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MULTI LINGUALISM, CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND SRI GURU GRANTH SAHAB

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Abstract:

In this article, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, a Holy book of Sikh religion, which is created and compiled in Punjab, covers the significant aspects of the ethics, linguistics, socio cultural and civilizational history of its region. Also, an attempt has been made to highlight the thoughts of Guru Nanak and others Gurus, mystics and Bhagats in the mirror of Oneness, unity in diversity and theory of live and let live. Though there are many examples to dig out the roots of language and human growth through anthropology and etymology, but the Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the most important book of the Punjab, that mark is yet to be seen. The above-mentioned signs have also been briefly indicated in this article.

Keywords: GGS, Nank, Bhagti, Vedanta, Oneness, Raags, Genres, Humatics

Boundaries and borders on the globe are the symbols of human journey. The geography of these boundaries and borders gives a glimpse of human cultural identity and living style. Punjab is an area whose geographical landscape kept changing because it was a rich agricultural land and a gateway to India, due to which it suffered numerous annexations. Many languages and cultures from across the globe kept amalgamating into Punjab's language and culture. Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam were the three major religions of this area. All three - idol worshipping, avatarism and monotheism were practiced here. The division by Varan Ashram and many other social evils cursed the people of India. Islam came from Arabs through the Indus Valley, and its effects were evident in all the faiths in India; the Bhagti Movement was one of the prominent ones.

Interestingly, the center of the Bhagti movement was in the valley of Ganga Jamuna (Banaras), but it could not effectively provoke the people of this region. However, this seed of the Bhagti⁽¹⁾ movement sowed by Ramanad and Bhagat Kabir grew into a strong tree in Punjab. The roots of this tree spread in villages, suburbs, towns and other far-flung areas in Punjab. No doubt that this strong bhagti tree was turned into a blossoming garden by Baba Guru Nanak,⁽²⁾ who revolutionized the entire Hindustan with his theory of monotheism and bhagti. He introduced an invigorating and thought-provoking system, which became the first and only religion born in Punjab.

The iconoclastic tendencies of Muslim rulers led to the destruction of temples, imposition of Jizya suppression of religious faiths and processions and prohibition on building new temples as well as repairing the old ones. These measures had brought degradation of Hindus, and consequently, they became hypocrites. Guru Nanak described their condition in the following words:

“You wear a loin cloth, sacrificial mask and rosary, yet you earn your living from whom you call malechas (untouchable). You perform the Hindu worship in private, yet my brother, you read the books of Muhammadans and adopt their manners.”

Another example describes their condition at that time:

When Guru Nanak visited Hardavar, a place of pilgrimage for the Hindus on the bank of the river Ganges, on the day of Vaisakhi, people were taking holy bath and offering water to the sun. The Guru also went into the river and began to throw water to the west. The people were attracted to the guru and asked him what he was doing. Guru replied that he was sending water to his fields in Punjab. People laughed and asked how the water could reach his fields thousands of miles away in Punjab. The Guru answered that my water would reach Punjab in the same way their water could reach the Sun.

Guru Nanak described Allah's almightiness, creation and equality for human beings in such an excellent, unequivocal and comprehensive way. A scholar Uajala Maan Amratsari said that not even a Muslim could explain it in such a manner.⁽³⁾

Guru Nanak perceived the upcoming geographical changes of the 15th century due to his thoughtfulness and travels that are called "Udasis." In today's geography, these four Udasis cover nine different countries, including Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Nepal, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia and Sri Lanka. He became familiar with the geography, cultural norms and, sociological standings and roots of the languages of these areas, which are linked with the Indo-European and Indo-Arian branches. He learned the linguistic and cultural connectivity and disconnectedness of these languages: Tamil, Dravidian, Marathi, Gujrati, Hindi, Awadhi, Bhojpuri, Bundelkhandi, Bhageli, Maghadi, Nimari, Braj Bhasha, Sindhi, Pashto, Bengali, Punjabi, Asami, Arabic, Persian and Adivasi, etc. He inculcated the writings associated with love for Allah and his humanity in his Pothi, written by the Sufis, Sadhus, Bhagats and poets of these languages that then became part of *Aadh Granth*, which was compiled in 1604 by the fifth Guru, Guru Arjun Dev ji.

