

### **The perception of Gurbani / Gurbani consciousness**

It is an error to regard Gurbani as a mere topic of the intellectual circle and to limit its scope just up to its literary meaning. In reality gurbani is a substance of the Divine circle, Nanak circle, saints circle, spiritual circle and is in fact from the Primal Being. It is lofty pure, continuous, hidden, nectar, ecstatic, quite essential and has descended from its Divine sphere. To comprehend and understand it, it is necessary to rise from the intellectual circle to the spiritual intuition. This is illustrated by gurbani thus :

- 1.1** *In all the ages, it is through the Divine word, that the Lord is recognized and the name becomes sweet and dear unto the mind (602)*
- 1.2** *By the Guru instruction, ambrosial Gurbani is realised and one's sorrow is ended and ego eliminated.(1153)*
- 1.3** *By the Guru's instruction they realise the Guru's word and remain attuned to the true Lord. (1155)*
- 1.4** *He, who understands Gurbani, is absorbed in the true Lord. 412*
- 1.5** *O God's saints! understand you the true Guru's word.1025*

The understanding and identification of bani is urged but this can only happen through the spiritual intuition and not through interpretation by the intellect. Intellectual knowledge is incomplete and limited. This is the reason that this Divine bani is known, recognized, understood and discussed through intuition by rare elevated souls (Gurmukhs) as in illustrated by bani :

- 1.5** *Blest are the words wherewith the Name (of God) is uttered. Rare is the person who knows such an utterance by the Guru's grace. (103)*
- 1.6** *True is the Lord and true is His Gurbani. Rare is the one, who by Guru's grace understands this thing. (1044)*
- 1.7** *The Nectarean Gurbani is sweet. Through the Guru, any one tastes and sees it. (113)*

To make the general sangat of intellectual circle, understand the abstract, invisible and intuitional subject of Gurbani, it is very necessary to give concrete examples. Even in Gurbani's full and real knowledge can be obtained only through intuition, yet a humble effort is being made to understand it through visible examples. The sun-rays and sun-shine are brought into being by the sun-rise. The sun-rays have those virtues and essence which the sun has, such as heat, light, life-flows, energy and various others. In the same way when the immortal Lord's "word" expressed itself in creation, all the Lord's virtues and essence such as intuitional knowledge, melody, music, tune, power, life-flow, taste, sweetness, coldness, pity, tolerance etc come into existence in His creation. In fact the knowledge of this Divine manifestation is "intuitional" Knowledge.

From this arises Divine - current and sound which is said to be Bani from the supreme source. When Guru Nanak experienced this divine flow, He would say, "Mardana, play the rebab, Bani is coming". Just as the Divine light is indelible and eternal, so also is Gurbani. This divine light neither changes nor is destructible. Therefore bani is also truth.

It has come from divinity, therefore it is divine Bani.

It is without the dirt of materialism, is pure light, therefore this Bani is "pure Bani".

This divine light has been there from time in memorial, therefore the Bani is also eternal.

It is beyond the three qualities, is pure, invisible and the essence of the Divine circle. Therefore it is concealed Bani.

It is capable of destroying the darkness of the three qualities and doubt. Therefore this Bani is a Guru form. Just as heat, brightness, energy and life - current, cannot be separated from the sun-shine, so also bani, word, Naam, nectar, will, divine-taste, power, melody, music, tune, love etc cannot be separated from Divine light

and are absorbed with one another like warp and woof.  
This whole Divine “love-play” is the gift of the grace of the immortal Lord. To make this clearer, it is necessary to get the support of Gurbani .

