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**A Bakhtinian Study of Folkloric and Public Chronotope in the *Bani* of Guru Nanak and
Kabir in Sri Guru Granth Sahib**

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Abstract: The idea of this paper is to foreground and interpret the public and folkloric space and time (the sub-categories of chronotope) that point to the "productive and generative" (DI 206) chronotopicity of the Guru Granth Sahib, the religious and sacred text of the Sikhs. The paper employs Bakhtinian postulates of public and folkloric chronotopes to put forth the socio-historical and human-ecological ethos by analysing the poetic utterances of Guru Nanak and Kabir in the Guru Granth Sahib. The paper has chosen the poetic utterances of Guru Nanak and Kabir as they perfectly embody and enrich the aforesaid sub-categories of Bakhtinian chronotope with deeper sociological and ecological values.

Key words: Chronotope, folkloric, public spheres/spaces, Guru Granth Sahib, socio-historical

Introduction

In rendering the socio-historical coordinates of public space, it is imperative to manifest through their songs those folkloric characteristics which aim to reconstitute the entire socio-ecological balance. As far as the speeches of Kabir are concerned, the study has limited itself to the Adi Granth as the expressions of Kabir in the Granth can be taken as the most authentic, intact and reliable (Hess 15) expressions which precedes the compilation of Bijak and other canonic texts containing Kabir's verses (Hess 7). The paper intends to renew the interpretation of public and



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folkloric space and time in the Guru Granth Sahib as indicators of real socio-historical time (renewed Bhakti era) and as a new spatio-temporal model that strives for unified, progressive and transformative universal chronotope. Bakhtinian idea of chronotope is ideal and progressively instrumental in gauging this scale of change and movement in the socio-religious world of Guru Nanak and Kabir in the Guru Granth Sahib. Hana W Owen rightly judges this intrinsic characteristic of Bakhtinian philosophy to underscore the human relation and its working in the background of historical concreteness:

Mikhail Bakhtin whose philosophy both compliments and enhances narrative understanding and has considerable potential in generating a more inclusive and creative understanding of humanity, our relationships to others and to the world in which we are inextricably linked. (136)

Both Bakhtin and the utterances of these two poets assist in seeing and comprehending, through these sub-categories of public sphere/space and folklore, the existing social world as fragmented and a struggling heterogeneity which historians like David Lorenzen interprets as the sign of intensive “socio-historical contradiction” (13) profusely permeated in the religious songs of Bhakti poets. Guru Nanak and Kabir bring such fragmented spaces of their world onto the public spaces through their public encounters through their dialogic songs. The folkloric space of the Guru Granth promotes the unified and authentic unity of man with the nature through its divine songs. Their songs manifest the human-nature participation in universal worshipping of the divine which Guru Nanak manifests through his composition sung everyday as *Aarti* in the Sikh temples. The folkloric space of nature and its unity with these two is further reflected in the labor-craft unity



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which corresponds to Bakhtin's idea of "communal labor" (*DI* 209). Guru Nanak infuses his farmer's skills (Meleod 228) into his mystic songs of nature and the divine. Kabir was a weaver and thus relied on nature for his craft and livelihood. All such characteristics which permeate the songs of Guru Nanak and Kabir will be put forth through illustrations taken from the Guru Granth Sahib. However the paper, before coming to those illustrations, must engage with Bakhtin's notions of chronotope in general and the sub-categories of public sphere and folkloric models in specific. Though the concepts like heteroglossia, polyphony, carnival etc. are integral and correlated forms of chronotope and which are inherently available in these sub-categories (the notion of double voiced discourse), yet the paper does not intend to deflect itself from engaging those models in their full application. Nevertheless, there will be indications of these interrelated models of Bakhtinian dialogism in the paper.

Chronotope: General characteristics

Chronotopes in Bakhtinian perspective constitutes "organizing", "representational" and "concretizing" (*DI* 250) patterns for the historical or compositional events of a literary narrative or any creative work. Chronotope which literally stands for representation of time-space in literary narratives, in fact, works out as the "ground" (*DI* 250) to materialize the "representability" (*DI* 250) of history and human events or figures to take full narrative shape and meaning. The chronotopic categories of literature and other artistic creations are inseparable from the real and ever growing historical world and are intrinsic to the unified real historical world where the author/speakers and readers or listeners come from contemporary or different times (*DI* 253). Chronotopic images and categories enhance and enrich both the representational characteristics of



