

MANTRA SYSTEM

ARTICLE

Prof Devinder Singh Chahal, PhD

Institute for Understanding Sikhism
Laval, Quebec, H7W 5L9
Email: sikhism@iuscanada.com

The Vedas are mantric teachings. They consist of various mantric chants or hymns cognized by different seers or Rishis from the Cosmic Mind. They set forth Dharma or natural law, which is a mantra in manifestation.

(Frawley, 2017)

THE MANTRA SYSTEM IN HINDUISM

According to Frawley, 2017 in Hinduism, a mantra (literally meaning man, to repeat and tra, the power) is a sacred and spiritually beneficial word. By chanting a mantra repeatedly with love and devotion, a person can become spiritually illumined by developing a pure mind which enables a person to see God. Each mantra has a presiding deity who is supposed to give the results of chanting the mantra.

There are different forms of mantra, such as the seed (bija) mantra, which is thought to be energy pervading the human body and the Universe. The deities are believed to be manifestations of bija mantras; Shiva, for example, is linked with the mantra hrim, and Kali is associated with the mantra Krim.

Some mantras are purported to accomplish many wondrous deeds simply by correctly chanting them. Other mantras supposedly help purify one's consciousness, give spiritual enlightenment, and put one in touch with the Supreme. Hindus also believe that a mantra received from a saint or holy man is far more effective than mantras chosen from a book.

Two mantras are especially recommended in Vedic literature. One is Omkara or the Om mantra; the other

ABSTRACT

Originally in Hinduism and Buddhism, a word or sound is repeated to aid concentration in meditation. Most of the time, people repeat or chant a word or a phrase so that their wishes are granted. A religious leader or a Sant /Baba also gives a word or phrase to be repeated to get their wishes granted when initiating their follower. This article contains different types of mantras: Mool Mantra, Mahan Mantra, Naam Mantra, Bij Mantra, Bani Mantra, Vaheguru Mantra, etc., found in the Sikh Scripture (Aad Guru Granth Sahib- AGGS) have been discussed if these are simple mantra or used as metaphors.

is the Hare Krishna maha-mantra. Hindus believe these two mantras can bring one to the realm beyond material existence. There are many more mantras; for example,

Popular Mantras: Sacred symbol of Om, Namaskar mantra, Hrim, Krim, Hum, Shrim, the Four Great Goddess mantra, the Maha-Mrityunjaya mantra, the Gayatri mantra, Shiva Prarthana, Shiva Dhun, etc.

OM

OM (or Aum) Sanskrit: ॐ, ओम् (Ōm) is the sound of a sacred spiritual symbol in Hinduism. The meaning and connotations of Om vary in different schools of Hinduism. Om does not have any purpose in the actual form. Om is not the word. The word is made in the creation and everything from creation because all creation is in Om, so Om can not be known. Only experience can be done, and Om will be experienced only when there is no thought, desire, dream, or expectation, and the mind is completely calm. Om can not be created, nor has it been done because Om has done the creation of the universe itself. Om means the origin of the three gods (Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva). All

errors and mental distortions can be corrected by chanting Om. If Om is spoken by true mind and concentration, then one experience of the three gods is in one place. (What Is Om, n.d.)

OM is also called “Omkaara”, which means different in Hinduism, Sanskrit, Jainism, Prakrit, and Hindi.

Alternative spellings of this word include “Onkar” or “Oankara:

Oṅkāra (ओङ्कार):—(rah) 1. m. The mysterious name of the Trinity; consent, agreement; power. f. (rā) Divine energy.

From the above information about OM, it can be easily inferred that the pioneer Sikh theologians, Bhai Gurdas, under the influence of Vedic and Vedantic philosophies, declared the ‘open oora’ in ਐਕਸ ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ (Oankaar) a modified form of ONKAR, or ANKARA which means Trinity.

