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50 YEARS

THE SIKH FOUNDATION International

Sikh Research Journal

ISSN: 2771-3520

Vol. 9 - No. 1 - 2024

2024, Vol. 9, No. 1
ISSN: 2771-3520

Table of Contents

2024, Vol. 9, No. 1
ISSN: 2771-3520

Foreword: Narrative, Narrativization, and Storytelling

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As the summer months careen into hotter and more humid days, we continue to bear witness to narratives' potency. While some historical narratives were created and are no longer active, today we observe and notate how historical narrativization determines the rationale, logic, and decision-making guiding our world. Bombs, tanks, drones, and now AI, are funded according to the narratives of terror that have been constructed over decades, justifying and legitimizing the war-making machines that lurch forward against all odds (Kumar, 2020; Makaryan, 2023; Tilly, 1985). Technological advances are lauded despite their continued detriment to international disasters, like climate catastrophes. How one narrativizes is dictated by the prevailing status quo of control, order, and capital accumulation; without awareness and recognition that this is happening, we hurl towards imminent self-destruction. Historical narrativization limits our understanding of the present by presenting History as seemingly as fixed as Truth or God, while also undermining the particularities of embodiment and lived experience as "truthful" realities to consider (Kaur & kehal, 2024). Like the tempered glass surrounding a museum exhibit or the tiniest synthetic fibers woven together to create bulletproof Kevlar, to narrativize is to attempt to present (selected) stories of the past as unbreakable, solid fixtures - both created, both seemingly indestructible.

Out of necessity, we create moments of pause through writing and reflection. We feel called to retain and retrain our minds towards the possibilities of a world and ways of living more timeless - an opportunity to meditate beyond *the rulers of just a few days*[1]. In the pauses, we grapple with the present, seeking glimpses into other worlds beyond this one. By identifying that a process of narrativization is even occurring, one challenges the prevailing narrative. Is there a canon, or is there a narrative of standardizing a canon that serves as canon? By challenging these narratives, one unhooks the standardization of the canon from the power of storytelling.

In this issue, we meditate on the power of stories – plural, contradictory and messy - while considering the potency of the archive and history to ground such realities simultaneously. How can one grapple with the process of making Sikhi real as an ultimate Truth while also negotiating the particularities and stickiness of Sikhi in one's own life (Ahmed 2006)? In their own unique ways, the contributions in this issue offer unique insights into this question: the issue of narrative development and the interrogation of a standard representation of facts or reality.

The first article, "Betting on God", by Dr. Anil Matoo, analyzes the framework of Pascal's wager as a useful metaphor for contemplating the notion of "betting on" the prospect or process of attaining *Naam* (the divine name, spiritual truth), rather than investing in *Maya* (worldly illusion) during one's lifetime. Pascal's

[1] As Bhagat Kabir Ji reveals in Bilaval, the worldly rulers last for four days (i.e., a short period of time), showing off their false power.

wager is a framework to consider the utility of belief in God as an investment of time and effort seeking salvation or denying such a possibility. Reworking such a framework through Gurbani (Sikh scriptures) and Sikh ethics, Matoo rethinks the possible overlaps between Pascal's methodology of the bet versus Gurmat's (Sikh teachings and philosophy) framing around the necessity to resist Maya and reorient towards Naam. Such an exercise offers a new way to consider how to engage with Western philosophical traditions while developing one's relationship with Sikhi and Sikh living.

In the second research article, "Women's Education in Colonial Punjab: Significance of Women Teachers and Training Institutions," Sarabjeet Bamrah provides a historical overview of the transformations in Punjabi education from pre-British Raj era into the period of British rule. In particular, her article highlights the gradual decentralization of women's teacher education and the emerging possibilities for women as educators, or key power holders in a Punjabi institutional and societal context. As the education system transitioned from Punjabi-created and -centered schooling systems to a standardized British English curriculum, Punjabi women, though highly educated, were no longer prioritized as possible instructors in a colonial context. The continuing impact of this, as Bamrah argues, is necessary to understand contemporary gender inequities or dynamics generally regarding women's education in Punjab.

Finally, a closing essay by Arvinder Goomer, titled "A Kaur's Story," demonstrates how storytelling can elucidate sticky points of narrativization within Sikh embodied experiences over the last few decades. Tracing a journey from a post-Partition India into the tumultuous and precarious 1980s of Delhi, and onward through a migration story of uncertain settling in the US Sikh diaspora, Goomer's personal essay reflects some of the themes of her recent book of the same name. Largely focusing on the tensions of reckoning a Sikh Punjabi women's immigrant identity in a *sangat* (community) that fell short of practicing a vision of true equality, her narrative demonstrates the empathy we gain for those who came before us as we step into shoes not so unlike the ones they wore. Furthermore, Goomer's self-reflection shows that, at any point of one's life, there exists the possibility to reject one's internalized patriarchy.

This issue concludes with a book review from Yousuf Saeed, an independent scholar and filmmaker based in New Delhi, of Radha Kapuria's 2023 book *Music in Colonial Punjab* published by Oxford University Press. Saeed offers another type of historical narrative or archive of music tradition in Punjab with which we can better contextualize the present.

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2024, Vol. 9, No. 1
ISSN: 2771-3520

Betting on God: Applying Pascal's Wager to the Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji[2]

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Abstract

In the *Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji*, there are several lines which indicate that the individual should bet on God and not gamble on the World. The purpose of this article is to examine this unexplored metaphor in the sacred text itself. To do this, the article will turn to Western philosophy arguing that both Western diaspora Sikhs and non-Sikhs can benefit from the Western intellectual framework. This framework already has a significant scholarship on wagering on God, notably Blaise Pascal's famous argument. Specifically, this article will examine Pascal's wager to assist in analysing the concepts of betting and gambling in the Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji. Furthermore, William Wood's examination of the wager as a form of artful rhetoric will also be applied to this study. Ultimately, this article intends to show that the thoughts of Pascal and the selected subsequent scholarship can facilitate a deeper understanding of belief and faith in the Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji.

Keywords*: God, Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji, Sikh, Sikh Philosophy, Pascal's Wager.*

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to analyse a metaphor in *Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji* (AG)[3] which advises that individuals should bet on God rather than gamble on the World. The reason for this recommendation is that if we bet on God then we are betting on God's truth and *Naam* (name) whereas gambling on *Maya* (worldly illusions) means risking our life on deception and falsehood. In the AG, the metaphor of betting

[2] I owe a large debt to my son Eric ("Bambino") who passed away on August 11th, 2023, at 11 days old. His strength is inspirational to me. As I sat down next to him to recite various Sikh prayers with Bambino in the Neonatal Unit, I thought about several themes which occur in this article. So, I want to thank him for being with me as I thought about certain parts of this article. I would like to thank Dr. Andrew Field (University of Surrey) who read an earlier draft of this work and provided invaluable feedback on how to make my argument clearer. I also want to thank the anonymous reviewers and editors at the *Sikh Research Journal* who provided me with excellent feedback on an earlier draft of this article.

[3] The references to the *Adi Guru Granth Sahib ji* (AG) were accessed through the Sri Granth online resource developed by Punjab University, Patiala, available at: www.srigranth.org. There are three important things to note regarding my use of the primary sacred text from this online resource. First, I have chosen to use the term *Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji* instead of the terminology of either the *Adi Granth* (the first compilation by Guru Arjan Dev Ji) or the *Guru Granth Sahib Ji*. This decision is not to conflate terms but to recognize the cultural, historical, and theological context of the sacred text especially as it has been referred to in my family. This choice is not meant to critique or judge other scholarly or personal terminologies but to honor the rich history of the text. Second, I want to caveat that the translations from the Sri Granth online resource include certain phrases and terms that carry a colonial context, such as the term 'Hell.' The focus of my article, however, is not to conduct a piece of etymology or philology. Rather, I want to examine the concept of the bet and gamble in the AG. Notwithstanding, it is important to note that some of the English translations in this article cannot be seen without their colonial context. Finally, I also want to bring to the reader's attention that Jeevan Singh Deol (2001) highlighted several issues regarding the textual history of the AG, noting that the 'textual study of the Adi Granth has generated a great deal of initial hostility and resistance' which has 'yet to be overcome' (p. 35). Deol continues by stating that there have been 'issues connected with the printing of the text' (p. 35) which has 'degenerated into harsh invective and, occasionally, outright hostility' (p. 36). He bravely references the examples of Piar Singh and Pashaura Singh, who were 'excommunicated' and 'given symbolic religious punishment[s]', and G. B. Singh who was beaten for authoring manuscripts of the AG (p. 36). Therefore, I elected to use references from this online resource, focusing on the theological content of the AG rather than engaging in examining the controversy and politics surrounding the sacred text.

serves as a spiritual tool to cultivate belief and faith in God and in God's truth and name Conversely, if the individual gambles on the World, and falling into the traps of Maya, then they deny God's truth.

In Western philosophy, we can see a similar use of the betting metaphor in Blaise Pascal's thought. For Pascal, when deciding whether God does or does not exist, it is more prudent to wager on God's existence. On first encounter, it may seem unconvincing or even a futile exercise to connect Pascal's wager to the bet mentioned in the AG. After all, the AG is considered a *living* sacred text, while Pascal's thought is the work of a mortal human. Also, there are significant cultural differences between the two bodies of work, and the context in which they function and operate. Furthermore, there is a theological tension as Pascal held that the 'Christian religion alone is appropriate for all' (Pascal 1670: Fragment 219, 70).

This article intends to use Pascal's wager, along with selected scholarly interpretations of it, to inform an examination of the metaphor of betting and gambling in the AG. It is not my intention to argue that the entirety of Pascal's thought is in harmony with the AG and the tenets of the Sikh religion. Instead, my intention in this article is to show that it is a valuable exercise to apply established Western philosophical thought to understand uncharted areas of the AG.

This article will argue that the concepts of betting and gambling in the AG should be taken with great seriousness. These concepts, which Sikh theologians have largely overlooked, are crucial to initiate a discussion of the significance and role of betting and gambling in the AG when it comes to believing in God. The reason for using Pascal is that there is already a body of thought on the wager and the belief in God. Although originating from a Western perspective, Pascal's thoughts can still serve as an intellectual compass to help us better understand the complexities and depth of the AG, particularly in relation to the concept of betting on God.

Furthermore, there is an emerging use of Western thought in Sikh theological and philosophical discourse. Gurbachan Singh Sachdeva, for example, cites several Western philosophical and scientific thinkers to create a better understanding of the AG's revelations on the Universe and its origins. This approach is part of Sachdeva's overall message that Sikh thinkers need to 'dig deeper, thoughtfully and reverentially, to interpret the true meaning [of the AG]' (Sachdeva 2012: 280). Ultimately, for Sachdeva, the incorporation of diverse thought and resources will 'stimulate greater research for transcendental revelation' (p. 280) of the AG.

This article intends, to an extent, to align with Sachdeva's approach by incorporating broader and more diverse thinking and resources to provide a deeper insight into the theology of the AG. In doing so, however, I am consciously distancing myself from Arvind-Pal S. Mandair who prefers to elevate 'Sikh philosophy' over 'Sikh theology.' Mandair writes:

> [T]he idiom of philosophy can enable us to think and experience an infinite repetition of the 'original' moment, but differently each time, never as repetition of the same. Sikh philosophy is able to do this because it allows access to the realm of the impersonal (the not-I, or non-ego) without eradicating the personal (which keeps the ego intact). By

> contrast, 'Sikh theology', and the idiom of theology in general, is unable to do this, as it absolutely needs to privilege the 'original' moment of revelation. (Mandair 2015: 179)

Although there are merits to Mandair's position, it unfortunately does not acknowledge the ways in which theology can benefit philosophical exploration. By integrating Pascal's thought into our study of the AG, I intend to initiate further examination of the AG's theology through these philosophical methods.

I will begin by outlining the five key ways in which Pascal's thoughts, and selected subsequent scholarship on the wager, relate to the AG. These connections form a thematic thread which runs through my article illustrating how the AG utilises the metaphor of betting and gambling to cultivate and sustain the belief in God. Thereafter, I shall examine Pascal's wager itself, opting to not examine the probabilistic dimensions of the wager but rather through the lens of William Wood's interpretation of Pascal's project. I choose to emphasise Wood's perspective because his constructive interpretation of Pascal's wager can situate itself within the wider Pascalian scholarship. Notably, it aligns with the scholarship which suggests that Pascal's wager helps the individual to cultivate and sustain their belief in God rather than following the traditional probabilistic arguments. The fact that Wood focuses more on the artistic metaphor over the probabilistic dimensions of the wager makes his perspective more applicable to my analysis of the bet and the gamble in the AG.

In this article, we will see that Wood views Pascal's wager as an artistic and persuasive argument which deviates from the traditional arguments for God's existence. This article will not explore the entirety of Wood's excellent argument. Instead, it will focus on a particular part of it which concerns the use of language to create a convincing argument to maintain the belief in God. Wood's insights on Pascal's wager will underpin much of my analysis of the bet and the gamble in the AG.

In doing so, I shall not argue that the bet is an argument for the existence of God. Moreover, I will not specifically examine the contours of the bet itself. The central objective of my argument is to show that the sacred text uses an artistic metaphor to encourage the individual not only to bet on God but also to *keep betting and believing* in God. Consequently, this article will examine constituents of the bet such as meditation and remembrance of God, the concept of *asking* God for a bet to establish a transcendent rapport between the individual and God, and the consequences of gambling on Maya. Ultimately, I argue that the bet in the AG functions as an artistic metaphor to bet and keep betting and believing in God, establishing a constant practice of prayer and faith in God through Gurbani.

Later in this article, I will acknowledge that there are limited references to betting in the AG. While this is a significant limitation, it does not imply that the metaphor of the bet should be ignored. This limitation, however, does mean that I will not analyse the contours, conditions, or the nature of the bet itself in this article. Instead, the purpose of this article is to show that we should approach the bet in the AG with great care and seriousness. Therefore, this article intends to initiate an exploration of the bet within the AG. My intention is to offer a perspective on the bet that future scholars and thinkers can further examine and elaborate upon.

Before I analyse betting and gambling in the AG, it is essential to understand what the AG is and its role in Sikh theology. This is particularly important because, although the AG advocates for betting on God, it does not imply that the individual should bet on the AG itself, despite the theological tenet in Sikhism that recognises it as a living sacred text. Consequently, I shall first define the AG. Thereafter, I shall provide an interpretative context to my argument from a Sikh perspective. I will then explore the artistic metaphor of betting and gambling in the AG. From this exploration, I will examine the AG's guidance on why we should bet on God and not gamble on Maya. This article will also explore the inescapability of this cosmic choice in the AG and how betting on God is a constant spiritual practice that cultivates belief in God. I will conclude by discussing how Pascal's wager, along with the selected subsequent scholarship, can enhance our understanding of certain aspects of Sikh theology.

The Five Connections Between the AG and Pascal's Wager

This article argues for five key connections between Pascal's wager and the metaphor of betting and gambling in the AG. First, I shall argue that both arguments are in the form of an artistic metaphor which is the central premise in my argument. The second connection is that both present prudential arguments to bet and to *keep betting and believing* in God. The AG advocates that the individual should bet on God because everything else is gambling on Maya. Similarly, Pascal posits that it is the individual's 'best bet' (Hájek 1998) to wager on God. The function of the betting metaphor in both sources is to argue that we ought to cultivate and sustain our belief in God.

The third connection is that both sources present an inescapable choice for the individual. In both accounts, the individual is compelled to decide. With Pascal, there is a coin being spun at the edge of infinity. In the AG, there is a cosmic game of dice where the consequences reside in the individual's body. For Pascal, the individual is forced to wager regardless of their belief in God. Similarly, the AG explains that the individual is born into the game where they are continually tempted by the illusory and treacherous Maya. Therefore, the individual must decide whether they bet (and maintain their bet) on God or gamble on Maya.

The fourth connection relates to human passions. For Pascal, human passions can prevent the individual from believing in God. The AG mirrors such a sentiment. According to the AG, the human passions will cause the individual to lose the game of life by drawing them to gamble on Maya. In both the AG's concept of the bet and Pascal's wager, human passions prevent the individual from believing in God.

The final connection concerns the constant and ongoing cultivation of belief. Both the AG and Pascal hold similar sentiments about belief in God: that belief means constantly betting on God, and that this requires a life of authentic meditation and focus on God. This spiritual practice must be sustained to avoid the risks of gambling on Maya, which tempts individuals through their passions.

Before unpacking our analysis into Pascal's wager and the metaphor of gambling in the AG, and keeping these five connections in mind, I want to emphasise that my argument is not intended to prove the existence of God. I do not propose that Pascal's wager should be employed to construct an argument for

God's existence within the AG. Rather, I focus on the aspect of the wager which concerns sustaining one's belief in God, which is pertinent to our study of the AG. Specifically, after betting on God, the individual needs to keep betting on God because it *is* the best bet. The individual must constantly remind themselves that it is the best bet and persist in betting on God. In doing so, the individual will keep believing in God. Later in the analysis, I will show that this dimension of the wager is useful when exploring the betting metaphor in the AG.

In making this argument, I recognise that there are significant cultural differences between Pascal and the AG. To force a connection between these cultural and literary traditions would undermine my overall argument. Therefore, to examine the cultural context of a particular *shabad* (prayer) in relation to Pascal's wager would not be beneficial. Similarly, aligning certain features of Pascal's notion of a fallen world and making a tenuous connection to the concept of Maya in the AG would not be useful when examining the sacred text itself.

