Moreover, in the Rahaoo (Pause) of the same Bani Guru Nanak has condemned the use of writing of Oankaar as descriptive name before any writing:

ਸੁਣਿ ਪਾਛੇ ਕਿਆ ਲਿਖਹੁ ਜੰਜਾਲਾ ॥
ਲਿਖੁੰ ਰਾਮੰ ਨਾਮੰ ਗੁਰਮੁਖੰ ਗੋਪਾਲਾੰ ॥ਰਹਾਉ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪ-੯੩੦.

Hey Pundit! Listen! What is in writing the ritualistic confused word (Om, Oankaar or Aumkaar)?

Oh Gurmukh³! Understand¹ / comprehend¹ the God^{2,4}.

AGGS, M 1, p 930.

Note: ਲਿਖੁੰ¹ - Metaphor for understanding; ਰਾਮੰ ਨਾਮੰ - Metaphoric names for God; ਗੁਰਮੁਖੰ³ - One, who follows the philosophy of the Guru.

In fact, Guru Nanak has not coined any ਕਿਰਤਮ ਨਾਮ (descriptive/specific name) for God because according to him God is ineffable, thus, no descriptive name can be assigned to God. Therefore, Guru Nanak has used non-descriptive names, e. g. ਓਹੁ, ਆਪਿ, ਆਪੇ, ਏਕੁ, ਤੂ, ਤੁ, ਤੁਹੀ, ਅਗਮ, ਬੇਅੰਤੁ, etc in the same ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ ਬਾਣੀ. Actually Guru Nanak does not even use non-descriptive name in many of his verses. For example,

ਆਦਿੰ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿੰ ਸਚੁ ॥ ਹੈ ਭੀੰ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀੰ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਜਪੁ ੧, ਪ-੧.

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)."

AGGS, Jap 1, p 1.

There is neither descriptive/specific nor non-descriptive/non-specific name of God in the above phrase; importantly it is without any indication to who it is being addressed.

Guru Arjan has emphatically strengthened the principle of Nanakian Philosophy that no ikrqm nwm (descriptive/specific name) can be assigned to God.

ਕਿਰਤਮੰ ਨਾਮੰ ਕਥੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਜਿਹਬਾੰ ॥

ਸਤਿੰ ਨਾਮੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਪਰਾੰ ਪੂਰਬਲਾੰ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ. ਮ: ੫, ਪ-੧੦੮੩.

Your tongue⁴ recite³ the descriptive² names¹ of That (God). (because)

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

AGGS, M 5, p 1083.

This verse implies how can one assign any descriptive/specific name to God who existed even before the beginning of the time and space? But people still like to coin some descriptive/specific names for God for repeating again and again for meditation or for grant of a wish from God. [For details consult Ref. # 5.]

I would like to mention here that Oosho [18] described ਓੰ as follows:

"... ਨਾਨਕ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਉਸ ਇੱਕ ਦਾ ਜੋ ਨਾਉਂ ਹੈ ਉਹੀ ਓੰ 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, ਸਾਂਕੇਤਕ ਹਨ। ਪਰ ਇੱਕ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਨਾਉਂ ਹੈ ਜਿਹੜਾ ਅਸੀਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਉਹ ਓੰ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਓਮ ਹੈ।"

"... Nanak says that the name of that One is ਓੰ, all other names are given by man, whether one says Ram, Krishan or Allah, are the names given by man. These are man-made descriptive (reference) (ikrqm) names. But there is one name that has not been given by man, that is ਓੰ. This is not a descriptive (ikrqm) name.... "

In spite of the above fact explained by him, Oosho fell back to Vedic and Vedantic philosophies and declared that "ਓੰ is ਓਮ (Om) at the end of his statement." 'Om' is a descriptive name as the sum of Brahma – the Creator, Vishnu – the Sustainer, and Shiva – the destroyer, reported by many non-Sikh and Sikh scholars.