RUDRAKSHA BEADS - ‘MIRACLE BEAD’

Rudraksha (rudrākṣa) is a stone fruit; its dried stones are used as prayer beads by Hindus (especially Shaivas), as well as by Buddhists, Sikhs, and Muslims. The Rudraksha stones are produced by several species of large, evergreen, broad-leaved trees in the genus *Elaeocarpus*; the principal species is *Elaeocarpus ganitrus*. According to Sadhguru, if one is wearing Ek mukhi (one-face), that one is asking for trouble. He recommends wearing panchmukhi (Five-faced beads) is safe and sound for everyone – man, woman, and child. It is for general well-being, health, and freedom. It lowers your blood pressure, calms your nerves, and brings a certain calmness and alertness to your nervous system. The Gauri-Shankar is a certain kind of Rudraksha that brings the wearer prosperity. Prosperity need not necessarily mean just money. Prosperity may come if you are a balanced person, and you function sensibly in your life. It happens when energies act well. (Sadhguru, 2020)

THE MANTRA SYSTEM IN SIKHISM

A brief study of the mantra system in Hinduism proves that Bhai Gurdas was the first Sikh theologian to declare ਐਕਸ ਏਕੁ ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ (Ek Oankaar) under the influence of the Veda and Vedanta philosophies. He has also said that the Commencing Verse of the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) (Aad Guru Granth Sahib, 1983) is a Mool Mantra in his Pauri 15 of Vaar 3 (J. Singh, n.d.) Later, Bhai K. Singh, 1981 and Prof S. Singh, 1972 also declared that ਐਕੁ

is Om, Aum, and ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ (Oankaar). Consequently, other Sikh theologians under the same influence and without properly understanding Nanakian Philosophy accepted the Commencing Verse (ਅੰਰਭਿਕ ਵਾਕ - Arambic Vaak) as Mool Mantra and introduced many other mantras into Sikhism.

After declaring the Commencing Verse as Mool Mantra, Bhai Gurdas was again the first who proposed that Vaheguru is the Gur Mantra in his Pauri 49 of Vaar 1:

VAHEGURU (ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੁ) GUR MANTRA –

BHAI GURDAS VAAR # 1 PAURI 49 (J. SINGH, N.D.)

ਸਤਿਜੁਗ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਵਾਸਦੇਵ ਵਵਾ ਵਿਸਨਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਾਵੈ।

Satijugi Satigur Vaasadayv Vavaa Visanaa Naamu Japaavai |

In Satyug, Vishnu in the form of Vasudev is said to have incarnated and ‘V’ Of Vahiguru reminds of Vishnu.

ਦੁਆਪੁਰਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਹਰੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਸਨ ਹਾਹਾ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਾਵੈ।

Duaapari Satigur Haree Krisan Haahaa Hari Hari Naamu Japaavai |

The true Guru of dvapar is said to be Harikrsna and ‘H’ of Vahiguru reminds of Hari.

ਤ੍ਰੇਤੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਰਾਮ ਜੀ ਰਾਰਾ ਰਾਮ ਜਪੇ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਵੈ।

Taytay Satigur Raam Jee Raaraa Raam Japay Sukhu Paavai |

In the treta was Ram and ‘R’ of Vahiguru tells that remembering Ram will produce joy and happiness.

ਕਲਿਜੁਗਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰ ਗੋਵਿੰਦ ਗਗਾ ਗੋਵਿੰਦ ਨਾਮੁ ਅਲਾਵੈ।

Kalijugi Naanak Gur Gobind Gagaa Gobind Naamu Alaavai |

In kali juga, Gobind is in the form of Nanak and ‘G’ of Vahiguru gets Govind recited.

ਚਾਰੇ ਜਾਗੇ ਚਹੁ ਜੁਗੀ ਪੰਚਾਇਣ ਵਿਚਿ ਜਾਇ ਸਮਾਵੈ।

Chaaray Jaagay Chahu Jugee Panchaain Vichi Jaai Samaavai |

The recitations of all the four ages subsume in Panchayan i.e. in the soul of the common man.

ਚਾਰੇ ਅਛਰ ਇਕੁ ਕਰਿ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੁ ਜਪੁ ਮੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਜਪਾਵੈ।

Chaaroo Achhar Iku Kari Vaahaguroo Japu Mantr Japaavai |

When joining four letters Vahiguru is remembered,

ਜਹਾਂ ਤੇ ਉਪਜਿਆ ਫਿਰਿ ਤਹਾਂ ਸਮਾਵੈ ॥੪੯॥੧॥

Jahaa Tay Upajiaa Firi Tahaa Samaavai ||49 ||1 ||

It (Vahiguru) merges back to its source of origin.