Transitioning from the cultural to language differences, my intention is not to compare the linguistic traditions of each discourse, as it beyond the remit of the article, which aims to examine the betting metaphor which convinces the individual to bet and keep betting and believing in God. It is important to note, however, that 'Sikhism does not have a sacred language identity and uses Persian, Arabic, English and many other languages to vehicle its message to the community' (Rajdeep Singh 2018). Rajdeep Singh states that this 'balanced language identity helps it [Sikhism] to grow under different conditions and to attract people from other ethnicities' (Rajdeep Singh 2018). He continues: 'The comparison between the Sikh [sic] and the Christian faith clearly shows how language plays an extremely important role in the formation and continuation of religions despite the differences in geography and ethnicity' (Rajdeep Singh 2018). This article acknowledges and values the linguistic differences between Pascal and the AG, as the language of the AG allows the 'religion to grow and have followers from diverse ethnic backgrounds' (Rajdeep Singh 2018) without 'the mediation of a priestly class' (Nirvikar Singh 2018: 1) when approaching the AG.

Pascal's Wager

This section shall briefly explore Pascal's wager, which involves an imaginary dialogue between a believer and an unbeliever. All references to Pascal in this discussion are taken from Fragment 418 of Pascal's *Pensées,* titled: '*Infinity – nothing*' (Pascal 1670: Fragment 418, 121).

Echoing Wood, this section intends to interpret Pascal's wager 'as an example of artful and persuasive rhetoric, and not just as an example of probabilistic reasoning' (Wood 2004: 528). While the entirety of Wood's argument will not be explored in this section, we will specifically focus on how Wood analyses the believer's, or, as he understands Pascal, the Christian believer's use of language when speaking the unbeliever in Fragment 418. For Wood, the Christian's artful and 'subtle linguistic tricks' (Wood 2004: 529) show the falseness of the unbeliever's conclusion 'that his bodily existence makes God unintelligible to him' (p. 530). In subsequent sections, I will show how this interaction between the believer and the unbeliever is relevant when examining the metaphor of the bet and gamble in the AG.

The validity of Wood's interpretation is not the primary concern of this article. Instead, my argument sees Wood's argument as part of the wider Pascalian scholarship which analyses the dimension of the wager which concerns sustaining the belief in God even with the wager itself. In other words, my argument centres on how once the unbeliever is convinced, the wager itself keeps convincing the now-converted believer to keep believing in God. This is because, like Pascal's wager, the AG not only uses a similar betting metaphor but advocates that the individual should cultivate and constantly practice spiritual wisdom through reflection on God. The following quote, albeit lengthy, contextualises how Wood sees Pascal's wager:

> Pascal criticises traditional arguments for God's existence on the grounds that they are too remote from human experiences and, hence, unattractive. At the same time, he criticises the imagination for its often deceptive attractiveness. An ideal apologetic argument, therefore, would be one that harnesses the attractive forms produced by the imagination to the true claims of natural theology. Pascal presents just such an argument in fragment 418, the wager fragment, entitled 'Infini-Rien' (infinity-nothing). (Wood 2004: 528)

For Wood, in the debate between the Christian and the unbeliever 'the cognitive barrier between human beings and God lies in the fact that we, unlike God, "have extension"' (Wood 2004: 529). The unbeliever acknowledges 'that we can conceptualise limitlessness but only limitless extension' (p. 529). Pascal's Christian 'must undermine this idea if the unbeliever is to believe that God exists' (p. 529). According to Wood, Pascal does this by undermining the unbeliever's 'concept of self' (p. 529).

The use of the term 'infinite' is an important tactic for the Christian, especially since the wager 'is set in a context that questions how infinity is intelligible' (Wood 2004: 529). Wood charts how the Christian deploys the word infinite, which the unbeliever gradually comprehends as a concept, 'before concluding with the phrase "infinite prize"' (p. 530). It is in the unbeliever's progressive understanding of the infinite, and specifically the infinite prize, that Wood insightfully presents Pascal's intention of leading the unbeliever to 'be able to understand God' (p. 530). This leads Wood to argue:

> But if he [the unbeliever] can understand this concept of God, then he himself must not be the sort of being that he once thought. The probabilistic sections of fragment 418 do not convert the unbeliever, but demonstrate to him that the barriers to his belief come from his mistaken conceptions of the self. The unbeliever is so attached to 'noxious pleasure, glory, and good living' that he identifies his true self with the body and then falsely concludes that his bodily existence makes God unintelligible to him. (Wood 2004: 530)

From Wood's analysis, we can see how Pascal deviates from traditional arguments for God's existence, which he rejects, to develop arguments that focus on persuading and convincing the unbeliever. One explanation for this shift stems from Pascal's belief that God's nature is 'beyond our comprehension' (Pascal 1670: 122). Although it is beyond the scope of this article to analyse Wood's argument on

developing an attractive 'rapport' (Wood 2004: 520) with God, we can see that using artful rhetoric is integral to Pascal's project. There is drama inherent in the presentation of the wager. Pascal writes:

> [L]et us say: 'Either God is or he is not.' But to which view shall we be inclined? Reason cannot decide this question. Infinite chaos separates us. At the far end of this infinite distance a coin is being spun which will come down heads or tails. How will you wager? Reason cannot make you choose either, reason cannot prove either wrong. (Pascal 1670: 122)

The unbeliever replies: '[t]he right is not to wager at all' (Pascal 1670: 123). The Christian, however, responds: 'Yes, but you must wager. There is no choice, you are already committed' (p.123). This exchange underscores an inescapable choice that every individual must make. They *must* decide and choose whether God exists or not. The coin is being spun at the 'far end' of the 'infinite chaos', which is beyond our control and reason. Hereafter, Pascal presents his probabilistic justification for wagering on God. I argue, however, like Wood, that probabilistic reasons do not convert the unbeliever. Rather, it is Pascal's artistic use of metaphor and rhetoric that not only convinces the unbeliever but also keeps persuading the believer to bet on God.

The unbeliever, admits the truth of the Christian's explanation but still pleads to the Christian: '[B]ut is there really no way of seeing what the cards are?' The Christian replies: 'Yes. Scripture and the rest, etc.' (Pascal 1670: 124). Despite this, the unbeliever still struggles with their belief in God, particularly because they are 'being forced to wager.' The Christian's response provides an insight into the wager:

> That is true, but at least get it into your head that, if you are unable to believe, it is because of your passions, since reason impels you to believe and yet you cannot do so. Concentrate then not on convincing yourself by multiplying proofs of God's existence but by diminishing your passions…which are your great obstacles. (Pascal 1670: 124-125)

The individual's passions and their attachment to 'noxious pleasures, glory and good living' (Pascal 1670: 125) are obstacles to their sustained belief in God. In the pursuit of acquiring belief in God, 'Pascal recommends that we embark on a course of praxis' (Cottingham in Honderich 2005: 683) which will make the individual believe, and keep betting and believing, in God. In other words, one should behave 'just as if' you 'did believe, taking holy water, having masses said, and so on. That will make you believe quite naturally and will make you more docile' (Pascal 1670: 125). This course of action will yield benefits to the individual. They will become 'faithful, honest, humble, grateful, full of good works, a sincere, true friend… It is true you will not enjoy noxious pleasures, glory and good living, but will you not have others?' (Pascal 1670: 125).

According to Richard Tarnas, Pascal 'faced with his own religious doubts and philosophical skepticism, the leap of faith necessary to sustain Christian belief had become a wager' (Tarnas 1991: 303). For Pascal, God needs to be 'approached via a living tradition of faith' (Cottingham in Honderich 2005: 683). Thus, the

wager not only encourages the individual sustain their belief in God but also provides a framework for the individual to keep betting and believing in God.

Alan Hájek writes that '[b]elieving in God is presumably one way to wager for God… the act of genuine striving already displays a pureness of heart that God would fully reward' (Hájek 1998). It is not the case that you would be rewarded for 'wagering for God momentarily then wagering against God thereafter; nor that you would be infinitely rewarded for wagering for God sporadically' (Hájek 1998). Instead, the individual needs to sustain their wager on God which can be enhanced by 'adopting a certain set of practices and living the kind of life that fosters belief in God' (Hájek 1998). Crucially, according to Hájek, Pascal's objective is to show 'that *we ought to believe* in God, rather than that God *exists*. And he seeks to provide *prudential* reasons rather than *evidential* reasons for believing in God. To put it simply, we should wager that God exists because it is the *best bet*' (Hájek 1998).

Here, we start to see the connections between Pascal's wager and the AG. For both the AG and Pascal, believing in God is considered the 'best bet' and the individual should constantly cultivate belief in God by betting on God. The uniqueness of both is that their arguments utilise a persuasive metaphor. In the following sections, I delve deeper into the bet and gamble in the AG which are similar to, using Wood's phraseology, Pascal's linguistic and artful techniques.

Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji

The AG is the primary sacred text of the Sikh religion. The prefix '*Adi*', meaning 'first', distinguishes it from the *Dasam Granth*, a subsequent Sikh scripture. In addition, the term '*Guru*', translated as 'Teacher', is pivotal and has three integral features relevant to understanding God. First, 'Guru' can refer directly to God with the term '*Sat*-Guru' specifically referring to God being the *True*-Guru. Second, it refers to the ten successive human Gurus to whom God's truth was revealed. Finally, Guru pertains to the AG itself where the lineage of human Guruship is sealed and the text becomes the authority for Divine access and revelation.

Moving ahead a little, this article primarily focuses on the first and third aspects. It argues that the individual should 'bet' on God or the *Sat*-Guru and, more importantly, this does not mean betting on the AG itself despite its authoritative status in revealing God's truth. In other words, the AG teaches the individual to bet on God above all else and not gamble on Maya.

To better appreciate how and why the individual should bet on God, we need to examine the theological dimensions of the Sikh religion. The AG opens with the *Mul Mantar*[4]*,* which reveals several key tenets in Sikh theology:

Ik oaankār saṯ nām karṯā purakẖ nirabẖao niravair akāl mūraṯ ajūnī saibẖa gur parsād.

[4] The *Mul Mantar* is the term to encapsulate the opening lines of the AG.

> There is one God. The Name is truth. Creative Being personified. Without fear. Without hate. Timeless in form. Beyond birth. Self-existent. (Known by) the grace of the Guru. (AG:1)

Although each of these terms requires thorough examination, this article will briefly focus on five specific terms relevant to the study of the bet and gamble in the AG. The terms 'Timeless in form', 'Beyond birth', and 'Self-existent' suggest that God transcends the phenomenal world. Meanwhile, 'The Name is truth' and '(Known by) the grace of the Guru' highlight that without the revelation of God, God and God's truth would not be known. Crucially, without the 'grace of the Guru', individuals would not be able to epistemically access God. The revelation of God's 'Name' and 'truth' to Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the first Guru, bridges God's transcendence. The AG documents the revelation of God to the Gurus. It provides a pathway to God through scripture. Consequently, a textual analysis of the AG thus provides an insight into believing in and understanding God.

The textual study of the AG, however, is not without controversy and has received significant resistance. On this issue, Jeevan Singh Deol writes:

> There are, as is to be expected, a number of reasons for this strong resistance to the textual study of the Adi Granth, the most prominent being that the doctrine of the Granth as Guru appears to have produced a strong reluctance to interrogate its textual history. (Deol 2001: 34)

The textual history and origins of the AG are rooted in Sikh tradition. We learn from this tradition that Guru Arjan Dev Ji, the Fifth Guru, compiled the first version of the AG. Additionally, it was Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the Tenth Guru, who ended the *human* Guru line and declared the AG a *living* sacred text (Deol 2001; P. Singh 1996).[5] It is beyond the scope of this article to examine the textual history of the AG. If this article, however, intends to explore the concept of the gamble in the AG, then we need to establish what we are betting on. This clarification allows us to discern the fundamental distinction between betting on God rather than on the AG despite its status as the sealed Guruship. In other words, betting on the AG rather than God is another form of gamble. With this understanding, I will now provide an interpretative context to my argument.

Interpreting the Bet

In this section, I outline the particular Sikh scriptural interpretative technique that I will use in my argument. In doing so, my intention is to look at Sikh scriptural interpretation broadly to understand this artistic metaphor of betting on God.

[5] For further information on the textual history of the AG see Jeevan Singh Deol (2001) and Pashaura Singh (1996)

The Sikh philosophy of G*urmat*[6] has been reinterpreted as '*prnālīan* – literally systems, techniques or schools of interpretation' (Mandair 2022: 25).[7] Mandair provides an insightful elaboration on this term, stating:

> *Prnālīan* are relatively distinct but continuous techniques of exegetical, interpretative, translational practice – continuous in the sense that interpretative activity has been going on since the time of Guru Nanak – each distinguished by one or more dominant thinkers or techniques of learning reaching to changing historical contexts and challenges.
> (Mandair 2022: 25)

It would be beyond the scope of this article to focus on how each 'successive *prnālī*' (Mandair 2022: 25) operates. It is essential, however, to recognise, as Mandair does, that each *prnālī* is considered a 'thought-practice rather than as strictly hermeneutical schools' (p. 25) focusing on 'the Word of the Guru as embodied in Sikh scripture (*śabda-guru* as [Adi] Guru Granth Sahib [Ji])' (p. 3). This 'thought-practice' is central to my argument of the artistic metaphor in the AG.

Since I am exploring the broader application of an artistic metaphor, I will not use a scriptural interpretative method which focuses solely on the literal meanings of specific words. In Sikh exegetical practice, such a technique is referred to as '"*śabda arth*" (meaning of the words) which provides synonyms as well as the meanings of difficult words in a particular hymn' (Pashaura Singh in Mandair 2022: 25). Overemphasising the meanings of words like 'bet', 'wager', or 'gamble', and their equivalents in the AG such as '*hod*' or '*jūa*', would diminish the *spiritual impact* of the metaphor in the Guru's utterances (*gurbānī*). This is because overly focusing on the meanings and etymology would shift our focus away from understanding the 'function of the body-mind complex as a receptacle of the effects of *gurbānī*' (Mandair 2022: 26) due to the 'poetry of the Sikh Gurus' (p. 25). If we adopt 'a narrow clerical method of textual analysis or philology' then we could risk moving away from the 'kind of thought-practice taught by the Sikh Gurus (*gurmat*)' which falls under the 'scope of… *prnālī*' (p.26).

Instead of focusing narrowly on meanings and etymology, my analysis will focus on the poetic metaphor of the bet in AG. I want to align myself with the 'broader activity of interpretative thinking called *vichār*, or when applied more specifically to the poetry of the Sikh Gurus, called *gurbānī vichār* or *śabda vichār* (lit. contemplative reflection on the Guru's Word)' (Mandair 2022: 25). My argument intends to show that the metaphor of the bet in the AG, similar to Pascal's wager, is an artistic and metaphorical tool to help the individual 'acquire practice wisdom (*aql*, *siānap*)' (p. 97). In turn, the individual will foster a deeper sense of reflective thinking (*mananā*) which evolves into *bibēk vichār*. According to Mandair, *bibēk vichār* is 'awakened or enlightened thinking, which is the kind of thought process associated with the *gurmukh*' (p.97). Mandair addresses a common misconception relating to the *Gurmukh* that supports my argument:

[6] For Mandair, the meaning of *gurmat* 'incorporates, but is by no means limited to, the Guru's instruction, the wisdom of the Guru, the Gurus' system or logic; the Gurus' philosophy of life as a whole; the teachings of the Guru' (Mandair 2022: 22)
[7] Mandair refers to Taran Singh's text *Gurbānī Dīan Viākhiā prnālīan* as 'the first systematic attempt to survey the major systems of Sikh scriptural interpretation' (Mandair 2022: 25).

> There is a mistaken tendency to think that the gurmukh does not need to think, that she or he expresses merely poetic or aesthetic sensibility. In fact the Sikh Gurus use the word a great deal in their writings, and it is used almost always in a positive sense, indicating that the gurmukh does indeed indulge in thought, albeit with the difference that her speech/actions/desires do not emanate from ego, but from a different psychic structure. It is a thought process that is intrinsically imbued with aesthetic feeling, affect, and is therefore in tune with the cosmic processes of hukam [God's will/command/order].
> (Mandair 2022: 96)

I argue that the bet in the AG serves as an artistic metaphor designed to initiate a reflective thought process which leads to a higher orientation of thoughts towards God. This interpretation, together with Wood's thoughts, shows how the bet in the AG aligns with Pascal's wager. Therefore, I will not adopt an interpretative model that only focuses on the meanings of the words, whether in the AG or in Pascal's writings. Furthermore, I will neither explain the content of the bet in the AG nor elaborate on Pascal's wager beyond its use as an artistic metaphor. This decision stems not only from my focus on the poetic metaphor present in both sources but also from other reasons which I shall outline next.

While it is tempting to adopt the *śabda arth* approach, which involves looking at the meaning of words, when examining the bet and gamble in the AG, I will refrain from doing so. The main reason is that the *śabda arth* approach could lead to further uncertainty and speculative interpretations given the flexible and varied use of *jūa* ("gamble") and the limited use of *hod* ("bet" or "wager") in the sacred text. Consequently, this method does not allow us to gain a deeper insight into the meaning and distinction between *hod* and *jūa*.

Further complexities arise when we start introducing terms from one language into another. For example, if we incorporate English or French meanings into the scriptural language of the AG, then this would be an unsuitable methodology because we would fail to achieve a definite equivalency between the languages. This is especially the case with the Gurmukhi script which is composed of various languages and dialects. If we were to explore these uncertainties then it would divert us from the objective of this article which is not to focus purely on the meanings, distinctions, and substitutions of words of the relevant languages within the context of the bet in the AG and Pascal's writings. Consequently, I will not argue that hod has a distinctive meaning which makes it equivalent to Pascal's wager, as this would lead us into an exercise of etymology and philology. Such a focus would shift our attention away from the poetic and artistic metaphor of the bet itself which, I argue, is found in both the AG and Pascal's writings.