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a literary work and readers' or listeners' understanding of such literary piece in the light of their contemporary historical timeline. Bakhtin elaborately points out the generic classifications of literary narratives and its historical development in the later stages of European literature which can be classed under various and distinctive chronotopic categories. He classifies such chronotopic categories under the genres of travel, adventure, everyday adventure, idyllic, Rabelaisian, Greek and Roman biographical or autobiographical, chivalric, Baroque and Folkloric. The primary category in the chronotope is time (*DI* 86) and the human and historical events become the measuring scale to sense the palpability and concretization of temporal coordinates (*DI* 250). Chronotope, in Bakhtinian definition, serves as the quintessential model to foreground human events as markers of temporal fluidity and spatial density:

An event can be communicated, it becomes information, one can give precise data on the place and time of its occurrence. But the event does not become a figure. It is precisely the chronotope that provides the ground essential for the showing-forth, the representability of events. And this is so thanks precisely to the special increase in density and concreteness of time markers - the time of human life, of historical time- that occurs within well-delineated spatial areas. (*DI* 250)

Chronotope materializes and embodies time and space into historical epochs and human oriented activities that in fact serve as the base for all measurement and growth both within the world inside a text or the real world outside a text. In literature, chronotope essentially becomes the "constitutive category" (*DI* 84) and fuses the spatio-temporal coordinates (*DI* 84) to generate



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narrative meanings and attached values. In sum, chronotopes for Bakhtin are fundamental categories to evaluate meanings tied to the place and time within narrative frames and as an important category to see the "measure of a man" (DI 91).

Bakhtinian chronotopes of folklore and public sphere

(a) Chronotope of folkloric world/space

Before evaluating the public and folkloric spatio-temporal categories in the utterances of Guru Nanak and Kabir, it is essentially important to review the categories of folkloric and public spheres as propounded by Bakhtin in his monograph "Forms of Time and Chronotopes in the Novel" (1937) as collected in *The Dialogic Imagination* (1984) and other works like *Problems in Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1929). The philosophical cores of these two important spatio-temporal categories predominantly permeate Bakhtin's variant ideas of polyphony, carnival and chronotopic postulates. Bakhtin traces the folkloric spatio-temporal categories in the pre class and agriculture society of collective labor (DI 206). It was the time of communal collective labor where the other events of human life such as consumption, food, drink, celebration, cultic or sectarian acts were derivatives of this collective labor. There was no individual or private life outside the communal life or labor oriented working (DI 206). The entire social world worked as collective participants where collective agricultural labor and various phases of nature (agriculture) were further "indissolubly linked" (DI 209) with human life and its activities. Folkloric time conjoined the events of human life and natural agrarian phenomena to generate a unified and collective identity of human-natural world. Both coinciding and co participation of human and natural world led to the formation of common measuring "scale" (DI 208) to perceive the unified sense of the entire



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world. The human affairs like birth, death, copulation, ritualistic and cultic activities were not isolated from the collective labor of man against nature. The productive and fertility cycle which was intrinsically present in the agricultural events through the coordination of the nature/ the earth (seasons, days and nights, growth of plants) further contributed in the unity of human-natural world and the formation of common scale to measure and perceive the common categories for both. The time of the natural and communal events were measured by "the same scale" (DI 208) with the same intervals and categories. Time was highly productive and generative in its cyclic movement as it was measured in terms of collective and communal growth of the people inseparably linked with production process of their labor. (DI 207). The agricultural phases and human life fully coordinated with the laws of earth (nature). Everything is understood and celebrated with the renewal of seasons, days and time both in the communal and agricultural life. New grain and new birth in community along with the cycle of time into renewal of year, period and seasons productively multiplied the communal strength and production. The motifs of marriage, love, death and old age did not represent individual traits or markers of life. Rather these events were taken as positive markers of transformation, renewal and regeneration of collective communal life. Bakhtin links these human motifs with the natural phenomenon of growth and fertility. He says, "The passage of time marks not only a quantitative but also a qualitative growth- a movement toward flowering and ripening" (DI 207). Thus Death and old age were part of the generative phase of communal and agrarian life. It became negative phenomena only after society entered into a class system where individual and private affairs were reinforced after the development of capitalist consciousness among people (DI 215). Bakhtin explains the characteristics of folkloric chronotope:



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This is the time of productive growth. It is a time of growth, blossoming, fruitbearing, ripening, fruitful increase, issue. The passage of time does not destroy or diminish but rather multiplies and increases the quantity of valuable things; where there was but one seed sown, many stalks of grain appear; the new issue always eclipses the passing away of individual specimens. (DI 207)

