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GURU ARJAN DEV'S
SUKHMANI SAHIB
(Jewel of Bliss)

*In Gurmukhi & Devnagri
with
English Translation*

DR. G. S. CHAUHAN

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(FREE OF COST)

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PREFACE

"Sukhmani" is a composition of Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs. This is written in simple Punjabi language with mixture of Hindi words which were in circulation at that time among spiritual seekers. This is called "sant bhasha" or the lingua franca of the saints of Northern India. It has words from Punjabi, Sindhi in the West to Bengali in the East. Since the saints moved freely from place to place, they had developed a language of their own called "sant bhasha". The time of composition is 1601-1602 AD at Sri Amritsar where Gurdwara Ram Sar is located.

This composition is divided into 24 "Ashtpadis" or groups of eight stanzas. Each stanza is having 10 lines. Before each ashtpadi, there is a "sloka" which gives the gist of the next eight stanzas.

In the first ashtpadi, after the first stanza, Guru Arjan Dev has given two lines with "Rahau" mark at their end. This word 'rahau' means "pause here and think" i.e. what has been said before is an important thing, therefore, the reader has to pause and weigh the meaning of preceding lines in his mind before proceeding further. These two lines give the underlying idea of this composition as under :

ਸੁਖਮਨੀ ਸੁਖ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਨਾਮੁ ॥
 भगत जना कै मनि बिस्माम ॥ रहाउ ॥
 सुखमनी सुख अंम्रित प्रभ नाम ॥ ॥
 भगत जना कै मनि बिस्माम ॥ रहाउ ॥ ॥

Sukhmani is the Lord's Name which is nectar, very precious jewel and is bestower of all happiness and bliss (ਸੁੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਮਣੀ), giving all enjoyment. It resides in the mind of saints and can be obtained from them.

Note: ਮਣੀ ਸਾਧੀ mani is a mythical jewel carried by a cobra who is more than hundred years old on its head. It is self-luminous and therefore shines in the dark. Sukhmani thus is such a rare jewel which is self-luminous capable of giving ever-lasting bliss to the devotee.

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Remembrance of the Lord's Name is the main theme of this composition. The various aspects covering worldly and spiritual fields of human life are beautifully brought out in practical terms. As, the Guru proceeds with the subject of remembrance of His Name, and as the devotee rises higher as a result of his practice of Name, he gains higher knowledge, his actions become more and more pure and Godlike and finally he gains "Brahm Gyan" or Divine Knowledge.

One can find a large number of lines in Sukhmani in praise of the Lord which can be used for Japa or repetition in praise of the Lord and Kirtan i.e. musical singing as well as for meditation. The eighth stanza in fourth ashtpadi is a short prayer with deep emotion and is ideal for meditation.

Before reading this book, it may be of interest to understand Guru Arjan Dev's scheme of development of the subject in Sukhmani, with a view to making a self-realized saint out of a layman.

When a layman approaches a divine person, he certainly must be suffering physically or mentally. Such a person, when gets tired with his own efforts, goes for solace to the higher powers. The divine personality therefore has to provide the solace, calm the person and show him the light at the end of the tunnel. The first ashtpadi does just that. The Guru has categorically declared in the first two lines of the first stanza itself that if some body remembers the Lord continuously, all diseases, worries and troubles of his body will end. He has enumerated all benefits like an end of the cycle of births and deaths. The same trend continues in the second ashtpadi.

The third ashtpadi deals with advice to the devotee to desist from depending only on various spiritual practices meant for specific cleansing processes like penances, yogic practices and charities etc. These have but limited gains. The final saviour and mainstay of the devotee is remembrance of the Lord's Name only.

Having warned the devotee about wrong practices, now the Guru teaches about the most important cleansing agent, the "gratitude". He wants the devotee to be grateful for the gifts, the Lord bestows on him. Thus, in the fourth and fifth ashtpadis, the gifts of the God are enumerated which are valid cause for us to be grateful to the Lord and thus have control over our main tormentor, the personal ego.

Thus starting with gratitude, the Guru carries on to more potent remedies for self-cleansing, like,

- a) Surrender personal ego to the Lord
- b) Seek the company of saints
- c) See only the One Lord in whole of His creation.

These subjects are dealt with in sixth to ninth ashtpadis. In the eighth ashtpadi, the qualities of a "Brahm Gyani" i.e. knower of Brahm are also described.

The tenth and eleventh ashtpadis deal with wonders of the Lord's creation. The Guru has given beautiful description of His multi-faceted creation and has stressed on omnipotence and omnipresence of the Lord. By this stage, the devotee has adequately purified himself and with the impact of tenth and eleventh ashtpadis, his faith and devotion have also been strengthened.

Now comes a very critical stage in the spiritual progress of the devotee. There is every possibility that he will feel that he has become a great spiritual person and his ego will see no limits. Therefore, the Guru has felt the need to caution against this pit-fall and other connected dangers. The advice is clear.

- d) Be humble, humility is key to happiness.
- e) Do not think ill, talk or act against the saints. This sin is unforgivable.
- f) Forget your wisdom, surrender to the Lord and remember His Name. This is the only way to dispel fear, sorrow and illusions. These lessons are contained in twelfth to fourteenth ashtpadis.

After the warnings, now is the stage to enhance the aspiration of the devotee for self-realization to a sufficiently high level. This is done by the Guru in fifteenth to seventeenth ashtpadis by stressing on remembrance of the Lord's Name, explaining that the Lord is unmanifest and beyond the three qualities of maya and that the Lord, the devotee and the devotion are True and Eternal.

When the devotee's aspiration is very high, the Lord is pleased and manifests in the form of a teacher or Guru to lead the devotee, cut his shackles of worldly attachments, make him realize his Self and end his cycle of birth and death. This is explained in eighteenth to twentieth ashtpadis.

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At this stage, the devotee, having realized his Self, has started seeing the Lord as manifest in every being and everything. Guru Arjan Dev has, therefore, decided to raise the level of the devotee from any type of worship in manifest form to un-manifest form. The twenty first and twenty second ashtpadis, therefore, deal with the unmanifest and manifest aspects of the Lord and advise the devotee that now his Consciousness (jiv-Atma) has merged in the Universal Consciousness (Parmatma), he should now onwards only remember the unmanifest Lord.

This takes us to the final stage as described in twenty third ashtpadi where the Guru bestows the Divine Knowledge or "Brahm Gyan" on the devotee. This Divine Knowledge dispels ignorance of the previous lives and the devotee is now a saint or knower of Truth.

The last ashtpadi, the twenty fourth is praise of the Perfect Lord and stresses His remembrance. In this ashtpadi, the gist of the whole composition is given. The Guru explains the advantages of reciting this composition.

In the following pages, an humble effort has been made to explain the words of Guru Arjan Dev. The divine instructions are unfathomable. No human being can understand the full purport of Gurbani.

I am sure this effort will meet the needs to a great extent of the devotees who are living in non-punjabi speaking areas of India and far-flung countries all over the world. Due to their likely lack of knowledge of Gurmukhi script, I have given Devnagri script also.

If any reader finds any mistake or has a suggestion for improvement, the same would be gratefully accepted.

In spiritual composition like "Sukhmani", certain sanskrit terms are used which have specific meaning.

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