Rather, I propose that if we consider the wider concepts in the AG, we can better understand why an individual should bet on God and not gamble on Maya. In particular, exploring the concepts of remembrance and forgetting offers a framework to distinguish between betting on God and not gambling on Maya. In relation to remembrance, the AG states:

> *Kaho Nānak bẖaj har manā parai na jam kī fās.*

> Says Nanak, meditate, vibrate upon the Lord, and you shall not be caught in the noose of death. (AG: 1426)

This is complemented by another line:

> *Kaho Nānak bẖaj har manā aoḏẖ jāṯ hai bīṯ*
> Says Nanak, listen, mind: meditating in remembrance on Him, salvation is attainted. (AG: 1426)

These verses indicate that remembrance is an important feature of an individual's meditation on God. If an individual remembers God in their meditation, then they will not be trapped in the 'noose of death', which in Sikh theology symbolises that they will return to the world of Maya. By *choosing* to remember God in their meditation, they will achieve 'salvation.' In other words, they are liberated from Maya along with its forms of deception and attachment. This remembrance will also help the individual appreciate how God operates in their lives. For example, the AG states:

> *Ŧan ḏẖan sampai sukẖ ḏīo ar jih nīke ḏẖām. Kaho Nānak sun re manā simraṯ kāhi na rām.*
> He has given you your body, wealth, property, peace and beautiful mansions. Says Nanak, listen, mind: Why don't you remember the Lord in meditation? (AG: 1426)

This verse suggests that if an individual remembers God in relation to their worldly affairs, then they do not risk forgetting about God. Conversely, the AG provides the individual with consequences of forgetting God:

> *Nānak har bisrā▫e kai pauḏe narak anḏẖyār.*
> O Nanak, forgetting the Lord, they fall into the deep dark pit of Hell. (AG: 1426)

The concept of 'Hell' in the AG extends beyond the remit of this article, but it is pertinent to my argument as Hell has an important connection with Maya. In the AG, we see that the 'intoxication of Maya leads the others to Hell' (AG: 196)[8] which is 'the place of the ungrateful'[9] (AG: 315). At the same time, however, the AG advises that the individual should not 'be afraid to live in Hell'[10] (AG: 337). The reason for such guidance is that we can navigate our way through Hell by remembering God for 'Hell and disease do not afflict one who joins the Company of the Lord's humble servants, O Nanak; the Lord attaches him to the hem of His robe'[11] (AG: 531).

Here, we can see that meditation on God requires the act of remembrance. In essence, we need to constantly remember God as we navigate the world; otherwise, we risk forgetting about God. If we forget about God will return to Maya which will lead us to Hell. This danger is highlighted in the text:

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[8] *Māiā magan narak lai jāī.*
[9] *Narak gẖor baho ḏukẖ gẖaṇe akiraṯ gẖaṇā kā thān*. The full translation is 'In the most horrible Hell, there is terrible pain and suffering. It is the place of the ungrateful.'
[10] *Surag bās na bāchẖīai darīai na narak nivās.* The full translation is 'Don't wish for a home in heaven, and don't be afraid to live in Hell.'
[11] *Narak rog nahī hovaṯ jan sang Nānak jis laṛ lāvai.*

> *Sāḏẖsang bẖaj parmānanḏ. Narak nivār uḏẖārahu jīo.*
> In the Company of the Holy, meditate on the Lord of supreme bliss. You shall be spared from Hell – save your soul. (AG: 295)

It is a risk, or gamble, to forget God because the stakes are high. Conversely, it is less of a gamble and safer to remember God. I argue that it is not only safer but also the best bet to bet on God because it ensures the individual will save their soul and be 'spared from Hell'. Instead of getting into the probabilistic elements of this conclusion, I will show how the AG encapsulates this idea through artistic metaphor, similar to Wood's argument. This correlation between betting and remembering God is also evident in the following passage:

> *Hukmai būjẖai cẖaupaṛ kẖelai man jiṇ dẖāle pāsā. Jo jan jān bẖajėh abigaṯ kao ṯin kā kacẖẖū na nāsā. Kaho Kabīr ṯe jan kabahu na hārėh dẖāl jo jānėh pāsā.*
> When one understands the Hukam of the Lord's Command, he plays the game of *chaupar* with the Lord; throwing the dice, he conquers his own mind. Those humble beings, who know the Imperishable Lord and meditate on Him, are not destroyed at all. Says Kabeer, those humble beings who know how to throw these dice, never lose the game of life.
> (AG: 793)

We can now tentatively show how betting on God correlates with remembering and meditating on God. If you remember and meditate on God, then you are backing the "winning" dice. The 'game of life' is thereby *won*. On the other hand, if you approach life by gambling on Maya, that is, by forgetting God, then you are backing the "losing" dice.

With this in mind, we are ready to examine the concept of the bet and gamble in the AG. Before doing so, however, there are several important points to address regarding the bet itself. First, there is only one reference to betting in the AG, which means we must rely on one, concise expression of the bet. This restricts our ability look at other contexts or usage of the term to better grasp its meaning and implications. Second, we are provided with no information concerning the content of the bet in the AG. Later, we will see that the extent of our knowledge of the bet is that it is used in relation to God. Consequently, we cannot definitively equate the content of Pascal's wager, which is a prudent bet on God to gain the infinite and losing the finite if it turns out that God does not exist, with the bet in the AG. The reason is that if we do not have a strong comprehension of the content of the bet in the AG then, at best, we will only speculate on how it connects to Pascal's wager.

Instead, I propose that the equivalence between the bet in the AG and Pascal's wager lies in their use as artistic and poetic metaphors. If we analyse the terms more deeply, then we can see that the AG uses the word hod in relation to God and can mean both "bet" and "wager." In addition, the Punjabi translation of hod is *saṭā* which also translates as "bet" and "wager." Moving forward, I will treat any references to betting as also pertaining to wagering. Furthermore, I will treat the term hod in the AG as equivalent to Pascal's wager since they are both used in an artistic and metaphorical sense. Additionally, the AG contains references to gambling, using the term *jūa* or *jūai* which translates as *gamble or gambling*. This

term, as we will see, is associated with the World and Maya, and not God. I will unpack these connections further in the following sections.

Bet on God; Do Not Gamble on *Maya*

Earlier, I mentioned that the AG recommends that the individual should bet on God, as anything else amounts to gambling on Maya. To be clear, this instruction appears neither literally nor explicitly in the AG. In the following sections, we will see several references to the gamble and gambling which refer only to the World and Maya, while references to betting are limited. In fact, as we shall see, there is only one reference to betting in the AG and it directly relates to God. Therefore, any AG exegesis, in terms of betting on God, should recognise this limitation.

Looking ahead a little, we will see that in the AG describes a scenario where the individual makes two requests: the first request is to play a game with God. The second request is for God to provide them with a bet. Here, we will see that in relation to God, the term hod (meaning "bet" or "wager") is used.

There is an important distinction in how the terms hod, jūa, or jūai are utilised which supports my central argument that we can interpret the AG as saying that we should bet (or wager) on God and not gamble on Maya. If the individual bets on God, then they are betting on God's truth and name (*Naam*). If the individual gambles on the World, however, then they are risking their life on the deceptive and illusory World (Maya). Maya is depicted as a violent force that manifests itself in the world. According to the AG, '*Maya* has drawn her bow without an arrow, and has pierced this world, O Siblings of Destiny' (AG: 332).[12] Furthermore, Maya can deceive the individual into attaching and identifying their true self with this World. The AG shows the illusory strength of Maya in a metaphor:

> *Sakaṯ aḏẖer jevṛī bẖaram cẖūkā nihcẖal siv gẖar bāsā.*
> In the darkness of *Maya*, I mistook the rope for the snake, but that is over, and now I dwell in the eternal home of the Lord. (AG: 332)

This illusory strength of Maya is such that it can seize the mind like 'the parrot caught in the trap' (AG: 336).[13] The individual is so deceived and 'blinded'[14] (AG: 338) by Maya that they 'cling' (AG: 338)[15] to the World through their human desires, passions, and emotions. Although God 'created the world of *Maya* with its various colours and species' (AG: 347)[16], the individual must overcome it and maintain their belief and faith in God for God represents truth and Maya embodies falseness. Consequently, the AG advocates that the individual should bet on the truth of God rather than gamble on the illusory Maya. There is a logical sequence in the AG which leads to this conclusion.

[12] *Tin bin bāṇai ḏẖanakẖ cẖadẖāīai ih jag beḏẖiā bẖāī.*
[13] *Jio nalnī sūatā gahio man baurā re māyā ih biuhār.*
[14] *Anḏẖā*
[15] *Laptānā*
[16] *Rangī rangī bẖāṯī jinsī māiā jin upāī.*

First, the AG warns that gambling can have a negative impact on the individual. The AG states that 'the gambler's addiction does not leave [the individual]' (AG: 838).[17] This addiction can have a detrimental impact on the individual's ability to focus on pursuing God for 'the gambler's consciousness is focused on gambling' (AG: 1180).[18] By focusing more on the gains that they can make in the phenomenal world, rather than pursuing and meditating on God, the AG contends that 'In the end, the gambler shall depart empty-handed' (AG: 1158).[19] Maya is intoxicating to the gambler to the extent that they ultimately lose as they are now focused more on the act of gambling itself rather than meditating on God.

Second, the AG morally condemns gamblers. It categorically states: 'Thieves, adulterers and gamblers are pressed like seeds in the mill' (AG: 1288)[20], as they are invested in the phenomenal world. The gambler's conscious attention on gambling is categorised along with adultery, due to the instinctual pleasure or 'sensory desires' (AG: 212)[21] it initiates within the individual. The AG states: 'As the man driven by sex looks upon another man's wife and the gambler looks upon the throwing of the dice – In the same way, wherever [the believer] looks, he sees the Lord.' (AG: 873).[22] From this, we can see that when gambling dominates the conscious and instinctual actions of the individual then they will suffer negative consequences. The only way to overcome this is to 'Realise the word of the *shabad* [prayer], and cross over the terrifying world-ocean' (AG: 1288).[23]

The AG does discuss the concept of gambling in facilitating the *believing in* God but re-conceptualises it as betting. The individual is encouraged not only to play a game with God, for God's sake, but they should resolutely bet on God while doing so. The reason for this bet on believing in God is clear: if they do not bet on God then they *will* lose the game of life. The AG articulates this with the words: 'Says Nanak, you never even think of the Naam; you have lost the game of life in the gamble' (AG: 1243).[24] The reason for this loss is provided in the two preceding lines:

> *Sāhib sabaḏ na ūcẖrai māiā moh pasārī*
> You do not chant the Shabad, the Word of Your Lord and Master; you are attached to the expanse of Maya. Within, you are filled with greed and doubt; you wander around like a fool. (AG: 1243)

In essence, the individual loses the game of life by gambling on Maya. Rather, the individual should bet on God. Gambling is associated with actions and states of being that are deeply rooted in Maya and the phenomenal world. In the next section, we will examine why betting on God is a better course of action for the individual and how it effectively cultivates a belief in God.

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[17] *Jio jūār bisan na jāe.*
[18] *Jūārī jūe māhi cẖīṯ.* In fact, two lines later the AG states that similar to the gambler's consciousness is focused on gambling, 'the humble servant of the Lord lives by meditating on the Lord' (*Tio har jan jīvai har ḏẖiāe*. AG: 1180).
[19] *Cẖale juārī ḏue hath jẖār.*
[20] *Cẖor jār jūār pīṛe gẖāṇīai.*
[21] *Inḏrī*
[22] *Jio bikẖī herai par nārī kaudā dāraṯ hirai juārī jah jah ḏekẖau ṯah ṯah rāmā.*
[23] *Bẖaojal ṯāraṇhār sabaḏ pacẖẖāṇīai.*
[24] *Nānak nām na cẖeṯī jūai bājī hārī.*

The Inescapable Game and the Bet on God

For both Pascal and the AG, an inescapable game is playing out in the infinite. Pascal proclaims that a coin is being spun on the edge of infinity. Similarly, the AG tells us of a cosmic game which intimately concerns life, as revealed in the following line: 'You [God] behold Your creation, like the losing and winning dice of the earth' (AG: 474).[25] God is, essentially, viewing the world *sub specie aeternitatis* (in a universal perspective). The sacred text reveals that from this perspective there is a cosmic game of 'dice' unfolding in the Universe. It is an infinite game which is deeply connected to life itself. Here is an important passage which substantiates this:

> *Māiā kao lūjẖėh gāvārī. Janam marėh jūai bājī hārī. Hamrai har ḏẖaṛā jė halaṯ palaṯ sabẖ savārī.*
> Only fools argue over Maya. They are born and they die, and they lose the game of life in the gamble. My alliance is with the Lord who embellishes all in this world and the next. (AG: 366)

The AG elucidates that this infinite game is the game of life where the individual stakes their life. The individual must orient themselves towards God; otherwise, they will 'lose this precious human life in the gamble' as they 'do not understand the word of the shabad' (AG: 1155).[26] If the individual gambles on Maya and the phenomenal world, then they will lose 'the jewel of this human life in the gamble' (AG: 705).[27] Interestingly, the AG calls human life a 'jewel.'[28] The significance of human life is equated with a worldly commodity which enhances the gambling metaphor. The individual stakes a jewel, their life, in the cosmic game.

Crucially, the result of this game resides in the body, as stated in the AG: 'Within the body, one loses, and within the body, one wins' (AG: 1066).[29] Here, the AG is identifying the body as the site for winning or losing.[30] Building on this, it states that the body can influence choices which are centred on human passions, cravings, and desires instead of focusing on and believing in God. To focus on bodily passions, cravings, and desires can result in the individual losing the infinite game and gamble as the individual is now focused on Maya.

The AG cautions that focusing on such passions will produce a losing result. Elaborating on the cosmic game, it states that the 'game of chance is played on the board of egotism, with the pieces of falsehood and ego' (AG: 422).[31] According to the AG, 'those who forsake Truth and cling to falsehood, lose their lives

[25] *Ḏekẖėh kīṯā āpṇā ḏẖar kacẖī pakī sārīai.*
[26] *Janam paḏārath jū▫ai hārі▫ā sabḏai suraṯ na pāī.*
[27] *Raṯan janam haranṯ jūai parabẖū āp na bẖāvhī.*
[28] *Raṯan*
[29] *Kāiā vicẖ ṯotā kāiā vicẖ lāhā.*
[30] Although Nietzsche was not influenced by Sikhism, we can see a similar sentiment in his philosophy concerning the body and the individual's psychological and physical life. We can see this idea most explicitly in *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), I:17 and *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1883-85), I:4.
[31] *Haumai cẖaupaṛ kẖelṇā jẖūṯẖe ahakārā.*

in the gamble' (AG: 919).[32] In other words, the individual is turning away from God. Such an individual is described here:

> *Guṇ cẖẖod aaugaṇ kamāvḏe ḏarageh hohi kẖuār. Jūai janam ṯinī hāriā kiṯ āe sansār. Sacẖai sabaḏ man māriā ahinis nām piār.*
> Forsaking virtue, they practice evil; they shall be miserable in the Court of the Lord. They lose their life in the gamble; why did they even come into the world? But those who conquer and subdue their minds through the True Word of the Shabad, night and day, they love the Naam. (AG: 1284)

If the individual 'cherishes in his consciousness the Guru's Teachings' (AG: 974)[33] then they do 'not lose his life in the gamble' (AG: 974).[34] The temptation of Maya, however, will entice the individual to gamble on the passions and Maya. If the individual succumbs to such passions, then they will lose in the cosmic game. The AG makes several references to this:

> *Bẖaram bẖulāṇā sabaḏ na cẖīnai jūai bājī hārī.*
> He is deluded by doubt and does not remember the Word of the Shabad. He loses his life in the gamble. (AG: 1012)

> *Gobinḏ na bẖajai ahanbuḏẖ māṯā janam jūai jio hārai.*
> He does not vibrate and meditate on the Lord of the Universe; he is intoxicated with egotistical intellect. He loses his life in the gamble. (AG: 1205)

> *Anṯar kroḏẖ jūai maṯ hārī.*
> He is filled with anger within, and he loses his mind in the gamble. (AG: 314)

> *Tarisnā jalaṯ na kabhū būjẖėh jūai bājī hārī.*
> His burning desire is never quenched, and he loses the game of life in the gamble. (AG: 1198)

Instead, the AG recommends meditating and cultivating consciousness on God. In essence, bet on God because gambling on Maya and your passions is not only risky, but a losing gamble. The AG states that 'The five hideous demons have run away. Do not lose your life in the gamble. The Creator Lord has taken Nanak's side' (AG: 866).[35] The 'five hideous demons', which are representative of Maya and sensory passions, lose to God's revelation. If an individual gambles on these five demons, then they lose the game of life. Instead, the individual who has bet on God becomes the *Gurmukh*[36] as they chant on God. The AG

[32] *Kahai Nānak jin sacẖ ṯajiā kūṛe lāge ṯinī janam jūai hāriā.*
[33] *Gur kī sākẖī rākẖai cẖīṯ.*
[34] *Apnā janam na jūai hāre.*
[35] *Pancẖ ḏūṯ bẖāge bikrāl. Jū▫ai janam na kabhū hār. Nānak kā ang kīā karṯār.*
[36] The *Gurmukh* is a conceptual state of life and being wherein the individual overcomes the world and focuses on God. In terms of Western philosophy, it is tempting to draw parallels between the *Gurkmukh* and Friedrich Nietzsche's *Übermensch*. The latter concept, however, is multi-layered as the individual must overcome the world and their weakness to become a stronger and superior individual, in other words, *Über-*mensch. The *Gurmukh* denies the world and tries to face towards God. In other words, the *Gurmukh* maintains a 'sustained practice' (Nesbitt

affirms, the 'Gurmukh, unto whom the Lord becomes merciful, chants the Lord's Name and wins the game of life' (AG: 650).[37] Betting on God is presented the winning bet where 'one's life is not lost in the gamble' (AG: 210).[38]

A critical question arises: if it is an infinite game then how can a finite individual play and bet on God? If there is a cosmic game unfolding in the Universe, involving a transcendent God, then this would logically seem too remote for a mortal and finite individual to engage with. The AG addresses concerns that attempt to rationally *join* this game could lead the individual to become 'intoxicated with egoistical intellect.'[39]

To overcome this difficulty, the AG elaborates on this game metaphor which allows the individual to engage with God. In the AG, a rhetorical question is posed:

> *Baḏahu kī na hod māḏẖao mo siao. Tẖākur ṯe jan jan ṯe ṯẖākur kẖel pario hai ṯo siao.*
> Why not make a bet with me, O Lord of Wealth? From the master comes the servant, and from the servant, comes the master. This is the game I play with You. (AG: 1252)

Here, the individual is requesting to 'play' a 'game' with God and is asking God to provide them with a 'bet.' The individual is transcendentally communicating with God through the image of betting on a game. In this process, in Wood's sense, the individual establishes a rapport with God. The term hod is used to denote this engagement and bet with God instead of jūa or jūai which are associated with a gamble on Maya. It would be prudent to make a bet with God considering that the individual's stake is their 'jewel' of human life. Essentially, if you are betting with God, then you hold 'the winning dice' (AG: 1045).[40] If you gamble on Maya, then you will 'lose this life in the gamble' (AG: 1314).[41]

The game of chance played with God enables individuals to *lose* the specific bodily and sensory desires while cultivating virtuous characteristics. The AG describes this process:

> *Kām kroḏẖ māiā maḏ maṯsar e kẖelaṯ sabẖ jūai hāre. Saṯ santokẖ ḏaiā ḏẖaram sacẖ ih apunai garih bẖīṯar vāre.*
> Sexual desire, anger, intoxication with Maya and jealousy - I have lost all of these in the game of chance. Purity, contentment, compassion, faith and truthfulness – I have ushered these into the home of my self. (AG: 379)

2005: 26) of prayer towards God and not on *maya*. If the individual were to focus on *maya*, or, for the purposes of this article, gamble on *Maya* then they would become a *Manmukh* who focuses and faces towards the world and sensory desires and pleasures.

