

JAAP SAHIB

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praises. It is through our own failings that we ignore Him, chose not to recognize the Power of the Powerful, but alas this too is His game and we must play by His rules.

Thus as we turn to Jaap Sahib, we are drawn into the lap of God, surrounded by His infinite love. The security of being enveloped by His infinite Power gives us the strength we need to complete our life cycle ever glorifying His name through our actions, by allowing Him to rule us.

Jaap Sahib-The Play of Divine Forces, and Divine Verses

In Jaap Sahib, Guru Gobind Singh ji has composed 199 verses of varying meter, employing languages from Persian to Sanskrit, to demonstrate (not simply proclaim) that God, though worshipped by all, is beyond the description of any one and can not be subjected to any worldly limits. Thus the names used by Various Religions present in the Guru's time (17th century) to extol God are combined in one Grand hymn of praise.

Through mixing concept and grammar, and blending language our Guru has created a masterpiece to reflect that God encompasses all forms, all forces, all adjectives, and all attributes. From the opening statement in Bhujang Prayat Chand, Guru Gobind Singh ji sets the tone by juxtaposing a negative prefix "A" (Namastvang Akale), against a positive trait (Namastvang Kirpale). God is beyond death (immortal) yet He is Compassionate. Guruji captures our inability to understand God by saying though we can't say God is limited by death as humanity is, we can say God is Compassionate. Throughout this verse (and most of the ensuing ones) Guru Gobind Singh ji uses "A" and "Nir" to convey the concept of "Beyond description", as in English we would use no, cannot, without, above, beyond. Inter-

JAAP SAHIB :

Its Spiritual and Social Impact

Introduction :

Writing about Jaap Sahib is a great blessing. The very process of thinking about and meditating on this Divine work brings a student ever closer to the Master. Although I have recited it and listened to it each day for the past 18 years, just as every Sikh does as part of their daily prayers (Nitnem), it is not until this test of my understanding that I have realized the depth my love for it and its impact on me and on the world in which we live. But perhaps all wise teachers know that a test is meant more to demonstrate and reinforce the understanding in the student than it is to satisfy the teacher.

This essay must be viewed as an expression of what I have learned through this study, rather than an attempt to explain Guru Gobind Singh ji's thought or reasons for sharing Jaap Sahib with us. Each of our studies must be viewed as a part (infinitely small) of the infinite whole of our Guru's revelation.

A disciple's study can not reveal and should not presume to reveal the whole.

For we are Sikhs-students, and it is unseemly for a student to presume to comment on the Master's work. Rather Gurbani is revealed for us to imbibe, and having experienced that wonderful taste to try to describe it to others. It is

revealed for us to digest, and having been nourished, to demonstrate the power of its sustenance through our work. For though beyond description, it is the Praise of God through NAM and Gurbani which uplifts us and those around us; and through God's praise we are empowered to carry out God's mission.

Thus as Jaap Sahib is a sublime praise of God; let our studies be an attempt to praise our Guru through whom this wonderful vision of one God beyond any boundaries is revealed to us.

JAAP SAHIB—the Spiritual Impact : Beyond the Beyond

As the central purpose of all bani is to raise our spiritual consciousness, so we may open our minds to God's presence, to have our ego subdued by the overwhelming power and glory of God's love, so we ultimately may realize that though we are distinct entities, we are part of God, so Guru Gobind Singh ji in seemingly endless litany makes us understand, indeed feel the absolute power of God. For it is one thing for a child to say that God is great, but for a Guru so imbued with powers which command the world to say that God is "beyond", has an impact far greater. For our Guru speaks of powers known and unknown to humanity, relating, intertwining all we see to that which is unseen - unrealized. It is this dynamic link between the manifest and unmanifest which often prevents us from understanding God. It is the ultimate enlightenment when we no longer see ourselves or creation as separate from our Creator. Yet God is beyond enlightenment. The Enlightener is not a stage - He is the Creator of both the stage and all the players on it.

In the opening stanza of Jaap Sahib, Guru Gobind Singh ji explains.

