

Before we start considering some holy Shabads for their meaning, it will be helpful to know some important terms used in Guru Granth Sahib. Only a few recurring terms will be explained first, and more terms will be added as per the need for the Shabads.

Ø THE (So Called) MOOL MANTRA

ੴ ਸਤਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਰਿਭਉ ਨਰਿਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤੀ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥

Ek-Onkaar; SutNaam; Kerta; Purkh; Nirbhau; Nirvair; Akaal Moorat; Ajoonee; SaiBhang; Gur Persaad.

This small collection of highly sacred words is in praise of Waheguru (God) and describes His traits. It is called the **MOOL MANTRA** (the recipe to realize God) – albeit erroneously. Mool Mantra is recited in obeisance of Waheguru and is recited before any important task is begun. It is the very first entry in Guru Granth Sahib.

Meaning: There is only one Supreme Power in the universe and this power is uniform and constant everywhere in the universe. True is the existence of this Supreme body of Power - Waheguru or God. In other words God's existence is eternal. He is the Creator and is omnipresent. He is without fear because nobody is superior to Him and **no natural**

Law applies to Him

. He is fearless and is therefore perfectly Just. His is completely unaffected by time. He never takes any life form, and is self-Illuminated. He can be realized

only

by the grace of the Guru

Ø **RAHAO:** This term means pause, and is used to express the main theme of the shabads. The sentence preceding Rahao carries the main theme. If a shabad contains more than one theme, each theme is followed by 'Rahao'. Thus there can be more than one rahaos (or pauses) in a shabad. Most shabads have one or more rahaos, but there are a few shabads which do not contain any 'rahao'. For example the holy Shabad, "So der tayra keha so gher keha -----" does not have any rahao.

Ø **MEHLA:** Almost every culture in the world in general, and the Indian Culture in particular, recognize the male as the head of the family and the wife as providing support. Many holy men of different faiths worshipped God assuming the role of the male and God as their beloved.

Guru Nanak Sahib advised the masses to change this notion and asked all human beings to consider God as the only male in the universe and themselves as His brides. With this new notion, all human beings – males and females – would worship God and accept His Will exactly the way, the typical Indian ladies obey their husbands.

Mehla is a Sanskrit word which means a female.

So Guru Sahiban began to use this word to emphasize the role of human beings in relation to God. In Guru Granth Sahib, Guru Sahiban are identified as Mehla (in a few cases as Mehal) 1, 2, 3, 4 ---- etc. for their compositions.

However, the other holy men are identified by their names.

Ø **THE GREAT SOULS: whose holy compositions have been enshrined in the Holy Guru Granth Sahib:**

Guru Granth Sahib is a unique Holy Book which has been written by the founder of the Sikh religion, Guru Nanak Sahib Himself and five other Gurus. The Principles of the contents of Guru Granth Sahib are exactly the same as professed by Guru Nanak Sahib no matter whose compositions have been enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib. Another great thing about Guru Granth Sahib is that it includes the compositions of many other Great Souls who belong to different religions and most of them come from the so called UNTOUCHABLE Strata of the Indian Society. No other holy book of any religion in the world has contributions from other holy men.

There are thirty five Great Souls whose compositions are enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib. They

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come from all This number includes **six Guru Sahiban:** Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Guru Angad Dev Ji, Guru Amar Dass Ji, Guru Ram Dass Ji, Guru Arjun Dev Ji, and Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji.

There are **fifteen Bhagats** as follows: Kabir Ji, Naam Dev Ji, Ravidas Ji, Trilochan Ji, Farid Ji, Benni Ji, Dhanna Ji, Jai Dev Ji, Bheekhan Ji, Parma Nand Ji, Sain Ji, Peepa Ji, Sadhna Ji, Rama Nand Ji, and Soor Dass Ji (only one line).

There are also **eleven Bhattis** who were Brahmans and who were all cousins with the exception of one, Bhikha Ji who was their uncle and who was the first one to come to Guru Amar Dass Ji's asylum. His nephews came a little later. They are:

Bhikha Ji, Kalsahar Ji (also known as Kallh or Tull), Jaalap Ji, Keerat Ji, Sullh Ji, Bhullh Ji, Nullh Ji, Bal Ji, Gayand Ji, Mathura Ji, and Haribans Ji.

Two bards of Guru Sahiban's Court, Satta and Balwand have also their composition enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib. Their composition is enshrined under the title, 'Ramkali Ki Vaar, Rai Balwand tatha Sattay Doom Aakhi'. Sunder Ji, a great-grandson of Guru Amar Dass Ji has written an account of the passing of Guruship to Guru Ram Dass Ji by Guru Amar Dass Ji which also includes the advice and wishes of Guru Amar Dass Ji as to what He wanted to be done after He leaves this mortal world.

There are three Sloaks by Guru Nanak Sahib which have been addressed to Bhai Mardana Ji in 'Bihagrrha Ki Vaar'. Some people erroneously believe that they have been written by Bhai Mardana Ji, but that is not the case. These Sloaks have been written by Guru Nanak Sahib.

Ø INTERNAL ORGANIZATION OF GURU GRANTH SAHIB:

All the holy contents of Guru Granth Sahib are in poetry, most of which are in Raags and in Sloaks. The number of Raags used in Guru Granth Sahib is thirty one out of which twenty-two had been used by the Bhagats. That means Guru Sahiban used nine additional Raags. Raag Maajh has been introduced by Guru Nanak Sahib and was never used before. The last Raag, Jai Jai Wanti has been used by Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib only. The thing that amazes me

beyond comprehension is the fact that none of the Guru Sahiban had any formal training in music yet they have used so many Raags in their Baanis with further very deep intricacies of subclasses and gher (s) in each Raag. Guru Nanak Sahib used Vaars in Gurbani for the first time. All the Bhatt Baani is in Suvvayyes which have been written by them in praise of the first five Guru Sahiban. Unlike all other religious holy books, there is no story per se in Guru Granth Sahib. A few stories from the Hindu holy books have been used, but only to emphasize the grandeur and kindness of Waheguru.