Note: I have spelled Vahiguru since Bhai Gurdas has used Vavva (V) first letter of (Vishnu).

Some scholars have raised several doubts about the authenticity of this pauri. A casual analysis of this Pauri indicates that it contradicts several principles of Nanakian Philosophy. Moreover, the Yuga system explained here is not consistent either with Hinduism or with that quoted by Guru Nanak in his bani. Furthermore, it is not clear who Gobind is who appeared in Kali Yuga. Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed, and Nanak also appeared during Kali Juga, but their names are not mentioned.

After that, some theologians picked up some phrases from Gurbani and declared them mantras under different names. Nirmal Singh Kalsi, 1996 has enumerated seven different types of mantras in his book, Beej Mantar. He has also tried to justify the various forms of mantras by quoting some stanzas from the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS). However, Nirmal Singh Kalsi agreed (personal communication) that he wrote them not as mantras but as mangals (songs sung on happy occasions). Let us examine if these are mantras or mangals or something else.

1. BIJ (SEED) MANTRA

The first part of the Commencing Verse, ੴ, is generally considered the bij (seed) mantra. But Nirmal Singh Kalsi, to support his view about Bij Mantra, quoted the following verse:

Bij (Seed) Mantra

ਬੀਜ ਮੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਹਰਿ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਗਾਉ ॥

Bīj manṭar har kīrtan gāo.

ਆਗੈ ਮਿਲੀ ਨਿਥਾਵੇ ਥਾਉ ॥

Āgai milī nithāve thāo.

Guru Arjun says:

By repeating Bij (seed) Mantra (praise of Hari God), the homeless people get homes in the next life in heaven.

AGGS, M 5, p 891.

It appears to be the mantra.

2. MOOL MANTRA

ਮੂਲ ਮੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਰਸਾਇਣੁ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਪੂਰਾ ਪਾਇਆ ॥੫॥

Mūl manṭar har nām rasāiṇ kaho Nānak pūrā pāiā.

॥5॥

Nanak says that people think they have understood the Complete One (the Eternal Entity) through the

basic formula, the name of Hari, which is the best of all other methods.

AGGS, M 1, p 1040.

To understand the above stanza in its real perspective, it is essential to understand the stanza before it:

ਸਚ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਤੁ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਨ ਪਾਵੈ ॥

Sach bin saṭ sanṭokḥ na pāvai.

Without practicing truth, one cannot achieve ever-existing contentment.

ਬਿਨੁ ਗੁਰ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਜਾਵੈ ॥

Bin gur mukaṭ na āvai jāvai.

Without enlightenment, one cannot achieve salvation from the so-called reincarnation.

If one considers the complete couplet, then the central theme comes out as that by practicing the truth and following the teachings of the Guru, one finds contentment and understands the Entity (the Divine Name) and achieves salvation, but not by the repetition of the name of Hari or the Mool Mantra.

3. MAHAN MANTRA

The Mahan mantra has been created by combining the Commencing Verse with the sloka of JAP bani as follows:

Commencing Verse and Sloka

ੴ

ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ
ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

Ik=oa'nkār saṭ nām karṭā purakḥ nirbhāo nirvair akāl mūraṭ
ajūnī saibḥa'n gur parsād.

The One and Only (Singularity) - That is infinite, Exists forever;

Source of every creation,

Without fear (not governed by any other),

Without enmity;

Timeless (without the effect of time),

Takes neither birth nor dies; (never comes into an anthropomorphic form);

Originated by Itself,

Enlightener; and Bounteous.

॥ ਜਪੁ ॥

Jap.

ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ ॥

Ād sach jugād sach.

ਹੈ5 ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥੧॥

Hai bhī sach Nānak hosī bhī sach. ||1||

AGGS, Sloka 1, Jap, p 1.

Was in existence² before the beginning of time and space¹;

Was in existence in the past³ (throughout the various ages);

Is in existence⁶ in the present⁵

Nanak says will remain in existence⁸ forever (in the future)⁷.

According to Prof. Sahib Singh, 1972 and Harbans Singh, 1988 ਸਚ (sach) and ਸਤਿ (sat) are interchangeable in their meanings; both mean “exist” and “true.” Here the ਸਚ (sach) has been interpreted as “exist.”

