Chapter-IV

Understanding of Guru Granth Sahib: A Hermeneutical Study

The term ‘hermeneutics’ finds its roots in the Greek word *hermeneuein* which means interpretation or explanation. It deals with the triadic structure of major concepts such as nature of the text; what it means to understand a text; and how understanding and interpretations are determined by the presuppositions and beliefs of the audience to which the text is being interpreted. The hermeneutics is, therefore, a science of interpretation and concerns with the, problems, methods and purpose of interpretation.

The hermeneutics can be considered as a search for true text, or a search for true meaning. For S.P. Dubey, “The art of interpreting a religious text either by me today or by a commentator of another day is said to be hermeneutics.”\(^{238}\) The hermeneutics is the training in the art of interpreting the Scripture by extracting its meaning for communication to others. It is a science which establishes rules, principles and methods of interpreting religion and its Scripture and its relation to society. As such hermeneutics concerns to how the true meaning of a text can be determined with accuracy and how a reader perceives and interprets the reality. “The hermeneutics of a text works on

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a different level, since it is concerned not so much with how the text works, but instead with what the text is saying. The hermeneutics is about recovering and understanding the meanings of texts—sometimes this may be quite easy and literal, but it may also be a subtle process, uncovering meanings that perhaps even the author did not intend or was not aware of. However, the texts are not simply about poetry and meaning, they are also about being read—a point that is easy to miss within the study of any text, including religious texts. A large part of the analysis of texts is not only what can be understood from the text itself, but also from how it is interacted with within a social and cultural context.”

It is a widely accepted fact that the religion is an everlasting thought and the principles concerned with it are not merely temporary. The interpretation and re-interpretation of these principles ought to be studied in the newer conceptual facets of society. The doctrines of Gurmat have not sprouted for the sake of history only. So, the history cannot be fixed as a determiner for the boundaries of Gurmat doctrines. The interpreter has to deal with complicated experience of text specially when it is in the form of poetry, which includes the expressions, hopes, objectives, thoughts, feelings on symbolic reflection and magnificence concepts need strong attention. As the Sikhism is a progressive religion,

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therefore, ethically; its principles should be re-interpreted time to time, as there is need of re-awakening in Sikh society.

**Limitations of Hermeneutics**

The hermeneutics, the science of interpretation, has its own limitations which are detailed as under:

1. The specific form and content of scriptural books vary sharply from tradition to tradition and even within a single scriptural corpus. Ritual books, legal codes, myths and legends, historical accounts, Divine revelations, apocalyptic visions, ecstatic poetry, the words of teachers and prophets, and hymns or prayers to deity have all served as a Scripture. Sometimes problems crop up during the fixation of a text then can any universal or common rules be formulated which can be applied to any religious text of the world.

2. The major obstacle to delimit the phenomenon of Scripture is its very medium of expression. The term ‘Scripture’ is usually reserved for religious texts that have been committed to the written or printed page, as the word itself and its common equivalents, for example, sacred writings. Yet in most religious traditions, sacred texts were transmitted orally in the first place and written down only relatively later. For these reasons, a descriptive distinction between oral and written Scriptures may on occasion be necessary, even though etymologically ‘Oral
Scripture’ is a contradiction in terms. Here the question is how science of interpretation be applied to oral traditions prevalent in religions. What measures and bases can be adopted for the interpretation of such traditions?

3. Another problem in delimiting Scripture is of distinguishing the primary sacred text of a religious tradition from other secondary sacred text. Such distinction between a community’s pre-eminent Scripture and the rest of its sacred texts is helpful in understanding many religious traditions, in some cases, the panoply of texts revered is so great and the relative distinctions of authority and sacrality among them so unimportant that all have some legitimate claim to the title of Scripture. When the secondary Scriptures are as important as the primary ones then it should be considered whether the hermeneutics of the original and secondary text should be same or it should be different.

4. Other limitation of hermeneutics is the medium of expression in a Scripture. This medium of expression is in the form of revelation only. The hermeneutics is studied in the light of language, grammar, history, culture etc. When we accept the fact that every word of Scripture is

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240 ‘In the Mahayana Buddhist tradition as a whole, the number of texts treated as sacred is so vast that it is not possible to single out some as more deserving of the title scripture than others, save in particular segments of the tradition where one sutra is given extraordinary status (e.g., Nichiren Buddhist veneration of the Lotus Sutra in Japan). Even in a community with a scriptural book or canon that is clearly more sacred than other sacred texts, the decision to reserve the status of ‘Scripture’ only for the former can be a debatable one.’
revealed then the question arises that whether on the bases of language only the revealed word can be understood?