- 3.0 *For Him, unbeaten strain of the Name re-sounds. (231)*
- 3.1 *Within Him resounds the tune of the celestial strain. (375)*
- 3.2 *By Guru’s instructions they hear the true Gurbani. (364)*
- 3.3 *For God emanates ambrosial Gurbani, which the Exalted Guru narrates and preaches to the world(125)*
- 3.4 *By the hymns of the Guru, Name resounds in the mind. (362)*
- 3.5 *The supreme Guru’s word is the Lord’s Name and this Name, I enshrine in my mind. (1239)*
- 3.6 *Ambrosia is your word O Master ! It has permeated the mind of your slaves. (72)*
- 3.7 *He, who enshrines in His heart the immortalising Gurbani, begins to meditate on the Nectarean Name (118)*
- 3.8 *Ambrosia is the Lord and ambrosia is God’s Gurbani. By serving the true Guru, Gurbani get permeated in the mind. (1190)*
- 3.9 *Necter-sweet is the Guru’s instruction and the Gurbani. Night and day, utter I the God’s Name. (1057)*
- 3.10 *By this sweet will the necterean Gurbani has become prevalent and by His will one quaffs the necterean Gurbani(118)*
- 3.11 *The hymn of God’s love, is the printed arrow, which has smitten my heart, O Lord. (449)*
- 3.12 *There, in the truth gate, resounds the celestial strain of the utterance of the Guru’s word and one easily merges in the Lord. (1069)*
- 3.13 *He who is blessed with praise and bliss and within whom unstuck melody resounds, come not to grief again. (1224)*

This Divine light-like circle where there is always satsang, singing of Lord’s praise and continuous kirtan is in Gurbani, said to be the realm of truth, assembly of saints, one’s home, a place free of all worries. Worldly and materialistic people cannot reach this place. Through the literary meaning of Bani and through the company of enlightened soul’s (Gurmukh’s) We hear of the play of the Divine circle and then we make assessment with our intellect which without doubt can be incomplete and wrong. Guru Nanak Sahib was God-like and word-like but pitying us the worldly creatures, He happily took on the physical form of a man. The result was that seeing him with our own eyes, hearing His word and Bani from His very mouth created interest and in the light of spiritual leadership, we could mould our lives making an effort to reach the divine circle by taking the protection of the sat sangat. Now Guruji is not with us physically but He has blessed us with His “light”, knowledge, initiation like Gurbani for our guidance. Without this we do not have any true-pure and proper leadership with us. Therefore we have to sit in the presence of the Bani-like Guru and guide our lives in the light of Gurbani’s leadership.

The mind is colored with the color of the Naam through reading Gurbani, doing kirtan or listening to it. The touch of Gurbani is obtained only when we pay attention to the meaning’s of Gurbani, otherwise we do not touch the spiritual supernatural power of Gurbani and its effects on our minds is very little or non at all. This is the reason that despite having innumerable Gurdwaras in this age, unlimited path or akhand path, kirtan, whole night kirtan, we are becoming inattentive and going further from Gursikhi. The point is pure attention. Without attention, the reading of Gurbani is parrot like repetition. Therefore our mind does not touch Gurbani. This is the reason that inspite of doing numerous ‘paths’ and listening to them throughtout our lives, our mental and spiritual well-being does not change, does not rise higher and we remain deprived of spiritual life and Gursikhi.

The touch of the touchstone effect of “He who heartily realises this Gurbani, within His mind abides the Lord’s Name” 797 will begin to make our minds experience the

spiritual and supernatural power ( of Gurbani). Our mental and spiritual life will change. At some auspicious time the light of Naam can occur in us. At first our attention will be on the word by word meaning of gurbani, then it will gradually turn towards idiomatic and intrinsic meanings and eventually get absorbed in Gurbani. This Bani from the very source has divine taste, Divine colour, Divine love, Divine joy and full ecstatic stage. Therefore, any gurmukh who has touched this divine bani and realised it, easily acquires all this divine virtues such as in his life - colour, taste, love, joy, enthusiasm, service etc.

Such people in whose mind abides the Lord's Name, have their ego spilling over the Divine flavour, taste and love.

In this way while reading the bani with attention, mingling with sadhsangat and repeating the Naam, the removal of our mind's dirt will begin gradually. The clouds of dirt of the mind will begin to break up with the practise of reading Bani and uttering the Word. At time in our souls will occur sparks of Divine electricity and the light of Nanak shines. Then gradually this Divine shines will occur at frequent intervals and when all the dirt (ie materialistic clouds) has disappeared, then through Guru's grace on some auspicious day the soul light will be kindled. In Gurbani this is said to be intuitional light. In this condition we will experience the play of "He who heartily realises this Gurbani" and then according to "within his mind abides the Lord's Name" will occur in us the light of Naam. With the occurrence of " through Guru's Shabads the Lord thundered" our life will be successful.