There is no sign of any mantra system either in the commencing Verse or in the sloka to support the idea to call it “Maha Mantra”; however, the following so-called “Maha Matra” may be the ‘Greatest Basic Principle of Nanakian Philosophy:

4. MAHA MANTRA (GREATEST BASIC PRINCIPLE)

Guru Arjun writes about the greatest principle of philosophy of Guru Nanak as follows:

ਮਹਾ¹ ਮੰਤ੍ਰ² ਨਾਨਕ ਕਥੈ³ ਹਰਿ⁴ ਕੇ ਗੁਣ⁵ ਗਾਈ⁶॥੪॥੨੩॥੫੩॥

Mahā manṭar Nānak kathai har ke guṇ gāi. ||4||23||53||

Nanak describes³ the greatest¹ principle² of his philosophy to understand⁶ (sing) the characteristics⁵ of the Hari (Vishnu god)⁴.

AGGS, M 5, p 814.

There is nothing about Mantra in the above phrase. Here again, Guru Arjun has used Hari (Visnu – one of the gods of the Trinity).

5. NAAM MANTRA

To support this view, the following verse is often quoted:

ਨੰਨਾਕਾਰੁ ਨ ਹੋਤਾ ਤਾ ਕਹੁ ॥

Nannākār na hoṭā tā kaho.

ਨਾਮੁ ਮੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਗੁਰਿ ਦੀਨੋ ਜਾ ਕਹੁ ॥

Nām manṭar gur dīno jā kaho.

Those, whom Guru has given Naam Mantra, do not come across any hurdle in their lives.

AGGS, M 5, p 257.

ਨਾਮੁ ਮੰਤ੍ਰੁ (Naam Mantar): Naam means ਹੁਕਮੁ (Hukm), i.e., the Laws of Nature/Universe. Guru Nanak explains Naam is Hukm as follow:

ਸਤਸੰਗਤਿ¹ ਕੈਸੀ² ਜਾਣੀ³ ॥

Saṭsangāṭ kaisī jāṇīai.

Question:

How² is the noble congregation¹ recognized³?

ਜਿਥੈ⁴ ਏਕੋ⁵ ਨਾਮੁ⁶ ਵਖਾਣੀ⁷ ॥

Jithai eko nām vakhāṇīai.

Answer:

The noble congregation is recognized where⁴ only one⁵ Naam⁶ is discussed/described⁷.

ਏਕੋ⁸ ਨਾਮੁ⁹ ਹੁਕਮੁ¹⁰ ਹੈ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ¹¹ ਦੀਆ ਬੁਝਾਇ¹² ਜੀਉ ॥੫॥

Éko nām hukam hai Nānak satgur dīā bujhāie jīo.

||5||

Nanak Says:

Nanak Says:

The truly enlightened¹¹ person disclosed¹² to me that there is only one⁸ Naam⁹, which is the hukam¹⁰ (Laws of Nature/Universe.)

AGGS, M 1, p 72.

NOTE: Many theologians consider Naam as a name of some deity or a phrase to be repeated..

Guru has explained ਹੁਕਮੁ (Hukm) in JAP Bani as follows:

ਹੁਕਮੈ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਭੁ ਕੇ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਹੁਕਮ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥

Hukmai andar sabh ko bāhar hukam na koie.

Every action and reaction in this Universe is going on under the Laws of Nature/Universe nothing is out of these laws.

Therefore, those who understands the Laws of Nature/ Universe and how to use them have yet to come across any hurdle in their lives.

6. BANI MANTRA

In support of this view, the following verse is often quoted:

Bani Mantra

ਬਾਣੀ ਮੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਮਹਾ ਪੁਰਖਨ ਕੀ ਮਨਹਿ ਉਤਾਰਨ ਮਾਂਨ ਕਉ ॥

Baṇī manṭar mahā purkhan kī maneh uṭāran mānn kaoo.

The Words of God, the Supreme, is the greatest mantra which eradicate pride in one's mind.

ਖੋਜਿ ਲਹਿਓ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਖ ਥਾਨਾਂ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮਾ ਬਿਸੁਮ ਕਉ ॥੨॥੧॥੨੦॥

Khoj lahio Nānak sukḥ thānān har nāmā bisrām kaoo.

||2||1||20||

And after searching Guru Arjun has found that Name of Hari (Vishnu) gives peace in mind. 2.1.20.