[37] *Har har ḏaiāl hovai jis upar so gurmukẖ har jap jiṇkā.*

[38] *Guṇ gāvaṯ ḏẖiāvaṯ sukẖ sāgar jūe janam na hāre.*

[39] The AG warns the individual about becoming an intellectual egoist. The focus here is not only God but on the cognitive and rational faculties in understanding God. These faculties are still rooted in *Maya* and this phenomenal world. Therefore, the individual needs to take care when utilising them in pursuing God.

[40] *Gurmukẖ ḏevėh pakī sārī.*

[41] *Jin har har nām na cẖeṯio ṯin jūai janam sabẖ hār.*

On shedding these negative bodily sensations, individuals are 'not reincarnated again into the world of form and substance' (AG: 335).[42] The individual has *won* by believing in God. The AG further elaborates that 'Whoever believes in the Name, wins; He Himself [God] implants Truth within' (AG: 1035)[43], suggesting that the reward for believing in God is acquiring truth. The individual will 'be a winner of the game of life and come to abide in your true home [with God]' (AG: 1072).[44] If you bet on God then you win by losing your sensory passions, cravings, and desires. The more you bet on God, the more you lose the sensory temptations of Maya. If you gamble on Maya, however, then you are gambling away your human life on the phenomenal world. Unlike betting on God, gambling on Maya means that you are allowing all your human passions and desires to govern your behaviour that leads to more destructive behaviour.

Believing in God

The AG emphasises that merely believing in and betting on God will not suffice. There are several passages which suggest that believing in and betting on God is not a fixed event:

> *Jūai janam na hārahu apṇā bẖāj paṛahu ṯum har sarṇā.*
> Don't lose your life in the gamble – hurry to the Lord's sanctuary. (AG: 433)

> *Sifṯī raṯā saḏ bairāgī jūai janam na hārai.*
> Imbued with the Lord's Praises, one is forever a Bairaagee, a renunciate, and one's life is not lost in the gamble. (AG: 360)

> *Kūṛ nivāre gurmaṯ sāre jū▫ai janam na hāre.*
> She who drives out her falsehood, and acts according to the Guru's Teachings, does not lose her life in the gamble. (AG: 244)

> *Gur pūrā pāiā nām ḏẖiāiā jūai janam na hāre.*
> Meeting the Perfect Guru, we meditate on the Naam, and do not lose this life in the gamble. (AG: 453)

> *Anāth ke nāthe sarab kai sāthe jap jūai janam na hārīai.*
> Meditating on the Patron of lost souls, the Companion of all, your life shall not be lost in the gamble. (AG: 80)

> *Jin seviā ṯin hī sukẖ pāiā so janam na jūai hārī jīo.*
> Those who serve the Lord find peace; they do not lose their lives in the gamble. (AG: 107)

[42] *Kaho Kabīr ṯā kao punrap janam nahī kẖel gaio bairāgī.*
[43] *Manne nāo soī jiṇ jāsī āpe sācẖ ḏariṛāiḏā.*
[44] Jīṯ āvhu vashu gẖar apne.

These verses convey that betting on God must become constant practice rather than merely professing belief in God. The individual must align their lives in agreement with God; otherwise, they are still gambling on Maya. If the individual gambles on Maya rather than on God, then they will lose this life. The above verses explain that the way to not lose the game of life is to bet on God. Crucially, since human life is finite, the individual must 'hurry' to make their bet on God. In essence, the above passages, the AG presents devotion to God as a better bet than yielding to Maya, which is analogous to Pascal's wager.

Believing in God is a spiritual commitment to continually bet on God and not something that can be imitated. The AG cautions: 'Some wear religious robes and wander around in pride; they lose their life in the gamble' (AG: 911).[45] For the individual to win the game of life and not lose, they must genuinely focus on God which will dispel falsehood while being 'Imbued with the Lord's Praises.' Otherwise, by imitating religious beliefs, the individual will be acting from and for pride. This sensation of pride is gambling on Maya and the individual will lose in the game of life. The individual must constantly expel falsehood to prevent themselves from being 'entangled in Maya' (AG: 1428)[46] and 'blinded' by it (AG: 1428).[47]

The AG continues: 'Those who are outwardly pure and yet polluted within, lose their lives in the gamble'[48] (AG: 919). Such false display of believing in God is categorised with other trappings of Maya[49] where the individual is making a gamble but with a fatal consequence. We saw above that 'In power, pleasures, beauty, wealth and youth, one gambles his life away' (AG: 1015).[50] By doing so, the individual is staking their life on Maya and 'waste this human life in vain and lose the game in the gamble' (AG: 412).[51]

In fact, the AG describes the world itself as 'a gambler' (AG: 222)[52] noting that Maya is so enchanting that the individual will 'forget the *Naam*, the Name of the Lord' (AG: 222).[53] The fatal consequence is that the individual will lose in their gamble on Maya. It is, therefore, more prudent to not only bet and gamble on God but persist in believing in God. The more the individual believes and acts in agreement with God, the more 'Imbued' with God they will become. Otherwise, if you 'play the game of chance in this world' then you will 'lose' your 'mind' (AG: 369).[54]

Conclusion

To conclude, the ideas of Pascal, along with selected subsequent scholarship, can facilitate a deeper understanding of belief and faith as depicted in the AG. Previously, we discussed how Wood's interpretation of Pascal's move away from traditional theological arguments for God's existence to ones

[45] *Ik bẖekẖ karahi firėh abẖimānī ṯin jūai bājī hārī.*
[46] *Man māiā mai faḏẖ rahio bisrio gobinḏ nām.*
[47] *Anḏẖ*
[48] *Bāhrahu nirmal jīahu ṯa maile ṯinī janam jūai hāriā.*
[49] I use the word 'trappings' deliberately here as the AG states that 'The Primal Lord Himself has beguiled them; they lose their lives in the gamble' (*Ḏẖarahu āp kẖuāian jūai bājī hārī. AG*: 429). It is tempting to gamble on *Maya,* but the consequence is that the individual will lose their life in doing so.
[50] *Rājan rangan rūpan mālan joban ṯe jūārī.*
[51] *Birthā janam gavāiā bājī hārī.*
[52] *Aisā jag ḏekẖiā jūārī.*
[53] *Sabẖ sukẖ māgai nām bisārī.*
[54] *Jūai kẖelaṇ jag kė ih man hāriā.*

that persuade and convince the unbeliever through rhetoric and metaphor. This underpinning can help us understand the betting and gambling metaphor in the AG.

Writing as a believer in Sikhism, with Punjabi heritage and Sikh parentage, I recognise that the metaphors in the AG, such as betting on and with God whilst not gambling on Maya, may seem obscure given the sacred text's intricate language(s) and its extensive theological context. I argue that both Western diaspora Sikhs and non-Sikhs can benefit from the Western intellectual framework. This is largely due to the substantial existing scholarship in the West on the concept of a wager with God, as influenced by Pascal's thinking. This enterprise may seem farfetched, but it can prove to be a beneficial exercise to understand the complex arguments presented in the AG. The obscure becomes more comprehensible through familiar metaphors thus not only deepening our understanding but also allows the individual to constantly practice their spiritual commitment to God.

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2024, Vol. 9, No. 1
ISSN: 2771-3520

Women's Education in Colonial Punjab: Significance of Women Teachers and Training Institutions

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Abstract

This paper documents and analyzes the dynamics of women's education chronologically, with a focus on women teachers and training institution in Punjab, before its annexation in 1849 by the British and during its colonial phase. Prior to 1849 Punjab had a vibrant and thriving indigenous educational system. There is evidence that women received education through the existing mechanisms, a fact appreciated by William Adam in his famous reports. The change in the medium of instruction from 'Persian'- the official language of the state, to 'Urdu' after annexation, proved detrimental not only to the women's education but overall education too. The unavailability of women teachers added to the despair as the simple idea of a 'woman teacher' was widely challenged by several old schools. The male opposition fearing competition from lesser paid women colleagues, and existing stereotypes regarding the responsibilities of women, restrained the efforts for women teacher training. Allender admits that not only in India but also in Britain, women teaching professionals had to struggle for acceptance. The training schools advanced the cause of women education through native women; it was agreed that only native women could help extend women's education; hence they must be trained for this cause. As a result of this historic phenomenon, we now have the National Council for Teacher Education training men and women teachers. As we embark on this research, data collected from various Regional and National Archives and libraries related to women's education in colonial Punjab has been reoriented to develop arguments according to the theme of this paper. This research shall enrich our understanding about decisive constituents of women's education in Punjab from a historical perspective; and reflect on the contemporary need to create a women inclusive system and functionaries working at the grassroots to reduce inequality of opportunities and recognition.

Keywords*: women's education, women teachers, training institutions for women teachers, normal school, training college.*

Women Education in Colonial Punjab: Significance of Women Teachers and Training Institutions

The contemporary situation of women's education in Punjab, according to government records, appears hopeful. The Gender Budget Statement for 2023-2024 indicates that the Punjab Government is committed to empowering women and girls by addressing key gaps and barriers that deny them the opportunity to benefit from the development efforts. It highlights significant achievements made through several policy initiatives introduced in the past, viz. improving the imbalance in sex ratio, girl child education, maternal health, etc. However, numerous gender gaps continue requiring stronger policy and program commitments to reinforce the State's commitment to gender equality. The 2011 Census reveals that the

women constitute 47.23% of the total population of the state, as compared to 48.5% at national level. The census shows an improvement in the sex ratio to 895 from 876 in 2001. According to several Government of India reports, the sex ratio at birth has improved to 928 per 1000 in 2021-2022 from 891 per 1000 in 2015-16. The female literacy rate increased from 63.5% in 2001 to 70.7% in 2011. Punjab ranks relatively high on women's education rates in the country, with almost 38 percent of girls completing secondary education and 10 percent completion rates for graduate degrees (Department of Social Security and Women & Child Development, Punjab, 2023-24, pp. Foreword-1).

From a historical perspective, we discover significant evidence of a comprehensive women education system existing in pre-annexation Punjab. G.W. Leitner (1883), who became the Principal of the Lahore Government College in 1864, rightly described the situation of women education in Punjab, stating, "Indigenous female education in the Panjab requires less development than revival" (p. 97). He noted that the native girl was often more intelligent than her brother and there was not a single family that did not take pride in having their female members learn to read (Leitner, p. 98). William Adam, in his celebrated Reports on the State of Education in Bengal from 1835 & 1838, made a priceless remark that Punjab was far ahead of Bengal in women's education, a sector that was rapidly developing in Bengal (Adam, 1941, p.504).

Section I: Indigenous Education System and its Decline: Educating Women in Pre-Annexation Punjab

In 1849, when the British conquered Punjab, there existed a robust indigenous education system. This fact is reinforced by William Arnold*, (1857; as cited in Richey, 1922) who observed, "Certainly the idea of Education is not new to the Punjabis…We find all the school phraseology ready-made to our hand" (p. 99).[55] Under Sikh rule, Persian was the official language which heavily influenced the indigenous educational landscape. This led to the predominance of Persian in local schools which also taught Sanskrit and Arabic. The schools dedicated to Sikh teachings instructed in Gurumukhi from the Granth Sahib, while Lande schools specialized in teaching bookkeeping to the children from trading community. The Persian schools were attended by boys from Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim communities, although the teaching profession was predominantly in the hands of Mahomedans. The education system in Punjab was distinct from those in other regions of India in three key ways. First and foremost, unlike other parts of India, women's education and women teachers were common in Punjab; secondly, it was common for entire communities to assist in sustaining schools and lastly, teachers frequently received cash payments and occasionally regular salaries, with such allowances being more distinctive in Punjab as compared to other regions (Richey, p.279).

During the era of the East India Company, the Charter Act of 1813 marked the first step towards education, allocating a sum of Rs.1 lakh towards the education of Indians under British rule and officially allowing missionaries to come to India. Missionary efforts to educate the local populations were ongoing

[55] The term 'Punjabi' hereafter appears at several places throughout the manuscript which besides the Punjabi language connotes the natives of Punjab. It is inclusive of all the communities the Sikh, the Muslims and the Hindus. It has been used in several historical reports used in the text and I also specifically retained it as I feel that this term reflects the superior picture of the then Punjab. *William Arnold was appointed the First Director of Public Instruction, Punjab in 1856)

across India, including Punjab. Arnold noted in his initial report that while there was some unwillingness among missionaries in other parts of India to accept aid from the government, due to the religious neutrality of British government, however, this reluctance was not evident in Punjab. He also mentioned about the Church of England Mission schools and the American Presbyterian Mission schools already established in the province (Richey, p.298). Unfortunately, the Charter Act of 1813 was nonfunctional until 1823, when "organizing a state system of education was begun in three presidencies by 1823 and the educational grant of India increased from one lakh to ten lakh rupees" (Nurullah & Naik, p. 74) a watershed moment in the history of Indian education. However, prior to 1854, the British government made no sincere efforts, particularly for women's education, often under the pretext of strict social and religious neutrality. It was not until Wood's Despatch of 1854 that the British government acknowledged the value of women's education in India and pledged its free and cordial support (Wood's Despatch, 1854, p. 35). This was thirty-one years after they accepted responsibility for men's education (Kamat, 1976, pp. 3-4).[56] Richey (1922) highlighted this neglect, 'female education was not recognized as a branch of the State system of education in India' (p. 32). The prevalent social customs such as early marriage, the evil of Sati, prohibition of widow remarriage, and the pardah system made educating the women difficult. William Adam (1941), in his Report on the State of Education in Bengal, summarized this view: "A superstitious feeling is alleged to exist in the majority of Hindu families, principally cherished by the women and not discouraged by the men, that a girl taught to read and write will soon after marriage become a widow" (p.187).

Nevertheless, by 1856-57, the authorities in Punjab encouraged the educational department to promote women's education. At the 1862 Education Durbar in Lahore, the third anniversary of the public distribution of prizes to meritorious scholars belonging to government educational institutions, Lieutenant-Governor Robert Montgomery called on the native chiefs to support him in introduction and expansion of the women education. A year later, he declared that a significant movement was underway in Punjab, overcoming centuries-old prejudices against women's education (Punjab Provincial Committee, 1884, p.10). In 1856, subject to the supervision of Mr. Browne, Inspector of Schools, the first female school, was started by the British at Rawalpindi, and by the year's end, 17 more schools were opened with 306 girls enrolled, averaging 18 per school (Richey, p.299).

An account of girls' education in Punjab would not be complete without acknowledging the contribution of Baba Khem Singh Bedi, a direct descendant of Guru Nanak Dev, who played a pivotal role in advancing education for girls by motivating communities to educate their daughters and founding 108 schools for girls in Rawalpindi around 1855 (Leitner, p.102). Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of the Sikh religion, believed men and women are equal and therefore women cannot be considered inferior. The Guru in his teachings asks, *so kyon manda aakhiye jit jamme rajan*, (why call her bad? From her, Kings are born). To woman we married, of woman are we born, of woman conceived, and by woman are the civilization continued. It is by woman that the entire social order is maintained. Baba Bedi emphasized the importance of Guru Nanak's teachings, urging parents to love their daughters as dearly as their sons and to educate them

[56] Before annexation that is 1849, the first government school in the Punjab territory was opened at Simla in 1848; and after annexation it was proposed to establish a government school at Amritsar. These schools were basically for men and efforts for women schools remain suspended for quite long.

accordingly. He appealed to the people to remember that there was once the custom of educating daughters in their families.