Though God is indescribable, He is described by those according to how they have been blessed to perceive Him. What we perceive or can perceive of God are His countless manifestations and forces. Forces such as good and evil, life and death; scientific forces, such as light, gravity, and sound. Manifestations in visible creation, whether visible to our eye, or through a microscope or telescope, all are "attributes" of God's nature. As such they are names or appellations, by which we attempt to identify God or at least associate with God. Much in the same way as we would out of love or reverence entitle a work of art which overwhelms our senses or a scene of great beauty to which we would react with inutterable praise, so those to whom God has revealed even the smallest detail of His nature have responded with similar awe. Much as we attach slogans or mottos to capture a concept - even as we would attach a nick name to a child or friend to express a dominant trait and indicate our affection, so those to whom God has shown His affection have throughout the ages tried to verbalize that which no words can adequately describe. For though God is to be known - experienced by each of us, each according to the perspective we have gained, each of us will describe our experience according to what vision we have been blessed with.

Thus in Jaap Sahib we turn each day to the Master Himself, the one who knows God even as all creation knows God, who for us embodies the spirit of God, and through whom we gain not only the love of God but of all God's Prophets, indeed all His creation. By loving Guru Gobind Singh ji and repeating Jaap Sahib, Lord Jesus, the Prophet Mohammed, Lord Krishna, Lord Ram Chander, Mahatma Buddha, Our Elder Moses, Lord Zoroaster, and the countless saints, all smile on us. It is a vision of 1 God in whose court the Lords of the worlds sit while the myriads of heavenly hosts sing God's

"Power behind the Power". From verses 46-48 God is the bhan bhane - the sun of suns; the man mane - the respect of the respected; the chandra chandre - the moon beyond the moon; the bhan bhane - the Sun of Suns; the song behind singing; the melody, behind tunes; the dance behind dancing; the sound behind all sounds; the beat behind the rhythm; the drama behind the play. God is the Force behind and beyond all Forces.

SOME ADDITIONAL THEMES

Creation and Destruction

Though we as humans often see death and destruction as some form of Divine punishment, Guru Gobind Singh ji stresses that it is all part of God's drama-of His great order as Master of life and death, and as such there is no malice. Repeatedly God is described as kind, merciful, in conjunction with His description of Destroyer. Guru Gobind Singh ji wants us to understand that all life is a play, with God himself the playwright, the scenery, the script, the lighting, the actors, the sound effects and music. He creates the stage for all His plays and then appears on it, playing all the roles Himself. Like any good play, there is message and a lesson in every scene of life. It remains for us to understand that lesson and learn to gladly accept any part of the play that God would give us. The problem is that because we haven't read the script, we can't understand then purpose of all the actions. Jaap Sahib lets us know that thought we can't know the full extent of God's play, all that we see and know, all that we experience, is indeed

part of His Divine order. (Rual Chand, Tav, Parsad)

Namo sarb kale—Namo sarb diale (19)

Namo sarb kale—Namo sarb pale (20)

Namo sarb karta—Namo Sarb harta (27)

Behind/Beyond

While people saw and worshipped God's forces and manifestations, Guru Gobind Singh ji clearly states that God is the force behind all forces and should be mistaken for just the force itself. For the force can sometimes be explained or measured, but God is beyond measure.

Namo Dev Deve (Bhujang Pryat Chand 44, 46-48, 55-57)
(Bhujang Pryat Chand 67-68)

(Mudhbar Chand, Tav Prasad 77-91)

(Mudhbar Chand, Tav Prasad 161-179)

(Bhujang Pryat Chand 185-188)

All are Subject to God-God is the Doer of All, for all, everywhere, at all times :

SARBUNG : Charpat Chand, Tav Parsad—142-144; 76-78

NAMO SARB : Bhaujang Pryat Chand (19, 20, 22, 24, 28, 29); Bhujang Pryat Chnd (44, 45) (64, 66, 69)

Chatra Chakra Bhujang Pryat Chand 96-98

Sada Sarbda (Bhujang Pryat Chand 73, 60

Sada Sachdanand Satrang Pranasi (Bhujan Pryat Chand, 195)

Sada Angsunge, (199)

Ke Sarbatra (Bhagvati Chand, Tav Parsad 111-119)

JAAP SAHIB : the Foundation for a Just Social Order—
Khalsa

History has demonstrated that justice is not produced by economic or political systems alone, but by the consciousness of the people and their rulers. If we view the authority which empowers us as different, we become as children quarreling over whose father is bigger. Furthermore, we are and have been able to design the authority to serve our needs and our agendas, rather than submitting ourselves to the authority of God. In the process we have created divisions at all levels of society, based on any differences which would secure our power. In Jaap Sahib, Guru Gobind Singh ji demolishes any individual or group's claim to God by showing that God is beyond any one's command. Rather we as part of creation are all subject to God's command. While we debate and feud to preserve our selfish interests, God is providing for all. While we enact laws to govern, we are all under God's law. If we are to create the social order we are capable of, we must recognize the Authority which takes care of all our interests. Thus by proclaiming 1 God, and understanding that that which one calls God, albeit in a different language and by a different name, is the same which another calls God, we are able to break down the social barriers to peace and justice.

