

## **Punjabi Proverbs (Akhans)**

Punjabi proverbs form a part of Punjabi folk-literature. They contain the essence of the experience of life as well as the unchanging truths. Brevity, orality and compactness are some other characteristics of proverbs. Punjabi proverbs are of many kinds and their social and cultural importance can not be ignored. Here is a detailed discussion on Punjabi proverbs. Definitions Various scholars have defined proverbs in their own respective ways. In the words of Raymond Firth, "A proverb is a terse didactic statement that is current in tradition. It ordinarily suggests a course of action or passes a judgement on a situation." Another scholar Danis Saurat says, "The proverbs are crystallized forms of human experience."

Punjabi dictionary defines proverb as a compact colloquial sentence which conveys in brief and popular dialect some profound experience.

According to Dr. Vanjara Bedi, "The proverbs are compact and rhythmic sentences spoken in people's own dialect which convey some truth of human life."

Dr. Kamail Singh Thind has also defined proverb as- that form of folk-literature which expresses the crystallised experience of human life in a brief but suitable manner.

From Historical Perspective-like Bujharats, the history of proverbs is also as old as Vedas. But the proof of their existence is available from Punjabi literature as old as it is available. For example, the Shalokas of Sheikh Farid written in pre-Mughal period do not hint at any proverbs; rather some of his Shalokas have turned into proverbs.

- (a) Kandhi Utte Rukhra, Kichrak Bannhe  
Dhir Farida Kache Bhande Rakhiye,  
Kichr Tain Ncer
- (b) Chal Chal Gaiya Pankhian Jinni Vasaye  
'Tal Farida Sara Bharia VI Chalsi,  
Thakke Kr val Ikkal.

Such examples are available in the writings of Bhagats and Nath Jogis.

### **Mughal Period**

The history of the literature of Mughal period reveals that the proverbs were freely used in the language of these days. The Gurus' own lines have become proverbial e.g.

*Satia Eh Na Aakhian, Jo Maria I ag J  
alarm Nanak Satian Janian, Ji Birha  
Chot Marann' (Guru Amar Dass Suhi's  
Vat)*

and

*Tera Kiya Mcetha Laagc Hari Naam  
Padarath Nanak Maangc. (Guru Arjun  
Dev)*

*Double-line Dudh Sambhc Gujri Bed  
Dhan Sambhc Khatri Ben*

*Jo Sukh Chhajju De Chubare  
Na Oh Balkh Na Bukhare.*

*Four-line*

*Vekho Bharuey Di Akal Gai*

*Majh Vech Ke Ghorai Iai*

*Dudh Peeno Gya*

*Iidd Chakkni Pai.*

*Seven-line: Chet Visakh Shaven*

*Jeth Haad Saven*

*Saon Bhadoti Nhave*

*Assu Kattak Thoda Khave*

*Maghar Poh Roon Handhave*

*Magh Phaggan Tel Malave.*

Te Vaid Hakim Kadi Na Jave. Punjabi Proverbs are Powerful- Like Punjabis, the Punjabi proverbs are also powerful. They have full energy. They reflect very well Punjabi life and culture. A majority of Punjabis are engaged in agriculture.

That is how it is said - Dabb Ke Vah. Rajj Ke Kha (Plough well, eat well).

### **Social and Cultural Importance of Punjabi Proverbs**

Like other languages, the proverbs of Punjabi also represent the culture and society

Panjab

of Punjab. They stand witness to our social and cultural history. Here we are discussing the importance of Punjabi proverbs with regard to the culture and society of Punjab.

### **Punjab and Punjabi Language**

Describing the geographical conditions of old Punjab Dr. Vanjara Bedi writes that in the North of Punjab lie the snow-clad hills of Himalayas which sprawled from Jamuna in the east to Atak in the West at some time and was named Sapt Sindhu by the Aryans. There after this province shrank to five rivers and came to be known as Punjab and its language was called Punjabi. Punjab remained under constant spate of invasions and Punjabis had to resist every invader. Many proverbs are famous about Punjab and Punjabi.

- (a) Punjab: Punjab vich Jammda Suab.
- (b) Land of Punjab: Punjab Di Vahi Te Dudh Di Malai Sada Lahewandi.

### **People of Punjab**

Punjabi Na Pid Chhadde, Na Hatth Adde. Punjab De Jammean Nu Nit Muhimman. Punjabian Di Rehni Patshahan Wali. Dhann Punjabi Ma wan De Jaye Jihnan Vadde Kot Nivaye.

