

**Conclusion and Possibilities**

The scriptural texts are considered to be sacramental of central importance to their religious traditions. These texts are always part of a larger field of religious practices. The study of these texts requires that we examine not only the content of such texts, but also use them in our real life. The understanding of scriptural texts also requires looking at how the readers create meanings, either as individuals or as members of interpretative communities. That is, texts come to have particular meanings through being read, not only through being written. The study of religious texts requires understanding the spiritual activity, not the simple written words.

In the same context, the hermeneutics of a text works on different levels; it is concerned with how the text works, what the text says, and how the text transcends its hidden revealed message to the mankind. It is a branch of knowledge that deals with the theories of interpretation, especially of Scriptures. It is a historical encounter which calls forth the personal experience of being here in the world. It tries to hold together two areas of understanding theory: the question of what is involved in the event of understanding a text, and the question of what understanding itself is, in its most foundational and existential sense.

Hermeneutics provides us tools, skills and guidance to pursue right vision and perspective. It not only provides us techniques
and processes to perceive reality and meaning but it sharpens our vision and understanding of the meaning with new and more possible dimensions, and thereby improves our perception of reality. It is the task of hermeneutics to interpret the text in the context of contemporary situation, to make the text or message of the Scripture relevant and meaningful to the present reader. In the relevant context, the interpreter keeps the Word of a Scripture alive, meaningful and relevant, otherwise the Scripture is dead and irrelevant. Thus, hermeneutics is the task of always coming back to the text under new circumstances and in new situation; and it is always a re-reading of Scripture and of ourselves, our world, our society and our history. It is the task of hermeneutics to relate the contents of earlier documents to different cultures and philosophies of life across the geographical and historical boundaries.

The idiom and structure of every re-interpretation is finalized by the needs of the hour and the place. The devotees of Sikh religion are not only seen in Punjab but all over the world and as a result, its principles are bound to be interacting to all over the world. Instead of focusing on the ideas of Eternal Reality and religion, attempts should be made to analyze the structure of religious experience, which is central to the understanding of religion. The hermeneutical study of any text is possible due to its different concepts, viz. understanding, interpretation, language, grammar etc. So, attempts have been made to understand its science.
Some scholars believe that hermeneutics is a western discipline, and it cannot be used as a research tool for the study of Guru Granth Sahib. But we should not hesitate to accept it if the positive traits of another culture can be used for the understanding of our scriptural texts. It is pertinent to note that grammar is also a developed theory with its own science. If grammar can be the basis of any study, why hermeneutics can’t be considered as a discipline for the study of Gurbani? However, we need to make efforts for initiating a discipline of Sikh Hermeneutics or GurmatMimamsa based on the interpretation of Gurbani. The Sikh Hermeneutics or GurmatMimamsa can be justified as a subject only if equal importance is given to the message and diction of Gurbani. Some important facts that have appeared in this regard are as follows:

1. It is a well-known fact that a method evolved for a particular religious tradition may not have universal utility, as it needs much experimentation and testing to determine its value for another religious tradition. It has been observed that the biblical methods of textual criticism are not of much helpful to unearth the true meaning of Sikh Scripture because the biblical and Sikh Scripture do not belong to the same age and they are not the product of similar cultural and religious milieu. Besides they are quite at variance with each other linguistically and from genre point of view. To identify the canonical text we have to keep in mind certain factors that are peculiar to the Sikh tradition. For
example, 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.

2. The ideal interpretation of the Scripture is really a difficult task for an exegete. It includes the individual revealed experience of the interpreter and the special skills for the creation of a new literary work. The concentration of the interpreter should be focused on the revealed Word of the Scripture. The experience of the revealed Word is the most important factor for understanding the Scripture in its original sense.

3. A Scripture includes the Divine revelation manifested through the medium of words. Sabad in its form and concept can be identified separately but they are inseparable as both are important. It is important to understand the Divine truth implicit in the Scripture so as to understand the Scripture itself. The Scriptures can never be interpreted at the finalized level. Therefore, their interpretation will continue even in the times to come.