Guru Nanak understood well that nature, nurture and culture are deeply connected. Human has a thorough relationship with the sun, moon, stars, galaxies, forests, deserts, mountains, caves, valleys, storms, earthquakes, rainfall, earth, cosmos, changing environment since the day he was born, whereas culture is made up on the foundation stone of language, land and mind. In that era, Pali culture was spreading in Hindustan. Vedic knowledge, singing, and many local skills were a part of this culture. It also included carpenters, welders, goldsmiths, iron smiths, cobblers, barbers, woodcutters and shopkeepers. This entire landscape was filled with natural beauty, but the monarchs were ruling, and religion was the actual power of rulers and the elite class. Language and culture flourish the connectivity and disconnectedness in this nurturing atmosphere. In this environment, many personalities with positive and negative mindsets are born, who are also called binary opposites. Nature is just like the mother, which takes care of human growth and can also be understood in this way that culture is just like flowing blood in the social skeleton or existence, which is the food for internal and external beings.

People have their own language, and the government has its own through which it runs the entire system. The intellectuals comprehend the cultural and linguistic relations and differences between the language of the public and the ruler. They understand the science of culture and spiritual relation among words, alphabets and hermeneutics. Today, the term memetics is used for this. Guru Nanak was a visionary personality who understood well the languages, cultures, mindsets, social norms and skillsets of this area. In short, he was well aware of cultural science and psychological ambiguities, which can be seen in *Guru Granth Sahab*, which is not only the encyclopedia of this political and social structure but also the charter of humanity. For example, in Sikander Lodhi's era, a Kabir Panthi Brahman was murdered because he said that Hindus and Muslims are equal in Allah's opinion; on the other side, no Shudar was allowed to sit with a Brahman. He was not allowed to listen to the recitation of Veda. If any Shudar had ever listened to a Veda, burning molten metal would be poured into his ear. The punishment for

killing a Shudar was equal to that of killing a dog. Where there was no difference between a human being and an animal, Guru Nanak was saying:

پھکڑ جاتی پھکڑ ناو، سبھنا جیا اکا ناو⁽⁴⁾

Phakarr Jaati Phakharr Nao, Sabhna Jia Ikka Nao

(There is no caste and creed; all these things are useless. The creator of every life is one.)

پر ن وے نانک جات کیسی⁽⁵⁾

Paran Vey Nanak Jaat Keisi?

(Every being has a life; if He has created everyone, then how can everyone have different caste.)

جات جنم پچھئیے، سچ گھر لیہو بتاء
سا جات سا پت بے جیہے کرم کما⁽⁶⁾

Jaat Janam Puchiay, Sutch Ghar Leho Bataye

Sa Jaate Sa Pat Hey Jeihey Karam Kamaye

(What to ask about birth and caste if He is the only one creator? A man is known by his deeds, which is actually his representation.)

Guru Nanak provoked such social values which touched the hearts of humanity, and its fragrance took the entire globe into its arms. He inculcated the values and importance of freedom and integrity, which is expressed in his writings, and the accents of Lehndi, Purbi, Majhi and Braj Bhasha are evident in his poetry. The circumstances of the socio-political and cultural system in that era can be understood through his Bani (poetry).

Ralph Linton writes in his book titled "Tree of Culture" that there were two generations in the Indus Valley Civilization, one of which practiced hand-axe culture, which was linked with the common culture of Africa and Asia. The other generation followed copper and flake culture, which was linked with South East Asia. Then Proto-Austroloids came to this region; Manda, Santhal, Koru, Khond, and Panrri were people of this generation. Dravidian culture flourished from the Mediterranean and Armenoid. After them, Aryans⁽⁷⁾ came here who were wizards, wanderers, polygamists and fighters with strong bodies, whereas the locals of these areas were feeble and skinny and worshipped the Linga and Yoni; they were gamblers and rest-loving. It is said that when Islam was spread in this region, two kinds of generations came into being; one of them was Samis, who came with Muhammad bin Qasim's annexation, and the other one was the European Aryans, who had roots in Iran and Turkistan. A renowned Punjabi scholar, Shareef Kunjahi, says in a study of Rig-Veda that this generation of Aryans came from the Arctic region where previously the weather conditions were normal and the region was inhabitable. He quoted a Canadian geophysicist to prove his viewpoint, who said in 1991 that thousands of years ago, there were 150-foot-tall trees in the Arctic region. Due to changing weather conditions, people migrated from this region to different areas. Aryans used to associate themselves with the sky, whereas the Dravidians linked themselves with Earth. The concept of caste and creed developed right from this point. Metallic spears and swords were invented by Aryans and Brahmans. Khattris kept horses and associated themselves with the high sky, Whereas the Dravidians linked themselves with Earth, so they were considered Shudars (the lower class).⁽⁸⁾