## Bondage - Escape /Freedom fom bondage

"God" being self-illuminated creator is not under any restrictions and is in fact independent in His delight. Being a part of such an independent God, it is the hereditary right of man to have independence. Unconsciously man's intrinsic desire is always yearning for this hereditary urge for freedom. But man indulges in action that keep's him in bondage because of his ignorance, the influence of materialism and enslavement by the five thieves: love, anger, greed, passion, ego resulting in the loss of his spiritual freedom. In Gurbani there is a clear mention of such bondage of man :

- 6.1 *In ego, the soul is imprison and the Name comes not to abide in his mind. (560)*
- 6.2 *The religious ceremonies are all entanglements and the bad and the good are bound up with them..  
The toils for the sake of children and wife, done through egoism and worldly attachment, are but fetters.(551)*
- 6.3 *All this kingsmen are like bonds for the soul O brother  
The world is gone astray in doubt (602)*
- 6.4 *Whatever deeds I do attached with avarice, with them all, I am binding my self down. (702)*
- 6.5 *The world run's after worldly affairs and so is ensnared in the trap.  
The Lord's meditation it realizes not. (1010)*
- 6.6 *One does various and good many deeds.  
Whatever he does, that process fetters for his feet. (1075)*
- 6.7 *Good many waves of desire arise in the mind.  
How can man he delivered in the Lord's court. (1088)*
- 6.8 *Practicing egoism, the mortal is bound in bounds and involved in the affairs of mammon, he is born in hell and heaven. (761)*
- 6.9 *The mother, father, son and wives are but bonds.  
The religious deeds, which man does in ego, are but fetters. (1147)*
- 6.10 *To his mind clings the filth of ego.  
Myriods of rituals are the root of involvement. (1149)*
- 6.11 *Involved in worldly affairs, this mind does evil deeds.  
Beguiled by mammon, it ever bewails. (1176)*

Although we think that we are independent and can do what we like, in actual fact we are bound by many types of restrictions. All the creatures and His creation are the work of the creator and are controlled by the Divine will “order” and discipline. Except for man, the whole universe is functioning intune according to Divine will. For this reason the evolution of these creatures is upwards. These lower level creatures, having limited intellect, cannot use their brain or their cleverness. For this reason they are in tune with the infinite. But man is given a brain. According to the colouring (inclination) of his mind and through maxims and devices he makes wrong use of his brain and thus going out of tune with God- indulges in action which entangles him in restrictions of his self-made chain and make him suffer.

In Gurbani Guru Sahib Ji has warned us of such restrictions thus :

- 7.0 *O my stranger soul, why do you fall in entanglements (439)*
- 7.1 *With great relish you ever peck at the bait, and are ensnared. O fool, by what virtues shall you escape. (990)*
- 7.2 *Everyone knows the way to be caught in impurity, but rarely anyone knows how to escape (331)*
- 7.3 *Hope and desire are entanglements, O brother, and rituals and religious ceremonies are the entrappers. (635)*

Despite the advice of Gurbani and various other enlightened souls, man is entangled in many types of shackles. But due to ignorance and uninformed about these shackles, he thinks that he is free and he is not restricted in anyway. Therefore, he is not making any effort to free himself from these restrictions. Further more through ignorance he indulges in wrong actions and unconsciously moulds new chains daily and gets bound in more restrictions.

To make man conscious, gurbani has clearly explained

many aspects of these restrictions and has told us the methods of avoiding and escaping from them.

Let us now discuss some aspects of these human restrictions :

1. If we learn the method of following Divine discipline and will, then we can be safe from the restriction of egoistic actions. It is impossible for us to follow the discipline of “will” as we are not even aware of the Divine will.

“Nanak, if the mortals were to realise the Lord’s command, they would never entertain egoism.” Our condition is, “ In ego, the soul is imprisoned and the Name comes not to abide in the mind”.(560) Divine command for us is comfort-giving and is a form of salvation. Low grade creatures are unconsciously following this command. For this reason they are more happier and more free than humans and are not restricted by their actions. “Ego” is the root cause of all our actions and entanglements.