AGGS, M 5, p 1208.

It appears to be a mantra.

7. VAHEGURU MANTRA

Nirmal Singh Kalsi, 1996 supports his theory that Vaheguru is a mantra with verses from the Vaaran of Bhai Gurdas (J. Singh, n.d.), but his idea needs to be supported by something in Gurbani. Dr. Santokh Singh, 1993 has quoted many non-Gurbani sources, the unreliable Rehit Namay, Janam Sakhis, and Sarb Loh Granth, to prove that the Vaheguru Gurmantra was given by Guru Nanak. When Guru Nanak came out of the Vaein Nadi (a rivulet) after his three days stay in water, he declared that the Vaheguru Gurmantra was given to him by God for its recitation by the Sikhs. Bhai Gurdas (J. Singh, n.d.) also wrote that Guru Nanak coined Vaheguru. Based on the information given in Vaaran of Bhai Gurdas, Rehit Namae, Janam Sakhis, and Sarb Loh, now Vaheguru has been accepted as Gurmantra by almost all Sikhs. They ignore that these sources are fictional accounts and not accurate historical facts.

The word Vaheguru is neither found in the bani of Guru Nanak nor in the bani of any of the other Sikh Guru whose bani is incorporated in the AGGS. However, some theologians quote some verses from Bhattan de Swayiay for Guru Ram Das to support Vaheguru as Gurmatra. But they are ignoring the fact that Bhatt Gyand has used the term Vaheguru to address Guru Ram Das as Krishna:

ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਹਿ ਜੀਉ ॥

vāhigurū vāhigurū vāhigurū vāhi jīo.

Vaheguru, Vaheguru, Vaheguru and Vah (wow Guru Ramdas) Ji.

ਕਵਲ ਨੈਨ ਮਧੁਰ ਬੈਨ ਕੋਟਿ ਸੈਨ ਸੰਗ ਸੋਭ ਕਹਤ ਮਾ ਜਸੋਦ ਜਿਸਹਿ ਦਹੀ ਭਾਤੁ ਖਾਹਿ ਜੀਉ ॥

Kaval nain madhur bain kot sain sang sobh kahaṭ mā jasod jisahi dahī bhāṭ khāhi jīo.

Then he compares Guru Ram Das with baby Krishna.

You have lotus eyes, melodious speech, and the company of millions of friends; Mother Jasoda is calling him (Krishna) to eat curd and rice...

In the last phrase of this stanza Bhatt Gyand continues to compare Guru Ram Das to Krishna who pervades the whole Universe:

ਸਤਿ ਸਾਚੁ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਨਿਵਾਸੁ ਆਦਿ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਸਦਾ ਤੁਹੀ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਵਾਹਿ ਜੀਉ ॥੧॥੬॥

Saṭ sāch sarī nivās ād purakh sadā tuhī vāhigurū vāhigurū vāhigurū vāhi jīo. ||1||6||

You, Krishna (Guru Ram Das), exist forever, pervade in the Universe, and are the Primal Supreme being, Vaheguru, Vaheguru, Vaheguru and Vah (wow Guru Ramdas) Ji.
AGGS, Bhatt Gyand, p 1402.

Some supporters have tried to convince that the word Vaheguru was coined from the words 'Vaho' and 'Gur' as found in the following phrases of the Sikh Gurus:

ਨਾਨਕ ਵਾਹੁ ਵਾਹੁ ਕਰਤਿਆ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਪਾਇਆ ਕਰਮਿ ਪਰਾਪਤਿ ਹੋਇ ॥੧॥

Nānak vāhu vāhu kartiā parabh pāiā karam parāpaṭ hoie. ||1||

Guru Amardas says that:

By repeating Wonderful Wonderful..., God is obtained, and His Grace is also obtained

AGGS, M 3, p 514.

Guru Arjun repeats the same idea as follows:

ਵੇਮੁਹਤਾਜਾ ਵੇਪਰਵਾਹੁ ॥

vemuḥtājā veparvāhu.

ਨਾਨਕ ਦਾਸ ਕਹਹੁ ਗੁਰ ਵਾਹੁ ॥੪॥੨੧॥

Nānak dās kahhu gur vāhu. ||4||21||

That (God) is not dependent on anybody and is carefree.

Guru Arjun says:

Repeat! That Guru (God) is Wonderful.