4. A Scripture or a religion cannot be understood clearly without the knowledge of its history. So, it is essential to have the knowledge about its contemporary history. It is pertinent to note that before using any source as an evidence for textual study of the Guru Granth Sahib, an interpreter has to examine the historical circumstances out of which a particular source had originated. Besides, one has to unravel the process
through which it had been composed, the sources employed for it and the very purpose of its origin.

5. The knowledge of the original language of a Scripture is another important factor for the complete understanding of a Scripture. Some researchers and scholars often use translations or commentaries of the concerned Scriptures in their works. But such research works cannot be considered complete and appropriate as they lack the originality of the text. So, another important hermeneutical rule is the knowledge of language as a basic medium.

6. The research studies and interpretations related to Gurmat need to be based on such research tools which are best suited to interpret the Gurbani. The Gurmat interpretation does not simply mean to prepare an exegesis or a commentary but it should be an attempt to interpret the explanatory Divine experience and the message of Ultimate Reality. Therefore, any research is considered to be systematic which has set its own limitations of research tools. For example, the grammar as a research tool has its own limitations and cannot go beyond the philology. So, on the basis of grammar only, it is very difficult for an interpreter as well as the reader to reach on the eternal meaning of the text.

7. The hermeneutical study of Guru Granth Sahib must include its textual analysis. An interpreter must familiarize himself with the ways, means, methods and traditions which were prevalent in Sikhism for the transmission as well as exegesis of Gurbani. The history of Sikh
scriptural tradition can easily be understood referring back to Guru Nanak, whose experience of the Numinous formed its very core and basis as well. Very truly, to interpret the message of Gurbani oral transmission in the form of musical tradition has been a prevalent mode but it was not the possible way to preserve the Sabad for future generations.

8. Every Scripture has its own internal structure that helps to understand its text. Any researcher should be acquainted to the internal structure of the Scripture. It is believed that neither the models or tools for the study of Scriptures of other religions can be applied to the multifaceted structure of Gurbani; nor should such an attempt be made. Gurbani is such a well-organized composition which facilitates the researchers not only to understand but also to reach easily to the unique and varied values and reality of the Ultimate Being through its study. So, it is necessary that the researchers should go through the multidimensional evaluation of the Scripture.

9. Guru Granth Sahib is the holy Scripture of the Sikhs and it is their Eternal Guru; that is, their authoritative religious and spiritual guide, their preceptor and enlightener for all times. The essence of Gurbani is beyond space. It is from the Primal One, Guru is full of Nectar. Gurbani is the message of unapproachable and limitless Ultimate Being, that is why it itself is beyond limits. A human being is an intellectual being and intellect is the only source to understand everything concerning him as well as beyond his intellect. But a human being should try to understand
the meaning and ideas of Gurbani with the help of Gurbani itself. In this way, it is an institution which provides knowledge, when one joins it as a student. In the present research, the approach to study the Guru Granth Sahib is according to our intellect but it does not mean that this approach is restricted to academic knowledge only rather it is an experience of the Eternal Reality also because without Divine Order and Divine Grace His message cannot be understood in its true sense. 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 only by the Sabad Guru, Guru Granth Sahib.

The text of Guru Granth Sahib has an infinite hermeneutic potential. In this relevant context, each generation of scholars has tried to unfold its meaning from its particular angle.\textsuperscript{625} The actual practice of hermeneutics becomes a part-whole-part moment, a constant back and forth or dialectical process. This process can also be named as Sikh Hermeneutical Circle which has initiated as never ending movement and which encircles various important complete disciplines. Thus, the present study reaches at the conclusion that the hermeneutical tools as discussed above can form the basis for the establishment of Sikh Hermeneutics or GurmatMimamsa as a discipline to interpret the Guru Granth Sahib.

\textsuperscript{625} Guru Granth Sahib, p. 340.