Dr Sher Singh [27] accepted that Guru Nanak did not believe in the philosophy of Vedas, nevertheless, he (Dr Sher Singh) still compared ਓੰ with that of ਓਮ (Om) that it is composed of a, u, m representing Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, respectively. He said that Guru Nanak added numeral '1' before 'Om' to confirm that Brahma is One. Parma Nand [16] also says that 'Om' is a compound word of letters 'A' (*Vaishvanara*), 'U' (*Taijasa*), and 'M' (*Prajna*) in Upanishads and are identified as Vishnu, Brahma, and Mahesh, respectively. Contrary to all the above description of ਓੰ, Guru Nanak does not accept the Trinity of God, i. e. Brahma - the Creator, Vishnu – the Sustainer, and Shiva – the Destroyer.

SEMINAR AT GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY

A seminar on 'Mool Mantra' was held at Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, which was sponsored by the University Grant Commission (UGC), New Delhi, under Pritam Singh, Retired Professor and Head of Department of Guru Nanak Studies, in March 1973. The proceedings of the seminar were published in 1985 (after 12 years) under the title: *Sikh Concept of the Divine* [24]. I would summarize the outcome of the seminar from the paper presented by Pritam Singh as follows [25]:

“‘O’ (ਓ) (with open end extended) is believed to be the initial Gurmukhi character of the age-old mystic Indian term *Om*. It is pronounced as *O, Om, Oankar (Omkar)*, according to the predilection and cultural affiliation of the speaker. Swami Harnam Das quotes *Taittiriyanopanishad* to corroborate his view, but claims Vedic sanction for assigning the phonetic value of ‘O’ to ‘ਓ’. Some readers, especially, those belonging to *Udasi*

and *Nirmla* denominations, generally pronounce ‘O’ as ‘Om’: while most of the Sikhs pronounce it as *Onkar*. Normally, etymologists explain *Onkar* as the combination of *Om* + *Kar* or *Oam* + *Kar* (ੴ + ਕਾਰ ਜਾਂ ਓਅੰ + ਕਾਰ) but Sohan Singh Galhotra [10] believe that *kar* should be read as ‘*akar*’. Says he:

Ikoankar = *I*(Ik) + *Oam* + *akar*.

Oamkar: The word has been explained in many different ways by many different writers. But as far as Sikh writings are concerned, the prefix *Oam* makes its meaning clear. *Oam* consists of three letters *o*, *a*, *m* – *o* stands for *urdham*, i.e. above; *a* for *adham*, i.e. below; and *m* for *madham*, i.e. between, i.e. the entire universe. The word *akar* means the visible expanse or simply the expanse. Taking the three components of *Ik Oamkar* together, then, we can say that it means **One Universal Being**.”

Pritam Singh [25] has also mentioned that:

1. The members of *Udasis* and *Nirmalas* accept ‘O’ as ‘Om’. (This was also reported by Joginder Singh [22].)
2. Bhai Santokh Singh expressed his view that Guru (Nanak) did not at all deviate from Vedas.
3. (Pundit Tara Singh) Narottam believes that the text beginning with ‘O’ and ending with ‘*Prasad*’ original revelation granted by Lord Vishnu to Guru Nanak to represent mystic essence of Veda.

Parma Nand [16] also in that Seminar defines *Oamkar* as follows:

Ek Oamkar means ‘One God’. ‘Om’ is the proper name of God and *kar* is grammatically a suffix added to it to denote the sound of ‘Om’. According to the following *Vartika Sutra* of Panini, this suffix *kara* is added in the sense of *nirdesa* (denotation: “*Varnatkarah*: 2227). The examples are *akara*, *Kakara* which means the sound of ‘A’ and ‘K’, respectively. R. B. Prahlad C. Diwanjee explains the phrase *Oamkara* in his Critical Word Index to the Bhagavad Gita:

Oamkara: *Om* is the sound produced by the word (*kar*) while recited/pronounced during recitation. Again he says “the particular sound, produced by the pronunciation of the syllable *OM*”.

Thus grammatically *Oamkara* means the sound Om.

