

## **THE RAHAO PRINCIPLE – A FAILED PRINCIPLE (Part 2A)**

by Harnaak Singh

In this article we will review “The RAHAO Principle” espoused by Karminder Singh in his “the RAHAO Principle Part 2” posted in Asia Samachar 13-Nov-2016.

ANALYSIS IN OUR PART 1 HAS SHOWN THAT THE RAHAO PRINCIPLE IS A FAILED PRINCIPLE.

In this Part 2A of our article we lay down the basics in relation to how the message of Gurbani can be distorted and misinterpreted by misguided elements as a precursor to the further analysis. This is very important as a precursor into understanding “the RAHAO Principle Parts 2 and 3”

### **INTRODUCTION**

The main intent of this section is to show how misguided elements can interpret Gurbani for ill intentions. There is usually a motive behind an interpretation by such elements.

We first present a primer followed by a discussion of how Gurbani can easily be misinterpreted. This is followed by an actual example where this has been done by an author. We then show our interpretation of the misinterpret verse and point out the misgivings and the motive of the author who misinterpret the verse. We end with a conclusion and warn about such misinterpretation.

### **PRIMER**

Before commencing on the analysis we highlight two key points.

Firstly, in the study of Gurbani, one extremely important point to remember is that the teaching of Gurbani is meant for our MIND which is part of our INNER-SELF. Gurbani teaches us through the Shabad, and uses broadly “our interaction with the creation” as illustration to explain what is required of us. This means episodes for human normal living as well of other members (flora and fauna) of the creation, which we UNDERSTAND very well and CAN RELATE TO, are copiously used to make us understand the concepts and hence the virtuous actions required of our MIND. Essentially Gurbani teaches us to control our MIND to be virtuous, using examples we generally experience in our daily interaction with the world at large.

Secondly it is important to appreciate that when analysing a shabad from first principles, i.e. without reference to available credible translations, it is necessary to analyse the complete shabad and first get the “big picture” message from Gurbani. The reason is to ensure that we do not miss the core concept when interpreting single verses. However it is acceptable to interpret one verse if we source the meaning from available credible translations. This is because the authors whose translations we are using have already studied the entire shabad to prepare their translation.

### **INTERPRETATION TO MISLEAD**

The main intent of this section is to show how misguided elements can interpret Gurbani for ill intentions.

We will illustrate this using the verse

ਸਕਤੀ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਵਰਤਦਾ ਕੂੜੁ ਤਿਸ ਕਾ ਹੈ ਉਪਾਉ ॥ SGGS 511 M:3 Goojree Ki Var

He remains engrossed in material wealth, and his efforts are false.

Note: the English translation under the Gurbani verse is by Sant Singh Khalsa

Consider the words ਸਕਤੀ, ਕੂੜੁ and ਉਪਾਉ.

Mahan Kosh directs us to refer to ਸਕਤਿ for ਸਕਤੀ.

- The word ਸਕਤਿ has nine meanings as follows (1) ਤਾਕਤ strength (2) ਅਸਰ effect (3) ਮਾਇਆ material world (4) ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀ wife (5) ਕੁਦਰਤ creation (6) ਬਛਰੀ small spear or knife (7) ਸੱਤਾ word used in Buddhism (8) ਦੇਵਤਿਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਇਸਤ੍ਰੀਆਂ the wives of the devtas (9) ਸੂਰਜ ਦੀ ਤਪਤ the heat from the sun
- The word ਕੂੜੁ has many meanings but we will consider two i.e. (1) ਝੂਠ falsehood (2) ਮਾਇਆ ਦਾ ਮੋਹ the attachment to maya and the word ਉਪਾਉ to mean ਉਦਮ effort endeavour.

Interpret ਕੂੜੁ attachment to maya, to mean lustful endeavour (because “lustful” related activities can be classed as attachment to maya) and use meaning (8) for ਸਕਤੀ.

Making an extreme interpretation we translate the verse above to be

Involvement (ਵਰਤਦਾ) with (ਅੰਦਰਿ) the wife of the devta (ਸਕਤੀ) is an endeavour in (ਤਿਸ ਕਾ ਹੈ ਉਪਾਉ) lustfulness (ਕੂੜੁ).