Unfortunately, after annexation, the promising educational landscape changed drastically. The shift in the medium of instruction from Punjabi to Urdu proved detrimental. The people were unfamiliar with the new script of Urdu, which is written from right to left, unlike the left to right of Punjabi with which they were familiar. The government had to establish new schools since none of the indigenous schoolmasters new Urdu, leading to resistance among teachers who were now required to teach history and geography in an unfamiliar language. Moreover, the introduction of modern education itself did not bring in the decline; before 1849, Punjab already had missionary schools teaching modern education. However, the adoption of Urdu as medium of instruction lead to the educational deterioration. Prof Rao rightly claims that the indigenous schools during the British rule did not diminish as the British government followed a policy of integration. She states that regardless of 'linguistic and religious multiplicity' British appreciated the reliability of indigenous schools to be the foundation of state education. The British authorities in several parts of India adopted 70,000 indigenous schools with their curriculum and trained available local teachers for a month to equip them to teach geography and history. Consequently, countless government primary schools came up without much expenditure. With a roll call book and a small pay for the teacher these government schools were simply the indigenous schools till 1860s except in Bombay and Punjab (Rao, 2020, p.37). Surprisingly, the situation in Punjab differed as the government introduced Urdu as medium of instruction, unfavorably affecting both the indigenous and overall education. Before 1849, Punjabi served as the medium of instruction; during the colonial reign, it was replaced by Urdu, and in the post-colonial period, Punjabi was once again reinstated as the medium of instruction.

Section II: Changing Dynamics of Women's Education during Colonial Period

(a) Ramifications of Urdu as medium of instruction

After annexation, the earliest ruling head of Punjab, Robert Montgomery, proposed that Punjabi language and Gurumukhi characters should be replaced with Hindi and Urdu like the Northwestern Provinces as it "possesses advantages over less cultivated patios of Punjab" (Rao, 2020, p.214). Along with using Punjabi for communication, the Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh communities resorted to Nagari, Persian, and Gurumukhi characters consecutively for writing. When the government announced Urdu in Persian characters to be the medium of instruction it corresponded with teachers to take up teaching in its newly founded schools. On being employed the teachers were handed over a set of guidelines they had to comply with. The schoolmasters turned adamant, because they heard the words-History, Geography, and Arithmetic for the first time, and found them to be strange and repulsive (Punjab Provincial Committee, pp. 3-4). Unfortunately, Arnold was completely unreasonable hoping that the schoolmasters who spoke Punjabi, Arabic, and Persian would instruct history and geography in a foreign language and criticized them when they refused to do so (Rao, 2020, pp. 214-15). He also argued that people strongly opposed the introduction of the Urdu language as medium of instruction, finding it to be offensive. However, the resistance was not due to a lack of knowledge about the subjects they were supposed to teach, but rather because of the unfamiliar language in which they were expected to teach. Arnold wrote,

> We found a whole people wedded to system diametrically opposed to that which we wish to introduce; to whom Urdu is utterly inconsistent, opposed to the idea of erudition and learning; people who were ignorant of the geography of their own province, ignorant that there was such science and therefore prepared to reject geography, inclined to reject whatever is strange to them. (Arnold, 1858; as cited in Richey, 1922, pp. 301-02)

Apparently, Arnold's statement reflected that natives of Punjab were against modern education. Prof. Rao (2022) asserts that it was much before Arnold's report that the people of Punjab had redirected town duty of Rs. 130 in Rawalpindi for the management of a school with 300 boys. This school was handed over to the American Presbyterian Missionaries who already were running a school in Lahore with same number of boys. All these schools were teaching modern disciplines. This proves that the hostility of natives was not for the subject but for an unknown language and characters. Nevertheless, the British government introduced Urdu for instruction proclaiming it "a really national system of education" (p. 215).

Regrettably, when introduced as medium of instruction Urdu disadvantageously influenced the women's education. Not only were the Hindus, Muslims and the Sikhs of Punjab getting their girls educated in schools but also had women teaching in school which was unheard of in other areas in India. No religion restricted their girls being educated. Unfortunately, once Urdu replaced Persian as medium of instruction these female educators became jobless. Leitner too assigned the decline in women's education to the change of medium of instruction and acknowledged that women education in Punjab just needed restoration. He further admits that girls who used to come together as per their convenience at their own or a friends' house to learn Nagri or Gurmukhi or Arabic, were sadly getting dissociated from their brothers in language and feelings every day by the change of language. So was the case of a mother at home who for the same reason could not cooperate with the teacher (Leitner, p. 97). Before annexation, Persian was taught extensively, while Urdu was primarily studied by Europeans. The substitution of Urdu for Persian was looked upon as a limitation of education, leading to disuse of Urdu as the spoken and written language of gentlemen (Leitner, p. ii). Consequently, the medium of instruction was a crucial aspect that hindered the progress of not only women's education but the entire system of education in Punjab.

(b) Engaging schoolmasters' wives and widows as teachers: availability, limitations, and suggestions

During the nineteenth century, educating women remained a challenging issue world over. Besides some obvious tribulations, the most significant hurdle was the shortage of women teachers Also, the very idea of "plans for establishing the figure of a female teacher were widely resisted by many conservatives" (Caruso & Moritz, p. 21). With England introducing the teacher education system around mid-nineteenth century, it was then implemented in India as well. Following Wood's Despatch in 1854, women's education and teacher training in India followed the pupil-teacher system model. Additionally, the zenana teaching system, which involved home education, must be acknowledged. This method was preferred over traditional women's schools as it was aligned with social customs of the time, with women of the upper caste families being taught at home by the missionary women. Despite the practical challenges, missionaries and government agencies used this system to provide systematic instruction to select groups of women (Caruso & Moritz, 2018, p. 37).

Mary Carpenter, a British social reformer known for her significant contributions to prison reform and correctional education, was deeply troubled by the lack of women's education during her visits to India in 1866. She stressed that a major obstacle to the improvement and expansion of female schools was the widespread shortage of women teachers (Sengupta, 2011, p. 102). Malcolm Darling (1925), who served as Assistant Commissioner and later Financial Commissioner in Punjab, similarly asserted that, "the slow rate of progress in female education is officially ascribed to the "paucity of qualified teachers" (p. 299). In contrast, Leitner noted that before annexation in Punjab, indigenous women's education was supported by the local community and there was no shortage of women willing to teach. He (1883) noted that, most of the time not only was the Punjabi woman knowledgeable but was also an instructor. For example, before 1849, six schools in Delhi were maintained by the Punjabi women for girls (p. 98).[57] H. R. Mehta (1929) highlights the presence of women teachers and the respect associated with teaching among Hindus and Muhammadans. He suggests that women "instructed for their own pleasure or what is more likely, under the idea that they were engaged in a meritorious and laudable task" (p.13).

Educating women and recruiting women teachers were challenging issues that needed immediate attention. The existing pool of the available teachers was limited to those who were competent to teach only reading and writing. Compounding the shortage were social conditions like women being unable to "leave their homes until they are married and then there is husband to be considered and provided for. If the wife is suitable, and she and her husband are willing to come, the head of the family objects," (Caruso & Moritz, 2018, p.37) making the availability of women teachers almost impossible. During this period, women, especially the unmarried, did not adopt the profession of teaching; schoolmaster's wives and widows were therefore sought by the government as teachers, although this too proved challenging due to 'the conditions of Hindu society are not such that she could go off to a strange place to undertake the charge of a school' (Bengal Provincial Committee, 1884, p.112). Recognizing the shortage of women teachers as the greatest obstacle in women's education, there was a push to involve schoolmasters' wives as teachers. As a result, provincial governments took steps to encourage the schoolmasters to educate their wives, and it was found that many of the young schoolmasters of parts of India did not object to their wives engaging in schoolwork. To their relief, inquiries revealed that in Punjab, a considerable number of schoolmasters' wives had started private schools for girls, prompting authorities to promote this practice further. Another solution was to employ widows as teachers for women's schools. Mrs. Mitchell, Lady Superintendent at the Female Training College in Pune, highlighted the advantages of widows as trainees:

> I have found in my own experience that so far from married women being the best sort of women to be trained as teachers, I would here say just one word. I have found in my own experience […] the reverse, as the husband has been as often a hindrance as not; the best women I have had have been widows or single women. (Lee-Warner 1884, p.385)

[57] Leitner's Report shows the existence of several female indigenous schools, in some of which boys were admitted. Not to speak of the numerous Koran schools for both boys and girls taught and supported by pious widows; there were the following schools conducted by female teachers: Nawankot and Moharwal in the Lahore District, Wairowal and Fattahabad in the Amritsar District, Dhatrat and Asant in the Karnal District, and Panipat had 6 schools so conducted.

The Education Commission made significant suggestions regarding employment of widows on a larger scale for teaching. It reaffirmed that one of the major hurdles in the way of women's education would be overcome if Hindu widows could be persuaded to accept schooling job. This would in turn provide an independent and interesting career to a large group of women (Education Commission, 1883, pp. 539-40). The Education Commission reported that the employment of women teachers was critically necessary for women's education due to prejudices among the natives against male teachers and inspectors in girls' schools. Notably, the majority of existing girls' schools was primarily staffed by male teachers. Only elderly men were thought to be apt to teach, and efforts of extending women's education by employing young males as teachers would not be accepted by the people. Therefore, most of the time the faculty in girls' schools were procured from the retired male teachers, out of whom several had exhausted their working capacity (Education Commission, p. 38).

The Education Commission stated that the lack of women teachers in Punjab was a major obstacle to the women's education. Deficiency of teachers for girls' schools was clearly evident in the figures that showed that the availability of trained women teachers in the profession was extremely low in comparison to their need. In 1881-82, of 515 girls enrolled at Normal schools across India, Punjab had 138 (Education Commission, p.538). Therefore, increasing the number of schoolmasters' wives as teachers would produce far-reaching impact if it could successfully produce, the required number of teachers, as other methods had failed to obtain an adequate supply. Regarding a specific proposal made with regard to the more extensive employment of native widows as teachers, the report stated that native public opinion in many provinces posed a barrier. It was likely that the highly regarded Hindu families would not allow their widowed members to take on a public service, as being a schoolmistress. Only if Hindu widows could be convinced to take up the profession of teaching a major difficulty would be conquered. However, besides the exposure to the outer world beyond the safe four walls of the house there were several major challenges that widowed teachers had to face once they moved out. Firstly, the position that they assumed exposed them to rude remarks and secondly, the school mistress often found opponents in areas wherever they were posted. Additionally, she would be faced with male teachers' chauvinism, be young or old, who would be reluctant to accept her orders. Women heads of women training colleges were extremely understanding of the seriousness of the situation and tried to provide a favorable environment to the young widow teachers. For example, the Ahmedabad Female Training College's head never approved of a widow teacher's appointment unless she obtained the permission and approval of the native families. Despite these hopeful steps the situation of a widowed educator continued to be extremely tough in rural areas. It was observed that these challenges would cease to exist if trained female teachers would get a job in their own area (Education Commission, pp. 538-40).

Women teachers faced specific limitations and conditions that applied to the various social classes from which they could be recruited. Hence, for a genuine and lasting expansion to be made in educating women, the growth and change of native public opinion was a must. It was observed that the "Native society does not approve of the adult daughters of good family studying in an institution like a Normal school or going out into the world as women teachers" (Punjab Provincial Committee, p. 25). Moreover, the Education Commission made significant suggestions regarding the promotion of women education. To mention few, it recommended that, a) rules need to be framed to promote the gradual replacement

of male by women teachers in all girls' schools, b) schools under the women teachers should generally encourage stipendiary pupil-teacher positions, c) establishment of additional Normal schools or classes[58] was recommended. Furthermore, the existing schools under private management were to receive liberal aid from government and apart from that aid may be granted as perk to the normal student who cleared the exams for teacher training, d) the faculty of regular schools to be rewarded for their efforts to prepare students. especially the girls be motivated and awarded for teacher training certificate examination, e) the wives of the male teachers to be encouraged to take up teaching, and widows be trained and recruited as educators with provision of sufficient secure environment wherever they are posted, and f) special encouragement was to be given to the European and Eurasian young women to qualify in the vernacular language in the districts where they may be required as teachers in the native schools (Education Commission, p. 549).

Besides these recommendations, significant suggestions were made after observing the current state of women's education and the scarcity of women teachers. The significant difficulties in recruiting women teachers for village schools called for the employment of married couples in these roles. This approach had already been implemented in the Madras Presidency, where married couples were recruited to teach in mixed (co-education) schools and was being followed in Punjab to some extent. Efforts were being made in Punjab to train the wives of schoolmasters, highlighting the advantages of having women teachers in both mixed and boys' schools. Additionally, the high number of male teachers in purely girls' primary schools across all provinces was adding to the difficulty of keeping girls in school after a certain age. Interestingly though, in "Punjab much keenness is felt for the girls' education" (Women Education Commission, 1936, p.5). The reports acknowledged that while replacing male teachers with female teachers was not that difficult, it was more challenging for women teachers to work alone in villages. Often, there was no suitable place where they could live, and they could not remain there unprotected. Therefore, it appeared that the employment of married couples could be a very important solution in mixed schools (Women Education Commission, p. 7).

Regarding the availability of women teachers in Punjab, the demand was higher than the supply. Although teacher training did make a few promising advances, training for women teachers was still in a nascent stage. This unavailability served as a major obstacle to the girls' education. W.R.M. Holroyd, Director of Public Instruction in Punjab, identified three factors essential for the success of women's schools: competent teachers, effective supervision, and regular inspection. He noted the scarcity of competent women teachers in Punjab, observing that women joining the existed Normal schools as students had received very little prior education. Holroyd lamented the fact that after completing their training in these schools, many were not available for employment far from their homes. Generally, the pupils were reluctant to accept an unfamiliar person as a teacher in a girls' school, and when no women teacher was available, they would often employ old men. In some instances, people open to hiring young men belonging to the priestly classes who came from well-recognized and respected families**.** He also attributed the non-availability of the trained women teachers to the insufficient salaries offered*.* If these were on the same scale as those provided for boys' schools, all other difficulties might perhaps be

[58] Training or Normal classes started by a small number of schools were like the pupil teacher system that paid the girls who got enrolled in them.

overcome (Punjab Provincial Committee, p. 254). Therefore, it was evident that the presence of women teachers was necessary for the success of advancing women's education in Punjab.

Moving ahead in this interesting historical journey, below is a quick brief summary of how and when the teacher training institutions originated in Punjab. Teacher training institutions, particularly those for women, were significant aspects of the colonial educational policy that is why they have been discussed in a separate section.

Section III Teacher Training Institutions: The Need and the Beginning

Prior to annexation, although there was a widespread respect for education and the teachers, there were no formal programmes for teacher education or training schools. In the middle of nineteenth century, when England began organized attempts for improvement of education, one major issue identified was the lack of qualified schoolmasters and the inadequate methods of teaching. This deficiency was felt more acutely in India. Consequently, following the recommendations of Wood's Despatch in 1854, that the model adopted in Britain for establishing training schools and classes for Masters be followed in India, an Education Department was established in 1855. Subsequently, Punjab saw the establishment of its first Normal schools (as teachers' colleges in India were called), was opened in Lahore and Rawalpindi in 1856 and 1857 respectively, with another following in Delhi the next year (Mehta, 1929). As defined by the Punjab Education Code (1925), a 'Normal School is an institution in which students are prepared for vernacular masterships in primary and secondary schools' (p.4). Each Normal school in Punjab was situated at the headquarters of their respective Education Circle, with districts of Punjab organized into these Circles under specific divisions. After several modifications in 1901, these included Delhi, Jalandhar, Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Multan Circles each encompassing several districts.

Normal schools were started by the government to train and enhance the learning of the vernacular teachers. In these schools, a certificate was awarded to the student at the end of the completion of the training courses and teachers' examination. The various grades of certificates which were granted and the positions for which they qualified the holders, are shown in Table 1 (Nathan, 1904, p.193).

Table 1: *Various Grades of certificates in Punjab*

Province	**Grade of certificate**	**Grade of certificate**	**Posts for which the certificate qualifies**
Punjab	Anglo-vernacular teacher's certificate	Senior First grade	Head master, high school.
		Senior Second grade	Head master, middle school, or assistant, high department.
		Junior First grade	Assistant master, middle department
		Junior Second grade	Head master, primary school.
	Vernacular teacher's certificate	Senior First grade	Head master, high school.
		Senior Second grade	Head master, middle school, or assistant, high department.
		Junior First grade	Assistant master, middle department
		Junior Second grade	Head master, primary school.

	Zamindari certificate		Head master, zamindari school

Adapted from *Progress of education in India, 1897-98-1901-1902*, by A. Nathan, 1904, p. 194.

The Normal schools in Punjab offered two types of teacher training classes: one for vernacular teacherships in primary schools, and the other for teacherships in Zamindari schools, which were, however, a diminishing category (Cotton, 1898, p. 240). The Zamindari certificate examination required acquaintance with the native method of accounts in the Mahajani script, and qualified individuals for the teacherships in Elementary Zamindari schools designed specially to meet the demands of the agricultural people. These schools for the agriculturists' children were opened in 1887-88; they operated on a half-time system where each boy was required to attend school in one half, either in the morning or in the evening, and working in the fields in the other; at harvest time, the schools were closed altogether. The course of instruction included reading, writing and native arithmetic. The half-time educational system of the Zamindari schools was frequently receiving complaints from the zamindars for making their children unfit for the hard work in the fields. Also, it was feared that with the agriculturists becoming more aware of the advantages of education, they would soon want their children to attend full-time rather than half-time (Nash, 1893, p. 175).

In addition to Normal schools, there was a Central Training College in Lahore, established in 1881, for the training in science and practice of teaching for English teachers across all classes of Anglo-vernacular schools and for vernacular teachers in secondary schools (Cotton, 1898, p. 240). There was a Model or practicing school attached to Normal schools and training colleges, where the students received practical instruction in the art of teaching. Further details are provided in the following Table.

Table 2: *The Central Training College's qualifications, length of course, examinations and certificates*

Institution or Class	**Department**	**Preliminary educational qualifications**	**Length of course**	**Examinations**	**Certificates**
Training College, Lahore	Senior Anglo-vernacular class	University degree	One year	At the end of course	Provisional second grade senior Anglo-vernacular certificate.
	Junior Anglo-vernacular class	Study up to the intermediate standard	One year	At the end of course	Provisional second grade junior Anglo-vernacular certificate.
	Senior vernacular class	Entrance examination or junior vernacular teacher's certificate	One year	At the end of course	Provisional second grade senior vernacular certificate.