Teja Singh [29] says that ੴ (*Ohm*) was already being used and Guru Nanak added ‘*kar*’ and a new word, ‘ੴਕਾਰੁ’ (*Omkar*), was coined:

“*Sade des vich sargun rup lai Om sabad age hi prachalit si. Guru ji de vele ih, wadha kita gia ki ‘Om’ di than ‘Oamkar’ sabad banaia gia ate is da bhav ih ki uh wahiguru jisda prakash lagatar hunda rahe.*”

But Parma Nand [16] refuted his claim by saying that it is partly wrong: “*The word Oamkar has not been created or*

introduced during the time of our great Gurus. I have already given a number of quotations containing the word Om as well as Oamkar, used in the same sense.” He further mentioned that the only thing Guru Nanak did was to add numeral ‘1’ to confirm the ‘Oneness’ of God but this characteristic is also accepted in Vedas and Upanishads. Moreover, the historical fact about the existence of Oamkar Temple thousands of years before Guru Nanak’s visit to this temple in South India also supports that ‘*Oamkar*’ or ‘*Oankar*’ was not coined by Guru Nanak.

Bhai Vir Singh [from Ref. # 25] considers numeral ‘1’ as an independent entity, not as adjective for ‘Open Oora’. Pritam Singh [25] emphasizes that in spite of unmistakable figure 1 which precedes ‘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 *matra* added to them, make *Oankaar*. *Akar* (a) means Brahma (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.

With this seminar held at the Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar the pronunciation of logo, ੴ, has been permanently stamped as Om + Kar or Oam + Kar by the Sikhs and non-Sikh scholars.

(Note: Different authors have used different spellings for ‘Om’ (‘Oam’ or ‘Aum’) thus their spellings have been maintained in this paper.)

Now it has become an established fact in the Sikh psyche that < is *Ek Oankar*, *Ek Onkar*, *Ek Omkar*, *Ek Oamkar*, or ‘*Aumkaar*’, which originated from *OM*.

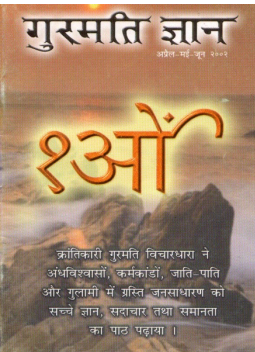
The following observation of Parma Nand [16] about the addition of numeral ‘1’ is worth noting:

“This figure ‘1’ placed before ‘*Oankaar*’ 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, and Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva formed the Trinity as creator, preserver and destroyer, respectively. 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 others, 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 also to be so.

Countless male and female divinities were also regarded as gods and goddesses. 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)."



However, 'One and Only' God of Guru Nanak does not represent any of the above gods mentioned by Perma Nand [16]. The God of Guru Nanak neither represents the **Trinity** as represented by Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva in facing figure; nor comes into anthropomorphic form on this Earth.



ੴ TO ੴ

From the above discussion it becomes very clear that even the members of Dharam Parchar Committee of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), Amritsar are also under the strong influence of ancient philosophy and mythology. A monthly magazine, *Gurmat Gian*, in Hindi is published by the Dharam Parchar Committee of SGPC. This committee is so much under the influence of Vedic and Vedantic philosophies that it had structurally misconstrued ੴ into 'Ek Aumkaar' by adding a line coming out of *Aum* as is found in 'Open Oora' in ੴ on the title page of the July 2002 issue of *Gurmat Gian*.

Soon the Dharam Parchar Committee realized their blunder and issued a notice in its next issue of '*Gurmat Gian*' that ੴ should never be misrepresented as ੴ by any writer or scholar. But still they are not aware of the fact that ੴ (Open Oora) does not represent 'Oankaar' or

'Aumkaar'. Nevertheless, I have noticed that ੴ has already started to appear on some Web sites and in many writings in print form.

It is apparent from the above discussion that the Sikh theologians and scholars have encouraged some scholars like, Parma Nand [16] 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 'Aum' (ੴ) in Upanishads and in declaring the 'Commencing Verse' as Mool Mantra according to Vedic formula for declaring a word or phrase as mantra or Mool Mantra.

