CHAPTER III

GENERAL CLASSIFICATION OF IMAGERY
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A comprehensive and critical study of the imagery of the Adi Granth presents before us a rich variety of colourful images. Human life is depicted in all its shades through enticing images and we find nature in its varying moods and multi-coloured forms. We find images covering the whole span of human life - from infancy to old age - even life after death and death in life. The images became the steps of the ladder on which the human soul aspires to climb on the eternal spiritual striving to transcend this human existence and to attain the state of 'deathlessness'. Adi Granth is the golden treasury of the best images - one can find in Indian literature during the medieval period - 12th century to 17th century. All the poets of the Adi Granth were concerned with Bhakti movement which was a revolutionary religious struggle of the people and their leaders against the establishment in Indian religions and their formalism and ritualism. The selection of the verses of various saint-poets by Guru Arjan Dev was done on the basis of ideological like-mindedness. So the repetitions of images and the rise of the same objects, events and mythological figures in the imagery of all the saint poets was but natural. They all had almost the same type of spiritual, social, political and intellectual experiences.
There is no doubt that we find originality and novelty in their images and we cannot even ignore the fact that every saint-poet wanted to create images from his own experiences of life and many of the images used in the Adi Granth bear the stamp of the personality and creative individuality of the creators. But, at the same time, the repetition is so much that the images lose their lustre and appear like ready-made and stale stuff. About such images H. Coombes says, "A stale and ready-made image is almost invariably the evidence of an absence of original first-hand experience in the user, as far as any significance in the phrase itself is intended; it is the expression of a loose and general kind, not precise and individual; it doesn't carry in itself any sign of fresh perceptiveness or imagination."18

It is the tragedy of doctrinal and didactic verse that it cannot escape repetition in the use of images, as time and again the same idea comes up in the mind for expression and with it are linked the same images. Clive Sansom does not even include such verse in the realm of poetry. He is of the opinion that poetry written deliberately to inculcate morals or to influence conduct is seldom successful. It belongs to the sphere of ethics and philosophy rather than that of poetry. But the great image-makers and idol-breakers of the

Adi Granth, like Guru Nanak, saint Kabir and the greatest sufi Sheikh Farid, knew that the moral truths in poetry need transformation into poetic truths. In their hands, the ordinary images get transmuted into intense, evocative, bold, congruous and fresh images. "Doctrinal verse, didactic verse are very well; but they are not poetry, unless the moral truths have been translated into poetic truth," says C. Day Lewis.

For the purpose of a critical understanding and assessment of imagery in such a voluminous sacred text, the necessity to classify the images arises. But C. Day Lewis\(^2\) is of the opinion that it is in practice impossible to lay down categories to one of which any given image will conform, beyond the elementary ones of metaphor and simile, of classical epithet or personification. Without some classification, we are in the fear of confusion and can never critically analyse and assess the various types of images and can draw no conclusions.

For the classification of imagery, only two models are before us to select one of them for this purpose. The first is of Graham E. Victor, the author of 'The Imagery of Proust', and the other is that of Caroline Spurgeon, the author of Shakespearean Imagery and what it tells us.

(a) 'The Imagery of Proust' shows the way for the distribution

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20. C. Day Lewis, The Poet's Task,
according to quality, which is as under:

1. Auditory - relating to or experienced through hearing.
2. Visual - relating to sight.
3. Mental - relating to mind.
4. Gustatory - relating to taste.
5. Olfactory - relating to smell.
6. Kinaesthetic - it includes all images drawing on bodily sensations apart from hearing, seeing, tasting and smelling, i.e. touching (tactile), instinctive (visceral), relating to heat (caloric) etc.

7. Synaesthetic - all images in which a stimulus in one sense calls forth a response in another. For example, a sound calling forth ideas of colour.

(b) In 'Imagery relating to themes' we can divide them in four categories:

1. Nature - (i) water, river and pools (ii) flowers and trees (iii) birds (iv) landscape (v) sun, moon and sky (vi) seasons and weathers etc.