2. Physical restrictions.

Our bodies, health, disease, make-up, enjoyment, taste, flavour etc are all burdens. A lot of time and attention is spent on nurturing, removing scars, nursing and making-up the body. Our mind intelligence and attention are circling around with our body as its epi-center of existence and importance. For this reason our body is the one cause of our burdens.

3. The desire of me and mine also keep us absorbed day and night and even in dreams. Subordinate to the restrictions of this desire we are action-bound and suffer. “Being entangled and enmeshed in the love of false occupations, the whole world has perished” (133)

4. Burdens of rituals and superstitions

Despite the existence of high education and religious knowledge, we still believe in old superstitions and suffer as a result of getting entangled in various rites and rituals. The regretful thing is that even our scholars, philosophers and meditators have not been able to escape from these burdens of superstitions.

In Gurbani these superstitions have been describe thus :

9.1 *The man reads holy texts and studies the Vedas. He practices inner washing and breath control.*

*But he escapes not from the company of the five evil passions and is all the more tied to haughty dispositions.*

9.2 *My dear by all these methods the Lord is not met. I have performed many such rituals.*

*I have dropped down weary at the Lord's door and pray for the grant of discerning intellect.*

9.3 *Man may remain mum, make his hands the leaf-plate and wander naked in the forest.*

*He may visit river banks, shrines and the whole earth, but duality leaves him not*

9.4 *With his minds desire he may go and abide at a place of pilgrimage and place his head under the saw,*

*But his soul's impurities departs not thus, even though he may make lacs of efforts.*

9.5 *He may be a man of bounty and give gifts of many sorts, like gold, women, horses and elephants.*

*He may offer corn clothes and land in abundance, but he arrives not at the Lord's door.*

9.6 *He may remain attached to love, to worship, adoration, prostrate salutations and perform the six rites.*

*He takes pride, nay excessive pride and falls into entanglements. By these means he cannot meet God*

9.7 *The knowledge of Yogic modes of union with the Lord and of the 84 sitting postures of the men of miracles; he goes weary practising these as well.*

*He may attain long life, but without obtaining association with God, he is born again and again.*

9.8 *He may enjoy royal sport, indulge in kingly ostentations and issue unchangeable orders.*

*He may have beauteous couches perfumed with the sandal aloe-wood scent. Such things lead him to the door or terrible hell. 641 - 642*

These superstitions and doubts have been discussed in one previous article under the heading "Bharam" in Gurbani Vichaar. Make an effort to read it again.

#### 5. Political restrictions

Although we are politically independent of other countries, yet we are badly entrapped in the restrictions of red tape, corruption, illegal adulteration, family worship, the forces of materialism and power, taunts and party rivalry . A lot of our time and energy are used up in these useless engagements. Where two or more persons get together they waste their time in these useless talks.

#### 6. Social Restrictions

We are all bound firmly by the restrictions of social rituals and despite suffering, we, instead of lessening or leaving them are increasing them. We have made our births, deaths, engagements, marriages and various other social festivals so complex, complicated, showy and expensive that apart from the physical effort, the burden of unnecessary expenditure has brought us suffering . Despite our education, new civilization and scientific thinking we, instead of making an effort to break these unnecessary and troublesome traditions and rituals, we are competing in increasing, raising and making them empty shows.

An example is given of such unnecessary and troublesome traditions and rituals. In the earlier days, at a girl's engagement one rupee was given to complete the ceremony. The custom of these engagement has been so complicated that people have "Roka", then "Thoka" and finally the "Shagan". It is surprising that many other customs are being added onto the engagement ceremony to make it showy causing unnecessary expenditure. In doing these rituals, each individual tries to out do the other thus bring out competition to make the display more showy. The greed of those on the boys side increases. In this way our society is suffering and becoming weak. The result is that it is becoming very difficult and expensive for a poor man to have his daughter married. If the motive for show and the hunger for dowry continues, to increase like this then that time will fast come when suffering people will kill their daughters at birth just as they did in older times to save them from the tyranny of the moghals. But the regretful thing is that our philosophers, meditators, scholars, religious leaders instead of obstructing or reducing these empty shows and troublesome restrictions are themselves rolling in this directions. How tragic it is that even in todays civilization many innocent girls inevitably commit suicide because of the unnecessary customs and restrictions. They are sacrificed at

the pyre of dowry.