And they have also encouraged other Hindus on Internet to say so as reported by Prem Sanjeev, the member of two popular Sikh Internet Discussion Groups (Sikh Diaspora and Gurmat Learning Zone) as follows:

"Om is the essence of the Vedas. The Upanishads and the Geeta glorify it. With this one sacred syllable all Vedic mangalaacharans are considered done. By remembering and invoking the Lord as Om, Shri Guru Nanak Dev dutifully maintains the Vedic paramparaa or 'tradition', for that new philosophy which disregards age-old wisdom can never bear fruit. When new thoughts or ideologies are based upon the wisdom of the ancient, they have not only the fragrance and freshness of the new but also the strength and tenacity of the old. Saints never come into this world to destroy the link with the ancient; rather, they come to fulfill the wisdom of the past. Shri Guru Nanakji did the same. The approach was new, but the knowledge was not. The language was different, but the essence the same."

Many of the members of both the Internet Discussion Forums accepted ੴ as Ek Oankaar.

WHAT DOES THIS LOGO, ੴ, STAND FOR?

I have been working with many scholars to understand what does this logo, ੴ, stand for? It was Dr Parminder Singh Chahal (my son) 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, ੴ, with an open end. The numeral '1' (One) should be pronounced as 'Ek' and the letter ੴ (Oora) with open end as 'Oh'. Our further research leads us to find that letter ੴ (Open Oora) means ੴ (Oh) in Punjabi-English Dictionary [13]. And also in *Mahan Kosh* of Bhai Kahn Singh [23] the letter ੴ (Open Oora) means ੴ (Oh). Besides ੴ (Open Oora) also means 'astonishing',

‘marvellous’ or ‘wondrous’ in *Mahan Kosh* as discussed previously. ‘Oh’ in English also means ‘That’ and strong emotional reaction such as surprise, shock, pain, extreme pleasure or used to introduce short phrases that express a strong emotion, such as anger, shock, delight, or triumph [9]. The open end of ‘Oora’ has been further extended to characterize it as ਬੇਅੰਤ (*Beant* - Infinite) or ਅਨੰਤ (*Anant* – Infinite).

In some verses in Gurbani the God has been addressed as One and Only, Oh, and the Infinite. These attributes are explained as follows:

1 (One)

The ‘One’ in this logo represents as ‘One and Only’ according to Guru Nanak:

ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਏਕੈ ਹੈ ॥

ਏਕੈ ਹੈ ਭਾਈ ਏਕੈ ਹੈ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪ-੩੫੦.

My God¹ is One and Only^{2,3,4}, Hey Brother!
AGGS, M 1, p 350.

Guru Arjan has further strengthened this attribute as follows:

ਏਕੈ ਰੇ ਹਰਿ ਏਕੈ ਜਾਨੈ ॥

ਏਕੈ ਰੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖੁ ਜਾਨੈ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੫, ਪ-੫੩੫.

Hey Gurmukh!⁵ Comprehend^{3,6} the God as One and Only^{1,2,4}.

AGGS, M 5, p 535.

ਏਕੈ ਮਹਿ ਸਰਬੈ ਸਰਬੈ ਮਹਿ ਏਕੈ ॥

ਏਹ ਸਤਿ ਗੁਰਿ ਦੇਖੈ ਦਿਖਾਈ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੫, ਪ-੯੦੭.

The True⁵ Guru⁶ has shown⁷ (me) the vision⁷ that the One¹ is in everything² and everything² is the One⁴.

AGGS, M 5, p 907.

Here ਸਤਿ ਗੁਰਿ (Sat Guru) means Guru Nanak since Nanak has been accepted as Guru by Guru Angad, Guru Amardas, Guru Ramdas, Guru Arjan.

ਨਾਨਕ ਵਰਤੈ ਇਕੋ ਇਕੁ ਤੂੰ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੫, ਪ-੯੬੬.

"Nanak Says:

You⁴, the One and Only^{2,3}, pervade¹ everywhere.

AGGS, M 5, p 966.

I may add here that some scholars may quote the following verse of Guru Nanak to justify that he himself says that God is ‘One’ in Veda:

ਬੇਦੀ ਵਖਾਣੈ ਕਹਿਹਿ ਇਕੁ ਕਹੀਐ ॥

ਓਹੁ ਬੇਅੰਤ ਅੰਤੁ ਕਿਨਿ ਲਹੀਐ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪ-੧੧੮੮-੮੯.

