

RIGHT APPRAISAL

No assessment, no evaluation or appreciation of the teachings of the Satguru is possible without correct understanding of the background and the context in which they were given and propagated. To get to correct conclusions and have right appraisal, we have two main sources of information, the scripture (*Gurbani*) and Sikh history. But the anecdotes of Sikh history will have to be tested on the touchstone of *Gurbani* for their veracity. Anything which does not tally with the idea expressed in the *bani* will have to be discarded and which is in accord with the Scripture accepted. To get the right appraisal it is necessary to understand and keep always in mind the most important point on which the whole concept of the Satguru's mission and teaching hinges. It is the continuity of the Guru in ten human forms and finally his omnipresence and dynamic existence amongst us (the Sikhs — as the guiding and driving force, and spirit in the knowledge (*gyan*) adumbrated in the *bani* (The *Shabd* — The Word) in Guru Granth Sahib. It is especially necessary in the case of the sixth and tenth Nanak. No understanding of the life and work of the sixth and tenth Nanak could be justly made without proper appraisal of the movement to which they contributed and lent finality, and without placing them in the perspective of the evolutionary process, of which their life and work are an integral part. We have very definite injunctions in this respect. The fourth Satguru says in *Rag Nat* :

Word is the Embodiment of the Guru and the Guru is in the Word.

ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ

The third Nanak in *Rag Sorath* says :

There is only one Word, One Guru, and One Interpretation.

ਇਕਾ ਬਾਣੀ ਇਕੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਇਕੋ ਸਬਦੁ ਵੀਚਾਰਿ ॥

The first Satguru in *Sidh Ghost* in *Rag Ramkali* says :

The Word is the Guru; the mind attuned (to the Word) the disciple.

ਸਬਦੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਧੁਨਿ ਚੇਲਾ ॥

The tenth Satguru repeats :

Attune your mind to the Word Guru :

ਗਿਆਨ ਗੁਰੁ ਆਤਮ ਉਪਦੇਸਹੁ ॥

Again in *Var Ramkali*, it is made clear :

The light was the same, the way the same, only the body changed.

ਜੋਤਿ ਉਹਾ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਸਾਇ ਸਹਿ ਕਾਇਆ ਫੇਰਿ ਪਲਟੀਐ ॥

The tenth Satguru himself explains thus :

Nanak assumed the body of Angad,

ਨਾਨਕ ਅੰਗਦ ਕੇ ਬਪੁ ਧਰਾ ।

And made his religion current in this world.

ਧਰਮ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਇਹ ਜਗ ਮੇ ਕਰਾ ।

Afterwards Nanak was called Amar Das.

ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਪੁਨਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਹਾਯੋ ।

As one lamp is lit from another.

ਜਨ ਦੀਪਕ ਤੇ ਦੀਪ ਜਗਾਯੋ ।

When the time for the fulfilment of the blessing came.

ਜਬ ਬਰਦਾਨ ਸਮੈ ਵਹੁ ਆਵਾ ।

Ram Das became the Guru.

ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਤਬ ਗੁਰੁ ਕਹਾਵਾ ।

Amar Das gave him the Guruship according to the ancient blessing,

ਤਿਹ ਬਰਦਾਨ ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਦੀਆ ।

And took the road to paradise himself.

ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਸੁਰਪੁਰਿ ਮਗੁ ਲੀਆ ।

The holy Nanak was revered as Angad.

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਅੰਗਦਿ ਕਰਿ ਮਾਨਾ ।

Angad was recognized as Amar Das,

ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਅੰਗਦਿ ਪਹਿਚਾਨਾ ।
 And Amar Das became Ram Das.
 ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਕਹਾਯੋ ।
 Those who have clear conscience get the realisation, but
 not the fools.
 ਸਾਧਨ ਲਖਾ ਮੁੜ ਨਹਿ ਪਾਯੋ ।
 Generally people considered them all distinct;
 ਭਿੰਨ ਭਿੰਨ ਸਬਦੁੰ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਨਾ ।
 But some rare person recognized that they were all one.
 ਏਕ ਰੂਪ ਕਿਨਹੂੰ ਪਹਿਚਾਨਾ ।
 They who understood this obtained perfection.
 ਜਿਨ ਜਾਨਾ ਤਿਨ ਹੀ ਸਿਧ ਪਾਈ ।
 Without understanding perfection cannot be obtained.
 ਬਿਨ ਸਮਝੇ ਸਿਧ ਹਾਥ ਨ ਆਈ ।
 When Ram Das merged with God,
 ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਹਰਿ ਸੋ ਮਿਲ ਗਏ ।
 He passed on the Guruship to Arjun.
 ਗੁਰਤਾ ਦੇਤ ਅਰਜਨ ਭਏ ।
 When Arjun went to the Divine Presence,
 ਜਬ ਅਰਜਨ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਲੋਕ ਸਿਧਾਏ ।
 He appointed Hargobind in his place.
 ਹਰਿ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਤਿਹ ਠਾਂ ਠਹਿਰਾਏ ।
 When Hargobind went to the Lord's presence,
 ਹਰਿ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਲੋਕ ਸਿਧਾਰੇ ।
 He seated Hari Rai in his place.
 ਹਰੀ ਰਾਇ ਤਿਹ ਠਾਂ ਬੈਠਾਰੇ ।
 Hari Krishan his son afterwards became the Guru.
 ਹਰੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਤਿਨਕੇ ਸੁਤ ਵਏ ।
 After him succeeded Teg Bahadur.
 ਤਿਨ ਤੇ ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਭਏ ।

An instance to illustrate this continuity can be given from the writer's own family history. In the month of *Vaisakh* 1630 A.D., Bhai Rup Chand and his father Bhai Sidhu were getting the *rabi* crop harvested. When they touched the water in a hanging goatskin to quench their thirst, they found it so cold that they thought it worth offering to the Guru and would not touch it themselves

although the heat of the day made them unconscious. The sixth Nanak, Guru Hargobind Sahib, was at Daroli at that time. Feeling attracted by his devotee's love and plight, he rushed to them, brought them back to their senses and took water. He was so pleased at their devotion that he bestowed upon them his sword and robes and a horse and took them out to the place where he founded a village for his devotees and named it Bhai Rupa, now in Bathinda district. On the way, he noticed that the sword and the robes that he had bestowed, were being carried on their heads and the horse being led. On being asked, Bhai Sidhu and his son Bhai Rup Chand said that the gifts were too sacred for them to wear or ride upon. This further pleased the Guru who gave them the most coveted title of Bhai (his own brother) and put them in charge of his mission in the cis-Sutlej area. At that time he told the Bhais to keep his gifts, bestowed on them, in trust for the Guru and he would get them back when the time came. And this he (the sixth Nanak) did when as Guru Gobind Singh (tenth Nanak) he reached Dina, near village Bhai Rupa, from Chamkaur and asked for his entrusted weapons, robes and horse.