5. One of the tasks of hermeneutics is the perception of reality which influences and is influenced by the interpreter. The important task of hermeneutics is to make the interpreter aware of the process by which he perceives the reality. The ways we interpret reality determines our identity to a large extent and vice-versa. In other words, the way we explain or interpret a reality reveals and exposes the nature and character of our personality, and conversely speaking, what our personality with its nature and trait we have got that also influences our interpretation of reality. As Hans-Georg Gadamer says, “It is what I am that effects what I see.” So, our perception of reality includes many factors related to our identity or personality and factors related to the object of our perception. ‘As our perception of reality is profoundly shaped, not only by our previous personal experiences, but also our experiences “remembered”, i.e., the experiences we inherit from our ancestors and carry them in our unconscious, subconscious and conscious mind, and also experiences of our people in the past, of our nation has gone through, how many race evolved, how the earth has been formed, how the universe has been shaped, how I have been trained etc. — all these shape our perception of reality to which we are guided
and led by hermeneutics.\textsuperscript{241} It is a fact that we cannot independently interpret without leaving our impressions on the interpretation. In general conditions it is a positive trait but in some special cases of revelation it is a negative trait and is subject to consideration.

6. The understanding of true meaning is other significant factor of hermeneutics. In hermeneutics, we are often in search of the meaning of a statement. Now the question is, can this meaning be obtained simply by understanding the words or sentences? Or, do we have to read, and can we read the mind of the original author without interference of our own perceptions? Further, can the original meaning be obtained without being transmitted by our mind? Even when obtained, will that be of any use to the reader standing several thousand years away from the actual composition.\textsuperscript{242} Can the mind of the original composer of any Scripture be understood with reference to his contemporary history? On the one hand, hermeneutics deals with such questions, while on the other it brings forth its limitations through such questions.

7. In hermeneutics the scholar faces double task (i) discovering in the past the original meanings meant for the original reader which were existing in the mind of the original author, and (ii) interpreting it in the present for the present reader. In tracing the original meaning the scholar has to take himself into the past and study the time, situation,

\textsuperscript{242} S.P. Dubey, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 166.
context of the past and other related factors like history, culture, sociology, language, etc. of the past surrounding the original author and original reader. In a way, he has to take himself imaginatively in the past time and reach to the mind and purpose of the author. This requires the art and power of his imagination. Hermeneutics gives us these directions but how one can attain the skill of explaining the mind of the author. So, hermeneutics is not only concerned with religion but also includes psychology. From the above discussion a question arises ‘whether the hermeneutics is the subject of religion only or is an inter-disciplinary?’

8. “The religions becoming more and more dynamic and their social and political involvements becoming more provoking and problematic, it is the task of every country to contextualize the message of its Scriptures and to seek their faithful meaning in and for its particular cultural, geographical and historical situation. Any hermeneutics that pretends first to discover general, ‘time and space transcending interpretations’ which are then to be adopted and applied to a particular situation, is not only deluding itself but is actually failing to fulfill precisely the task to which it is, in fact, called, and cannot possibly lead to any kind of real contextuality.”243

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9. Friedrich Schleiermacher has given the term ‘special insight’\textsuperscript{244} which means the Divine Grace of the revealed word of Scripture. The understanding of the Eternal Reality is also known as special insight. It is noteworthy that the main reason of special insight or the Divine Grace is the intensity of experiencing the Eternal Reality. The special insight is also the reason of the ability of the interpreter for analyzing a text. This special insight is essential for the understanding of a Scripture. So, can intellectual experiences of Science be used for the analysis of revelation? Before studying a Scripture we should categorize our vision in three categories— philosophical, objective and comparative aspects of the study.

