AMRIT BANI AS A
TRAJECTORY OF A DISTINCT IDENTITY

Charan Singh, et al*

Educational Researcher, Centennial College, Toronto

gurbanivichar@gmail.com

(*This paper is collectively prepared by some members of Sikh Translation Group
and presented on their behalf by Charan Singh)

ABSTRACT

Sikh means a learner, and Sikhi is about learning and training. Sikhi as a pedagogy and particularly its linguistic characteristics manifested through Amrit Bani (AB- ਅਬ) have been least researched in the past. Linguistic anthropology studies language as a solid resource for identity production. Interestingly, distinct Sikh identity is neatly interwoven into Amrit Bani (AB-ਅਬ) that enshrines and illuminates the Sikh Source – Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS). AB is not merely an abstract of the metaphysical description of self, rather it offers an analytical study of the nature of self and its social-cultural, and cross-cultural dimensions. Using AB, this self, hones into an instrument for social coherence. Guru Nanak used language as a tool for social harmony and coherence. Reviewing several other methods used by mankind to find meaning of life, Nanak suggests speaking AB (synonymously: *GuNno Boli* – GB (ਗੁਣੁ ਬੋਲਿ *guNu bol*) or Sweet speech / *Mithee Boli* - MB (ਮਿਠੀ ਬੋਲਿ) for day to day conversation and also to seek advance knowledge using Gumukhi script. AB helps to communicate with one another to harmonize inside and outside of human beings. We will illustrate how AB (ਅਬ) has unique characteristics that remain under-explored by researchers and how AB (ਅਬ) originates Gurmukh (*GoRMoiKh*- ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ) from "Only One" (*UoaN* - ੴ) letter (*AeKo AKhRo* - ਏਕੁ ਅਖਰੁ). It is hoped that exploring *AB* (ਅਬ) linguistically will meet the IUS conference 2013 objectives and help in better "Formulating Methodology for Interpreting Gurbani".

Some Most Advanced Order Linguistic Characteristics

The thesis of Amrit Bani (AB -ਅਬ) as a trajectory of a distinct identity of Sikhs pivots around AB as a language and yet distinct from other languages – that Mėhlā 5 (Nanak 5) explains in AGGS on page 747 (ਕਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਪਾਖੰਡ ਜੋ ਦੀਸਹਿ ਤਿਨ ਜਮੁ ਜਾਗਾਤੀ ਲੂਟੈ ॥Karam dharam pakhand jo dīsėh tin jam jāgātī lūtai) and suggests unique to Sikhi, a solution a ਨਿਰਬਾਣੁ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਕਰਤੇ ਕਾ ਨਿਮਖ ਸਿਮਰਤ ਜਿਤੁ ਛੁਟੈ ॥੧॥ Nirbāṇ kīrṯan gāvhu karṯe kā nimakh simraṯ jiṯ chhūtai. ॥1॥ also - ਏਕੁ ਅਖਰੁ ਜੋ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਜਾਪੈ ਤਿਸ ਕੀ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਸੋਈ ॥੩॥ Ėk akhar jo gurmukh jāpai ṯis kī nirmal so˗ī. ॥3॥) In the above reference sabd, the terms to be understood very clearly are what is 1) *Nirbāṇ kīrṯan*, 2) *Ėk akhar* and 3) Gurmukh ? Because with these three AB becomes a language with characteristics of Some Most Advanced Order (SMAO - ਸਮਾਉ).

Amrit Bani (AB - ਅਬ) and *Kachi Bani* (KB - ਕਬ) Nanak introduces several objective measurement tools to distinguish characteristics of AB (ਅਬ) as *SMAO* (ਸਮਾਉ) and then termed other languages as raw languages / *Kachi Bani* (KB – ਕਚੀ ਬਾਣੀ) or un-honed or decayed speech/ *Khari* ਬੋਲੀ (KB - ਖਾਰੀ ਬੋਲੀ / ਖੜੀ ਬੋਲੀ) as distinguished from Amrit Bani (AB- ਅਬ) / *GuNno Boli* (GB - ਗੁਣੁ ਬੋਲੀ). Indo-Eurpoean languages including Punjabi and several others languages may appear to be phonetically similar or may have near

identical shapes of their alphabets to AB (ਅਬ) / Gurmukhi script. Punjabi uses Gurmukhi alphabets and is like a peripheral to what at the core is termed as AB (ਅਬ) / GB (ਗੁਣ ਬੋਲੀ). However, these languages may be understood as *Kachi* Bani (KB) from AB's *SMAO* characteristics perspective. Guru Nanak doesn't leave speakers of other languages at a disadvantage. AB encourages users, speakers of these KB (ਕਬ) languages, on how to adopt to the *SMAO* (ਸਮਾਉ) characteristics of AB – these users can thus equally benefit. Thus a larger societal transformation and peaceful co-existence amongst different communities can happen through the simple use of language only by adopting bench marked characteristics of AB. Nanak advises how to simply shift KB into AB.

Building Blocks of Amrit Bani (AB-ਅਬ)- Sabd (ਸਬਦੁ)

AB (ਅਬ) defines a term : *Sabd* (ਸਬਦੁ) and its characteristic (*GoNno* Bolee - ਗੁਣ ਬੋਲੀ) AB's mined data from AGGS suggest *Sabd* (ਸਬਦੁ) is a composite term of four uniqueness converged into One Word(1) Listening (*SoNni* - ਸੁਣਿ) (2) Speaking (*Boli* - ਬੋਲੀ) , (3) See (*Disae* - ਦਿਸੈ) and (4) See – (*Dikhaaiaa* - ਦੀਖਿਆ) Insightfulness / Reflections/ Meaning/ Intuition/Teaching (*Dikhia -Vichariaa*).These four - B4 (*Beechar*- ਬੀਚਾਰੁ) - are the foundation of AB.

(**Editorial Note**: Complete paper was not submitted.)