

SANT, SADH, SANGAT

These words have been used in *Gurbani* very often and very often have they been misunderstood and misconstrued and sometimes exploited by clever and unscrupulous persons. It is, therefore, desirable to understand their use and interpretation in *Gurbani*.

Sant and *sadh* have been used in more than one sense in *bani*. Firstly, they are used with reference to flocks of sycophants, cheats, and beggars in different disguises of holy men fleecing and exploiting the unsuspecting believers with promises of relief in life here and hereafter. They roll in such ill-begotten wealth, establish palatial *ashrams*, and some of them even ride in limousines, and have the best of time. The one that can shower abusive and vulgar language, becomes more impressive, and he collects multiplied dividends. About such *sants* and *sadhs* we read in *Rag Asa* :

Who display rosaries on their necks and in their hands
hold shining jugs,

ਗਲੀ ਜਿਨਾ ਜਪਮਾਲੀਆ ਲੋਟੇ ਹਥਿ ਨਿਬਗ ॥

They are not saints of the Lord, but are the cheats of
Benars

ਓਇ ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਸੰਤ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਹਿ ਬਾਨਾਰਸਿ ਕੇ ਠਗ ॥

I abhor such saints.

ਐਸੇ ਸੰਤ ਨ ਮੇ ਕਉ ਭਾਵਹਿ ॥

They devour the fruit-tree root and branch.

ਡਾਲਾ ਸਿਉ ਪੇਡਾ ਗਟਕਾਵਹਿ ॥

Some of them call themselves even ‘the Satguru personified’

and are introduced as agents of the Guru, who can book berths for the faithful to the Guru's Door and secure salvation for them. The Satguru had no doubt created missionary centres and appointed preachers, but had never let loose such touts. On the other hand, history tells us that the self-appointed touts, out of the *masands* who had fallen in character, were deterrently punished.

Sadh and *sant* have then been used with reference to persons slightly above the normal level in spiritual advancement. These words refer also to those who soar high and achieve nearness to the Guru.

These words have mostly been used with reference to the Satguru himself such as :

I am sacrifice, yes, sacrifice am I to the vision of the
Guru, my beloved Saint.

ਹਉ ਘੋਲੀ ਜੀਉ ਘੋਲਿ ਘੁਮਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਰਸਨ ਸੰਤ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਜੀਉ ॥ (ਮਾਝ ਮ : ੫)

On meeting the Sant Guru, the Saint of the Lord, anoint
the face with the dust of his feet.

ਹਰਿ ਕਾ ਸੰਤੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਗੁਰ ਸਾਧੂ ਲੈ ਤਿਸ ਕੀ ਧੂਰਿ ਮੁਖਿ ਲਾਈ ॥ (ਮਲਾਰੂ ਮ : ੪)

Very often these words have been used to mean "the saint within us." In every individual two forces are always in conflict, the saint and the sinner. These are inherent in our nature. The touch of the Guru subdues the sinner and upholds the saint in us. For instance in *Rag Majh* the fifth Nanak says :

When our good luck developed, the Guru got the saint in
us to meet and function.

ਭਾਗੁ ਹੋਆ ਗੁਰਿ ਸੰਤੁ ਮਿਲਾਇਆ ॥

Obviously, the word *sant* here refers to the saint in us. In other words, it means that when the Guru puts his divine hand on our head and takes us into his protection, the Godly and saintly virtues in us are energized and the devilish tendencies are beaten down.

Sangat does not mean the company of any hypocritical, pretentions, individual masquerading as a spiritual wizard. It definitely means the *sangat* of the Satguru. We recite daily during our evening prayers the fourth Nanak's *Shabd* in *Rag Gujri* in which this is clearly defined as :

Be on them and their living who have not sought the protection and refuge in the Guru's company.

ਜੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸਰਣਿ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਨਹੀ ਆਏ ਪ੍ਰਿਗੁ ਜੀਵੇ ਪ੍ਰਿਗੁ ਜੀਵਾਸਿ ॥

Those men-of-God who have taken to the Satguru's *sangat* are blessed for eternity.

ਜਿਨ ਹਰਿ ਜਨ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਪਾਈ ਤਿਨ ਧੁਰਿ ਮਸਤਕਿ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਲਿਖਾਸਿ ॥

Nowadays the Guruship having been entrusted to the Khalsa under the Spiritual Leadership of *Gurshabd*, it comes to mean the assembly of people where the Khalsa is functioning under the Presidentship of the *Shabd* and *Gurbani* is being implemented.