I. **Philosophical Aspect:** When the philosophical study is discussed, a picture of theories emerges in the mind which is the base of every religion. But the scope of Sikh philosophy includes various theories. In the present research, only those theories are applied which are helpful in gaining the knowledge of Sikh vision. The primary theoretical concept of Sikhism is the doctrine of Sabad. The conceptual and spiritual world of Sikhism is based on the Eternal Truth of Sabad. If the word ‘Sabad’ is replaced with revelation then it is not a misconception. We cannot ignore the Sabad revelation because Sikhism speaks of the basic understanding of Sabad, then of its experience, and further adopting the concepts.

Everything else is secondary. It is pertinent to note here that Sikhism depends upon the faith on the Scriptural Guru, Guru Granth Sahib. It is not incorrect to say that the primary condition or the primary truth of any religion is faith. If the Divine truth of Eternal Reality is not experienced then even the highest intellectual level is meaningless because the soul of a human being is to be redeemed by the Scripture Guru, Guru Granth Sahib.

Human being is an intellectual being and intellect is the only source to understand everything concerning him as well as beyond his intellect. In the present research, the approach to study the Guru Granth Sahib will be according to our intellect but it does not mean that this approach will be restrained to academic knowledge only rather it will be further to experience the Eternal Reality because without Divine Order and Divine Grace His message cannot be understood.

_He, who by Guru’s grace knows the Lord’s will, _
_comes to realise the way of life of all the ages._

_This is the sign of union with the Lord. That in his mind the man recognises only the True Lord’s command._

_Pondering over the Guru, I have learnt this instruction, that the Merciful Master, through His mercy, ferries His slaves across._

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245 गुरु विद्वंद्व ते गुरु भक्ते॥
सुन्दर सुचार्य वी विधय सहै॥ _Guru Granth Sahib_, p. 1027.

246 भूष भिरहै वी टेंग तीमगढी॥
भैं हिंदे मंग मंजु टादरी॥ _Ibid._, p. 106.
The scholarly study helps in formulating a vision towards any text, but a true scholar is that who experiences and understands the Sabad Guru.

**Supplicates Nanak, of what kind is the man of Divine knowledge?**

*He who recognises his ownself comprehends Him. The divine, who by Guru’s grace, embraces Lord’s meditation, becomes acceptable in His Court.*

The divine scholars know nothing but truth; as they obtain true understanding.

*Led astray by another, they go not astray.*

*They know the True Lord.*

*He alone is the divine, who enshrines affection for the Name.*

*Within the mind of the God-conscious beings is enshrined the Guru’s word and they ever, and always bloom in their Lord’s love.*

After considering the aspect of Sikh vision, another considerable aspect comes forth that, what is the applicability of Sabad based Sikh vision or approach in practical life? Up to what limits the
above discussion on faith is relevant, how much the faith system can be applied? These questions can be answered by taking into consideration the three approaches, i.e., the approach of a Saint, a Soldier and a Scholar.

(i) **Saint**: For Saint, Gurbani has used the words Sant, Sadh, Bhagat, Jan, Sant-Jan, Sadh-Jan, etc., interchangeably. Moreover, the word ‘Saint’ signifies a range of virtues. It can be whole spectrum rather than a person or an absolute value. A Sant is used to refer to a wise, knowledgeable and religious person with knowledge of Divine Truth. The first duty of the Sikh is to be a Sant or to be a wise and knowledgeable person. A Sant can be loosely translated as saint though this is not very exact, for the English term, when used in the adjective sense ‘saintly’ refers to a person of great holiness, virtue or benevolence and has a formal connotation in the Western culture. The word can be said a modified form of the word ‘Sat’ which can simply mean ‘truth’. So, a person who makes up his mind on the path of truth is said to be a Sant.

(ii) **Soldier**: In the context of Sikhism, the term ‘Sipahi’ is used for a soldier which means warrior or a soldier of truth. Sikhism strongly advocates the concept of Miri-Piri and Sant-Sipahi. These concepts go parallel to each other. Sikhism is the only religion in which war has been justified for the sake of religion, truth and against injustice and cruelty. This life style was first endorsed by the Sixth master, Guru Hargobind in
the form of Miri and Piri, and later personified by Guru Gobind Singh in the shade of Sant-Sipahi. So, it can be said that these concepts are imbedded in Sikh religion and Sikhism cannot be imagined without these concepts. Faith always supports us, sometimes as a Sant-Sipahi and sometimes as a Scholar.