From, *Progress of education in India, 1897-98-1901-1902*, by A. Nathan, 1904, p. 205.

(a) The start of a new chapter: training schools for women teachers and the role of missionaries

Until 1813, the East India Company opposed the entry of Christian missionaries into India, citing that East India Company was a trading agency, seeking profit and not the spread of religion. They contended that supporting missionaries might be seen as their support of conversion efforts and possibly turn the Indians hostile against the British (Rao, 2020, p.58). Particularly, in Indian context, missionaries and the colonial administration did not work together because of the government's aggressive attitude, to the extent that by the end of nineteenth century, all missionaries, including the Anglicans, became decidedly against the colonial state. However, in several instances, missionaries worked together with Indians, earning respect and admiration for negotiating with the colonial state on behalf of local people's rights. This was a unique and unusual development in the history of missionaries and education (Rao, 2021, pp.156-167).

Regarding the relationship between colonial administration and missionary presence, Cox (2002) notes that it was highly unlikely to be a missionary in Punjab without dealing with problems created by the attitude of imperial power (p.17). Harding (2008) highlights that government of India's educational policy (Wood's Despatch, 1854) was a resonance of modern thinking in England, emphasizing that private institutions would provide the majority of education, which was to be funded and overseen by the government. He further states that Wood's Despatch had limited success in Punjab because, in the nineteenth century, the only private institutions providing popular western education were Christian missions, particularly the American Presbyterian and the Church Missionary Society. The government was forced to open more of its own schools only after becoming apprehensive about disturbing religious and political reactions fueled by the local press's interest in seeking the political connections of different Christian mission societies. Yet, the Christian institutions often posed challenges to the state-run schools, as parents greatly valued the mission-run schools because of their perceived competence and superiority (p.179).

Nevertheless, the beginnings of the modern education of women in Punjab can be traced to the schools started by missionaries. Robert May from the London Missionary Society came to India in July 1814 and established a school in Chinsura, a town in Bengal close to British India's capital Calcutta and the Danish settlement Serampore. Subsequently, the Serampore trio-William Carey, Joshua Marshman and William Ward - founded the Serampore College in 1818. The missionary collaboration with Indians was not confined to Bengal, which had a large European presence and was the heart of the British Empire (Rao, 2021). Robert Frykenberg has extensively studied missionary activities in education, starting from the first Protestant Mission at Tranquebar in 1706, established by Bartholomaus Ziegenbalg and Heinrich Plutschau, to the connections extending into the twentieth century (Frykenberg, 1986). Consequently, "even before the annexation of Punjab, there were English schools in Amritsar and Rawalpindi maintained by the people and by the missionaries at Amritsar, Ferozepur, Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Ambala, Kangra, and Kotegarh, near Simla. By the time Arnold wrote this report, the people of Rawalpindi had supported diverting the surplus town duty of 130 rupees to maintain a school with 300 boys and it was handed over to the American Presbyterian Missionaries, who already had established a school at Lahore" (Rao, 2020, p. 215).

Regrettably, the government's indifferent efforts to address the issue of finding trained female staff for the girls' schools in the existing educational (the idea of separate girls' schools was new in the province) and social situation in the province added to the troubles. Consequently, the entire endeavor was left to the private entities such as the philanthropists and missionaries. The American Presbyterian Missionaries, after setting up their headquarters in Ludhiana, initiated women's education by opening a girls' orphanage there in 1836. Subsequently, the Church Missionary Society established a girls' school in Kotegarh in 1844. As previously discussed, the wives of missionaries were often engaged in teaching at these schools (Mohabbat, et al., 2020, p. 3883). According to the Education Commission (1883), missionaries achieved great success in the field of education in Punjab, particularly through the girls' schools and zanana agencies (p.527). Later, in the early twentieth century, socio-religious organizations like Arya Samaj, Singh Sabha, and Anjuman-i-Islamia led reform movements in Punjab. Notable among the efforts to promote women's education, along with social reforms, were put in by pioneer institutions such as the Kanya Mahavidyalaya, established by Lala Devraj in 1886 in Jalandhar, the Hansraj Mahavidyalaya and the Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalaya. Madhu Kishwar (1986) reveals that as the drive for the women's education accelerated, there as an increasing need to teach English to girls so that a 'gulf was not created between men and women', (p. 16). Consequently, the Kanya Mahavidyalaya started teaching English from class five onwards from 1906, despite the significant opposition from the community.

Moving forward, while Normal schools for training male teachers were established, training schools for women teachers were not yet established by the government in Punjab. Instead, the women's Normal schools being conducted by the missionaries were following the same curriculum for training women teachers. Thus, the few institutions for women's education that came into being in the first three decades of the nineteenth century owed their existence to the efforts of missionaries and philanthropic private individuals. These entities not only educated girls but also trained them to become teachers.

Many of the solutions implemented to address the scarcity of trained women teachers were still inadequate given the mammoth task of advancing women's education. Due to the existing social conditions and the underdevelopment of women's education in Punjab, there were no institutions specifically for training female teachers. Hence, in 1891, Normal classes were attached to some existing girls' schools, which offered stipends to girls who passed these classes and prepared for the certificate examinations in the province. The government acknowledged that though this system was not satisfactory, it was almost impossible to improve upon until the social conditions in the province allowed for the establishment of proper Normal schools for women teachers (Nathan, p.220).

(b) The significant constituents: women's training school

The course for women teachers in Punjab extended a little more than two years. Throughout this period continuous training was provided in the disciplines along with everyday teaching drill same as recommended for the men counterparts for the teacher training certificate. The students of Anglo-vernacular had to study the same program as the men of the training school; vernacular students had a different program for junior and senior certificates. Nathan (1904) reported that the senior certificate program comprised: "vernacular language, arithmetic, history and geography, physiology and domestic

economy, Euclid and algebra, or elementary physical science, or a classical language, needlework, school management, and practice of teaching" (p.221).

With respect to qualifications, various systems were in place across India for provision of women teachers. In regions such as Punjab, United Provinces, Central Provinces, Bihar, and Orissa, the system was organized based on a vernacular secondary education. Conversely, Bombay and Madras called their vernacular education as either primary or elementary, and reserved the term secondary for Anglo-Vernacular education. Bengal, on the other hand, hardly recognized any education that did not include English. There were, therefore, fundamental differences in the types of teachers available and the methods of training in different parts of India. However, as a general rule, the primary teacher typically was product of an either primary or secondary vernacular school. Generally, there were two levels of training, lower vernacular and higher vernacular. In the lower vernacular, the teacher had typically completed primary education, while in the higher level; she was read up to the end of vernacular middle stage or its equivalent. In the United Provinces, widows were recruited rather than the girls from schools. Further, concerning the duration of the training courses, the women's education committee suggested that training periods could be as short as six months. And, with a view to raising the standard of women primary school teachers, a minimum period of at least eight years' school education followed by a two years' training course was necessary. The Committee also discussed the types of training schools that were necessary, concluding that a general educational school entirely devoted to training, with attached practicing schools and hostels, particularly situated in rural areas to attract village girls, were essential (Primary Education of Girls, 1936, pp. 5-6).The Committee maintained that it was essential to engage women teachers in primary schools for girls, with provisions for hostel accommodation and transport facilities. It also highlighted the need for special efforts to train village girls who would return to their own villages to teach after their training (Primary Education of Girls, p. 8). In addition, the authorities advocated that proper inducements should be offered to the teachers at boys' schools to teach or have their wives trained as teachers in girls' schools.

Normal students were provided with stipends and awarded scholarships based on exceptional performance. A scholarship was defined as a periodic payment guaranteed for a fixed time based on certain conditions, and it was strictly based on the results of a public examination. A stipend, on the other hand, was a subsistence allowance given to a scholar under certain conditions to enable or induce him to pursue certain specified courses of study (Punjab Education Code 1925, p. 4). In Punjab there was a bursary of Rs 2 per month for upper primary and Rs. 3 per month for middle vernacular, for female pupils who planned to take up a program in an authorized Normal Class (Nathan, pp. 221-22).

Refresher Courses were introduced by the government as a strategic measure to promote acquisition of knowledge by women teachers through training in Normal schools. While Refresher Courses for men were already being conducted, it was felt that women teachers also needed such opportunities to update their skills after completing their training and had taught for some time in a school. These courses were conducted in government girls' schools and lasted for about a week or ten days. However, more such courses were needed because teachers in average vernacular schools, especially in rural areas, lacked encouragement and motivation to put into practice what they learned at the Normal school. These

courses were successful; in many cases, they were almost exciting, and were always interesting (Progress of Education in Punjab, 1937, p.100). Hence, Refresher Courses had definitely contributed to the efficiency of the schools, as it had become increasingly clear to the government that efforts were needed to prevent the stagnation that teachers may drift into after they had been employed as teachers for some time, making these courses very desirable (Progress of Education in Punjab, pp.5, 56).

(c) Development of women Normal schools: a brief account

Government efforts for the development of training schools for women teachers began with a delay. Initially, women teachers training in Punjab was exclusively a private endeavor, which needs to be applauded, until a government training school was established in 1905. Until then, the training of women teachers was left completely to private enterprise.

As early as 1864, the Normal school for the training of women teachers was established in Delhi through the efforts of Mr. Winter of the Society for Propagation of Gospel Mission. This school produced several qualified women teachers who were employed in government schools for women (Female Education, 1869, pp. 12-13). Subsequently, Normal schools were opened in Lahore and Amritsar in the following year by the Committee for Promoting Woman Education, and schools at other places followed shortly after (Mehta, 1929, p. 77). By 1867-68, the Normal school of the Society for Propagation of Gospel Mission at Delhi was progressing fairly and was attended by both Hindu and Muhammadan women. The Lahore Normal School, placed under the care of a European lady, proved to be excellent. The Normal school at Amritsar implemented schemes for the training of women teachers and students, under the superintendence of an English lady (Holroyd, 1868, pp. 38-39). By 1868-69, out of the five existing private or Aided Normal schools, four were for women. Additionally, a Normal school was set up by the Anjuman at Kangra, and the schools at Delhi under the Society for Propagation of Gospel Mission and at Amritsar under the Christian Vernacular Education Society continued to make satisfactory progress (Holroyd, 1869, p. 42).

By 1873-74, there were five aided women's Normal schools. Out of these, four were located within the Lahore Circle and one in Delhi, all for the year 1873-74 (Holroyd, 1874, pp. 91-93). Additionally, there were six Aided Normal schools, one for men and five for women, including the European training school in Delhi (maintained by the Society for Propagation of Gospel Mission). The Aided Normal school for the native women in Delhi was also managed by the Society for Propagation of Gospel Mission (Holroyd, 1880, pp 71-72). The European Training School in Delhi was established later, in 1875-76 (Mehta, p. 77).

The Provincial Report indicates that up until 1882, the three existing Normal schools prepared teachers for women's schools; the ones at Lahore and Amritsar were being looked after by groups of local men, and third one at Delhi was being supervised by the Society for Propagation of Gospel Mission. The Report admitted the fact that none of the Normal schools answered the purpose for which they were proposed. It lamented that at Delhi Normal School, the women students for training were either too old or too young, and in both the cases, they hardly had any plans of seriously taking up the work of teaching after the completion of the course. Hence, the mission recommended converting the Delhi Normal school into a Normal school specifically for Christian females. The schools at Lahore and Amritsar were faced with

similar serious situation of finding trained female to take up employment of Lady Superintendents, and it was discovered that they stayed on for years as pensioners or if appointed as teachers excused themselves due to some cause. Had the Normal schools fulfilled their job of supplying trained teachers there would have been a sound availability of women trained teachers. However, they were merely regular schools of a better quality with regards to the development and accomplishments of the students (Punjab Provincial Committee, p. 62).

By the year 1883-84, the number of women aided Normal schools had reached six for Indians and one for Europeans, enrolling 187 and 4 pupils respectively (Mehta, p.77). Alfred Croft's report in 1886 states that the four training schools for mistresses in Punjab were all under private management and yet received aid (Croft, Review of Education, 1888, pp. 79-80). By the year 1887-88, there were two Normal schools: one in Delhi under the Society for Propagation of Gospel Mission and another in Amritsar managed by a committee of native gentlemen. Additionally, there was an institution in Delhi specifically aimed at training European girls for zenanas work (Report on Administration, 1889, p. 159).

By 1902, the pressing issue was the need for more efficient teachers in girls' schools, and the arrangements for the training of women teachers were, in the opinion of the government of India, inadequate in most provinces and required improvement without delay.

Surprisingly, 1905 witnessed a remarkable development with the establishment of the First Government Normal School for women in Lahore on January 4th, finally ending the long wait for a government initiative. The teaching work was carried on in three vernaculars-Urdu, Gurumukhi and Hindi, with the full staff being sanctioned for both the Normal school and its practice school. This was essential as the task of teaching full grown women who had been for some time out of the school was quite challenging (Orange, 1909, pp. 241-245).

In 1912-13, the Lahore Normal school was rapidly growing in terms of enrollment and had reached full capacity. Additional training classes at Amritsar, Sialkot, and Gujranwala produced a significant number of teachers. Anglo-Vernacular teachers were trained at the Kinnaird High School in Lahore (Report on Education in Punjab, 1913, p. 11).

Interestingly, by 1916-17, women teachers for girls' secondary schools were primarily trained in the Kinnaird High School for Girls, though a few also attended the men's classes at the Central Training College in Lahore. Teachers for primary girls' schools were trained at the Normal school for women in Lahore. For European Schools, women teachers were trained at St. Bede's College in Shimla, while men were trained at the government Training Class in Sanawar. The only government institution for training teachers for vernacular girls' schools was the Lahore Normal School for women. The Victoria Girls' School in Lahore was used as a practice school for the Normal school. Training classes were also maintained by the Amritsar Church Missionary Society, the American Presbyterian Mission and the Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalaya in Firozpur. Despite the establishment of many training classes by municipal and the district boards, there was a need for more government Normal schools for women outside Lahore as well (Progress of Education in Punjab, 1917, pp. 44-45). During 1921-22, the progress of the training was more noticeable among

Indian girls than it was among men. There were seven government Normal schools and three maintained by missions (Quinquennium Report, 1921-22, p. 107).

By 1927, women's teacher training appears to have made a gradual advance in India. Madras was the only province that produced a fair number of trained women teachers across all grades. Bengal, the United Provinces and Bihar produced only a small fraction of the trained teachers required for their schools and population (Review of Education, 1929, pp. 176-77). Punjab, however, made a commendable progress, with teacher enrollment increasing from 224 in 1917 to 445 in 1927, and then to 853 in 1932. The number of women scholars in women's college had grown significantly. The enrollment at the Lahore College for Women rose from 60 to 135, and that of Kinnaird College, Lahore, a mission institution, from 26 to 105. Both colleges had to turn away large numbers of applicants due to lack of space (Anderson, 1932, pp. 181-90). The Lady Maclagan Training College for Women and the Kinnaird Training Center, Lahore, provided trained graduates and under-graduates for Anglo-vernacular schools (Progress of Education in Punjab, 1937, pp. 5-6). In 1939, a government Normal school capable of accepting 50 Junior Vernacular students opened at Sharaqpur, training girls from rural areas from all districts of the province (Quinquennium report, 1941-42, p. 41). Furthermore, in 1944-45, a Normal school for Junior Vernacular women teachers was started at Chunian (District Lahore) (Progress of Education in Punjab, 1946, p. 14).

In the absence of a specific report on the progress of education in Punjab for the years 1946-1947, we have to depend on the report of progress of education in India. According to the report on Education in India for 1947-48, the number of female students receiving instruction at normal and training schools in East Punjab was 264 in 1946-47 and decreased to 229 in 1947-48. Additionally, the number of students enrolled in the teachers' training colleges and classes in East Punjab was 51 in 1946-47-, and increased to109 in 1947-48 (Education in India, 1951, pp. 96-97).

Postscript

As our discussion draws to a close, we recognize that the native women teachers were the answer to advancing women's education. The efforts of widows and wives of school masters are particularly noteworthy. Despite this progress, several issues, including the pay disparity, remained a cause of concern. It was believed that unsatisfactory conditions in schools would persist as long as the teachers were paid wages comparable to those of a coolie (Punjab Provincial Committee, p.17). Over time, the salaries of vernacular women teachers gradually equalized to those of men of the same qualifications as more mistresses became available. In 1927, the starting salary of a senior vernacular woman teacher was Rs.35. Another major issue was the facilities required and their availability for the women teachers, including protection, accommodation and security, which posed significant challenges. Girls graduating from the Normal schools were glad to go to any part of the province, if there was no work nearer home, provided they could live in the school hostel. In schools maintained by local bodies, a room in the schoolhouse was often provided. In some Aided schools, such as mission schools, teachers were allotted free quarters and security, but many Aided schools lacked such provisions. Until these conditions of service improved, it was difficult to raise the requisite number of trained mistresses. Only a few could find

work in their hometowns, and the rest were unable to accept posts for lack of protection and facilities (Education in Punjab, 1933, p. 95).

To sum up, after conquest in 1849, British discovered that the concept of education was not new to the people of Punjab. A system of indigenous schools existed, and surprisingly, unlike other parts of India, in most districts in Punjab, agricultural and non-agricultural classes manifested a wish for education. Also, it was remarkable that natives were not opposed to women's education, which was prevalent across various communities including Hindus, Muhammadans and Sikhs. However, the annexation and the change in the medium of instruction dealt a serious blow to education, particularly women's education. Furthermore, Professor Chanana (1997) argues that the kind of secular education imparted in government schools was not significant for girls, leading parents to be unwilling to send their daughters to these schools (p. 144). Miss M. Rose Greenfield had befittingly described that neither Urdu nor Hindi, the languages taught in the Government Female Schools, were the dialects of the people. Hence, the schools established were not popular as people felt that learning Urdu was unnecessary if their daughters were not going to do a job, and even boys would merely get a government or railway employment (Leitner, p.109). Miss Greenfield had come to Ludhiana, Punjab, in 1875 as an agent of the Society for Promoting Female Education in the East and had since worked to educate women in the city (Punjab Provincial Committee, p.226).