Jaap Sahib open with a proclamation :

God exists without any lines or Prints, no symbols, race, caste, or lineage to identify Him—Chhapai Chand, Tav Parsad

God has no tangible limits which we can apply to Him. Nor can we define God by any of the worldly measures we apply to each other.

persed are phrases similar to the opening one, Namastang Udare, Namastang Apare (8), & the basic thread of enlightenment : Namastang Suekai, Namastang Anekai (10) : God is unique yet Universal, yet one countless.

Breaking down all barriers which we have created by claiming God as our own, Guru ji recounts in 16-18

God has no, and therefore belongs to no caste-ajate, no lineage-apate, no religion-amajbe, Isn't that marvelous-ajbe; no country-adese; no dress/fashion-abhese; no special place-nirdhame; no birth-nirbhame.

Having rejected everyone's claims to God, Guru Gobind Singh ji shifts to say in essence though no one person, group, etc can claim God, God claims all as His own.

Namo sarab kale, Namost sarab diale.

In 19-20, the second theme of Jaap Sahib—God as the Divine Author of both Life and Death the source of both Creation and Destruction, is introduced. Namost sarab khape; Salutations to the Destroyer of all; Namost sarab thape—Salutations to the Creator of All; Namost Sarab kale; to the death of all; Namost sarab pale—Salutations to the sustainer of all.

In Chachri Chand Tav Parsad (29-42) Guru Gobind Singh ji uses 2 syllables, Arup hai, anup hai, aju hai, abhu hai—God is formless, unrivalled, immovable, and beyond creation, to count the countless and concludes that though God forms are countless, they are still of His one Form, and to Him they ultimately return—Anek hai pher Ek hai,

Returning to Bhujang Prayat Chand (44-61) "Namo Sarab Mane, Samastung Nidhane", Guruji introduces us to the

Is in chaos. For your Divine Entertainment, a booming laugh. Yet you care about all your creation. Those who have fallen flat, those who find grace, irrespective of shape. Your tone echoes forth. Notes and scores crumpled pieces to be reformed into your symphony. 1 tone echoing forth from your Divine Force. The Word, the shabad, from one tone the melody of creation emanates.

How can 1 tone produce countless sounds and variations ?

How can 1 light produce so many colors ?, or 1 sun so many rays ?

That 1 tone contains all tones. It is the source.

1 Force—its sound we hear, its light we see, the Source of all Power

1 Force contains all the forces of the universe—the source

1 God, the un-manifest, power behind all powers-force behind all forces- voice behind all voices-tone behind all tones-light behind all lights

The un—touchable—un approachable; the unimaginable. The in visible; Paradoxical; the distinct—the universal; the manifest the un manifest; the visible, the in visible, Creator of the animate and the inanimate.

You are the knowledge behind all knowledge; the wisdom behind all wisdom; the thought behind all thoughts. the source.

You are the un believable in whom all believe

The unknowable from which all knowledge springs

The unrevealed, the source of all revelation

No one can state God's form, His color, identify his imprint, or his habit

While we have established characteristics to classify or identify God's creation, not one of those attributes apply to God. Even the words we use spring from God. It is this vision of God not subject to any boundaries which forms the basis for Khalsa, which in Amrit Parchar allows people of all different castes and races to drink from the same vessel and become part of the same social order.

God's external image is constant, self-illuminated, with immeasurable power.

While all of creation is subject to time and space, the Creator is not. All creation is empowered with life, or light, or essence, yet while God the Empower-or IS (illumination). When we can not measure the extent of the power of God's manifestations, the universe, how can we measure God.

God is counted by millions of gods as their God and of myriad kings as their King.

If those who rule the world (s) recognize God as the source of their power, who are we to dispute.

Humans, gods, and demons, proclaim Him Lord of 3 worlds (land, air, water) and the jungles and vegetation declare He is beyond compare.

Oh God, who could ever recite all your names. The wise ones whom you have blessed know you by your manifestations and actions.