AGGS, M 5, p 376.

Bhai Kahn Singh, 1981 also mentioned the same concept. However, it is Dr. Sahib Singh, 1972 who said that the word ਵਾਹੁ used in Gurbani should not be considered as an abbreviation of ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ. The words used by Guru Arjun are ਗੁਰ ਵਾਹੁ even reversing their positions will not make it ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ. There exists a theory as to why none of the first five Gurus and the ninth Gurus ever used Vaheguru as Gurmatra in their bani and that it was supposedly only Guru Gobind Singh who revealed Vaheguru as Gurmantra.

Those, who support the theory that Vaheguru remained a secret mantra till the 10th Guru revealed it, are misleading the Sikhs because Guru Gobind Singh never recommended to his Sikhs the recitation of Vaheguru in any of his Hukmnama (edict), recorded by Ganda Singh, 1985. In the foreword to the book of Ganda Singh, Kirpal Singh Narang wrote that all the hukmnamay started with ਐ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਤਿ (Ek Oh Beant guru sat) or ਐ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਤਿ ਜੀਓ (Ek Oh Beant guru sat jio) and with a blessing of ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਜਪਨਾ (Guru Guru japna). It was only Satbir Singh 1980 who has reported that a special hukmnam was written on May 25, 1699 (Jeth 26,

Sambat 1756) to the Sikhs of Kabul where ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ, ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜਪਨਾ (Vaheguru Vaheguru japna) has been recommended. It is worth noting that this hukmnama, reported by Satbir Singh in his book published in 1980, is not found in Ganda Singh's book published in 1967. It means Satbir Singh must have discovered this hukmnama after 1967, but he has not given the source of this unknown hukmnama.

It is evident from the above discussion that the word, Vaheguru, has been used as praise for Guru Ram Das by Bhatt Gyand. He also compared Guru Ram Das to Krishna (God) who pervades in the Universe. In fact, there is no place for mystical formulae and mantras in Gurbani since Guru Nanak condemns all types of mantras, tantras, and religious hypocrisy:

8. TANTAR MANTAR

ਤੰਤੁ¹ ਮੰਤੁ² ਪਾਖੰਡੁ³ ਨ ਜਾਣਾ⁴ ਰਾਮੁ⁵ ਰਿਦੈ⁶ ਮਨੁ⁷ ਮਾਨਿਆ⁸ ॥

Fantṭ mantṭ pakḥand na jāṇā rām riḍai man māniā.

ਅੰਜਨੁ⁹ ਨਾਮੁ¹⁰ ਤਿਸੈ¹¹ ਤੇ ਸੂਝੈ¹² ਗੁਰ¹³ ਸਬਦੀ¹⁴ ਸਚੁ¹⁵ ਜਾਨਿਆ¹⁶ ॥੪॥

Anjan nām tisai te sūḥai gur sabdī sach jāniā. ||4||

I (Nanak) do not believe⁴ in magical formulae¹ (Tantara), magical hymns² (mantra) (including diagrams of mystical characters), and religious hypocrisies³, because my mind⁷ has imbibed^{6,8} the Eternal Entity⁵ (Ram).

The collyrium⁹ is the Laws of Nature/Universe¹⁰ that¹¹ made (me) capable to search¹² then the Ever-existing (God)¹⁵ was understood¹⁶ through the enlightening¹³ philosophy¹⁴.

AGGS, M 1, p 766.

And

Herbal Magical Medicine, Tantra and Mantra are not accepted by Guru Nanak

ਅਵਰੁ¹ ਨ ਅਉਖਧੁ² ਤੰਤੁ³ ਨ ਮੰਤਾ⁴ ॥

Avar na a^oukḥadhḥ ṭantṭ na manṭā.

ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ⁵ ਸਿਮਰਣੁ⁶ ਕਿਲਵਿਖ⁷ ਹੰਤਾ⁸ ॥

Har har simraṇ kilvikḥ hanṭā.

There is no magical herbal medicine², tantra³ or mantra⁴ other¹ than to deliberate⁶ on the Hari (Visnu)⁵ to understand how to get ride⁸ of sins⁷.

AGGS, M 1, p 417.

