

BARAHMAHA TUKHARI

BĀRAH MĀHĀ TUKHĀRĪ. Gurū Nānak's twelve-month hymn in Rāga Tukhāri in the Gurū Granth Sāhib, stands out in Sikh literature for its poetic splendour and philosophical import. The movement of the twelve months, including the lunar and solar days, and the effect of their transition upon beings of diverse species – those born from the egg, the fetus, the sweat and the earth – have been poignantly and picturesquely portrayed in this poem. Herein, time and space – universal as well as particular – have been richly fused in the person of a young bride ardently searching for her Divine Bridegroom through the cameos of the chanting reality of the twelve months.

The twelve months thus are very important, for it is within them that the “interaction of timeless with time” takes place: the young bride remains in quest of envisioning the Timeless Beloved within her historical context. One discerns here the

foundations for the positive approach to life and living in the Sikh faith. In the final passage of the Bārah Māhā, Gurū Nānak esteems all the twelve months, the six seasons, the lunar and the solar days, the hours the minutes, the seconds as “bhale” – blessed. According to Nānak I, it is sometimes now, somewhere here, that the Singular Being pervading all time and space is instantaneously found:

*Be das mäh rutī thitī vār bhale
Gharī mūrat pal sāche āe sahaji mile.*

In Panjabi, Guru Nanak's Bārah Māhā in the raga Tukhāri is not only the oldest composition belonging to this genre but also the first in which the theme of love-poetry has been transformed into that of spiritual import. He made the human soul the protagonist which suffers in the cesspool of transmigration as a result of its separation from the Supreme soul. This is followed by Gurū Arjan's Bārah Māhā.