(iii) Scholar: The term ‘Scholar’ is derived from the Latin word Schola which means a school child, or a student. In other words, a person who studies, searches is a student or disciple. In Sikh perspective, the person who practices for the Eternal Word (Sabad) is said to be the disciple of Guru. Till one practices Sabad-Guru he is a disciple because the Eternal Reality or Eternal Being is beyond the human intellect. As He is beyond our understanding, intellect, unseen and limitless; and one cannot describe Him in lives. So, a true Sikh is one who is always a disciple of His Guru. So, his approach should always be of a disciple, a follower, a Sant and a researcher.

II. Objective Aspect: After discussing the philosophical aspect the objective aspect is as follows:

(i) Philological Study: In philological study, it is necessary to get the knowledge of language and its significance. The language of the Scriptures and religious discourse is different from the general usage of language. In religious discourses, symbolic meaning is primary to lexicon meaning. But in semantic form, the esoteric meanings of the words
should be more explanatory for the researchers. We can come across through many examples in Gurbani in which Gurus have explained their ideas in simple language by means of story-telling, as:

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\text{Were I to be a she-fawn, live in a forest, and pick up and eat fruits and tubers.}^{252}
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\text{To know Thy way, (O’ Lord)! is as horse, saddle and gold crupper for me.}
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\text{To run after virtues is as quiver, arrow, bow, spear and sword-belt for me.}^{253}
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Whenever the revelation in a Scripture is discussed, the Divine knowledge is referred that is incarnated in words of the Scripture. “Such kind of knowledge or experience has been referred as revelation, Shruti and Samriti, Boddh, Kevelaya, Naam, etc. in the context of various religious traditions. It is such a Divine knowledge and spiritual experience that a religious leader can propagate for the welfare and salvation of the people. When such propagator ideas, experiences and compositions are compiled it takes the form of a religious Scripture.”^{254}

The language is an important medium for the study of text. The importance of language in a hermeneutical study becomes more relevant for the consideration of its limitations and it cannot be ignored. Here, an attempt has been made to study the revealed compositions and

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252 & 253: See the cited sources for the original text and translation.
spiritual experience through the medium of intellect. It should be kept in mind that language is not the least medium of a hermeneutical study; because the study is not limited to the medium of language, rather is beyond it.

*Through these fifty-two letters, the three worlds and all else are described.*

*These letters shall perish. That Imperishable Lord, cannot be described through these letters.*

The grammars, dictionaries, exegesis, commentaries of the text make the vision more clear and accurate. But it is also essential to experience the revelation of the revealed power only then revealed experience can be claimed. Just as soul, ego, grace, Divine Order, Eternal Reality, meditation, spirituality, mysticism, etc. are studied through intellectual approach, it should not be forgotten that these cannot be understood without experience. It is essential to analyse any scriptural text in its philosophical, objective and comparative sense on the one hand; while on the other, it is indispensable to adopt the approach of experiencing the spirituality of that text. “Without Guru Sabad the reading of Scripture, grammar and performing of prayers do not avail” in Sikh perspective.

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(ii) Theological Study: Theology is a branch related to philosophy which studies every aspect of religion. Theology has various important aspects to study. One of them is to study of revelatory experience of the Eternal Reality and the second is to understand of Eternal Word and the experience of its power through which the Divine experience of the Scripture flows through generations.

Sabad is elementary to Sikhism. It does not mean a simple word but an Eternal Reality which is symbolic of the Divine presence in utter darkness in the form of Eternal Guru, Guru Granth Sahib.

For countless ages, there was utter darkness.

There was no earth and no sky, but the Infinite Lord’s will alone was pervasive.

There was neither day, nor night, nor moon, nor sun, but the Lord alone sat in profound trance.\(^{257}\)

In Guru Granth Sahib, the power of Sabad is described as the power of the Eternal Reality; the whole world is created from and will sub-merge into Sabad.

The creation and deluge occur through the Lord’s Word.

Through the Word the creation evolves again.\(^{258}\)

\(^{257}\) अवकाश रंगकर चूर्णकर
पराकाश ह जागर सबक भ्रण
न दिमह भेंट ह संयुं ह संयुं हंद समाधिम लक्षणिम। Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1035.