7. We are also badly entrapped in our own numerous self created habits. We have addicted ourselves to many physical and mental addictions from which, inspite of so much suffering, we are unable to free ourselves. We have become their permanent slaves.

## 8. Restrictions of philosophy

This is a very subtle chain, which the philosophers and scholars themselves, are not aware of. It is extremely difficult to be free from the chains of philosophy. They are galvanised (with philosophy). For this reason the philosophers and scholars are deprived of lofty spiritual flashes, gleams, taste-colour, and the excitements of of subtle love. People are easily convinced by the mental exhilaration they derive from sharp intelligence but apart from pandering to their egoism, they remain totally deprived from subtle spiritual emotions, flashes and flights into the divine realm.

This is because these philosophers with their sharp intellect evaluate, weigh and form conclusions from everything with their sharp reasoning. We who belong to the intellectual circle waste our our time and energy in our research on what, why and how. Divine 'flashes', gleams, taste-hue, self fulfilling love, stage of wonderment, being above three dimensions are topics of divine consciousness belonging to the fourth dimension. Our intellectual awareness can wonder only in this world; it cannot grasp the 'wondrous play' of the 'fourth dimension'. We try to understand, comprehend and discuss it by analysing with our small intellect. The subtle waves of music ragas can only be understood and enjoyed by a musician. For the generally ignorant masses they are but 'Tu(n)-Taa(n)' noises.

*11.1 Every one speaks of gnosis (intellect) and meditation.  
But bound with the bonds, the whole world wonders  
about" (728)*

Bhai sahib Dr Vir Singh has used irony for these intellectual philosophers :

11

'O philosopher (while) you sit in the prison of intellectual sphere  
We have made friends in the country of exhilaration'.

## 9. Bondages of sanskar

The strongest of bondages, are the effects/results of actions of our previous lives. Everyone is entrapped in these restrictions, because every living being brings along with it bondages from previous lives in which it is deeply 'action - bound-(forced to face consequences). In the store of of our sub consciousness are found heaps of straw of enormous jealousy, duality, complaints, anger, greed and passion. From some of these heaps, foul odour and stench continue to seep out. Under their influence, knowingly or unknowingly being 'action bound' we commit actions which bind us in even more chains and bondages. In this way man is trapped in vicious cycle of his own actions. This pitiable condition of 'Being entangled and enmeshed in the love of false actions the whole world has perished' is taking place. But the surprising thing is that we are not even aware of our decline; how then can we expect any action to be taken to come out of it.

*12.1 With minds obstinacy they go about their business and daily suffer the consequences. 66*

*12.2 To attend to worldly affairs without realising the reality (of God's presence) is to lose the wealth of human life. 33*

*12.3 Abandoning Lord's Name, if man engages in other occupations, the whole of his false building (front) will fall off.  
The man who embraces not affection for the Naam, goes to hell even though he performs millions of ceremonial rites. 240*

*12.4 The religious ceremonies are all entanglements- the bad and the good are bound up in them. 551*

*12.5 One does various and good many deeds. Whatever he does, that acts like chains round his feet. 1075*

*12.6 Millions of rituals are the root of involvements.  
Without the Lord's meditation, one only gathers the worthlessness bundle of straw. 1149*

*12.7 Involved in worldly affairs, this mind does evil deeds.  
Bewitched by worldliness (maya) it ever bewails. 1176*

10. From the above discussion it is clear that we are unconsciously trapped in numerous types of bondages and are suffering. To be free from these bondages gurbani