But critical study of the above phrase shows here ਬੇਦ/ਵੇਦ means knowledge/wisdom according to Bhai Kahn Singh [24] and Dr Gurcharan Singh [19], although ਬੇਦ/ਵੇਦ also means, sacred books in Hinduism. Therefore, the above phrase should be interpreted as follows:

Intellectual¹ deliberation² reveals⁴ that It (God) is ‘One’³.

The Oh⁵ (God) is Infinite⁶ and nobody⁸ has found⁹ its limit⁷.

AGGS, M 1, p 1188-89.

Another example ਬੇਦ/ਵੇਦ means knowledge/wisdom to justify the above interpretation is found in JAP:

ਅਹਰਣਿ ਮਤਿ ਵੇਦੁ ਹਥਿਆਰੁ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਜਪੁ ੩੮, ਪ-੮.

Wisdom² should be anvil¹ and knowledge³ be the tools⁴.

AGGS, Jap 38, p 8.

Therefore, it is wrong to say that Guru Nanak was following Vedic philosophy to address God as ‘One’.

The following verses of Guru Nanak further confirms that God to be ‘One’ there is no other like the God:

ਵੈਵੈ ਨਦਰਿ ਕਰੇ ਜਾ ਦੇਖੈ ਦੂਜਾ ਕੋਹੀ ਨਾਹੀ ॥

ਏਕੈ ਰਵਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਸਭ ਥਾਈ ਏਕੈ ਵਸਿਆ ਮਨ ਮਾਹੀ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪ-੪੩੩.

When blessed², I saw³ that there is no⁵ second⁴ (other).

The One⁶ pervades⁷ everywhere^{8,9} and the One¹⁰ also pervades¹¹ in my mind¹².

AGGS, M 1, p 433.

Note: ਵੈਵੈ is a letter of Gurmukhi script used just to start the phrase, a style of writing poetry.

ਜਿਨਿ ਸਿਰਿ ਸਾਜੀ ਤਿਨਿ ਫੁਨਿ ਗੋਈ ॥

ਤਿਸੁ ਬਿਨੁ ਦੂਜਾ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪ-੩੫੫.

The One, Who has created², the same One can destroy³.

For me there is no other⁶ (second⁵) than the One⁴.

AGGS, M 1, p 355.

I may further add here that the attribute ‘One’ to God means that God is ‘One and Only’ and there is no other like; and It (God) does not exist in Trinity and does not come into anthropomorphic form as is accepted in Vedic and Vedantic philosophies.

ਓ (ਓਹੁ - Oh) (meaning ‘That’)

ਨਾ ਓਹੁ ਮਰੈ ਨ ਹੋਵੈ ਸੋਗੁ ॥ ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪ- ੯.

Oh (That - God) does not die; thus there is no reason to mourn.

AGGS, M 1, p 9.

Note: Here ‘That’ stands for God since Guru Nanak does not like to use any descriptive or specific name for God.

ਓਹੁ¹ ਬਿਧਾਤਾ² ਮਨੁ³ ਤਨੁ⁴ ਦਇ⁵ ॥ ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ੫-੯੩੧.
Oh¹, (That - God)² blesses³ the mind³ and body⁴.
 AGGS, M 1, p 931.

‘Extended End of Open Oora’ represents the Infinity of God:

ਗੁਮੁਖੀ¹ ਬੇਅੰਤੁ² ਧਿਆਈ³ ਅੰਤ⁴ ਨ ਪਾਰਾਵਾਰੁ⁵ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ੫ ੯੩੬.

The Guru-oriented¹ contemplates³ the Infinite², Who has no limit⁴ or end⁵.

AGGS, M 1, p 936.

ਤਾ¹ ਕੇ ਅੰਤ² ਨ ਪਾਏ³ ਜਾਹਿ ॥

ਏਹੁ ਅੰਤ⁴ ਨ ਜਾਣੇ⁵ ਕੋਇ⁶ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਜਪੁ ੨੪, ੫-੫.

*The infiniteness² of That¹ cannot be comprehended³.
 (In fact) Nobody⁶ knows⁵ its infiniteness⁴.*

AGGS, Jap 24, p 5.