2. Aesthetics - (i) Painting (ii) Theatre (iii) Literature and language (iv) Music (v) Architecture etc.

22. Graham, E. Victor, The Imagery of Proust, pp. 7-8
3. Society  
(i) Family and family relations  
(ii) Servants  
(iii) peasants  
(iv) bourgeois  
(v) Jews  
(vi) Diplomats  
(vii) Clothes and dresses  
(viii) Aristocracy etc.

4. Introspective Processes  
(i) Love and jealousy  
(ii) Sickness and death  
(iii) Sleep and dreams  
(iv) Habits  
(v) Memory  
(vi) Time, etc.

(c) We find distribution of images according to source also:

1. Nature  
(i) Flowers and gardens  
(ii) Plants, bushes and trees  
(iii) Fruit and seeds  
(iv) Seasons and weathers  
(v) Landscape  
(vi) Birds  
(vii) Animals  
(viii) Rural life  
(ix) Sea and water.

2. Common Objects  
(i) Metals, jewels and enamel  
(ii) Mirrors  
(iii) Household articles  
(iv) Pieces and fragments  
(v) Chains, links and network  
(vi) Thermometers and Barometers  
(vii) Materials and traders etc.

3. Science  
(i) Biology  
(ii) Physics  
(iii) Mathematics  
(iv) Astronomy  
(v) Geology and Archeology  
(vi) Chemistry and Alchemy  
(vii) Inventions.

4. Literature  
(i) General  
(ii) Folklore and Arabian Nights  
(iii) Knighthood and hunting  
(iv) Classics and mythology  
(v) Religion and the Bible, etc.


A critical analysis of the above scheme of the classification of images reveals that it will prove confusing for us. Because in (b) and (c) we find many repetitions. In (b) aesthetics covers all the arts and literature but in (c) it is divided into two sections - 'literature' and 'the arts'. Images from nature and introspective processes are included in both the sections. Moreover, the book 'The Imagery of Proust' concerns the prose of a novelist but the Adi Granth is a classic of poetry.

The other model of the classification of images is that of Caroline Spurgeon, the well known author of 'Shakespearean Imagery and what it tells us'. Her division is as under:-

1. Nature (outdoor) - (i) Weathers and seasons (ii) Rural life (iii) Sky, Clouds, Rain and wind (iv) Sunshine and shadows (v) Flowers and gardens (vi) Seas, rivers and ships
2. Indoor life

- Occupations (ii) Eating, drinking and cooking (iii) Kitchen (iv) Dust, dirt and washing (v) Body and its movements (vi) Sleep and dreams (vii) Clothes and materials (viii) Illness and medicine (ix) Parents, children and marriages, etc.

3. Classes and types of men.

- Kings, courtiers and soldiers (ii) Servants and foods (iii) Beggars, thieves and prisoners, etc.

4. Miscellaneous

- (i) Wars and weapons (ii) Law (iii) Music (iv) Painting (v) Sculpture (vi) Theatre, etc.

In the classification of the images in the Adi Granth, we are to overpower many difficulties and solve some special problems. Its poetry is the expression of the creative individuality of different saint poets belonging to the different parts of India - a vast country. It spreads over a period of six centuries - a period of continuous transition in the social, political and religious conditions of the society. On the whole, the pattern followed by Spurgeon suits our classification. Because its classification concerns the poetic creations of William Shakespeare who, in his dramas, deals with the history of the English people and their rulers during the span of many centuries. Taking in view the particular problems of the imagery in the Adi Granth, certain
modifications are made. We divide the imagery in three sections. The first section deals with imagery from nature. It includes images of sea, river, pools, trees, flowers, bushes, animals, birds, insects, seasons, weathers, sky, sun, moon, battlefields, kinaesthetic images (Coleric), day and night, light and darkness, games, etc. The second section concerns the images of our indoor life. It includes images from occupations, houses, homes, kitchen, forts, nectar and poison, fire, human relations, ornaments, human body, diseases, learning and birth and death. The third section of miscellaneous imagery includes images from mythology, history, religion, heaven and hell, and all other images from the world of music, colour, path, metals, machines and dirt and dust.

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