But such fusion of communal social whole with the nature survives no longer till a new social division of class system appears as the developing stage of human history and a new socio-political reality. The social communal whole was broken into a new class system of "individual life sequences" (DI 211), inter and intra class groups, sects and castes. The unity of social whole and the earth was cut away. Nature became places, geographical pieces and mere settings (as Kabir sees in terms of religious divisions manifested through spaces like mosques and temples) for narrative and other life events in the human life. Such disintegration ensued after the phenomenon of collective labor (the productive process) based on human-nature unity lost its connection with other collective communal affairs which had direct linking with the human-nature co working. Thus other human motifs of social whole were further fragmented and declined into the various subcategories and strata. Food, consumption, copulation were relegated to the everyday world and cultic and other activities were shifted to higher forms (high literature) and consciousness. For example Consumption which was integral part of collective labor became an object of bodily glutton, commodity and means of unlawful earning and pleasure. It became a source of private accumulation and thus was isolated from other elements of collective labor



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(celebration, future growth, offering and rituals). Such a private and individualized “life sequences” (*DI* 214) further aggravated when monetary and capital forces joined further to disintegrate the society into individual lives, groups and subgroups entirely opposed to the notion of social whole. The entire matrix of social communal (motifs and narratives) disintegrates and declines into various ideological spheres. The entire matrix of communal motifs and their corresponding narratives are relegated to the lower everyday and private spheres where they were further delved into unproductive and "coarse" (*DI* 213) human reality. These motifs and narratives take sublimated and official consciousness in cultic and high literary forms (*DI* 213). Bakhtin explicates this social segmentation as follows:

Society itself falls apart into class and intraclass groups; individual life sequences are directly linked with these and together both individual life and subgroups are opposed to the whole.....The course of individual lives, of groups and, of the sociopolitical whole does not fuse together, they are dispersed; there are gaps; they are measured by different scales of value; each of these series has its own logic of development, its own narratives, each makes use of and reinterprets the ancient motifs in its own way. (*DI* 214-15)

Such late structures of social disunity and the disintegration of communal motifs which were once inseparably connected with collective labor against nature correspond to the various themes of the Guru Granth Sahib which also points out such ever widening gaps within social whole and the universe in the Medieval settings of bhakti period. The Guru Granth Sahib insists on man's inner realization of cosmological consciousness and class free social realization. It reflects and lambasts the contemporary social fabric with multiple shards of conflicting identities and



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differences on the one hand and on the other it infuses inspiration and experience to recharge the idea of unified social whole and ecological consciousness.

(b) The chronotope of Public sphere/space

Public spaces work out as important social zones for Bakhtin which are fundamentally connected with his major theoretical formulations of carnival and polyphony. Public spheres, both in principle and essence, work for the public man and the sociality of particular time. Public man opens out to the world and is audible and reverberating enough through his voice and social participation in the world. Public sphere consolidates the need of a social sphere where all private and individual isolations of people are reverted and made open for public examination and participation. Public spaces both as symbolic constructions or real spaces fulfill important aspect of human organization and its linking with nature:

But this utter exteriority of the individual did not exist in empty space ("under a starry sky, on the bare earth") but rather in an organic human collective, "in the folk". For that reason this "surface" on which the entire man existed and was laid bare, was not something alien and cold ("the desert of the world") - it was his own native folk. To be exterior meant to be for the others, for the collective, for one's own people. (DI 135)

Bakhtin drew out this concept of public orientation and participation from his folkloric metaphor and Greek concept of "agora" (DI 131). Literature itself turns out to be a mode of public sphere where private, personal and social characters of the people are "laid out" (DI 131). Public man, as Bakhtin says, lives and acts in the public domain of social world and creates the social



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spaces. All his acts and expressions are social in nature and connected with the people (DI 123). Bakhtin flashes back to the Greek public square which constituted the biographical and autobiographical encomium of the public man. That how in ancient Greek the public square was used to make civic or political "encomium" of an individual (DI 131). Public square in ancient times would externalize and demonstrate all important moments of a particular individual.

The fusion of natural and social (public) whole is further extended and explained into Rabelais' space of carnival and open subversions of closed and fragmented worlds. Public sphere in Rabelais is an open space of public laughter and carnival gathering. Such a space implies human freedom, reminiscence of the pre class socio-agrarian values, suspension of hierarchical and false ideologies with the help of crude laughter of common people masked as clowns and fools (*RHW* 10). Man is brought outside from his private confinements and interiority to the public zones to reinvent human collectivity and their intrinsic connection with openness of the world. Carnival becomes one of such places where all canonic or narrow minded official and other ideological structures are razed for the open public review. Bakhtin provides an explanatory definition of it:

As opposed to the official feast, one might say that carnival celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions. Carnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal. It was hostile to all that was immortalized and completed. (*RHW* 10)

Public squares and spaces were further used as accessories and trappings by the Medieval



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figures like fools, clowns and rogues. Fools and clowns had the ancient connections and were carried forward into the Middle and Medieval age where their theatrical trappings of public squares were transmitted to literature also (*DI* 159-160). Public squares and open spaces were used by these figures to reflect and realize human reality through their symbolic representation of the world. Public squares thus rehabilitate public consciousness and promotes all openness, audibility and public perception (*DI* 123). Its symbolic manifestation denotes public participation and dissolving of self containing private walls of people which they have created for their petty and private goals of life. Dostoevsky's novels too constitute this phenomenon of open and public discourse where horizontal time-space facilitates the thrust of multiplicity of voices. His generic techniques interpolate generic models of antiquity and contemporary realism (*Morson* 1088). Gary Soul Morson fittingly explicates the expansive and openness of Dostoevskian ideal of polyphony which he derived as radical creator by "accumulating material since antiquity thus implying a sense of generic vastness through historical time and space". (1088)

Forms of public and folkloric Chronotopes in the utterances of Guru Nanak and Kabir:

(a) Folkloric chronotope and motifs in the Guru Granth Sahib

The songs of the Guru Granth Sahib particularly the *bani* (utterances/songs) of Guru Nanak and Kabir apart from explicating and positing the cosmological manifestation of the divine force, are preoccupied with socio-historical dialogism. They equip their utterances with critical and philosophical thoughts on the ideological architecture of socio-religious philosophy. Both Divine and devotionism, as Vikas Mishra finds it as the basic thread of all religious and non religious discourse of fifteenth century (4), is the predominant theme of the entire Guru Granth Sahib which



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is indissolubly connected with human life and natural ecology. It cannot be separated and isolated from the human and natural force of the entire universe. Their songs explicate an interpolation of human-nature unity implying their fusion through mystical musings of love and empirical deeds of labor and all embracing cooperation:

Amongst all is the Light You are that Light.

By this Illumination, that Light is radiant within all.

(Guru Granth Sahib 13)

Nature is not a mere ecological or geographical expansion of the universe. It is living, conscious and directly connected force that guides and participates with human in realizing personal and collective self-consciousness. Divine is formless and beyond definitional categories, thus the *Bani* of these poets urges to realize the similar ideal of fluidity and transformation which is perceivable through self understanding of one and all whereas institutional and canonic truths are fleeting and misleading. The actual truth is to realize the unending vastness of the divine by unifying the similar vastness of human-nature matrix. Bakhtin's folkloric motif of human-nature unity can be construed and realized in many utterances of Guru Nanak and Kabir. One such example that quintessentially represents such unity is in the following utterance of Guru Nanak and who instead of adhering to the false religious practices, awakened the divine consciousness inside his soul. His divine experience is spiritually enriching and metaphorically bewildering. What is noticeable is that the natural phenomenon acquires a real human and living character to manifest the divine consciousness:



Upon that cosmic plate of the sky, the sun and the moon are the lamps. The stars and their
orbs are the studded pearls.

The fragrance of sandalwood in the air is the temple incense, and the wind is the fan.

All the plants of the world are the altar flowers in offering to You, O Luminous Lord.

What a beautiful Aartee, lamp lit worship service this is!

O Destroyer of Fear, this is Your Ceremony of Light.

(Guru Grath Sahib 13)

The hymn categorically clarifies that the higher perceptions are not exclusive domains of humans only (and not to a group or a sect only) as both human and nature are fundamentally infused with such mutual co-realization. Equal participation and realization of such perception has been further concretized in this corealizing phenomenon. Bakhtin attributes nonexclusivity to man who as a mutual participant and working force operates in sync with nature and the entire earth (*DI* 211). Nature too plays out its role in manifesting and fulfilling this mutual desire for self-transcending experience. Nature, as Bakhtin points out while characterizing the folkloric time in the pre-class agrarian society, is contributive, participative and generative. (*DI* 211) The folkloric chronotope intrinsically was constituted with co-working of two forces, "the life of man and the life of nature are fused together" (*DI* 211). Nature and human perception work together in Guru Nanak's ecological vision of the divine. The higher goals can be fulfilled through this vision of unity and by unifying the social whole. The ideal of social whole is deep seated which surfaces only when one perceives the double-voiced intonation (heteroglot implication) implied in the



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hymn. Like folkloric time as Bakhtin points out, the collective social unity ('organic human collective) is also required (DI 135). One cannot perceive such unity without incorporating the entire human world. Therefore the idea of socio-religious collective has been insistently laid and stressed over through the *Bani* of Guru Nanak and Kabir. Religious congregation without class, groups or divisions of sectarian differences has been robustly pressed upon. The double voiced consciousness (heteroglossia) of this hymn somewhere points out this non-division of communal unity and participation with other forces.