So you see how one can easily make an extreme interpretation to say that this verse is teaching us the wrong thing. It is shown to **appear like it is from the sex manual and pro-Bipran** and hence solicit the ban of this verse.

Mind you, the above is done using credible dictionaries; we can imagine what would be the result when this is done without resort to credible sources.

Note that we are making a very extreme interpretation here, to illustrate the point which can create a contention between different groups. This can be used by misguided elements to divide a community unless the community is vigilant and knows and understands the meanings. For this purposes credible references are invaluable and will keep us away from this pitfall.

Such contention not only divides the community, but damages the document that is the subject of the contention. This leaves the future generation without the document which is important for their knowledge. **We owe it to them, so we must be wary of these elements.**

## AN EXAMPLE OF AN ACTUAL MISLEADING INTERPRETATION

An article we came across which misinterprets a verse in Gurbani is listed below.

This article is “How do we interpret Gurbani?” by Prof Devinder Singh Chahal PhD, on page 16 of Sikh Bulletin, Volume 18 Number 7 & 8, July-August 2016 available at

<http://sikhbulletin.com/Bulletins/SikhBulletinJulAug2016.pdf>

Dr Chahal reveals the motive behind his interpretation when he states that the translations by Manamohan Singh, Prof Sahib Singh and others are influenced by Vedantic philosophy and do not give the real message. The motive appears to be discrediting all the references that we use in our quest to understand the message of Gurbani. Therefore we would expect him to show that his interpretation is correct as compared to the interpretation in the references. All he says in the article is that they are wrong because they “follow inclination toward Vedantic philosophy”.

In his article the Dr Chahal explains the meaning of the verse

ਦੁਖੁ ਦਾਰੂ ਸੁਖੁ ਰੋਗੁ ਭਇਆ ਜਾ ਸੁਖੁ ਤਾਮਿ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥

He uses **his** “Nanakian Methodology” which is hinged on SCIENTIFIC REASON/LOGIC to make his interpretation.

Dr Chahal’s interpretation for the verse is as follows.

When somebody is living pleasurable and sedentary life, one becomes prone to a number of diseases/troubles/problems. However, those who exert (take pain/trouble) in workouts (structured regime of physical exercise) are resistant to these issues. The workouts become the medicine/remedy to prevent all such diseases/troubles/problems; or (in other words), once a pleasurable and healthy life is achieved through proper workouts, then no such diseases can occur.

He uses **his** “Nanakian Methodology” which appears to be a flawed methodology hinged on REASON/LOGIC. This is evidenced because, powered by IGNORANCE driven by the cult-like INDOCTRINATION of SCIENTIFIC LOGIC/REASONING of his “Nanakian Methodology”, Dr Chahal has relegated the teachings of Gurbani to a bunch of exercises.

Though the translation by the author appears SCIENTIFIC and LOGIC/REASONING laden, it does not give the message of Gurbani, in fact it is misleading, implying that Gurbani is teaching us to exercise. A book on exercise would provide more details on method, benefits and outcomes.

In the primer we had stated that Gurbani is meant for our MIND. Where is the message for our MIND in the translation by Dr Chahal?

Dr Chahal CLAIMS that the translations by Manamohan Singh, Prof Sahib Singh and others are not GIVING THE REAL MESSAGE, because they are influenced by Vedantic Philosophy. He thinks that HIS is the real message of Gurbani BUT does not realise that his SHALLOW and paranoiac SCIENTIFIC LOGIC/REASONING based thought, hinged on his “Nanakian Methodology”, results in a translation that is misleading and misleading.

## OUR INTERPRETATION OF THE SHABAD

Let’s analyse the Shabad and first get the “big picture” message of Gurbani from the Shabad. The reason is to ensure that we do not miss the core concept when interpreting the verse. This is important when we are deriving the meaning from first principles. Then we will compare this with those given in our available credible resources. The Shabad is

ਦੁਖੁ ਦਾਰੂ ਸੁਖੁ ਰੋਗੁ ਭਇਆ ਜਾ ਸੁਖੁ ਤਾਮਿ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥ SGGS 469 M:1 Slok

Suffering is the medicine, and pleasure the disease, because where there is pleasure, there is no desire for God.