If we examine the above phrases, it is clear again that in Nanakian Philosophy God has been addressed as **ੴ: 1 (One) stands for 'One and Only', ਓ stands for 'Oh' ('That'), and Extended end stands for 'Infinite'.** Therefore, **ੴ** can be pronounced as **ਇਕੁ ਓ ਬੇਅੰਤ (Ek Oh Beant)** in Punjabi. And as **'The One and Only, Oh ('That'), the Infinite'** in English.

Now let us consider if this **1 (One)** used in **ੴ** is **‘Singularity’** as understood by scientists?

This ‘Singularity’ is also called ‘Nothingness’ by other scientists.

WHAT IS NOTHINGNESS OR SINGULARITY?

The following information about 1 (One) used in **ੴ** as ‘Nothingness’ or ‘Singularity’ would further strengthened our thesis that **ੴ** is an original and unique logo designed by Guru Nanak to represent God.

‘Nothingness’ has been defined by Kaup [14] as follows: “Nothingness Theory defines nonexistence as being the absence of existence, the absence of nothingness, and the absence of absence. It is what is not being referred-to under any circumstances. Nonexistence by definition is that which cannot be referred-to, named, or defined. So referring to it in any way violates its strict definition. But this fundamental paradox is at the basis of Nothingness Theory and must be referred-to anyway. Despite it’s not being, absolute nonexistence exerts a detectable force. We have proven through simple logic that the Universe has and always will exist. Therefore, the Universe must have existed before the “Big Bang” and will exist forever. This

also means that the state of nothingness from which the Universe burst into existence must have existed relative to absolute nonexistence given that absolute nonexistence is not achievable. So space/time – matter/energy can attain relative nonexistence by collapsing into infinite density, which is a uniform state of static equilibrium. Examples of this state of relative nonexistence can be seen throughout the Universe in the form of **‘black holes’.**” A black hole is the pinnacle of perfectly symmetrical uniformity of energy, matter, space, and time.

Therefore, ‘Nothingness’ does not mean ‘without anything’. But it is in a so small volume that it appears to be ‘Nothingness’. According to the ‘Big Bang Theory’ the energy was in such a small volume that has been termed as **‘Nothingness’** by some and as **‘Singularity’** by others. This ‘Nothingness’ is termed as **suMn (SUNN)** by Guru Nanak. It is also termed as **‘Jyot’** (highly condensed energy) by him.

Will it be out of place to call the **‘Singularity’**, from which everything originated, the state of the Universe before Big Bang, as **‘1’ (One)** placed before the **ਓ (Oh - That) of ੴ ?**

Still another question:

Is not this **‘One’** of Guru Nanak as the **‘Singularity’** of scientists in which space/time – matter/energy has attained relative nonexistence by collapsing into infinite density, which is a uniform state of static equilibrium?

And this equilibrium is represented by Guru Nanak in the form of a logo as follows:

ੴ = 1 + ਓ + ∞

ੴ = Singularity + Oh (That) + Infinite

Could we infer from the above dismantled **ੴ** that the **‘One’ (‘Singularity’ = energy/matter - space/time)** is **‘That’**, which is **‘Infinite’** from which the whole Universe appeared after Big Bang.

WAHT IS ਸੁੰਨ (SUNN)?

This **‘1’ (One)**, accepted as ‘Singularity’ or ‘Nothingness’ by scientists is **SUNN** of Guru Nanak described as follows:

ਸੁੰਨੁ ਸੁੰਨੁ ਕਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੋਈ ॥ ਅਨਹਤ ਸੁੰਨੁ ਕਰਾ ਤੇ ਹੋਈ ॥

ਅਨਹਤ ਸੁੰਨਿ ਰਤੇ ਸੇ ਕੈਸੇ ॥ ਜਿਸ ਤੇ ਉਪਜੇ ਤਿਸ ਹੀ ਜੈਸੇ ॥

ਓਇ ਜਨਮਿ ਨ ਮਰਹਿ ਨ ਆਵਹਿ ਜਾਹਿ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਮਨੁ ਸਮਝਾਹਿ ॥੫੨॥

AGGS, M 1, 943.