With the advent of Islam, Arbi Saamis became monotheists from polytheists. They were against asceticism. They believed that life was a blessing by the creator and tried to find more blessings by Allah; they were proud of their forefathers, and walking in queues like that of camels was a part of their culture. When Aryans converted to Islam, one of their generations was ruthless and fearless, whereas the other generation had compassion and were soft-hearted who settled in South Asia, but the people of this generation were finical, visionary and skeptical. They had harmony and were merciful. Both these generations quit and negated worshipping idols. In this

scenario, Shri Guru Nanak Ji (1469-1538) developed his thought by amalgamating Vedanta, Bhagti and Islamic Mysticism. The main point of his philosophy was that human is just one part of the entire universe, and the entire universe is created by one creator. Each creation in this nature is a reflection of the Creator, which is why one cannot think negatively or badly of the other, as the Creator is the one who has created every single being. Like Kabir says:

اَوَّلُ اللَّهِ نُورٌ أُپَايَا، قُدْرَتُ كَيْ سَبِّ بَنْدَيْ

ایک نُور سے سب جگ اُپجیا، کون بھلے کوئے مندے⁽⁹⁾

Awal Allah Noor Upaiya, Qudrat Key Sab Bandy

Eik Noor Sey Sab Jag Upjia, Kon Bhalay Koye Mandey

Guru Nanak's philosophy neither created the atmosphere of competition and difference like in Nathpanthi nor was it based on one single thought or experiment. In fact, he gave respect, space and freedom of expression to everyone for expressing their viewpoints. As discussed earlier, his four Udasis spanned an area that became nine countries afterwards; now, in my opinion, there are nine such Rachnas from Sri Guru Granth Sahab that are not only the geopolitical, social and cultural anthology of this region but the scripture of consciousness which awares a human being with the sense and awareness of entire socio-cultural existence in life.

1. Jap Ji sahib (Recitation of the name of Almighty) Absolute Truth, Creator
2. Maajh di war (Middle of Raag, Relationship between Creator and Creation, Purification)
3. Patti (Discipline, Development and Regulation)
4. Thithi (Time, Period, Organism, Meter, Arrangement, Flow, Pulse)
5. Aasa di war (Hope, Belief)
6. Om Kaar (The Continuous Voice, Continuity, Force of being)
7. Sidh Goshat (Discourses of Sidhas, Wisdom of visionaries and such kind of a dialogue)
8. Malar di war (Also called Babar Bani, Integrity, A piece of courage and clarity in the fort of contemporary power)
9. Barah Maah (12 Months, Changing Patterns of Nature over 12 months)

In my opinion, these nine Rhymes of Guru Granth Sahib can be linked with the three-sided polygon of existences, creator, cosmos and self being.

اک اونکار، ستنام، کرتا پُرکھ، نر بھو، نر ویر

اکال مورت، اُجونی، سے بھنگ، گُر پرساد

آد سچ، جُگاد سچ، بے بھی سچ، نانک ہوسی بھی سچ⁽¹⁰⁾

Ik Onkaar, Satnam, Karta Purak, Nirbhau, Nirveir

Akal Moorat, Ajuni, Say Bhang, Gur Parsad

Aad Sacch, Jugad Sacch, Hey bhi Sach, Nanak Hosi Bhi Sacch

There is only one God; His name is True, He is the creator, He has no fear, He has no hate. He is omnipresent, unborn, and self-illuminating. Meditate on his name; by the Guru's grace, He is realized. He has been true since time began. He has been true since the ages. He is still true, Guru Nanak says. He will forever be true.

Now look the base of Islamic ideology in Surah Ikhlas Allah says:

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ {1/112} اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ {2/112} لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ {3/112} وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ {4/112}⁽¹¹⁾

“Say, ‘O Prophet,’ ‘Allah is One ‘and Indivisible’; Allah—the Sustainer ‘needed by all.’ He has never had offspring, nor was He born. And there is none comparable to Him.”

This concept of Oneness is also present in Vedanta. “Nirgun” and “Sargun” are two terms of this concept. “Nirgun” means without attributes, and “Sargun” means with attributes. In my

opinion, if we place both these terms on the same voice meter or reconsider their etymology, then both these terms can be read as “Nargun” and “Sargun,” and their meanings would be:

Nargun:

Nar also means water, maya, which is the source of all material forces. Nargun means the power of the whole universe with which it has been created.

Sargun:

Numerous dictionaries show its meaning as ‘Lake.’ The entire universe is a lake where the whole Maya or water is accumulated.

In Quran, there are a number of references which show that water is the source of the creation of the universe.