ਤੂੰ ਕਰਤਾ ਕਰਣਾ ਮੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਜਾ ਹਉ ਕਰੀ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥੧॥

You are the Creator Lord; I can do nothing. Even if I try, nothing happens. ||1||

ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਵਸਿਆ ॥ ਤੇਰਾ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ ਲਖਿਆ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

I am a sacrifice to Your almighty creative power which is pervading everywhere. Your limits cannot be known. ||1||Pause||

ਜਾਤਿ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਮਹਿ ਜਾਤਾ ਅਕਲ ਕਲਾ ਭਰਪੂਰਿ ਰਹਿਆ ॥

Your Light is in Your creatures, and Your creatures are in Your Light; Your almighty power is pervading everywhere.

ਤੂੰ ਸਚਾ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਸੁਆਲਿਉ ਜਿਨਿ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੇ ਪਾਰਿ ਪਇਆ

You are the True Lord and Master; Your Praise is so beautiful. One who sings it, is carried across.

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਰਤੇ ਕੀਆ ਬਾਤਾ ਜੋ ਕਿਛੁ ਕਰਣਾ ਸੁ ਕਰਿ ਰਹਿਆ ॥੨॥

Nanak speaks the stories of the Creator Lord; whatever He is to do, He does. ||2||.

Note: the English translation under the Gurbani verse is by Sant Singh Khalsa

The **summary of the Shabad** from our study is outlined below.

God pervades the whole creation and God's limit cannot be known. Suffering reminds me of God and pleasures distract me from God. Remembering God one realises that God is within (inside) and without (outside) the creation and Praising God (through Naam which is the word from God – the all-powerful doer) one attains salvation.

Having understood the whole Shabad then the one verse can be analysed.

Note that we have interpreted the meaning of shabad, from first principles, using the Mahan Kosh and University Patiala Punjabi-English dictionary meaning of the words with contextual and thematic consideration as used in the shabad.

## OUR INTERPRETATION OF THE VERSE

ਦੁਖੁ ਦਾਰੂ ਸੁਖੁ ਰੋਗੁ ਭਇਆ ਜਾ ਸੁਖੁ ਤਾਮਿ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥

Suffering is the medicine, and pleasure the disease, because where there is pleasure, there is no desire for God.

Suffering and pleasures are attributed to MAYA. We do not like suffering but we do like pleasures. When we are suffering (illness, pain etc) we go to the doctor to get medicine. We do not go to the doctor when we don't have pain. So suffering and pleasures are used metaphorically to allude to our MAN ਮਨ. Suffering reminds us of God. Sant Singh Khalsa's English translation (below the verse) is very apt.

Going scientific, the problem is we allow our MAN to be controlled by the five evils (in the process getting pleasure through MAYA). This usually leads us to external physical situations which inevitably affects our mind and thoughts (internal) and creates stress. Stress, as you know,

is the causative agent for almost all the illness one can be subject to. By remembering God we can control the five evils and gain the five treasures. This state does not create stress and hence we are not subject to illness or illness will have minimal effect on us due to our state of mind which has attained the five treasures.

Professor Sahib Singh's translation gives a similar explanation of the Shabad. The meanings in Manmohan Singh's and Sant Singh's translations of the SGGS likewise imply this meaning.

Therefore Dr Chahal's CLAIM, that these references influenced by Vedantic thought, do not give the real message, IS ABSOLUTELY FALSE. We must further impress upon the reader that all our Gurus had studied concepts of other faiths (e.g. Vedantic) which Dr Chahal has conveniently forgotten. In fact we can state that it is his SHALLOW and paranoiac SCIENTIFIC LOGIC/REASONING based thought, hinged on his "Nanakian Methodology", that is misguiding and misleading.

## COMMENTS ON THE AUTHOR'S INTERPRETATION

There are a number of misgivings by Dr Chahal.

Firstly we note that Dr Chahal has analysed only the one verse and ignored the message in the whole Shabad. It is a folly to just analyse one verse to make a judgement. It is like looking at the tyre of a car and making a decision that the car is black and soft and round without even looking at the car.