12

suggest the following means:-

- 13.1 *By searching and scrutinising, I have realised, that without god's meditation, man obtains not emancipation. 260*
- 13.2 *My tongue ever utters the Lord's Nectar Name. My halters(ropes used for hanging persons) of millions of births are cut. 893*
- 13.3 *Without the Naam how can he be saved? In sin he rots and putrefies. 935*
- 13.4 *The persons who contemplate on the Naam treasure, their shackles (iron chain ties to the legs) are shattered. 496*
- 13.5 *Without the Naam none is emancipated. All are chained by death's couriers. 569*
- 13.6 *He who serves the True Guru receives the Naam wealth and is emancipated by living the Naam. 597*
- 13.7 *Attached to the Lord's Naam, the man is delivered. Go and consult the divines, O brother. 603*
- 13.8 *By saints, grace, I have obtained the supreme bliss And all my bonds are broken. 673*
- 13.9 *In the society of saints, the bonds of ego are loosened and one sees only the One Lord. 1079*
- 13.10 *Through the Guru's word, one is delivered of coming, going, births and death. 1092*
- 13.11 *Nanak contemplate the Lord's Naam where with you shall be released from your shackles (iron chains tied to legs) 729*
- 13.12 *Remembering the Lord the bonds of worldliness (maya) are loosened. 497*
- 13.13 *Says Ravidass, death has plundered the whole world, but I have escaped by uttering the Naam of One Lord. 794*
- 13.14 *They who meditate on God, obtain the fruit and all their bonds of worldliness are broken. 800*
- 13.15 *I seek the saints shelter and serve the saints. I am now rid of all the affairs bonds, entanglements and other occupations. 822*
- 13.16 *O My soul, emancipation is attained by seeking the saints refuge. 611*
- 13.17 *O mortal, do the deeds which may emancipate you. Utter the Lord's Naam and the ambrosial words of the Guru. 741*
- 13.18 *Mediate on the Guru's feet that your bonds of worldliness may be snapped. 1093*
- 13.19 *Guru Nanak says always repeat the Lord's Naam, O Saints, for this is the only hope of escape.*

- 14.1 **Is there anyone who may deliver me of my bonds, Unite me with my Lord, read out to me the Lord's Naam And render this mind stable and stationary, so that it wanders not anywhere again? Is there any such friend of mine? 674**

## 11. Spiritual Bondages

These bondages are so subtle and fine that the truth seekers are not aware that they themselves are bound to them. When the seeker having toiled in meditation, penance, worship and other spiritual labours, acquires spiritual power and a following, automatically and unconsciously the subtle ego, of which he is not aware, seeps into his mind. In this condition he is no more a 'truth seeker'. With the increase of followers he becomes a 'noble person', 'an ascetic saint', 'saint', 'abbot', 'a great personage', 'guru', 'satguru', 'great-king', 'Sri 108', 'world guru' and sets up a camp or monastery, shrouded in luxury with which worship and respect continues to increase. Their Sikh followers nurture this subtle ego by heaping limitless praise. The result is that not only the spiritual progress of their soul stops but it gradually begins to move towards hell. Around them they create a religious territory, camp, group, tradition (schism), splendour and in these they are absorbed and entrapped just like family people. Examples of such people in olden time were 'Wali kandhari', 'Mian Mitha', 'Nur Shah' etc. But today such people are seen in greater numbers. Bhai Gurdas Ji has warned such truth seekers:

**'Without attention in the Word through the sadhsangat, there will be no place for the nobler ones.'**

- 14.2 *The whole world being in the grip of false ceremonies has not known God's secrets. sawiyeh 10the master*
- 14.3 *The wayward go about their business in pride and are awarded punishment. 162*
- 14.4 *The lovers of rituals, who practise pride, they bear an unendurable load. When there is no love with God's Name, then, these rituals are sinful. 257*

**15.1** *The man who embraces not affection for the Naam, goes to hell even though he performs millions of ceremonial rites. 240*

**15.2** *Abandoning the Lord, to do something else, that is to fall into the well of vice. 1227*

Imprisoned in such a fort of spiritual ego, the souls decline is indeed pitiable. Such subtle 'ego - forts' can only be destroyed by some highly enlightened soul or Satguru himself just as Guru Nanak broke up Nurshah's fort and brought salvation to him.