Here in this hymn the nature facilitates unified vision for human and participates in concretizing this phenomenon. Transcendental goals are perceivable only through the mutual co-working of human and nature. Therefore Nature here itself is an externalized expression of the formless divine. Moreover Bakhtin does not see such common language and physical signs as part of poetic or individual imagination which so far most of the western classists had taken for granted as "nonphilosophical and "sensuous" (Misra 2) as far as Indian poetic tradition is concerned. Rather such images or linguistic metaphors are generated only when such unity of man and nature facilitates this typical form of common language. The entire act of this mutual spiritual realization correlates with indissoluble and indivisible act of human and ecological consciousness. Bakhtin explains the qualitative aspect of such unified consciousness:

This time attracts everything into its orbit; it will not permit any unmoving or static setting. All objects- the sun, the stars, the earth, the sea and so forth- are present to man not as objects of individual perception ("poetic perception") nor as objects of casual



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daydreaming, but exclusively as part of the collective process of labor and the battle against nature..... All objects are thus attracted into life's orbit; they become living participants in the events of life. (DI 209)

The hymn also registers a “double-voiced” (a heteroglot property) intonation. This divine vision which is consequent upon through the co-realization of man-nature unity in the Guru Granth Sahib also deconstructs and dismisses institutional forms of divine realization (altar flowers, incense, pearls, fan, plate etc.). Such institutional or humanly devised rituals tend to mark sectarian differences and identity of man. Such sectarian and class differences, which Bakhtin sees as the disintegration of the “social whole” (DI 211), do not work for higher unity both in Guru Nanak's representation of cosmological unity as well as in Bakhtin's folkloric concept of collective working and co-realization.

In addition to the cosmic-human realization, there are plenty of agricultural and labor oriented images verifying Guru Nanak's settlement as a common agrarian (Mcleod 228) householder at the end of his all travels (Sadarangani 158 and 168). . Both practically and theoretically, Guru Nanak lays emphasis on the important role played by nature and the land of the fertile earth. In the last years of his days in Kartarpur (Punjab), Guru Nanak settled with other followers in this new land near the river Ravi (Mcleod 230). The land was fertile and productive as it lays emphasis on human bonding with agriculture labor and its production was served to feed the people through the unique idea of collective kitchen which can be perceived as Bakhtin's notion of “collective laboring” (DI 211). Guru Nanak conceived a new way of distorting social inequality



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and caste stigma by rolling out an idea of a community kitchen which corresponds with Bakhtin's folkloric unity of collective consumption (DI 206-207) and their productive bonding with agrarian land (the earth). People were fed with the collective produce of the labor and the land (nature). The unity of agricultural space and human toiling is evident from the philosophical expression of Guru Nanak which corresponds to Bakhtin's folkloric images of human-agrarian bonding in the "pre-class agriculture stage" (DI 206). Guru Nanak's agrarian and labor oriented images enrich his philosophical connotations as well as verify his knowledge of agrarian values and his personal participation. He widely uses images from agriculture and merchantile to promote the character of honest earning and collective consumption (the idea of community kitchen) living based real labor struggle with nature.:

Make this body the field, and plant the seed of good actions. Water it with the Name of the

Lord, who holds all the world in His Hands.

*Let your mind be the farmer; the Lord shall sprout in your heart, and you shall attain the
state of Nirvaanaa.*

(Guru Granth Sahib page 23)

The fertile and productive features of the earth are to be inculcated in the human soul. Human soul is metaphorically infuses the same fertile features if it is yielded and tilled properly. Guru Nanak unifies this event of growth and fertility by combining the folkloric motifs of unity and labor. The term "labor" as Bakhtin points out, is folkloric and directly connected with the communal labor done in coordination with the earth and distributed to the whole collective



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community of people relying on it (*DI* 206). Banerjee cites Bhai Gurdas (Bhai Gurdas was the amanuensis for Guru Arjan who compiled the GGS) for corroborating the labor oriented job of Guru Nanak:

During his period of travels he was temporarily cut off from the normal householder's life; but at the end of every udasi he came back to his family. When the period of travels came finally to an end he settled at Kartarpur, 'put aside all garments of renunciation' (as Bhai Gurdas says and 'found time to attend to agriculture'). (167)

Though the spiritual growth of the soul is the predominant idea in Guru Nanak, however he also promotes the notions of sincere toiling and collective distribution of the produces based on such human toils. Thus, the seeding of the earth (with human labor) and the soul (with the divine word) is a productive and progressive notion in his theological formulation.