At this time, more than ever, the world needs a new vision—a vision which while encompassing the needs of all, affirms the individual values and beliefs of each element of our diverse society. For unlike traditional societies, our modern world, while bringing diverse cultures together through technology, migration, and national demarcations, has often created more opportunities for confrontation than cooperation. Religious, ethnic, and racial groups who for generations have lived in conflict, often exacerbated, if not precipitated by their religious and political leaders, need an authority for peace. People who are lost without constructive values to provide meaning for their lives need an authority for truth. A spiritual vacuum exists in Western Democracy where the separation of church and state and a need to define being in terms of possessions (I have so I am) has practically destroyed all social institutions; it exists equally in the Eastern Block, where people have just realized that their entire identity individual and societal has been built on a foundation of falsehood.

The downtrodden of the world need an authority for justice and a hope that they too can rise and be counted among the productive citizens of the world.

Most of all—all people need an authority for love. While many have become conscious of the need to be kinder to our eco-system, we need to understand the basis for human ecology.

Jaap Sahib provides the foundation for all our needs. It is the very embodiment, in scripture of the Authority of All-for All. It provides the bridge we need to cross over our man-made boundaries. It provides the bond we need to join to gether in one grand harmonious society. Jaap Sahib is the scripture of the Inter-faith, Inter-racial, inter-

gender, inter-ethnic, pluralistic society we live in. By reciting Jaap Sahib, a Muslim sees the vision of Mohammed Sahib, the Christian, a vision of Christ the Hindus of Lord Krishna, the Jew of Moses, Sikhs of Guru Gobind Singh, the Parsee of Zoroaster, Buddhists of Mahatma Buddha. We recognize not only what we know as God, but what those we have previously viewed with bias, know as God. More importantly, we recognize these separate visions as 1.

Jaap Sahib is the foundation for a new social order—God's order—God's kingdom on earth. To use the Christian metaphor:

By hallowing God's Name, through Jaap Sahib
His will is done on Earth as it is in Heaven
What Jaap Sahib has revealed to me:

While the language of Jaap Sahib is foreign to me, I have always felt that the Guru can speak to us in any language we need to understand His teachings. Once in meditation, the Lord started speaking, when I had finished copying the words which He spoke, I realized to my joy, that He had revealed the essence of Jaap Sahib to me.

Dear Lord:

Make me an instrument of thy will, that the Divine Music of Your Holy Name ever echo in my mind. Let my life be a melody, ever attuned to Your Voice, every action a tribute to your Glory.

From your Divine music all of Creation dances. With each note your Being is manifest—a life form utters forth. Just imagine, just as the scales within our hearing exist, there are infinite notes beyond our comprehension, so too is your creation. As if our karma is tied to your score. Harmony suddenly slides into a minor key; cacophony and the world

The unincorporated from which all corporal bodies form
The formless from which all forms emanate
You are beyond life—Yet all Death folds into You
Oh Heavenly Lord, who can know you ?

We long for a sign from thee who are beyond all signs
a power, feeling, of being swallowed up, of return, of
reunion, of immense love within and without, of unity, that
self no longer remains distinct, but exists only as part of
You—merged.

We emerged from our mothers' wombs to be lost in the
world as distinct identities only to find our true selves
merged with you, Oh Lord. For without you there is no
life, no self, no creation.

You are all powerful, the source of the power

all knowing, the source of all knowledge

all encompassing, you encompass all

all merciful, the source of all mercy

all meaning

all languages

all compassionate

all glorious

omnipresent-present in all

the greatest-all greatness

tremendous

marvelous-all marvels

miraculous-all miracles

wonderful-all wonders

1 name—all names

1 spirit—all spirits

1 sun—all light

**all taste, all aromas, all sounds, all senses, all
touches, all feeling, all emotions, all bravbry**

**Within your Divine order, the actors of cowardice, fear, lust,
pride, greed, ahger, and hate**

**all darkness, against the background of darkness Your light
shines supreme.**

Majesties of the majestic

King of kings

Lords of Lords

Graatest of the Great-Greatness of the Great

Holiest of the Holies-Holiness of the Holy

Power of the Powerfull

Distinct but not Separate

All voices are your Voice

All knowledge is your knowledge

Ail bodies are your Body

All Light is your light

All Forms are your form

All Sweetness is your Sweetness

All Bitterness is Yours

All Love is Your Love