\(^{258}\) दुर्जोधर भलहरु सबमें थैँ॥
सबमें ही निविज दुर्जोधर थैँ॥ Ibid., p. 117.
In Raga Dhanasari, Guru Amar Das says that the light of the ‘Sabad Deepak’ is pervading all the three worlds and those who absorb this light become pure. The Sabad effaces the ego of the mind and thus imbued in true devotion one receives eternal happiness.

*The light of the Name lamp is pervading the three worlds.*

*He, who tastes the Name, becomes immaculate.*\(^{259}\)

The Lord and his love is attained through Sabad. Without the Word, the world is led astray and is born to die again and again. Guru Nanak says that if one realizes the Word, he should not be proud of himself.

*He who dies of the Divine Word gets immune from death and dies not, again a second time.*

*From Guru’s instruction love for God’s Name is obtained and the Lord is attained to.*

*Without Lord’s Name the world has gone astray and suffers transmigration over and over again.*\(^{260}\)

The ego, avarice and love of the self are the main impediments in the way of realization of Sabad. If the good is to be received, the renunciation of these bonds, and dwelling on the word, are

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\(^{259}\) Ibid., p. 664.

\(^{260}\) Ibid., p. 58.
required.\textsuperscript{261} It is through the Guru that we meet the Lord who makes us understand the infinity of His power, and this understanding is possible only when ego is put off by realizing that there is nothing but Sabad in all the three worlds.\textsuperscript{262} Guru Nanak says that with the recitation of the true Sabad, the unstable mind is restrained and the nectar is realized.\textsuperscript{263} Through Sabad, the dignity of salvation is obtained and false pride is lost.

In the last lines of Japuji, Guru Nanak, consistent to his own terse style, explains the construction of the Divine True mint where Sabad is fashioned and struck. But all this is granted only to those on whom the Ultimate Being casts His gracious glance.

\begin{quote}
\textit{Make continence thy furnace, patience thy goldsmith, understanding thy anvil, Divine knowledge thy tools, God’s fear thine bellows, practising of penance thy fire and Lord’s love thy pot, where in filter the Nectar of God’s Name.} \textsuperscript{264}
\end{quote}
III. Comparative Aspect: Sabad is a Dhawani that gives us a clear picture of the form of any text but Sabad is justified when it gives the knowledge of Eternal Reality. The Sabad is the sayings of reliable enlightened souls who have attained the Eternal knowledge. The meaning of Sabad can be of two types concrete and abstract. The concrete Sabad gives us the knowledge of those subjects that can be experienced directly. The sayings of the enlightened souls, educational couplets in structure are concrete Sabad.265

Regarding the sensitive issues of metaphysics, saints and sages have given abstract Sabad in Scriptures. The abstract Sabad is also of two types, terrestrial and Vedic. The terrestrial Sabads are not considered as truth. Only the sayings of enlightened souls and sages are taken as truth but Vedic Sabad are believed to be the Sabads of God Himself which are fault proof and perfect.

In Indian ideology, Vedas and other religious Scriptures are believed to be Divine and perfect. The source of their manifestation is not earthly but spiritual. So, these are believed to be authentic Sabad according to Vedic tradition of Indian philosophy.

Principle of Authentic Sabad in Guru Granth Sahib

The principle of authentic Sabad has also been accepted in Guru Granth Sahib. Bhagat Kabir writes that, we should not belittle the Scriptures by doubting them. That person is fake who does not follow the

preachings of Scriptures. Guru Amar Das justifies his perception by giving examples of educational facts from Vedas. Guru Arjan Dev gives justification of true meditation by exemplifying from Vedas, Shastras and Puranas.

In Guru Granth Sahib, the emphasis is laid on the sayings of the Mahatma and the showing of respect towards Guru’s ordain. It shows the positive point of view of Bani in Guru Granth Sahib. The following couplets justify this idea:

With four feet, two horns and a dumb mouth, how shalt thou, then, sing God’s praise?

Standing and sitting, the stick shall fall on thee, so where wilt thou, then, hide thy head?

Without God, thou shalt become a borrowed ox. With a torn nose and maimed shoulders, thou shalt eat the straw of coarse grain. Pause.

All day thou shalt wander in the forest, even then thy belly shall not be satiated.

Thou listened not to the advice of the holy men, consequently thou shalt obtain the fruit of thy actions.