(b) The public spheres/spaces in the Guru Granth Sahib

Public sphere in the Guru Granth Sahib does not directly correspond with the functioning of carnival spheres of Rabelais. It is public in a sense it strongly urges public awareness and carries public driven orientation. The social/public voice of Guru Nanak and Kabir breaks down the "private" (*DI* 122) walls of self-contained social institutions and their ideological monologism, sociopolitical dominance and authoritative conventions in the footlights of public consciousness. Guru Nanak and Kabir purge the existing world from its false doctrines and hypocrite functioning carrying irrelevant and orthodox norms and practices as Bakhtin sees Rabelais destroying the narrow-minded Medieval world replete with feudal and ecclesiastical structures. They invoke the



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concept of self realization to reach the cosmos without intermediated through false social infrastructure and doctrinal conceptions. What is striking is the laughing and satiric tone of Guru Nanak and Kabir as they leave no space for such ill conceived socio-ideological systems. Guru Nanak encounters them and places them in public review:

*They tax the cows and the Brahmins, but the cowdung they apply to their kitchen will not
save them.*

*They wear their loin cloths, apply ritual frontal marks to their foreheads, and carry their
rosaries, but they eat food with the Muslims.*

*O Siblings of Destiny, you perform devotional worship indoors, but read the Islamic
sacred texts, and adopt the Muslim way of life.*

Renounce your hypocrisy!

Taking the Naam, the Name of the Lord, you shall swim across.

(Guru Granth Sahib 471)

What is significantly implied is the disunity of collective labor and consumption. Brahmanic class relies more on ritualistic and falsified practices. The folkloric notion of agrarian labor or work idyll is dramatically changed in the existing/capitalist world. Now the labor and consumption is done in the form of capital taxation and false practices. Livelihood and food are earned through false practices and by befooling the common people. The element of collective food and consumption loses all piety in this changed scenario. Rabelaisian chronotope of public space is reinforced when Guru Nanak puts a light on the hypocrite acts of high class Brahmins who



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had recently converted to Islam. Though they have converted themselves into new tradition and culture, yet they have failed to compromise fully. Their double standard character and self delusion becomes the public theme for Guru Nanak and he does not fail to project unto the public sphere. He brings out such hypocrites acts out of the four walls of their homes and places in front of public scrutiny. Guru Nanak's loud and critical voice externalizes the internal workings and disguises of such converted Brahmins. The reader can perceive a sense of exteriorizing and public accounting (*DI 122*) of such hypocrite acts of people. Guru Nanak sounds as a conscious "contemplative" (*DI 122*) public man whose voice and position are "open, visible and audible" (*DI 122-23*) with his participation of public accounting. The entire idea is to restore a normalcy of simplicity and connection to the social consciousness by razing down the private acts of hypocrites.

Unlike Bakhtin's representative characters of public theatres and spectacles (clown, rogue and fool), Kabir does not need to wear any social mask to unfold inherent human corruption of everyday world of Benaras. Rather he opens out such events more fearlessly and subjectively. For Kabir the world is not a confined space for setting political, cultural or criminal enclosures, rather it is an open space of divine word which is reflected in the unified image of humanity and the nature. Both Kabir and Guru Nanak ultimately purge the private and sectarian spaces and connect them to the unified space of humanity and the divine cosmos. Kabir's personal involvement in taking out such private matters of people to the public assessment is his profound concern to restore human-divine unity. Such unity cannot be restored without demolishing the private/sectarian spaces, which Bakhtin sees as a break away from the collective human-nature



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unity (DI 211), of people and their indifference to the Lord (the prevailing cosmos). Similarly, in Bakhtinian philosophy such spaces diminishes the scope for "organic human collective" (DI 135). Such spaces need to be conjoined with public unity and with human element.

The everyday world was not only fragmented into various forms of human identity created by dogmatic forces but such forces had further segmented the entire earth denoting distributed and isolated spaces. Kabir's address to such dogmatic forces and systems without succumbing to any kind of fear and threat consolidates his image as public and social figure. He was equally intolerant to Muslim Qazis and Mullas who like hypocrite thugs of Benaras had fostered an attitude of personal welfare and selfish character (private realm):

You keep your fasts to please Allah, while you murder other beings for pleasure.