In Guru Granth Sahib, there is a bani of Bhagat Nam Dev:

ہر جن رام نام گن گاوے
جے کوئی نند کرے ہر جن کی اپنا گن نہ گواوے (رہاؤ)
جے کچھ کرے سو آپے سوامی ہر آپے کار کماوے
ہر آپے ہی مت دیوے سوامی ہر آپے ہی بلاوے
ہر آپے پنچ تہ پستارا، وچ دھاٹو پنچ آپ پاوے
جن نانک ست گر میلے، آپے ہر آپے جھگڑ چکاوے⁽¹²⁾

Har Jan Ram Nam Gun Gavey

Jey Koi Nind Karay, Har Jin ki apna Gun Na Gwawey

Jey Kicch Krey, So Aapey Swami Har Aapay Kar Kamawey

Har Aapay Hi Matt Devey Swami Har Apay Hi Bulawey

Har Aapy Panch Tatt, Bistaara, Vich Dhatu, Pancch Aap Pawey

Jin Nanak Sat Gur Meley, Aapey Har Aapey, Jhagarr Chukawey

In this poetry, “Har” and “Hari” words are used for Allah and for a common person too. “Jan” means every living thing. Shareef Kunjahi is an intellectual who gave a new meaning to human history by using words, and etymological shapes. He views linguistics and pronunciations in an entirely new manner. He is of the view that when many new nations and their businesses came to Hindustan, the new words that came with them should be seen through the lens of culture and civilization. He says that from 522 to 486, before Alexander’s invasion, there was a king in Iran who worshipped a God named “Ahura Mazda.” In English dictionaries, Ahura means Big God. Kunjahi says that the first shape of “Hura” in “Ahura” would be “Har.” In Norwegian language, this word means “Lord”. In German language, this word means “Owner”. In Sanskrit, “Har” and “Hari” mean “The Creator of All.” In 1967, a book titled “Six Centuries of Glory” published by Science Academy in Russia, mentions the meanings of Ahura as “Sense” and “Spirit” whereas Mazda means “Worshipper” and “Poetry.” In Persian, “Miza” means “eyelash,” in Japanese, it means “cold water,” in Pehalvi, it means “Cloud.” Another word is derived from “Mazda” which is “Mazar” that means “on the bank of the river”. In this way, Ahura Mazda means the power of the Almighty, who has created the entire universe. “Har” and “Hari” are rooted in each other. It is the duty of linguistics to find which one is derived from the other. The three sounds of “H,” “R,” and “L” are the basic sounds with the change of which there are many changes in the languages of this region. When the sound “Aa” comes as a prefix in Sanskrit and Punjabi, it gives an opposite meaning to the word, for instance, “Mul” (price) and “Amul” (priceless), “Sanjh” (unity) and “Asanjh” (disunion). In Arabic, the “L” sound plays this same role; for instance,

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

Translation: "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad (PBUH) is the messenger of Allah."

In fact, Sanskrit and Arabic are both rich languages in which there are numerous meanings of the same word. In the Granth Sahib, there are many words in Sanskrit, Arabic and other local

languages, which were discussed above; some of the words are used as they are, and others are somewhat different. Aasa ki Vaar is the bhajan of Guru Nanak, which is sung early in the morning, and this is sung in Raag “Todi,” which means Hamd or Dua, and another meaning of it is “stick, which is used for herding cattle.” In Arabic, it is called “asa,” which means “Support or Stick.” In Estonia, “asa” means “a green pasture.” Aas, Umeed and Aahar are the words that have the meanings behind the word “asa,” which actually means hope. Another word is ‘Dahi’ Baba Farid says in a Shlok:

جند ووہٹی، مرن ور، لے جاسی پرناء
آپن ہتھیں جُول کئے، کیں گل لگے دھاء (13)

Jind Vauhti Maran Var Lai Jasi Parnay

Aapan Hathin Jool Key, Kei Gal Lagey Dhey

(Death in the form of bridegroom will carry away the bridal self and her receptivity will leave her nothing to fall back upon.)

“Dhai” is a Vedic word which means “to adopt.” Whereas Damodar Das, the first writer Heer who lived in Jhang, writes its meaning as “to meet and greet.” Likewise, there is this word “salok” or “shalok” which means “the words of someone of higher status” whereas Sharif Kunjahi associates it with the Scottish language in which it means “thirst” and this word has also been used in war slogans, in Greek, this word means “unity” and “pile of food,” Griffith takes the meaning of “water’ from it and calls “Shalok” as Songs of Priest.

Conclusion:

In a nutshell, Guru Granth Sahib not only encompasses the written history of this region's anthology, mythology and sociology; in fact, it also includes the etymology of numerous languages of the entire globe. This great book holds religious, social, moral and intellectual prestige. Culture is woven into the geography of a region, and geography is under the special structure of the region, but cultural geography is beyond any limits or borders. Geography considers and changes itself with the political landscape of a region, but it does not spread like language, literature and cultural intellect. Guru Granth Sahib includes South Asia's geography, the relationship between Indo-European and Indo-Aryan languages and amalgamated culture, which can be researched in a new way, but the meanings of this philosophical and prestigious scripture will always remain universal.

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