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266, 267, 268, 269
With their ears, the Sikhs hear the instruction which the True Guru imparts.

They who submit to the True Guru’s will are imbued with four fold dye (of love).

This is the peculiar way of life of Guru’s Sikhs that their soul flowers by hearing Guru’s teaching.\(^{270}\)

In Indian tradition, the existence of Sabad is used as a proof of Scriptures. On the other hand, it is also used as a source of cosmology, as Eternal and primordial sound.

**Sabad as Source of Cosmology**

According to Rigveda (1.3.11), everyone has evolved from Sabad. Acharya Shankar quotes in commentary on Brahm Sutra that the world has originated from Sabad; Upanishadas say that the universe has originated from Pranav. It is quoted in Mandukya Upanishada that Onkar is the symbol of indestructible Reality and a collective form of three spaces. The universe is the description of God. According to Tatriya Upanishada (1.4), the whole universe has originated from the single idea of the God. Shevta Shastra, Chandogya and Amrit Bindu Upanishadas also support this view. Naiya & Vaisheshak supports the view that the creation and destruction of universe is due to Will of God. The universe is

\(^{270}\) Ibid., p. 524.
created by the activity of atoms in concordance with each other according to the Will of God.

According to Christian ideology, Sabad was alone stand in the beginning of the universe. The belief of creation of universe from word ‘Kun’ is also in argument with Christian ideology.\textsuperscript{271}

According to Guru Granth Sahib, Sabad is the source of cosmology:

*With One Word Thou didst effect the world’s expansion and where by lacs of rivers began to flow.\textsuperscript{272}*

*The creation and deluge occur through the Lord’s Word. Through the Word the creation evolves again.\textsuperscript{273}*

Onkar is the incarnation of God himself. As in Upanishadas, Onkar is the symbol of the Sabad in Gurbani. So, where Sabad is considered as the source of cosmology, Onkar is also the source of creation.

*There is but One True God. By Guru’s grace, He is obtained. Brahma was created through the One Lord. That Brahma cherished the One Lord in the mind. It is from the One Lord that mountains and ages have emanated. It is the Lord who created the Vedas.\textsuperscript{274}*

\textsuperscript{272} "ਉੱਖ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਟੇਕੇ ਕਰਾਉਂਦੇ। ਕੁਲ ਤੇ ਟੇਕੇ ਕਰ ਵਲੀਆਂ ਟੇਕੇ।" *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{273} "ਈਵੁੱਡਾਲ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸੀ ਮਾਲੇ ਟੇਕਨੇ। ਮਾਲੇ ਤੀ ਹਿਉ ਈਵੁੱਡਾਲ ਟੇਕਨੇ।" *Ibid.*, p. 117.
\textsuperscript{274} "ਈਵੁੱਡਾਲ ਕੁਲ ਈਵੁੱਡਾਲ। ਈਵੁੱਡਾਲ ਕੋਸਾ ਨਿੱਦ ਨਿੱਦ।"
The One Lord has created the creation.
He has made days, nights and everything.\textsuperscript{275}

The entire world is engrossed in the three modes.
It lands in hell and heaven.\textsuperscript{276}

**Sabad in Indian Tradition of Eternal Reality and Acoustics**

The tradition of Eternal Reality of Sabad has been in vogue since the ancient times of Indian religions. Rigveda acknowledges this thought. According to Kath Upanishada, word is Eternal and transcendental Reality. In Bhagwad Gita, Sabad is used as Par Brahmn, i.e., Eternal Reality. For Yogis, the Ultimate Word is present in all human beings. The Sabad rises from primary crown Chakra but is audible when the senses of human being meditate to listen it. This is called primordial sound. According to Gorakh Nath, the acoustic sound is the explanatory form of Onkar. It includes Brahma, Vishnu and Mahadev. It helps to achieve Nirvana i.e., salvation.\textsuperscript{277} It also helps in attaining the mystic experience and resolves all the conflicts of mind. Sabad submerges into Sabad. It means that Sabad is universe.