Note: I do not understand why Guru Nanak has used Hari (Visnu) in this above phrase instead of Eternal Entity. However, Guru Arjun has not used Hari in the following verse. Is it an interpolation of Hari in the above stanza of Guru Nanak?

Guru Arjun does not accept Tantra Mantra as he expressed the above philosophy of Guru Nanak in his following phrase:

ਅਉਖਧ¹ ਮੰਤ੍ਰ² ਤੰਤ੍ਰ³ ਸਭਿ⁴ ਛਾਰੁ⁵ ॥

A^oukḥadhḥ manṭar ṭantṭ sabḥ ḥhār

ਕਰਣੈ⁶ ਹਾਰੁ⁷ ਰਿਦੈ⁷ ਮਹਿ ਧਾਰੁ⁸ ॥੩॥

Karṇaiḥār riḍe meh ḍhār. ||3||

Guru Arjun says:

The herbal medicine¹, mantra², tantra³ al⁴ are like ash⁵ (useless).

Instead, understand the Eternal Entity, the source creation of everything⁶, and keep⁸ it in your mind⁷.

AGGS, M 5, p 196.

NO EFFECT OF MANTRAS OR PRAYERS TO DEFEAT THE MUGHALS

When Babur attacked Hindustan, the following description is about the destruction of Saidpur. The King (Pathan) engaged millions of pirs (religious leaders) to pray that the soldiers of the Mughals be blinded, but none of the Mughal soldiers was blinded by such prayers. Guru Nanak explains it as follows:

ਕੋਟੀ ਹੂ ਪੀਰ ਵਰਜਿ ਰਹਾਏ ਜਾ ਮੀਰੁ ਸੁਣਿਆ ਧਾਇਆ ॥

Koṭī hū pīr varaj rahāe jā mīr suniā ḍhāiā.

When the Pathan Ruler heard that Mir, Mughal – Babur, was attacking then millions of religious leaders were engaged in prayer to God to stop the attack.

ਥਾਨ ਮੁਕਾਮ ਜਲੇ ਬਿਜ ਮੰਦਰ ਮੁਛਿ ਮੁਛਿ ਕੁਇਰ ਰੁਲਾਇਆ ॥

Thān mukām jale bij mandar muchḥ muchḥ kuir rulāiā.

Babur burned palaces (residences) strong temples (worship places) and, cut the princes limb by limb and mixed in the dust.

ਕੋਈ ਮੁਗਲੁ ਨ ਹੋਆ ਅੰਧਾ ਕਿਨੈ ਨ ਪਰਚਾ ਲਾਇਆ ॥੪॥

Koī mugal na hoā andḥā kinai na parchā lāiā. ||4||

None of the Mughals were blinded by the prayers and the miraculous powers of the religious leaders (to stop the attack).

AGGS, M 1, p 417-418.

9. SAT NAAM MANTRA

To support this view, the following verse of Guru Arjun is often quoted:

ਕਿਰਤਮ¹ ਨਾਮ² ਕਥੇ³ ਤੇਰੇ⁴ ਜਿਹਬਾ⁵ ॥

Kirtam nām kathe tere jihbā.

ਸਤਿ⁶ ਨਾਮੁ⁷ ਤੇਰਾ⁸ ਪਰਾ⁹ ਪੂਰਬਲਾ¹⁰ ॥

Saṭ nām ṭerā parā pūrbalā.

“Your tongue⁵ recites³ the descriptive¹ names² of That (Eternal Entity)⁴.”

But that Eternal Entity⁸ is without any descriptive/specific name⁷ but existed⁶ even before⁹ the beginning of space and time¹⁰.

AGGS, M 5, p 1083.

Suppose that Eternal Entity existed before the beginning of space and time then how can one assign any descriptive/specific name to that Eternal Entity today for repetition? Even then, various descriptive/specific terms of the Eternal Entity have been repeated/recited during different Yugas. According to Nanakian Philosophy, no descriptive/specific name can be assigned to the Eternal Entity, which has been conceptualized as a logo, ੴ, by Guru Nanak.

Therefore, Sat Naam is also not a mantra. It means the Eternal Entity, ੴ, without any descriptive/specific name which exists forever.