*You look after your own interests, and so not see the interests of others. What good is
your word?*

*O Qazi, the One Lord is within you, but you do not behold Him by thought or
contemplation.*

You do not care for others, you are a religious fanatic, and your life is of no account at all.

Your holy scriptures say that Allah is True, and that he is neither male nor female.

*But you gain nothing by reading and studying, O mad-man, if you do not gain the
understanding in your heart.*

Allah is hidden in every heart; reflect upon this in your mind.

The One Lord is within both Hindu and Muslim; Kabir proclaims this out loud.



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(Guru Granth Sahib page 483)

Monotheistic and non formalizing concept of Kabir reinforces his belief in the unified coexistence of all heterogeneous elements which in fact help in fostering the wholeness of the entire earth. He notices that the human heart is cut away from the Lord and is filled with religious fanaticism, intolerance and dogmatic expressions of prayers and material images. Such selfish and narrow characteristics of man consolidate existing divisions and differences of men. Kabir's contentious and "loud" public tone confirms his intention to put this issue onto the social platform. Kabir's proclamation of unified unity with the divine and his dialogic confrontation with Qazi restore a sense of public rhetoric and space. A public space gets activated and historicized the moment Kabir dialogically addresses people and brings their acts on the public witness. All such private events if they had not been taken out to the public space would have passed into isolated and unnoticed sequence of history. Kabir not only contributed to highlight such private spaces of sectarian groups but also historicized the Medieval space by making such events public and historical. Thus there would not have any future consciousness, protest and awareness to such divisive acts. Public orientation is necessary both for intrinsic movement of history as well as for restoration of human collective. As Bakhtin says, *"To be exterior meant to be for others, for the collective, for one's own people."* (DI 135) Cutting away from the general concern and folk infuses petty human traits in one's life. Kabir sees the similar coarse human elements in his interlocuter: hypocrisy and selfishness. Kabir's utterance, however, cannot be understood in the context of particular individual. He is addressing to all Qazis in general or other religious representatives (Vaudeville and Partine 192) who have diverted themselves away from



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the general concern and thus, have acquired a private character of everyday life. Hypocrisy and selfish attitude characterize these Qazis as private people who have become indifferent to the general concern of humanity and other people (*"You look after your own interests, and so not see the interests of others"*). Their indifference to the pains of others and their isolation as religious class from others groups substantiate the existing socio-religious disunity of humanity. However Kabir himself believes in wholeness and unified coexistence (*"The One Lord is within both Hindu and Muslim"*). All such differences based on class, caste and religion convey not more than the private and individual realms of society and people. Kabir's dialogic call to Qazi and his open confrontation with such ruling forces of the time substantiate his public character and sensitivity to the masses.

Kabir had similar distaste regarding the everyday affairs of other sectarian people of his time, but he was quick to respond with all distaste:

What use is chanting, and what use is penance, fasting or devotional worship,

to one whose heart is filled with the love of duality?

O humble people, link your mind to the Lord.

Through cleverness, the four-armed Lord is not obtained.

Set aside your greed and worldly ways.

Set aside sexual desire, anger and egotism.

Ritual practices bind people in egotism;

meeting together, they worship stones.



Says Kabeer, He is obtained only by devotional worship.

(Guru Granth Sahib 324)

The social world of Kabir was too populated with all those features which occupy Bakhtin's chronotope of everyday world (part of public accounting). Duality (materiality), sexuality, cleverness, egotism, greed and communal isolation are the dominant motifs that permeate the capitalist world with "stratification of social classes" (DI 211) which Bakhtin points out and the social world of Kabir. Bakhtin precisely defines the "priapic" characteristics of everyday world in capitalistic society:

Here everyday life is priapic, its logic is the logic of obscenity. But around this sexual nucleus of common life (infidelity, sexually motivated murder, etc.) are distributed other everyday aspects: violence, thievery, various types of fraud, beatings. (DI 128)

Unlike Bakhtin's representative characters of public theatres and spectacles (clown, rogue and fool), Kabir does not need to wear any social mask to unfold inherent human corruption of everyday world of Benaras. Rather he opens out such events more fearlessly and subjectively. For Kabir the world is not a confined space for setting political, cultural or criminal enclosures, rather it is an open space of divine word which is reflected in the unified image of humanity and the nature. Both Kabir and Guru Nanak ultimately purge the private and sectarian spaces and connect them to the unified space of humanity and the divine cosmos. Kabir's personal involvement in taking out such private matters of people to the public assessment is his profound concern to restore human-divine unity. Such unity cannot be restored without demolishing the



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private/sectarian spaces (religious, social etc.) of people and their indifference to the Lord (the prevailing cosmos).