\textsuperscript{275} Govindnath Rajguru, *Gurmukhi Lipi Mein Hindi Gaddaya*, Rajkamal Prakashan, Delhi, 1969, p. 70.
The above discussion leads us to conclude that the Sabad is proof of revealed Scriptures written by saints and sages. It is a source of cosmology. It is also noteworthy that Sabad is also used as Brahm, Onkar, Pranav, primordeal sound, acoustic word and Bindu. According to Indian tradition, the Eternal Word is Guru that gives knowledge to the universe. So, the Eternal Word and its primordeal sound are also called Guru and Sabad. Hence, Guru is in two forms; one is Godly and second is in the form of primordeal sound.

**Principle of Sabad-Guru in Guru Granth Sahib**

*Gurbani is the Divine Word, Gurbani the Lord’s knowledge and through Gurbani the Lord is realised to be all pervading.*

In the above quoted couplet of Guru Nanak, Sabad Guru has been informed as acoustic Scripture and universal knowledge. Three forms of Sabad, hence, can be derived: first is primordeal sound; second Guru’s ordain; and third universal knowledge. Apart from it, Sabad has also been used as revelation of the above said three forms in Bani of Guru Granth Sahib.

**Sabad as the Ultimate Reality:** The contributors of Guru Granth Sahib have discussed the universality of Sabad by using it for Ultimate Reality. According to them, Ultimate Reality prevails in both virtue and transcendental form. Before the creation of universe when there was no

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distinction of form, class, caste, etc., the Ultimate Reality was in the form of Sabad only.

When there was no form, no sign and no caste, then in its quintessence form the Name dwelt in the Unlineal Lord.\textsuperscript{279}

In virtuous form, Sabad is present in the universe as well as in the human soul.

His Name, that is within all, should abide in his own Home, so that the mind’s wandering may cease. The mind then obtains the Lord, whose light is pervading the three worlds.\textsuperscript{280}

Amongst all, the True Lord’s Name is contained and by His own grace, the Lord is met.\textsuperscript{281}

According to the Bani of Guru Granth Sahib, the Ultimate Reality is present in the entire three universes. The principle of Sabad Brahmn in Guru Granth Sahib is in accordance with the Indian tradition.

**Sabad as a Primordeal Sound:** In Guru Granth Sahib, Sabad has also described as primordeal sound.

Day and night, the Divine music resounds within him, who, by Guru’s grace, knows the wondrous state of the Deathless Lord.

When one knows the Name, then realises he the One Detached Lord, pervading all.\textsuperscript{282}

\textsuperscript{279} 
Ibid., p. 945.

\textsuperscript{280} 
Ibid.

\textsuperscript{281} 
Ibid., p. 1275.

\textsuperscript{282} 
Ibid., p. 1285.
The True Guru has dropped the Immortalising Nectar into my mouth.

Whereat the Lord became manifest within my tenth gate.

There, in the tenth gate, resounds the celestial strain of the utterance of the Guru’s word and one easily merges in the Lord.283

Meeting with saints, night and day my soul remains pleased and beauteous look my home and mansion.

The unbeaten melodious music of the five musical instruments resounds since the friends have come into my home.284

The concept of primordeal sound given by the contributors of Guru Granth Sahib is different from the other traditions followed by Nathas and Saints. According to Nathas and Yogis, the primordeal sound is such as mystic sound which audible only after reaching the zenith of hardcore meditation. This sound is just a vibration which can be audible, after achieving the ecstatic state through meditation. The contributors of Guru Granth Sahib have though used appropriate vocabulary, yet they have used the primordeal sound for that mystic state in which human soul experiences continuous and aesthetic rasa of the music due to reunion with God. It is a blissful state free from joy and sorrows, music based, determination, firm and fearless.

283 अहिंसा वा ग्युज गुरुभधि नान्दी॥
उछू नान्दी ता मर्बनि पदितां॥

284 अनिद्रा वा सदहेण भ्रमणम घराता॥
कर्तनेम दुधारि पृष्टि अधिमा॥

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There in the saints’ society are full sounds of the melody of the five musical instruments.

Without being struck, they play wondrously and marvelously.

There are saints, God’s people play with their Lord.

Remaining perfectly detached, the saints contemplate their Supreme Lord.

Saints’ congregation is the seat of peace, poise and pleasure.