In the first four phrases Guru Nanak is saying that everyone talks about *Sunn*. But where did *Sunn* come from?

*Everyone speaks about the Sunn (Nothingness).
How did Infinite Sunn (Nothingness) originated?
How^s can one understand the Infinite Sunn (Nothingness)?*

Then Guru Nanak answers it as follows:
*From which That (Nothingness) originated it becomes like
That (Nothingness) again.*

Guru Nanak is explaining that when Nothingness became the Universe after the Big Bang then it will go back to Nothingness. There is evidence that **Black Hole** is appearing somewhere in our galaxy and possibly in other galaxies and these Black Holes will lead to the formation of Nothingness again.

The philosophy in phrase “ਜਿਸ ਤੇ ਉਪਜੇ ਤਿਸ ਹੀ ਜੈਸੇ ॥” has been strengthened by Guru Arjan as follows:

ਕਈ ਬਾਰ ਪਸਰਿਓ ਪਾਸਾਰ ॥ ਸਦਾ ਸਦਾ ਇਕੁ ਏਕੰਕਾਰ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: ੫, ੫ - ੨੭੬.

The Universe came into existence many times but God remained 'One and Only' all the time.
AGGS, M 5, p 276.

Now in the last two phrases in the above verse # 52 Guru Nanak is indicating that this **Sunn (Nothingness) is God** for him, Who does not take birth or dies as follows:

That It (Sunn) neither takes birth nor dies nor come into cycle of lives.

(Meaning it was always there in one or other form.)

Finally, Guru Nanak advises that try to understand this **God as Sunn (Nothingness)**:

Oh Guru-oriented! Orientate your mind so that you understand the above fact. 52.

AGGS, M 1, p 943.

Guru Nanak further says that **Sunn** gave rise to Universe (everything including living and non-living):

ਸੁੰਨਹੁ ਚੰਦੁ ਸੂਰਜੁ ਗੈਣਾਰੇ ॥

ਤਿਸ ਕੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣ ਸਾਰੇ ॥

ਸੁੰਨੇ ਅਲਖ ਅਪਾਰ ਨਿਰਾਲਮੁ ਸੁੰਨੇ ਤਾੜੀ ਲਾਇਦਾ ॥੫॥

AGGS, M 1, p 1037.

*Sunn is Infinite and without any attribute was in Itself.
This Sunn gave rise to stars, planets and space/time from the same source of Energy of Sunn.*

Guru Nanak has also explained that first elements were formed from the elementary particles from this Sunn

(Nothingness or Singularity) which gave rise to Suns and planets and galaxies in this Universe:

ਪੰਚ ਤਤੁ ਸੁੰਨਹੁ ਪਰਗਾਸਾ ॥ ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ੫ - 1038.

Five Elements appeared from this Sunn.

AGGS, M 1, p 1038.

It can be concluded from the above discussion on ‘SUNN’ of Guru Nanak that his ‘SUNN’ is ‘Nothingness’ or ‘Singularity’ as described by scientists in which space/time - matter/energy has attained relative nonexistence by collapsing into infinite density, which is a uniform state of static equilibrium. Therefore, this ‘SUNN’ (Nothingness/Singularity) after Big Bang gave rise to elementary particles then to protons, neutrons, electrons, neutrinos, and anti-matter. The combination of one proton and one electron formed first element, **Hydrogen**. By addition of one more each of proton and electron gave rise to second element, **Helium**. So with each addition of proton and electron more new elements were formed.

The ‘*panj tatt*’ (five elements) mentioned in the above phrase of Guru Nanak means five elements as Hydrogen, Carbon, Oxygen, Nitrogen, and Phosphorus, which gave rise to the DNA (Deoxyribonucleic Acid) molecule which is called ‘**Thread of Life**’. There is no life without DNA on this Earth. On the contrary the five elements in ancient philosophy are: Earth, Sky, Water, Air, and Ether, which are in fact either compounds or mixture of various elements.

The above discussion of SUNN leads us to accept that ‘**1**’ (**One**) of Guru Nanak in **ੴ** represents the ‘Singularity’ of scientists in which space/time - matter/energy has attained relative nonexistence (Nothingness) by collapsing into infinite density, which is a uniform state of static equilibrium.