The order of the Raags in Guru Granth Sahib has a special significance. Guru Granth Sahib starts with Jap(u) Ji Sahib followed by the holy compositions of Rehras Sahib and Sohila Sahib (some people name the holy Baani as Keertan Sohila, which is incorrect). After that the first Raag used in Guru Granth is Siri Raag which is an evening Raag. The second last Raag is Prabhaati which is the early morning Raag. The last Raag is Jai Jai Wanti used only by Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib. The symbolic significance of the order of the Raags is that without the worship of Waheguru, a man's life is dark just like the advent of night (darkness) after sunset. But by worshipping Waheguru following the advice of the Guru, man's life becomes begins to shine with Divine Knowledge just like the morning sun. Jai Jai Wanti is a garland of wild flowers; so when a man's life has been brightened by the Divine knowledge, he is honoured by Waheguru and a just as people honour someone by putting a flower-garland around his neck.

The following are the thirty-one Raags in the order in which they have been enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib:

Siri Raag, Maajh, Gauri, Aasa. Goojri, Dev Gandhari, Bihagrra, Wadhans, Sorith, Dhanasari, Jaitsari, Toadi, Bararri, Tilung, Suhi, Bilawal, Goand, Ramkali, Nut Narayan, Maali Gaurra, Maaru, Tukhari, Kedara, Bhairon, Basant, Sarang, Malhaar, Kaanarra, Kalyan, Prabhaati, Jai Jai Wanti.

Gauri is the longest Raag while Jai Jai Wanti is the shortest. Raags have been further divided into Shabads, Ashatpadis, Chhants, Solhes (in Raag Maaru only) and Vaars. There are twenty-two Vaars as follows:

Guru Nanak Sahib (3): Maajh, Aasa, and Malhaar

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Guru Amar Dass Ji (4): Goojri, Suhi, Ramkali and Maaru

Guru Ram Dass Ji (8) : Siri Raag, Gauri, Bihagrra, Wadhans, Sorith, Bilawal, sarang and Kaanarra

Guru Arjun Dev Ji (6): Gauri, Goojri, Jaitsari, Ramkali, Maaru and Basant

Satta and Balwand (1): Ramkali

TOTAL VERSES

There are close to 5800 total verses in Guru Granth Sahib of which there are about 2300 verses by Guru Arjun Sahib, about 950 by Guru Nanak Sahib, about 880 by Guru Amar Dass Ji and about 650 by Guru Ram Dass Ji.

BHAGAT BAANI

Some scholars had believed that the Bhagat Baani was collected by Guru Arjun Dev Ji when he sent some Sikhs to various places to collect the Baani. But Prof Sahib Singh has proved that there is more than sufficient evidence within Guru Granth Sahib to prove that the Bhagat Baani was collected by Guru Nanak Sahib Himself when He went on long journeys. This conclusion seems to be completely accurate when you find that even the Third Guru, Amar Dass Ji had the Bhagat Baani with Him as He has written some Shabads clarifying some of the Shabads of the Bhagats. The same is true of Guru Ram Dass Ji and Guru Arjun dev Ji. It is clear that each Guru Sahib passed on the total collection of Gurbani (including the Bhagat Baani) to the succeeding Guru Sahib. Guru Arjun Sahib then enshrined the total collection in Guru Granth Sahib giving according to the planned order.

RAAG MAALA

Ø SOME IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES OF GURBAANI

§ Firm faith in one God only – Waheguru. No other god, goddess or any other tomb etc. to be worshiped (absolutely no idol worshiping).

- Waheguru resides in your heart (mind) and not somewhere far far away. So, no need to leave home or family in search of Him. But do remember Him all the time.

- The objective of human life is to be one with Waheguru i.e. to connect with Him which can be achieved by Guru's grace only.

- The Guru (Satguru) is a manifestation of Waheguru (possesses the same qualities as Waheguru), and only the Guru can connect us to Waheguru. We must shape our life as per the Guru's Teachings which are the same for all humanity.

- Everybody is born equal, and Waheguru's Light is present in each and every human being. We should not discriminate among humans based on colour, caste, ethnicity, creed or gender. Women must be respected and treated equally.

- We must earn our livelihood by honest means, and should never claim somebody else's belongings. We must help the NEEDY as much as we can.

- Do no injustice to others, but fight against injustice and aggression, not just for your own interest, but for the rights of others too. Remember the supreme sacrifice of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib.

- We must control all our sensual pleasures. The most prominent are: Lust, rage, greed, attachment with family or belongings, and conceit.

We should never cast an evil look at other women (or men in the case of women).

- We must keep Waheguru in mind all the time, but must dedicate some time to sing His praise using Gurbaani.

- Do your best to achieve your objectives using honest means, but if you are not successful, rather than blaming Him, accept Waheguru's Will willingly.

- No ritual like fasting, suffering self-inflicted hardships, pilgrimage, donations to non-deserving charities, organizations, or individuals can help you to cleanse your mind and

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find salvation.

- Do not lavish undeserving praise or unleash unwarranted malicious criticism of others. In each case you have to have a vested interest. Such praise or criticism is strongly forbidden in Gurmat.