The galaxy of the saints sit and sing the Lord’s praises. There is no malady, sorrow, birth and death there.285

The continuous meditation of God is knowledge.286 So, according to Guru Granth Sahib, the primal state is the state of manifested knowledge. The experience of knowledge is revelation of Absolute Reality. In the Bani of Guru Granth Sahib, the Sabad is called as ‘Dhur Ki Bani’, that is, the order of Ultimate Being. So, Sabad is a form of Ultimate Being. Apart from it, Guru Granth Sahib emphasizes that Absolute Reality is incarnated in the Guru.

**Sabad in the Form of Ordain of Guru:** The contributors of Guru Granth Sahib have laid special emphasis on the form of Sabad as ordain of the Guru. Sabad is a source through which the Ultimate Knowledge gained in primal state is written in human language. When a Guru speaks his ordains, he is inseparable from his experience because his experience is

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285 भेंड तेकत सुंदर पुकार ताव ||
आलोक बनने अचल विमान भाव ||
वेश चढ़ति संद चार लेखा ||
प्रवाहित पुकार हिमाल भाव ॥ १ ॥
सुध समा भाग्यस्त लवन ||

the result of illumination of Ultimate Knowledge. This illumination is Divine. So, the Sabad is true Guru in itself. That is why, in Guru Granth Sahib, Sabad is known as the Ultimate Reality as well as the Guru.

The Guru Granth Sahib also provides the multi-functions of Sabad as Guru. So, patience, doubtlessness; state of indifference, i.e. renunciation, control over senses; achievement of divine rasa, i.e. aesthetics; relief from sorrows; transcendental attributes; good health; regulation of desires, fear of God, peace of mind;
determination for ideal life\textsuperscript{299}; success in every sphere of life\textsuperscript{300}; attaining knowledge\textsuperscript{301}; fulfillment of desires\textsuperscript{302}; relief from ignorance\textsuperscript{303}; concentration\textsuperscript{304}; virtue\textsuperscript{305}; freedom from bondages\textsuperscript{306}; achieving respect\textsuperscript{307} etc. are the results of the guidance and practice of Sabad Guru.

Sabad being the ordain of Guru, the Guru Granth Sahib is full of a good many hymns on the importance of Gurbani.\textsuperscript{308} It can be concluded that Sabad, as the incarnation of Guru, is presented in three forms. First is the concrete form of Sabad as educational; second is the abstract form of acoustic sound, i.e., primordial; and third the universal form of the virtuous and the transcendental Ultimate. Though Sabad Guru prevails in all the three forms in the Indian tradition, yet the status of Guru is conferred upon Sabad more emphatically in Guru Granth Sahib.

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{299} & कुक्कुव्विध मष्ट ललितौश्च ववज अते मु उदी। & \textit{Ibid.}, p. 788. \\
\textsuperscript{300} & महु नमः उपचे मे नित्ये दुःख मष्टु मृत्यु स्वीकारः। & \textit{Ibid.}, p. 422. \\
\textsuperscript{301} & सु जस्मिनं प्रवृत्तं समाधिम् अभिज्ञानं अभोजनं सादिः। & \textit{Ibid.}, p. 29. \\
\textsuperscript{302} & सु भलसन्ति सिद्धिः अभिज्ञानं ताहि फलेः नाम धारणां। & \textit{Ibid.}, p. 129; \\
\textsuperscript{303} & सति जिनम् अभिज्ञात ज्ञाति उदास वीराधसा। & \\
\textsuperscript{304} & कृतं विवेकः साधकः साधनोऽपि भक्तं धर्मं सबदी। & \textit{Ibid.}, p. 731. \\
\textsuperscript{305} & सति तत्त्वं एकतः सर्वांति सिद्धां अभिज्ञातं अण्डं ज्ञातिं। & \textit{Ibid.}, p. 774. \\
\textsuperscript{306} & कृतं मस्ती उव्वं लिङ्गं हने। & \textit{Ibid.}, p. 115. \\
\textsuperscript{307} & सति तत्त्वं सत्यं मस्ती कुलं अंवितं भक्ति पीठं। & \textit{Ibid.}, p. 937. \\
\textsuperscript{308} & कृतं विवेकः मवेन्द्र स्वेदः परी पवित्रं विवेकं समाधिम्। & \textit{Ibid.}, p. 152. \\

* \textit{Ibid.}, p. 127. \\
* \textit{Ibid.}, p. 115. \\
* \textit{Ibid.}, p. 611. \\

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