Linda Hess acknowledges the public image of Kabir when she strongly mentions the central role readers play in his expressions (Hess 10). It is beyond doubt that the entire city of Benaras was aware of such rough and public rhetoric of Kabir. Benaras, the city of Kabir's movement and contact, had lost its divine unity as it had become a center of hypocritical people disguised in religious robes consequently which attracts purging of its sins:

They wear loin cloths, three and a half yards long, and triple-wound sacred threads.

They have rosaries around their necks, and they carry glittering jugs in their hands.

They are not called Saints of the Lord - they are thugs of Benares.

Such 'saints' are not pleasing to me;

they eat the trees along with the branches.

*They wash their pots and pans before putting them on the stove, and they wash the wood
before lighting it.*

They dig up the earth and make two fireplaces, but they eat the whole person!

(Guru Granth Sahib 476)

Kabir exposes the closed interior spaces of the "thugs of Benaras". Benaras no more held a unified place of divine and human unity. Rather it had developed into a city of communal disunity and isolation. Kabir accesses the interior affairs of these thugs of Benaras (Guru Nanak describes this time and space as "drowning" world and *kalyuga*) and exteriorizes the thuggery of those



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people who pretentiously project themselves as superior, traditional and authoritative. Such externalization and scrutiny corresponds to Bakhtin's idea of public man who is "indispensible and obligatory participant" (*DI* 122-123) in disclosing such every day affairs. The sense of hypocrisy and characterological corruption is perceivable through their dietary customs and eating habits. Unlike Guru Nanak and Kabir who enrich their character by participating in the unity of human-nature labor, these imposters have even corrupted their dietary habits and its relationship with nature. The collective consumption and the participation of nature (in terms of agriculture and other allied works) are out rightly missing in these isolated and greedy culinary images. Bakhtin however points out the phenomenon of collective labor and collective consumption of human-nature labor:

All objects- the sun, the Stars, the earth, the sea and so forth- are present to man not as objects of individual perception ("poetic perception") nor as objects of casual day dreaming, but exclusively as part of the collective process of labor and the battle against nature. (*DI* 209)

All such images ranging from personal appearance to culinary practices mark petty downfall of the human soul, particularly observed and evaluated by Kabir and Guru Nanak . The overview of this city as part of the everyday chronotope shows all features Bakhtin's everyday world as nether world or graveyard which symbolize death and decay. He defines everyday world as 'scattered', "fragmented" and "deprived of essential connections" (*DI* 128). Such "essential connections" can be restored by reestablishing the social unity and its further unification with the entire cosmos (nature).



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Conclusion:

Folkloric and public chronotopes in the Guru Granth Sahib operates at two levels one at the eschatological level where the whole universal expanse is active with the divine consciousness and second at the socio-historical and sociopolitical level where socio-cultural architecture lacks uniformity and thus needs reinvention. Socio-historical and sociopolitical level represent real spatio-temporal categories of Medieval history and the literature of Guru Nanak, Kabir and Sant Ravidas intentionally takes upon the responsibility to create new "social realizations" and fields of "transcendence and transformation" as Ananta Kumar Giri characterizes the competence of medieval Indian literature (*LSCCPS* 79). Giri further characterizes the new bhakti model as the renewed "ethics, politics and spirituality of self-cultivation" (*SCSS* 92) which promotes a sense of multi-religious and multicultural society. Such multi-religious and multicultural landscape cannot be established without destroying the closed and segmented spaces of the old world. Guru Nanak, Kabir reshape the socio-historical world by highlighting the existing social disunity and "petty" human conflicts and by reestablishing "spiritual self-cultivation" (*SCSS* 92) model that strives for communal and ecological unity. Though the public spaces in the Guru Granth Sahib do not exhibit the Rabelaisian carnival spirit of open bodies and grotesque expressions, yet the subverting themes and spirit have been progressively maintained through socio-ideological multiplicity and by demolishing the false and hypocrite thoughts of the elite classes. However as Michael Gardiner points out, "social conflicts and rejections too work out as a form of carnival which pushes for "desired trajectory of social change" (254) So far as the folkloric repetitive time is concerned the Guru Granth Sahib does not exhibit the repetitive and cyclic features of folkloric era. Rather the



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Granth Sahib consciously records and represents the historical events and its participation through multifarious voices. It participates in irreversible form of time through its philosophical debates and attempts to revive the human awareness for the divine cosmos and social unity. Like folkloric motif of growth and expansion (*DI* 207) as Bakhtin propounds in his theories of chronotope, the Guru Granth Sahib also pitches for the collective growth and mutual enrichment of man and nature.

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