This overview of the geographical layout provides context to understand how the developments in education in the nineteenth century in both the metropole and other provinces of colonial India influenced developments in Punjab. In British administration, a province was the extension of metropole, with little difference between the qualities of government primary schools (the indigenous schools adopted by the government) between the two. Therefore, understanding British administration's commitment to education, including women's education, requires examining the measures being taken elsewhere. Although government's efforts in Punjab province for women's education remained suspended for quite some time, in the princely states, teacher training and education of women was receiving a more balanced attention. For instance, missionaries attached an interesting assistive step to girls' schools to bring girl pupil to schools in the guise of *Callers*. Attached to every girl's school, there was generally a woman who 'called' the pupils in the morning, supplied the girls with water during school hours, and took them to their homes when the work of the day was over. The girls' school at Patiala had two callers, each of whom received Rs.4 a month. Parents felt more confident in sending their children to school when they knew that they will be under the care of an elderly woman while coming and going. It was recommended that callers be attached to every school (Knowlton, 1904, p. 52). Gordon (1886) noted that it was considered improper for a girl child over eight to go out by herself, this impeded girls' education and the progress of girls' schools; hence, missionaries hired poor widows, known as *Callers*, to overcome this situation (p.473). In Bengal's Dacca district, the absence of women teachers was preventing the spread of education among women. Although, there was profitability in training of respectable women teachers as women mistresses for girls' schools, and private teachers in the zenanas of native gentlemen, yet there skepticism about the possibility of convincing native girls to embrace this kind of life. As to the possibility, of finding women for entering a Normal school, it was proclaimed that *bairaginees* had expressed willingness to enter such schools. *Bairaginees* were engaged in the education of ladies and

children in Dacca. The residents employed *bairaginees* for the purpose of educating their wives and had no objection to the educated *bairaginees* entering the zenanas (Proceedings of Government of India, 1863, pp. 108-110).[59]

Apart from the language barrier, the scarcity of women teachers was the greatest barrier to girls' education. While the training institutions for male teachers were established in 1856, institutions for women teachers came up quite late in 1905. Unmarried women were unwilling to join these institutions; as a result, one solution for overcoming these challenges in women's education involved employing schoolmasters' wives and widows as teachers in the women's schools. A number of reports mentioned that people were against their girls studying in Normal school or becoming teachers. Consequently, the students in the early Normal schools set up by the missionaries were mostly from lower castes and were not considered by respectable families as suitable teachers for their children.

In conclusion, Hayden Bellenoit's work notes a statement by William Lee-Warner the influential historical systematizer of the Indian princely states,

> if education truly cemented Indians to the Raj, then the British would have lavished unlimited amounts of money on schools and colleges across India (and the Empire). This was something which the British never came close to achieving, as education never constituted more than 4% of the Raj's annual budget (Bellenoit, 2007, p. 41).

While colonial administration took measures for advancing education, including teacher's training, yet the actual outcome was not highly satisfactory. Additionally, the contemporary state of women's education in princely states needs to be considered when assessing the colonial state's intention towards the promotion of women's education. The employment of *bairaginees* in Dacca and *callers* in the princely states proves that the authorities were eager to experiment with new ideas in teacher education. However, the same enthusiasm is not evident in Punjab. Despite ample opportunity for innovative approaches in Punjab, the inability of the government to implement these experiments ultimately reflects their real intent.

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[59] From R.L. Martin, Inspector of Schools, South-East Division, to the Director of Public Instruction, No.201, dated, 28th May 1862. The discussion exchanged was regarding the possibility of encouraging local girls to enter a normal school for women and embrace the life of a teacher. *Bairaginees* formed an isolated portion of native society, and at their initiation, they took a vow renouncing the world and its pleasures.

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2024, Vol. 9, No. 1
ISSN: 2771-3520

a Kaur's story – the Beginning

Arvinder Goomer

Abstract

A personal essay that highlights the journey of a Sikh immigrant woman who grew up with a nation riddled with contradictions. Arriving in her twenties to a 'free' world, where in her struggle to survive, she lost herself. The essay highlights how she found her voice and is now dedicated to strengthening it - not just for herself but in helping the women around her. By recording their stories and experiences, she ensures that history records the ordinary lives that make up the universe.

Keywords: *personal journey, faith, patriarchy, a Kaur's story.*

Dear Reader,

Fateh, I am Arvinder Goomer. I came to the US in 1995, to be with my newly wedded partner in life. In the years that followed, I gave birth twice, ran multiple businesses, worked various jobs, took care of family, volunteered, and strengthened my faith in *Waheguru*. What I kept postponing was my desire to author a book. I kept that goal on a slow burn, occasionally taking it out making copious notes, and then shoving those notes back in a drawer. My life partner kept pushing me to take the leap and pick up a pen.

In 2022 as we celebrated our son's marriage, I found myself in the role of a mother-in-Law. I struggled with breaking free from stereotypes and realized how deep patriarchy ran in me. To my horror, mentally, I found myself slipping into a traditional mother-in-law archetype, expecting to be wooed and revered at my son's wedding. Fortunately, I slapped myself out of any grandiose notions before articulating them in time. I started shoving advice and ideas for the wedding at my daughter-in-law, not giving her any space to voice her desires. I was understanding and patient if my ideas were accepted. I wanted her to love me and see me as a mother, but on my terms.

The moment of realization meant a reckoning for which I was ill prepared. I often caught myself saying things I did not mean and unintentionally hurting my kids. There was a debate in my head all the time, between who I wanted to be and who I was. I started talking to friends and family in similar situations, realizing where some of our issues were stemming from.

I realized that the women around me were dealing with a system that was rigged against them, which sparked the idea of a book in my mind.

The essay you are about to read is a chronicle of my journey, an exploration of who I am, and how I arrived at a pivotal moment in 2022 when I started drafting my book. It is a deeply personal essay. While history meticulously records our extraordinary accomplishments and failures in detail, it often overlooks how the

ordinary moments shape our existence, shape our world vision, and make us who we are. It is the ordinary that people need to know, for true merit is in showing up every day for the mundane. As I share my reflections and evolution of thoughts, I invite you to understand the influences that shaped me as of today. Please keep that thought central as you read the essay and follow my journey.

Thank you.

The Essay

I am a child of the seventies, growing up with a nation that was, and still is, struggling with secularism, nationalism and diversity. India had won its independence in 1947, at a great cost. The colonizers departed drawing a line through the Northern part of the country, dividing it forever into two countries forever at odds since their inception.

By the time I graduated from high school, India had fought two wars with Pakistan, three border disputes with China, and was torn apart by riots that broke out with alarming frequency across the nation.

I witnessed the Indian Army storm Harmandir Sahib and Akal Takht Sahib in Amritsar, the highest seat of authority for Sikhs. In the aftermath I saw the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her bodyguards and felt the terror of a mob fueled by politics of religious grandiosity target Sikhs in the aftermath. All this by the time I had turned thirteen.

Entering college, under the carefree joy of freedom only a freshman can feel, I carried with me a deep-seated anger and disillusionment.

While the political leaders of our times had failed us repeatedly, their treason was almost expected. For a generation that grew from the ashes of a colonized India, freedom was not a gift. We did not honor it or respect it, for us it was a right. The moral code of honesty and national pride had become a commodity, but my anger was not with the polity or the general populace, it was with my community. It was with Sikhi.

In school, our history lessons glorified the freedom fighters, their love for their country and the willingness to die for the cause. It was important for the government to ensure the general populace recognized the sacrifices made by past generations to attain independence, highlighting how colonization had scarred people who for years had been treated as second-class citizens.

Our country where Lord Ram was a household name, warriors like Pandavas renowned for their prowess and loyalty, had been under siege for too long. Following the decline of the Mughal empire, dismantled by multiple wars with Marathas, the colonizers stepped into a world ripe for taking. The general population had been living under tyranny for ages, only now the oppressors looked different. When generations grow up under servility and indignities, it takes a concerted monumental effort of rebellion to reclaim freedom. For years, Indians had been fighting for freedom; leaders like Gandhi, Bhagat Singh,

Jawahar Lal Nehru, Mohammad Jinnah and many others, had dedicated their lives to a free India. Our history lessons taught us the struggles of these leaders, and only with maturity did we come to recognize their human flaws. And freedom had come at a high price: a country had been left traumatized by partition and millions displaced.

ਨਿਰਭਉ ਰੱਬ ਸੀ	**My God is Fearless**
ਭਉ ਮੇਰਾ ਸੀ	All the fears are mine,
ਨਿਰਵੈਰ ਉਹ ਸੀ	My God is without malice,
ਵੈਰੀ ਉਹਂਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਸੀ	Their creation carries the malice within,
ਰੱਬ, ਨਾਂ ਤੇਰਾ ਸੀ, ਲੜਾਈ ਉਸ ਨਾਂ ਤੇ, ਉਹ ਮੇਰੀ ਸੀ	God, the name is yours, the fights in your name are ours,
ਪਿਆਰ ਤੇਰਾ ਸੀ, ਨਫ਼ਰਤ ਮੇਰੀ ਸੀ	You are love, God but the hatred is mine,
ਇਕ, ਤੂੰ ਸੀ, ਤੇਰੇ ਨਾਂ ਤੇ ਮਜ਼ਹਬ ਮੇਰੇ ਸੀ	You are One God, but in your name all the multiple religions are mine
ਸੱਚ ਤੂੰ ਸੀ, ਝੂਠ ਮੇਰੇ ਸੀ	You are the Truth, all the lies are mine
ਮੈਂ ਕਿਆ, ਅਕਾਲ ਤੂੰ, ਸਰਬ ਵਿਆਪੀ ਵੀ ਤੂੰ ਸੀ	I call you Timeless, omnipresent,
ਕਰਤਾਰ ਤੇ ਦਇਆਲ ਤੂੰ ਹੀ ਸੀ	I call you the Creator and the Compassionate
ਪਰ ਕਿਸ ਮਜ਼ਹਬ ਦੀ ਤੂੰ ਮਲਕੀਅਤ ਸੀ	But who do You belong to, that audacious thought
ਏਸ ਫੈਸਲੇ ਦੀ ਹੁੱਜਤ ਮੇਰੀ ਸੀ	and the audacious decision is mine.

Into this world of conflicts, and a search for identity, I was born, the youngest child in my family. Amidst the rising popularity of the family planning slogan of "*hum do, hamaray do*" (us two, and our two kids), I was ripe for teasing by my siblings for being the third child. I grew up with normal sibling tomfoolery, and love from parents who were deeply rooted in Sikhi. There were pictures of the Gurus around the house, but my mother brought them to life with *sakhis* (stories of our Gurus lives) and her faith. I would listen to her tell us about Guru Nanak's *Udaasis*, his travels by foot, while attempting to reconcile the image of the warrior I learnt about with the serene portrait I saw of him everywhere. To me, Guru Nanak did not look like a stereotypical prophet, one who preached while sitting on a pedestal. My Guru Nanak was a traveler, an engager, and a warrior of words.

This was my introduction to the power of words, and words became one of my closest friends. My mother was pleased with my interest in reading. I discovered shops that lent books, just like a library. I would sit in basements and storage rooms of my family and friends, finding old magazines, newspapers and books to read. If you could not find me in the house, everyone knew that I would be hiding in a corner, reading.

My biggest dream was to write a book, a dream I hugged close and often dreamt about. This dream inspired me to study English Literature in college. I loved spending time with books and not with people. My mother had brought home books about our Gurus, hoping that between her storytelling and the reading, her kids would find a connection to Sikhi. However, reading these books helped me realize the dichotomy that the women in my life navigated. They were devout Sikhs, immersed in *Gurbani*, teaching

their families about the radical notions of equality and equity that our gurus had preached about. In their real lives though, their roles and positions did not reflect those Sikh "values."

In all my conversations about Sikhi with my elders, one theme was always highlighted: Guru Nanak's advocacy for the equality of women. It was a truth universally acknowledged, something that set Sikhs apart from any other religious group- a revolutionary concept affirming women were equal to men. The men would swell up in pride, and the women, although trying to be modest, could not help but beam when they mentioned how our Gurus had brought the change. In, *Gurudwaras* (Sikh places of worship), the priests through their recitation of *bani* (written words of the Gurus) and its meaning, often compared how Sikhi, unlike other religions, considered women equal to men. Yet, I felt there was a hypocritical grandiosity in their statements as I looked around and never even saw a female *sewadaar* (volunteer) in any of the gurudwaras.

This duality troubled me deeply. In the world I inhabited, there was a stark contrast between practical reality and theoretical ideals. I grew up in a home where traditional roles of the provider and the nurturer were followed. My older brother, being not only the first born, was also the only son. He enjoyed privileges that were not granted to me and my sister. I remember driving my mother crazy, constantly challenging this duality. I wanted the same freedoms he had: the freedom to stay out late, to drink if I wanted to, to go out alone if I wanted to- all I wanted was for her to see me as his equal, in terms of privilege.

My mom's response never varied: she trusted me, but not the world. The suggestion that she treated us unequally was, to her, profoundly unjust. Thus, throughout my college years, I seized every opportunity to challenge the social norms. I argued for the right to travel with my friends, to be out late, not to marry until I had a job, pursue my master's degree, and even to simply stand outside at night and talk to a friend. This involved a considerable amount of emotional blackmail on both sides, mine and my parents. Every decision in my adult life seemed centered around the invisible gendered wall of rules that I had to obey.

By the time I started college, we had already endured Operation Blue Star, witnessed Indira Gandhi's assassination and hidden in our homes, had front row seats to the genocide of November 1984. If India's path to secularism was in jeopardy, I was navigating my own angst-ridden journey. I had been visiting gurudwaras all my life for birthdays and significant events. *Gurpurabs* (religious days commemorating a Guru) required a visit to the prominent gurudwaras, Nanak Piao or Bangla Sahib. Yet I had never felt a spiritual connection. The recitation of *paath* (specific Sikh prayers) was a chore enforced by my parents- an exercise of repetition, not of love.

This disconnect put me on a path to reject my *virsa* (legacy or heritage) and by my freshman year in college, I had donned the mantle of an atheist. I could not and would not pay lip service to a religion whose practice was hypocrisy.

I observed a persistent uneven distribution of labor within Sikh families around me, where women were required to be quiet, submissive, caught in culturally stereotypical roles of mothers - a stereotype upheld by women themselves. In media and in literature, the narrative persisted, women were expected to serve,

lose their identities after marriage, making Gurbani's message seem shallow by comparison. Young women were encouraged to study and be ambitious but only as long as it did not interfere with the holy grail of marriage.

As a vocal feminist, my perspective at that time was critical of the women around me. I had no understanding of their struggles and their compromises; I only saw surrender. I blamed Sikhi for this inequity, and in my mind my faith had failed me, Waheguru had failed me. I grew up believing that Waheguru punishes those that do wrong and rewards honest truthful living, but I saw no proof of that in real life. I asked for punishment for those who had massacred the innocent Sikhs in 1984 genocide. The men who had burnt down my school, the men who had beaten up families, the men who had raped grandmothers and babies: where was the justice for these victims?

In November 1984, after days of living in fear, I finally stepped out to go to school, and saw a ravaged neighborhood- houses burnt, blackened by ash, people averting their eyes as they walked past those houses. The shops were looted and destroyed, a testament to man's capacity for senseless violence. My school, freshly painted, had sections of it cordoned off until repairs were completed, and my teachers were hiding their tears, trying to be strong for the frightened children in front of them. The media circus that followed, the apathy of the government to those who had lost everything, and the audacious braggarts that talked of avenging Indira Gandhi's assassination by killing thousands of Sikhs, just cemented my belief that Waheguru did not exist. Religion, I concluded, was only a ploy by men to keep a society subservient to its ideologies and not think for itself.

It was easy to reject an ideology that no one practiced and blame the philosophy for its' failures. I was too caught up in the unfairness of it all to look past the hurt and realize that it is "us," the practitioners who corrupt them, not the other way around. My college years were spent arguing with my parents about God and my lack of trust in Sikhi. I openly flaunted my atheism to anyone willing to listen, embracing the role of a rebel within my family, as if it were a religion of its own. I could discuss for hours the demerits of organized religion.

Then came 1994, bringing with it not only marriage but also a move to the United States. By a twist of fate, I ended up married to a man of deep faith, and with him started a life of fresh spiritual challenges. In a new country, it was easy to follow my partner's routines until I developed my own. His weekly visit to the local gurudwara was my introduction to our community. A promise of *langar* meant no cooking for at least a day. Gradually I formed friendships and our *granthis* (priests) at the gurudwara became like surrogate brothers to me. I would listen to their *kirtan* (hymns), enthralled, because I had a personal connection to them. The gurudwara began to feel like the only place where I felt comfortable. I was having a challenging time adjusting to America. I was learning a new way of life, dependent on my husband for transportation, unfamiliar with how banking worked, faced with an overwhelming variety of foods, struggling to understand the accents, and constantly feeling out of place. The gurudwara became a second home and a place where I felt seen and heard.

Within months of arriving in the U.S. I was pregnant, feeling scared and more alone than ever. My pregnancy also brought forth intense rounds of introspection and spiritual assessment. I made the decision that since I had my roots in Sikhi, my children would too. It was the only thing from home that I could give them. India still felt like home to me, and so, like my parents, I would give my children a strong foundation in Sikhi. What they did with their faith would be their choice. It was an instinctive decision, and it would be years before I would understand the truth behind it.