CONCLUSIONS

In Hinduism and Buddhism, many types of mantras are repeated by people. The Vedas are full of different kinds of mantras. Rudraksha (rudrākṣa) is a stone fruit; its dried stones are used as prayer beads by Hindus (especially Shaivas), as well as by the Buddhists, the Muslims, and the Sikhs. On the other hand, the logical and scientific analysis of the Commencing Verse indicates that it is a concise and precise definition of God. It cannot be called a Mool Mantra, Bij Mantra or any type of mantra because no such title was given to the Commencing Verse by Guru Nanak at the time of its writing. Similarly, Guru Arjun did not assign any title to the Commencing Verse even like a Mangalcharan (a song to be sung at some happy occasion) at the time of compilation of the AGGS. It cannot be called either the basic formula or the basic creed of Sikhi because it describes only the characteristics of God, conceptualized in a logo, ੴ, but not the entire philosophy of Sikhi founded by Guru Nanak.

Guru Nanak condemns the mantra system (Mantra-Tantra-Yantra). Even Guru Arjun also condemns the mantra system. In Sikhi, there are no mantras (whether a word, name, stanza, or verse) to be repetitively chanted to force a deity to grant a person's wishes. In Gurbani, the practice of any magic, whether formulas, mantras, rituals, or beliefs, is strictly forbidden.

Scientifically, there is no such thing as a mantra in any religious text which can compel the Laws of Nature/ Universe to change to give the desired blessing, nor is there any power of black magic to work directly on a friend or foe since every action and reaction is going on under the Laws of Nature or Universal Order (ਕੁਕਮ) (Chapter - 8).

Although Guru Nanak has not assigned any name to the God conceptualized as a logo, ੴ. Still, he and Guru Arjun have used ਹਰਿ and ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ (Hari and Hari Naam) in two phrases. Hari means Vishnu - one of the gods of Trinity, OM. Moreover, the AGGS is full of use of Hari (Vishnu) and Ram (the incarnation of Vishnu).

A question to Sikh intelligentsia:

Why Guru Nanak and other Sikh Gurus are using Kirtam Naam (descriptive/specific names) such as Hari, Ram, Gobind, Bhagwan, Swami, etc., in their bani?

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am thankful to Dr. Kulbir Singh Thind for allowing me to reproduce bani/hymns in Unicode Gurmukhi script and their transliteration in Roman Alphabet. However, the interpretation of the bani/hymns is of the author unless otherwise the name of the other author is mentioned.

REFERENCES

- Aad Guru Granth Sahib. (1983). Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee). (M = Mahla, i.e., succession number of the Sikh Gurus to the House of Nanak, M is replaced with the name of Bhagat/ Bhatt for their Bani, p = Page of the AGGS.
- Frawley, D. (2017). The Mantric Approach of the Vedas. <https://www.vedanet.com/the-mantric-approach-of-the-vedas/>
- Kalsi, N. S. (1996). Beej Mantar Darshan (Punjabi). Kalsi Technologies, # 15, 7711 - 128th Street, Surrey, BC, Canada.
- Omkara, Oṃkāra, Oṅkāra, Onkara, Om-kara: 23 definitions. (n.d.). wisdomlib.org/definition/omkara
- Sadhguru. (2020). Rudraksha - Benefits of Panchmukhi, Ek Mukhi, Gauri Shankar, and more. <https://ishasadhguru.org/us/en/wisdom/article/rudraksha-benefits-panchamukhi#point1>
- Singh, G. (1985). Hukmnamay (in Punjabi). Punjabi University.
- Singh, H. (1988). Aad Sri Guru Granth Sahib (Punjabi). Vols. 14. Gurmat Seva Parkashan.

- Singh, J. (n.d.). Bhai Gurdas Vaaran. http://searchgurbani.com/bhai_gurdas_vaaran/vaar/3/pauri/15
- Singh, K. (1981). Mahan Kosh. Bhasha Vibagh Punjab.
- Singh, Sahib. (1972). Sri Guru Granth Sahib Darpan (Punjabi). Vols 10. Raj Publishers.
- Singh, Santokh. (1993). Sabd Kirtan – Sikh Holy Hymn - Punjabi English. Sikh Resource Center.
- Singh, Satbir. (1980). Sikh Rehit Maryada atae Usdi Mahanta in Punjabi 3658 Mori Gate, Delhi - 110 006. . Jaswant Singh 'Ajit' Pumi Parkashan.
- What is Om. (n.d.). <https://www.thedivineindia.com/what-is-om/5967>