

JAPJI Sahib: A Complete Way of Life

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All renderings attempting to explain the Divine path are quite difficult to comprehend. The Japji Sahib of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, which is such a work, was rendered more than 500 years ago. Languages are not static but dynamic and Punjabi language is no exception to this. This fact has not helped in the matter but has rather made it more complex.

The book 'JAPJI Sahib: A Complete Way of Life" attempts to facilitate the understanding of Japji Sahib, the daily Morning Prayer of Sikhs – incorporated at the beginning of 'Shri Guru Granth Sahib' the scripture of Sikhs – which is to be viewed as a single continuous and compact message of Guru Nanak, depicting unity of the directive principles of Sikhism. There is a school of thought, which explains Japji Sahib as expansion of the introductory 'Mool Mantra'. In this context, Japji Sahib is also stated to be the essence of whole Guru Granth Sahib. Conversely, the whole Guru Granth Sahib is said to be the expansion of Japji Sahib. The commentary, in black print, attempts to reflect this oneness of the principles of this most modern & universal religion of the world.

Apart from the commentary, this book also contains the translation of Japji Sahib in English. All the available translations of Japji Sahib are narrative in nature and therefore, make it impossible to relate them to each word of the original rendering in Gurmukhi script. This effort has been made with the idea of setting right this imbalance. The translation, in coloured print, is given in as many words as in the original rendering. Owing to the limitation of the difference in the grammar of the two languages, some words have been added, in the translation, to clarify the complete meaning. These additional words are mentioned in brackets. The commentary and the translation have been interspersed in such a manner that they complement each other for better comprehension by the reader. For easier segregated reading, the translation, in blue print, has been aligned right. However, where there is a direct instruction to be followed by human beings, the translation, in bold print, has been coloured red and has been center-aligned.

Another aspect that may be mentioned is that Sikhism has certain concepts, which if not unique, are quite special to it. Few such important concepts are 'Guru', 'Baani/Gurbaani', 'Hukam', 'Maaya', 'Man', 'Haumain', 'Naam/Shabad', 'Sat/Sach/Waheguru' and 'Simran'. Understanding these concepts in right perspective would be a pre-requisite for anyone interested in gaining an in-depth familiarization with this religion. These concepts have also been explained in the book. Some of the difficult words / terms (with super-scribed numbering) used in the book have been clarified in detail separately.

It can be said that Japji Sahib helps a person in understanding the very purpose of human life. It also explains the specific acts to be performed in life and the manner in which they are to be performed for achieving the laid down objective of human life. There can't be a more true and simple narration of why and how of the human life than the one detailed in Japji Sahib. Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji's rendering of Japji Sahib is a service to mankind to which it is difficult to find another equal.

Guru Nanak's message of Japji Sahib transcends all religions and seeks welfare of all beings. It is a powerful tool provided to the human being for fulfillment of his destiny. However, the option remains with the individual as to whether he wants to know, understand and pursue the desired path.

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Karen Martinez:

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Diana Gum:

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