Secondly Dr Chahal is ignorant of the fact that in Gurbani metaphors are liberally used to illustrate concepts. He completely ignored that suffering and pleasures are used metaphorically in the Shabad.

Thirdly Dr Chahal has not realised the core message of the teaching of Gurbani is meant for our MIND. Examples we experience in our daily interaction with the world at large are merely used to make us understand the core message; they are a means to an end not the end itself.

Fourthly Dr Chahal is very liberal in criticising the works of Professor Sahib Singh, Manmohan Singh and others not realising his own shallow knowledge and that his claim is FALSE. Note that both Professor Sahib Singh and Manmohan Singh had spent a major part of their lives studying and practicing Gurbani. Their references in interpretation of Gurbani are classics referred to by Gurbani learners worldwide.

Powered by IGNORANCE driven by the cult-like INDOCTRINATION of SCIENTIFIC LOGIC/REASONING of HIS "Nanakian Methodology" which is flawed (**Guru Nanak never mentioned such a philosophy**), Dr Chahal seems to be relegating the teaching of Gurbani to a bunch of exercises, sort of like a formula type solution; very mechanical amounting to ritualism. This is the ritualistic type "bibek budhi" or "scientific thought – logic/reasoning" Dr Chahal is using in his interpretation. This is the very thing Gurbani warns us against by the following verses.

Asa Ki Var SGGS P467 states in particular about jog ਜੋਗ (yogic exercises) in a verse in a stanza listed below.

ਲਖ ਤਪ ਉਪਰਿ ਤੀਰਥਾਂ ਸਹਜ ਜੋਗ ਬੇਬਾਣ ॥

hundreds of thousands of penances at sacred shrines, and the practice of Sehj Yoga in the wilderness,

At the conclusion of the stanza Gurbani goes on to explain that such PRACTICES are USELESS.

We add further that

ਸਹਸ ਸਿਆਣਪਾ ਲਖ ਹੋਰਿ ਤ ਇਕ ਨ ਚਲੈ ਨਾਲਿ ॥ Japji Sahib

Gurbani says our smartness, scientific thinking etc is not the solution.

There is more to Gurbani than a bunch of exercises, a bunch of numbers or a bunch of formulae. Rabindranath Tagore aptly points

The man, whose acquaintance with the world does not lead him deeper than science leads him, will never understand what it is that the man with the spiritual vision finds in these natural phenomena. The water does not merely cleanse his limbs, but it purifies his heart; for it touches his soul. The earth does not merely hold his body, but it gladdens his mind; for its contact is more than a physical contact - it is a living presence. (Sadhana: The Realization of Life – Rabindranath Tagore)

Dr Chahal, in his paranoia of scientific logic/reasoning thought, seems to be devoid of this quality of the “living presence” in his knowledge and interpretation of Gurbani. This living presence is “the divine wisdom from God”.

## CONCLUSION

The author has analysed the verse ignoring the message in the whole Shabad and further exhibits ignorance of the fact that Gurbani uses metaphors liberally to illustrate concepts. This is further exacerbated by the fact that he does not refer to credible reliable classic references in his interpretation.

The author’s interpretation is shown to be wrong and is bordering on ritualism, the very thing Gurbani is warning us against. He seems to be driven solely by his paranoia of scientific logic/reasoning based thought, his “Nanakian Methodology”.

The author is devoid of the quality of “living presence” (as Rabindranath Tagore explains) in his knowledge and interpretation of Gurbani. It is a folly to interpret Gurbani without this quality (divine inspiration) and therefore has misinterpreted the verse.

The author’s claim, that exponents of Gurbani like Professor Sahib Singh and others are wrong, is FALSE.

This completely decimates his motive behind as well as his own “so called correct interpretation of Gurbani” based on his Methodology.

Dr Chahal’s interpretation or rather **misinterpretation** of Gurbani will definitely mislead the reader.

SO MUCH FOR LOGIC/REASONING IN INTERPRETATION OF GURBANI  
WE HAVE TO BE AWARE AND BEWARE

Note: In Part 2B of this article we will have a look at some related concepts/thinking presented in the Jap Booklet by Dr Chahal available at <http://www.iuscanada.com/books/jap2016.html>.