INTRODUCTION

IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT:

The study that is presented in the subsequent pages is based upon the study of the poetry of the Sikh Gurus. This poetry of the Sikh Gurus represents the spirit of the Adi Granth, which is the most important scripture that the medieval India produced. It is a book that revolutionised the old concepts of thinking and provided new dimensions to it.

Writing a foreword of the 'Selections from the Sacred Writings of the Sikhs' Mr. Arnold Toynbee observes 'The Adi Granth is remarkable for several reasons. Of all known religious scriptures, this book is the most highly venerated.'

It is not great, important and remarkable only because it tells of the mystical experiences of the saint-poets, but because it has a special message to convey to the world. It teaches the man, his religion, and social values in the purest sense i.e. to inculcate in him the every possible ethical quality and helps to develop a really spiritual personality. The poetry of the Sikh Gurus, like their life, is a clear symbol of integration between different religions and races and a study of it gives new meaning to the life.

It plays, as it played in the past, a significant role in infusing the spirit of life in India in general and in Panjab in particular. It contains discussions almost about every

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religion or system of India and throws new light upon it. On the whole, it teaches a new method of living the life.

In addition to it, it is very important, as a piece of sublime literature and an immeasurable treasure for the student of language and literature.

NEED OF THE SUBJECT

The poetry of the Sikh Gurus, which comprises the major portion of the Adi Granth, is an ocean full of pearls and gems of different kinds of thoughts, but these are lying in the considerable depth and needs strenuous efforts to be found or picked up. Scholars like Dr. Bhai Jodh Singh, Dr. Mohan Singh, Dr. S.S. Kohli, Dr. Taran Singh, Dr. Jai Ram Mishra, Dr. D.D. Maini and many others have made deep dips to find these out and have contributed a lot upon the subject. They have really given a deep and vast study, but most of them have concentrated themselves upon the study of Adi Granth as a whole, or upon an individual poet or upon a kind of poetry and have not taken a single aspect of the contents of the scripture. There are also works, which deal with the History and Philosophy of the Sikh Gurus. Dr. Sher Singh, Sh. Khasan Singh, Dr. Gobind Singh, Sh. Khushwant Singh, Sh. Sewa Ram Singh, Sh. Indu Bhushan Banerjee etc. are the scholars who have contributed in this respect. Bhai Kahan Singh, Bhai Sahib Singh, Principal Teja Singh, Dr. Gopal Singh Dardi are the scholars, who have compiled Dictionaries, written Commentaries and prepared Translations of the Adi Granth. In this way many scholars, in some or the other way,
have worked upon the poetry of the Ādi Granth, and their efforts are quite appreciable.

But keeping in view the vast scope of the research, as Guru-Bani is an immeasurable treasure, there is a dire necessity of a specialised study upon the different branches of knowledge and different methods of approach to the ultimate reality, contained in the poetry of Sikh Gurus, I have dared to choose the present subject and so, in this respect, mine is a humble dedication.

SCOPE OF THE SUBJECT

The present work, as its very name suggests, is an outcome of the research, conducted upon one aspect and that is Bhakti. This word now-a-days is used in wider sense as Desh-Bhakti, Manva-Bhakti etc. but in each case the sense of the word Bhakti is pure and intensified love, whether it is for country, friend or man on the whole. But in this thesis the word Bhakti is adopted and used purely in the spiritual sense i.e. Bhakti for the Deity.

The scope of this work is confined to the extent of tracing the concepts of Bhakti and Bhagwan (to whom Bhakti is offered) in the traditional scriptures and systems and the attitude of Sikh Gurus towards it. In fact, this is my thesis. So, I have confined myself within the limit of this subject and have not concentrated or touched upon any other point or aspect. Every thing, which is concerned with Bhakti, whether it is object of Bhakti, nature of Bhakti, method of
Bhakti or the conduct of the person who follows the path of Bhakti is kept into consideration and is included in the range of the scope. The various offshoots of the Bhakti movement which resulted in the formation of various cults do not fall within the scope of my thesis.

OUTCOME OF THE RESEARCH

I have seen the origin of the Indian tradition of Bhakti in the Indian soil. The heterodox systems like Jainism and Buddhism have also contributed towards it. Sankara, though with a definite attitude towards it, also advocates Bhakti. This tradition has definitely attracted the Indians from all castes, creeds or schools.

The Sikh Gurus were not only preachers, but they were thinkers also, and at times revolutionary thinkers. They have their definite and independent concepts about Brahman, Jīva and Jagat, which they do not consider as different entities. They believe that Brahman and Jagat are like a thread and a knot in it, which are substantially the same. God is like a big pond, in which every kind of Jīva, it may be embodied in any form, lives.

The Sikh Gurus were essentially Bhaktas, though they do not disagree with the use of every other method and Jiva is perhaps, the most useful among the methods other than Bhakti. Their Bhakti is a unity which cannot be divided into various types. Their's is a Bhava-Bhakti and hence is an urge of the soul, which needs no show. Their Bhakti emphasises
the content rather than the form. Bhakti is their ultimate aim and also a method to achieve it. They prefer Bhakti, even to Mukti.

Bhakti-Sahana of the Sikh Gurus become complete with the exertion of all the workable human faculties. It is a continuous development which can be expressed through three words: Sravana, Manana and Niddhiyasana, but Gurus have supplemented the last by Bhava, which is in accordance with their doctrine of love.

The conduct of the Bhakta is based upon the ethical qualities, like truth, charity, forbearance, equality, universal brotherhood etc. It is to transcend the world of bondages, even while living in it or it is not to renounce the world, but to remain in it with a spirit of detachment, Bhakta never emphasises upon the achievement of his personal benefits, but he works for others' welfare. The real test of a Bhakta is that he should infuse the same Divine spirit in others, with which he is blessed.