

Bhai Gurdas Jee Class

Week 1:

1. Is there any point in reading Gurbani without understanding?

The answer is somewhere in between **yes** and **no**.

NO:

How can you apply the teachings of Gurbani if you don't know what they mean?

YES:

1. Sri Guru Har Rai Sahib and the clay pot.



2.

One day the Sikhs asked Sri Guru Har Rai Sahib Jee Maharaj (8th Guru) if there was any point in reading Gurbani without knowing the meanings. Guru Jee said to wait a few days.

It was rainy one day and Guru Jee asked the *sangat* to look at a wall. There was a clay pot that was resting on the wall and was full of ghee (butter). Because of the stormy weather it fell and broke.

When the sun came out in the afternoon, it shone like Gold. Guru Jee asked everyone what those pieces were on the floor. The Sikhs thought they were pieces of Gold.

Guru Jee asked the *sangat* to examine them closely. They realised they were just pieces of clay covered with butter.

Guru Jee explained Gurbani is like Ghee. It sticks to the clay pot (our soul). When it rains (Guru's Kirpa = grace) the pot (our soul) shines like gold.

3. Humau Pankhi – Bird



One day the Sikhs asked Sri Guru Gobind Singh Jee Maharaj (10th Guru) if there was any point in reading Gurbani without knowing the meanings. Guru Jee said to wait a few days. A sadhu (*Narad Muni*) gave jee Guru Jee a special feather from the *Humau Pankhi*.

The *Humau* is a legendary bird – legends says that it's feather no matter where they are always end up back on it.

Guru Jee joined the feather to an arrow and shot the arrow. He asked the Singhs to go and fetch the arrow wherever it had landed.

Everyone failed. Guru Jee explained that it was because the feather was from the *Humau Pankhi*, it had returned to the bird and taken the arrow with it.

In the same way Sri Guru Granth Sahib Jee comes from *sachkhand* (as the feather came from the humau pankhi), Gurbani is like the feather, when we attach it to the wooden arrow (of our souls) we automatically go to *sachkhand* as it comes from sachkhand.

Dhur Kee Bani Aayee.
(*Bani has come from the origin*)

2. History – How do we know what Gurbani means?

Bhai Gurdas Jee

Bhai Gurdas Jee was the nephew of Sri Guru Amar Das Sahib Jee but he formally became a Sikh at the time of Sri Guru Raam Das Sahib Jee. When Sri Guru Arjan Dev Jee Maharaj decided to compile Sri Guru Granth Sahib Jee, Bhai Gurdas Jee was selected as the scribe.

As Sri Guru Arjan Dev Jee came to Ang 91, **Bhagat Bani** began.

What is Bhagat Bani? Bhagat Bani is Gurbani that is not written by the Guru, it is written by one of the 15 Bhagats. These Bhagats were born in India to different faiths and castes.

A thought came in Bhai Gurdas Jee's mind that if the *Bani* of Bhagats is being included then he also was a poet and scholar and his composition should be added to Sri Guru Granth Sahib Jee.

That night Bhai Gurdas Jee had a dream in which he was in a boat which was sinking in the sea. As the boat was sinking he thought to call out to Vaheguru by reading *Bani*: when he read his own composition the boat continued to sink. When he read Gurbani of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Jee his boat came afloat.

The next morning, Bhai Sahib came to Guru Jee to continue the *seva* of writing. Guru Sahib instead asked Bhai Gurdas Jee to bring his composition so that it could be included in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Jee. Bhai Sahib said that he had now understood why his composition could not be included. Guru Jee asked three times for Bhai Sahib to bring their *composition*.

Each time, Bhai Sahib replied with humility, "Guru Jee, your *bani* is perfect, complete and divine – my composition is like me, imperfect".

Seeing Bhai Sahib Jee's humility Guru Jee blessed him to write *40 Vaars* and said that his *bani* would be the key to understanding Sri Guru Granth Sahib Jee. Further to this, they said from this day on the *arth* or meanings of Gurbani will be on "Sikh Rasna" or the "Tongue of Sikhs".

This means Sikhs themselves would explain Gurbani through the grace of Guru Jee.

4. Bhai Mani Singh / Baba Deep Singh Jee

One day a Singh at Anandpur Sahib was doing nitnem of *panj granthi*.

Panj Granthi is a compilation of various Baanis which were read daily by devout Gursikhs from the times of the Guru Sahibaan. Before Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji formulated the daily Nitnem for Sikhs at the Amrit Sanchar in 1699, many Gursikhs would read the Banis contained in Panj Granthi. Alongside Jap Ji Sahib, Shabad Hazare, Rehras Sahib, Sohila Sahib and Anand Sahib, the Pothi Sahib contained 5 main Baanis from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji:

1. Bavan Akhri

2. Sukhmani Sahib

3.Asa Di Vaar

4.Dakhni Oankaar

5.Sidh Gohst

Whilst the Gursikh was reading Dakhani Oankar Bani he made a mistake reading the following:

karate kee mit karataa jaanai kai jaanai gur sooraa ||3||

instead of Kai (*with a dulaavan*) he read Ke (with a *laav/sihaari*). The original pangti means “the way of the creator is known by the creator or it is known by the brave guru”.

The mispronounced pangti would mean “the way of the creator is only known by the creator, what does the brave Guru know?”

Sri Guru Gobind Singh Jee heard the *Singh* mispronounce the Gurbani and they asked the Sikhs to go and slap him. The Khalsa happily obliged.

The Singh lost consciousness after he was beaten by the Khalsa. When he regained consciousness he cried to Guru Jee, “Satguru Jee, if whilst reading Gurbani we will be beaten what chance of peace do we have in the afterlife.”

Sri Guru Gobind Singh Jee replied: “You are concerned about your pain, but every word of Gurbani is our *ang* (limb). When you mispronounced Gurbani you hurt our body also.”.

Bhai Daya Singh Jee, whose name *Daya* means compassion pleaded, “Guru Jee, we Sikhs do not know how to read Gurbani and how to pronounce Gurbani

Satguru Jee promised when the time was right they would teach *santhya* (pronunciation) and Gurbani Arth.

Finally, At Damdama Sahib, Sabo Ki Talwandi (village), near the city of Bathinda Sri Guru Gobind Singh Jee decided the time was right. Satguru Jee asked 25 Singhs to go to Dhirmal, their cousin, to bring the *original* saroop of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Jee that he had inherited.

Dhirmal refused to give the Saroop and taunted the Sikhs, “if Guru Gobind Singh is really the Guru, then he should be able to recite the Gurbani off by heart”.

Satguru Jee accepted this challenge and appointed Baba Deep Singh Jee as the scribe on Guru Nanak Dev Jee’s Gurburb (Kattak fullmoon) and completed the *saroop* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Jee Maharaj in 9 months and 9 days.

In the morning Satguru Jee would recite the Gurbani and Baba Deep Singh Jee would write it. In the afternoon/evening Satguru Jee would have Bhai Mani Singh Jee read the Gurbani (*Paath*) and would explain the *arth* (meanings).

Traditionally, Katha is done like this to this day.