As I began introducing them to Sikhi, I myself was reintroduced to its beauty. In the struggle to teach my kids *Gurmukhi*, I fell in love with Gurbani. I felt a connection with bani that I had never felt before. The peace I found reciting paath was new to me and I welcomed it with open arms. My heart, which once felt isolated and lonely, was filled with peace when I listened to kirtan. As I eagerly looked up the meanings of *shabads* (Sikh prayers) I listened to, my heart began to heal.

My roots in Sikhi were deeper than I realized. Yet what I had not considered was the extent of my own mental conditioning. During my single years, I was questioning religion and the patriarchy around me, however, the "married me" adopted the traditional role of the nurturer slowly and unconsciously. My husband and I looked to our parents as role models and as the demands of our lives weighed on us, we slid down the slippery slope of a system that I had been fighting all my life.

ਲੜ ਲਗੀ ਮੈ ਤੇਰੇ, ਪੱਲਾ ਮੇਰਾ ਤੇਰੇ ਹੱਥ ਫੜਾਇਆ,	I am bound to you, by a piece of cloth handed to me,
ਪਿਓ ਨੇ ਹੰਜੂ ਰੋਕੇ, ਮਾਂ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਹੋਕਾ ਸੀ ਭਰਿਆ,	a father struggling with his tears, a mom barely controlling her sobs,
ਭਰਾ ਨੇ ਚੁਪ ਕਰਕੇ ਮੋਡਾ ਸੀ ਘੁਟਿਆ,	a brother silently squeezing my shoulder, offering me his support,
ਨਾਲ ਹਾਂ ਤੇਰੇ ਇਹ ਸਮਝਾਇਆ	helping me remember he is always with me,
ਓਹਨੇ ਵੀ ਤਾਂ ਕਦੀ ਪਲਾਂ ਫ਼ੜਿਆ ਸੀ	He had held a piece of cloth like that too one time, when he got married,
ਅਥਰੂ ਮੇਰੇ ਦੇਖ ਕੇ ਭੈਣ ਨੇ ਛੇਤੀ ਇਕ ਰੁਮਾਲ ਸੀ ਦਿਤਾਂ	A sister offering me a tissue to wipe my tears,
ਦਿਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਮੇਰੇ ਸਵਾਲ ਸੀ ਓਠਿਆ, ਕੀ ਇਹ ਹੀ ਸੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਮਰਜ਼ੀ?	A question in my mind, is this what my Guru had envisioned or hoped for women?
ਇਕ ਪੱਲੇ ਨੇ ਹੀ ਕਰ ਤੀ ਧੀ ਪਰਾਈ,	a piece of cloth would make that bride a stranger in her home,
ਮੈ ਤਾ ਓਹਦੀਂ ਸਮਰੂਪ ਸੀ	I thought I was like my husband, equal to him,
ਜੋੜ ਸਾਡਾ ਪਾਕ ਸੀ, ਇਕ ਦੂਜੇ ਦਾ ਸਾਥ ਦਿਹਾਂਗੇ,	our union blessed and pure, with mutual support,
ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਲੜ ਲਗ, ਇਕ ਦੂਜੇ ਦਾ ਮਾਣ ਕਰਾਂਗੇ,	bound to our Guru, we will respect each other,
ਪਰ ਮੈਂਨੂੰ ਤੇਰੇ ਪੱਲੇ ਲਾਇਆ,	but they offer me to you like a burden being lessened,
ਮੈਂਨੂੰ ਤੇਰੇ ਮੋਡੇ ਪਾਇਆ	and a responsibility that you must bear,
ਚਲ ਇਹ ਤੋੜੀਏ ਇਹ ਰੀਤੀਵਾਦ,	Let us break these cultural norms and traditions,

ਬਣੀਏ ਇਕ ਕੱਠੀ ਅਵਾਜ਼,	and in a United voice,
ਮੈਂ ਤੇਰੀ ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰੀ ਹਿੰਮਤ,	Let us become each other's strength,
ਇਕ ਦੂਜੇ ਦੇ ਪੱਲੇ ਲਗ ਕੇ, ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਸਬਦ ਨੂੰ ਉੱਚਾ ਕਰੀਏ	Bound to each other with that piece of cloth, let us honor our Guru's vision and Their words.

(The ਪੱਲਾ or the long scarf, referred to here as a piece of cloth, is traditionally draped around the couple's shoulders, with the father usually handing each end of the scarf to the couple right before the beginning of the wedding ceremony)

I stopped reflecting on my actions, focusing instead on what I was supposed to be doing. I had children to take care of, a house to clean, laundry, groceries, homework, a job, cooking, doctors' appointments, and countless small tasks demanding my attention, in rare moments of self-awareness, I would turn my gaze inward and wonder where I lost the warrior within me. I wanted that fearless woman back, the one who questioned the status quo, and believed in her own power.

I had lost her, to a world that had demanded her submission.

As my children grew, my voice became stronger. The Bani I read every day challenged me to stand up against hypocrisy and inequalities around me. Each shabad reminded me of my guru's vision turning that incessant scream in my head into a ringing noise awakening my conscience. It demanded that I wake up to see the other women like me, who were writing the same stories, mired in centuries old roles, bearing the weight of patriarchy on their shoulders, oblivious that they had the choice to no longer accept the burden.

Women have been the torchbearers for patriarchy, acting as its' guardians and lulled into false sense of superiority as long they continue to dominate each other. Women are taught early on about their designated roles in life, taught to view their stay as a temporary dweller in their parent's home until marriage and motherhood as the ultimate life goal for them. They learn that their place and survival in society depends on asserting their influence over other women, even as the ultimate power remains with the men in their lives.

The prevailing belief is that women must nurture, as being mothers is what their bodies are designed to be. They are paid less, fought hard for the right to vote or to open an account, or to have a credit card in their own name. Media constantly depicts the ideal woman slim, subdued, and always perfectly put together. The image of a superwoman who effortlessly juggles motherhood and a career with grace and patience, never relying on her partner for support, and silently shouldering the load of her family's emotional and logistical burdens- that is a woman worth celebrating.

These are the struggles faced by a woman in the 2000s, but the expectations placed on them and unfairness of it all hit me harder. For as a Sikh woman, I hold the Sikh men to a higher standard, expecting them to embody all the values of Sikhi.

However, societal double standards prevail:

A man's assertiveness is a woman's aggression; prized in a man and abhorred in a woman.
A man's thirst for power is ambition, in a woman, it is greed.
A man's obsession with work is expected, in a woman it is unseemly.
A man's work is necessary, and a woman's work is dismissed as a hobby.

Throughout my lifetime, I have come to realize that while we practice some core values of Sikhi, we often overlook the important ones. While we espouse how our Gurus valued equality, we do little to practice it. As my son married welcoming a beautiful daughter-in-law into our family, I could not stay silent about the inequities I observed. I had long seen my sisters struggle with their identities, and learned behavior, striving to find a seat at the table, fighting to have their voices heard and silently bearing a mental load that should have been shared. I had also realized that my own mental conditioning needed to be confronted.

Motivated by my love for words and a firm belief in their transformative power, I resolved to share these inequalities, through my writing. I felt compelled to pursue my childhood dream: to write a book. It became essential for me to write a book, one that would encapsulate the lived experiences of the Sikh immigrant women around me.

Our stories needed to be told, we needed to remind ourselves and honor our gurus, by recognizing our worth. It was crucial to acknowledge the struggles we shared, to remind each other about our faith and of its' expectations of us. These realizations had to be articulated. I was driven to take tangible steps, and what holds more power than words?

Authoring a book has always been my dream. Motivated to share the stories of women around me, the arrival of a daughter in our family had served as a final push. So, I devised a plan to collect stories, true stories of real women around me. Immigrant Sikh women like me, who had created a life here in the US but at what cost?

I developed an online survey and sent it to all the women I knew, asking them to pass it to the Sikh women in their circles. The women who responded to the survey were invited to recount their stories. They shared, I listened, and I wrote. They asked for anonymity, and I embraced their stories as mine. Recognizing that it was *haumai* (ego) in me that made me believe I could be their voice, I approached the stories with increased humility, determined not to fail my sisters.

The culmination of this journey into their lives is my book, "a Kaur's Story." It is a labor of love and heartache, of triumph and resilience, of joy and surrender, of identity and our search for it. Each story has been written in first person, allowing the women who shared their experiences and had invited me into the deepest parts of their lives. The stories they shared were intimate, often painful. Among my sisters, some had compromised, others had fought for respect, and few chose to let things be. In my conversations with them, I learnt about courage, and I learned to listen without judgment.

The process proved to be mentally exhausting, so I found comfort in Gurbani, and asked Waheguru ji for strength. The stories I heard were ones of resilience, faith, and constant struggle. Some women had compromised so much that they could not recognize themselves, while others had initiated change. Each story, inspirational and challenging.

But that is life, isn't it? Change is the constant and the only steadfast reality of our existence. Whether we accept it gracefully or resist it, change is inevitable. It is coming with our daughters and sons, with our children who refuse to back down, the warriors who challenge our stereotypes, forcing us to look inward and acknowledge our biases. Change is coming with our kids who are breaking barriers, those of gender, stereotypes, occupations, and ageism, to name a few. They are inviting us on their journey, willing to hold our hands and live the life of Sikhi.

The stories we share are important, because just as history needs a record of the significant events, it also needs to document the struggles and triumphs of the people living through them. History isn't just about the battles fought or the inventions made, but it is a record of the efforts of its people, their lives and emotions, and what fuels their passions. It is in understanding the mundane, that seeds of change can sprout and bear fruit.

My sincere hope is that my book inspires the readers to have conversations within their homes and in the communities around them. I hope it encourages all Sikhs to engage in conversations and be the torchbearers of change. I hope that we can get past the barriers of gender and caste, to truly accept each other as equals and celebrate our gurus' legacy.

Author Note

Arvinder Goomer, a Sikh immigrant, is a budding writer, with a focus on women's rights. She is passionate about being a voice for women especially within her community. With a strong belief in equality and empowerment, she uses her writing to shed light on the lived experiences of women around her. Through her work, she strives to inspire others to take action and make a positive impact in the world.

2024, Vol. 9, No. 1
ISSN: 2771-3520

Book review: Music in Colonial Punjab by Radha Kapuria

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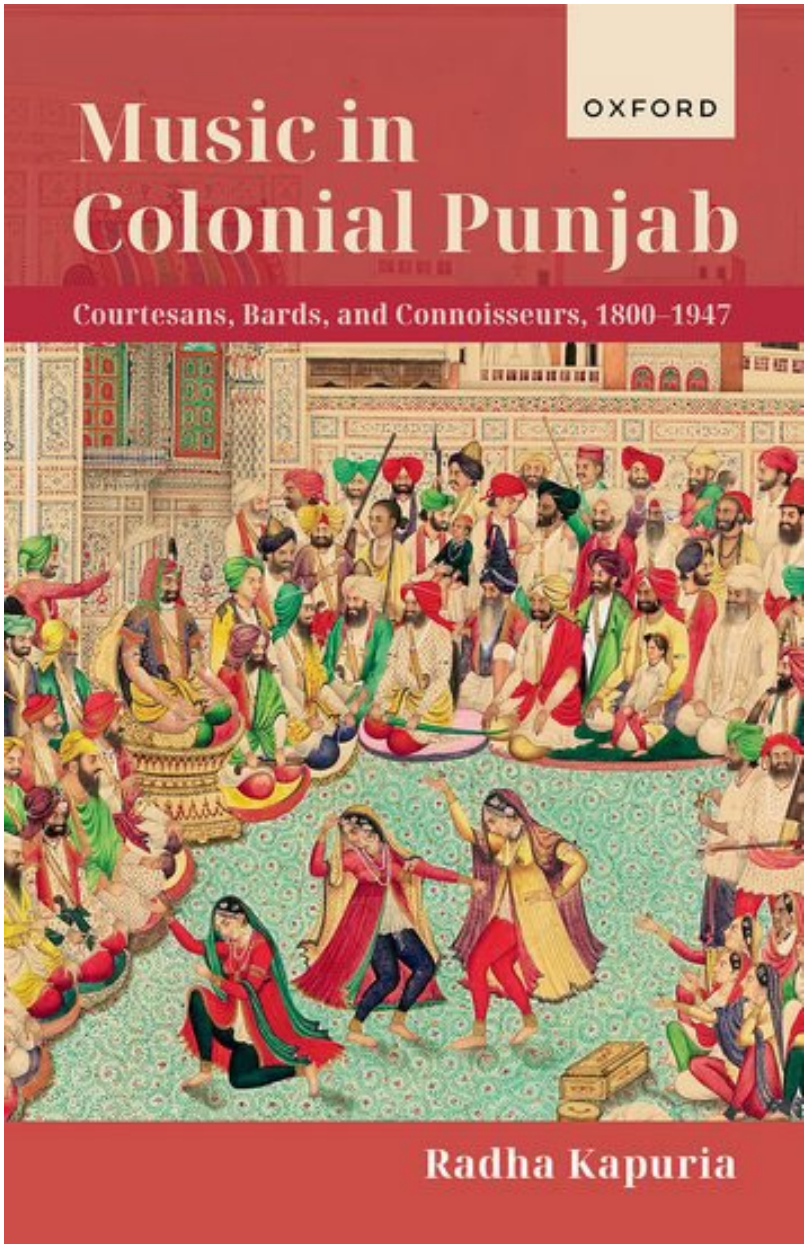

Music in Colonial Punjab: Courtesans, Bards, and Connoisseurs, 1800-1947
Author: Dr Radha Kapuria
Publisher: Oxford University Press, 2023, 410 Pages
ISBN: 9780192867346

Music in Colonial Punjab by Radha Kapuria is an empirical study of the development of various genres of music through practitioners and patrons in colonial Punjab from 1800 to 1947. The author focuses on a range of topics from the *mirasi*s (bards) and courtesans to nautch girls of Punjab who were perceived through a range of emotions, from appreciation to disdain, among different people. Integrated into the book's narrative is evidence of music/song by Christian missionaries, along with emerging reform movements within the Hindu and Sikh communities in Punjab. Kapuria's engagement with the topic is enhanced with her use of approximately 50 rare images and visual ephemera that vividly illustrate these various dimensions of music in colonial Punjab. Altogether, Kapuria has gathered numerous stories, commentaries and anecdotes about the music and musicians in that period from a wide range of sources to compile a unique social history of music of the region. By so doing, Kapuria forces a conversation about the music of colonial Punjab that challenges today's stereotyped boisterous images of Punjabi music which overlooks the rich history of music in Punjab, a "tradition" that goes all the way back to the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Interestingly, Kapuria documents that Maharaja Ranjit Singh was a great connoisseur of music and dance who not only enjoyed the daily performances by the *raagi*s, *rababi*s or the *tawaif*s (courtesans) in his court, but also supported and endowed these artists. The Maharaja in fact gave the courtesans huge land grants and even married a couple of Muslim tawaifs, i.e. Bibi Moran and Gulbahar Begum. During this period, the courtesans were given special status and respect in the court as well as in Punjabi society. As is well known among scholars, the higher status of the singers and nautch girls eroded under British colonial rulers who viewed the tradition as illustrative of moral decay of the colonized, a perspective that in the early twentieth century was infused into the reform movements that were a collaboration between the colonizers and elite nationalists of the time.

However, of all the themes presented in *Music of Colonial Punjab*, there is one I assert is particularly noteworthy. Kapuria points to the elitism that informs the distinction between classical and folk music. The book reveals that the practitioners did not distinguish the two and neither did they distinguish religious and secular music. Instead, they maintained a fluidity between genres, lyrics and styles without compromising the rigor of their training. Many of the musicians in fact were trained in a variety of styles, including dhrupad and kirtan. Some even performed what dominant society labels as "folk" music. Their audiences, comprising of individuals across class and caste groups as well as from rural and urban spaces, too appreciated the variety. Annual music festivals, like the Harballabh Sangeet Sammelan that is still held in Jalandhar since 1875 mentioned by Kapuria, illustrate the point. As above mentioned, it is only in the early twentieth century when reform movements, blessed by the British colonizers, that one begins to see a rigid distinction emerge between "classical" and "folk" music.

Radha Kapuria's findings actually confirms my own discoveries in developing the documentary film Khayal Darpan as well as my experiential knowledge based on a trip to Pakistan in 2005. In my observation, despite the challenges confronted by the musicians after the Partition, some of the most successful stories of survival of this music were the ones where the practitioners experimented with the form and basic structure of ragas. For instance, when Punjabi folk singer Tufail Niazi, born in a village near Jalandhar in 1916 and trained by many *ustad*s in Kapurthala and Batala, migrated to Pakistan, he developed his own

style using "classical" ragas in folk songs in a way that enthralled the audience. Niazi even mixed different ragas in the same composition, something the Indian puritans would abhor. Similarly, Pakistan's famed ghazal singer Mehdi Hassan was born in the family of *kalawant* musicians in a village in Rajasthan, not far from India-Pakistan border, and was trained in classical music, including dhrupad. After migrating to Pakistan, he too developed a refined style of *ghazal* singing using ragas, once again beautifully mixing different notes in the same song.

Although this book largely focuses on these musicians who traversed between classical and folk/popular binaries – *mirasi*s, *rababi*s and courtesans – it does not draw much from a field study or even meeting with the said musicians of today on either side of the border. So, while the reader benefits tremendously from the rich historical sources used here, one is left clueless on the current status of these subaltern performers. It is probably a subject for a future study. Even though the book pans across a wide range of topics, it rather expectedly stops at around 1947 and understandably does not cover the impact of the Partition on Punjab's musicians and their audiences, especially those who had to migrate to the other side due to their religious identity. The lack of, or a change in, the patronage to the music after 1947 is a subject that needs comprehensive research in both countries.

Nevertheless, *Music in Colonial Punjab* is a rich tapestry of musical accounts that deepens our understanding of a prominent region of South Asia - I only wished I was listening to all those melodies of Punjab while reading this book.

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