ੴ - THE LOGO

Now it is the time to sum up the description of the logo, **ੴ** designed by Guru Nanak, scientifically and logically.

The logo, **ੴ**, has been dissembled for explanation as follows:

ੴ = 1 + ਓ + ∞

‘**1**’ represents ‘**Oneness**’ (**Singularity**) – the state of God.

‘**ਓ**’ (**Open Oora**) represents God as ‘**Oh**’ since there is no descriptive/specific name for God.

‘∞’ (**Extended end of Open Oora**) represents **infinity** (**ਬੇਅੰਤ - Beant**) of **ਓ** (**Oh**).

Therefore ੴ = Singularity + Oh (That) + Infinity.

If it is so then we may infer that God is OH (THAT) where space/time – energy/matter is in INFINITELY small ONE unite (SINGULARITY) which looks like ‘NOTHINGNESS’ but became the Universe after the Big Bang.

The above analysis clearly indicates that the logo, ੴ, designed by Guru Nanak can be pronounced as **ieku E byAMq (Ek Oh Beant)** in Punjabi. And as **'The One and Only, Oh (That), the Infinite'** in English.

Is this description of ੴ described above correct or that where the earlier theologians like Bhai Gurdas and *Faridkot Wala Teeka*) have declared ੴ as *Ek Oankaar* or *Ek Onkaar* or *Ek Omkaar*, which represents OM (AUM) – the Trinity (Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh) according to Vedic and Vedantic philosophies?

Now I would like to pose the following question to the theologians and philosophers of the world:

Are the modern scientists and the philosophers not thinking about God on the same line as conceptualized by Guru Nanak during 15th and 16th centuries?

CONSEQUENCES

Personal discussion with scholars of Sikhi indicated that they want to stick to their own conviction to pronounce ੴ as *ਏਕੁ ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ (Ek Oankaar)* originating from AUM (OM). In that case they are strengthening the view of scholars like Parma Nand [16] in denigrating the originality and uniqueness of Guru Nanak as follows:

“ੴ is not a new word coined by Guru Nanak but he borrowed it from Upanishads because 'Oankaar' or 'Omkaar' 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 [16].”

CONCLUSIONS

ੴ is being misunderstood since the time of Bhai Gurdas when he declared that ਓ(Open Oora) in ੴ as *Oankaar*, thereafter, ਓ(Open Oora) was interpreted as Om or Aum by *Faridkot Wala Teeka*. But our present research confirms that:

1. There is no evidence in Gurbani incorporated in the AGGS that ਓ(Open Oora) is a abbreviation of ਓਅੰਕਾਰ (*Oankaar*).
2. The **1 (One)** in ੴ is in fact space/time – energy/matter highly concentrated in a Single Point, ‘**Singularity**’, which looks like ‘**Nothingness**’ for some scientists and ‘**Sunn**’ for Guru Nanak.

3. ੴ cannot be represented as ‘*Ek Oankaar*’ or ‘*Ek Aumkaar*’ or ‘*Ek Omkaar*’ since these words are ਕਿਰਤਮ ਨਾਮ (descriptive/specific names) which represent AUM or OM (Trinity of God).

4. In ੴ **1** stands for 'One and Only', ਓ stands for 'Oh' ('That'), and Extended end of ੴ (**Open Oora**) stands for 'Infinite'. Therefore, in Punjabi ੴ can be pronounced as *ਏਕੁ ਓ ਬੇਅੰਤ (Ek Oh Beant)* and in English ੴ can be pronounced as 'The One and Only, Oh (That), the Infinite'.

Finally, it can be concluded that if we, the Sikh theologians and scholars, insist that ੴ is ‘Ek Oankaar’ or ‘Ek Aumkaar’ or ‘Ek Omkaar’ then we are establishing that Guru Nanak has no originality and uniqueness in coining ੴ, the Logo of his philosophy, rather he was preaching and teaching Vedic and Vedantic philosophies.

THE CHOICE IS OURS.**REFERENCES**

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Natural Philosophy is a term applied to the study of nature and the physical universe that was dominant before the development of modern science; it involves the study of nature in all its various dimensions

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