There are some other such lines also in Guru Granth Sahib e.g. Dukh Daru Sukh Rog Bhya, Rotian Karan Pooreh la at, Nivei so Gaura Hoi, Mayadhari Annha Bola etc.

### **In Sufi Poetry**

Sufi Poetry has also made good use of proverbs and many lines of their poetry have also turned proverbial.

- (a) Ik Din Tainu Supna Theesan Gafian Babal Walian Vo.
- (b) Je Tudh Apna Aap Pachhata Sahib Nu Milan Asan Bande. (Both by Shah Hussain)

- (c) Maati Bagh Bagicha Maati Maati Di Gulzar.

Many other such like examples can be quoted from the history of the Post-Mughal period literature.

Ranjit Singh's period and British Rule- The literature of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's period can also be called invaluable rich in the treasure of proverbs. Main Poets of this period are Hasam Kadar Yaar, Shah Mohammad etc Here are some examples of those proverbs.

- (1) Koonjan Nazar Aaian Bajan Bhukhyan Nu
- (2) Wang Nimbuan Lahu Nichor Ditta (Both by Shah Mohammad)
- (3) Hasham Maut Pave Carvana, Tukham Jahino Jande
- (4) Gul Te Khar Paidaish & se, Ik Bagh Chaman De Downen.

In the literature written during the British rule particularly in Sufi poetry, Kissa Poetry, Prose proverbs have been used generously.

### **Modern Period**

In modern age also the Journey of proverbs goes on uninterrupted and in many books and other material an attempt has been made to preserve them. Now we shall discuss their composition.

### **Composition**

There can be no general hard and fast rule regarding the composition of proverbs. Different proverbs have different formations. Dr. Kamail Singh Thind has shown the composition of proverbs ranging from two words to ten lines as under:

<i>Two-word</i>	<i>Vahi Patshahi</i>
<i>Three-word</i>	<i>Mawan Thandian</i>
	<i>Chhawan</i>

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*Jorian Jag Thorian  
Kheti Khasman seti*

Four-word Auratan Ghar Dian Daulatan  
Jcha Des Teha Ves Agga Daud Pichha  
Chaud

*Single-line Akkhon Annhi Naon  
Noorbhaii*

*Kaun Kahe Rani Agga Dhak*

(d) Places of Punjab

Lahore Da Garda Pishaur Da Zarda.  
Aaega Nadaun, Jaega Kaun.

Chambe Di Hakk (Paddy), Guler Di Fakk  
(Husk) Nurpur Di Gapp. Amritsar Sippi da  
Ghar.

### Castes

Like in other parts of the country, Punjabi society was also divided into different castes, which had their own respective natures and characters. This aspect is visible in many Punjabi proverbs:

**1. Jatt:** A large number of Punjabi proverbs are available on Jatts, and they highlight many characteristics of this community.

(a) Jatt's High-handedness

Jatt Pilaye Lassi, Gal Vich Pa Lae  
Rassi.

Jatt Jattan De Saale, Viche Karde Ghale  
Male.

(b) Surfeited Jatt:

1. Chitta Kappra, Kukkar Khana Us  
Jatt Da Nahin Tikana.

2. Jatt Jatt Da Rehnda kama, Bhukha  
Mare Tan Kare Salaman.

(c) Famished Jatt:

Bhukhe Jatt Katora Labhya Pani Pee  
Pee Aaphrya.

(d) Carelessness of Jatt Jatt Yamla, Khuda  
Nu Lai Gaye chor.

(e) Jatt's Naivety:

Jatt Ganna Na Deve, Gur di Bheli  
Deve.

**2. Bania:** In Punjab Banias have been trading or shopkeeping till today. That is why Bania is known as clever community. But they spend lavishly on occasions like marriage.

(a) Vanaj Karende Baniye, Hor Karende  
Rees

(b) Baniye Di Kamai, Vijah Jan Zamccn Ne  
Khai

**3. Khatri:** In Punjab Khatri have been doing the business of usury or shopkeeping in Karyana wares. In Punjabi proverbs they have been portrayed as weak and cheats.

Char Chor Te Chare Thug Char Suniar,  
Chare Thathiar Char Chauke Solan, Solan  
Duni Batri Ik Mara Jeha Khatri.

**4. Kariar:** In West Punjab, both Hindus and Muslims engaged in trade are called Kariars. Here are some proverbs about Kariars:

(a) Khao Brahman Nat, Pandh Pao Kariar  
Nat

(b) Kan, Kariar, Kutte Da, Vlsah Na Kariye  
Sutte Da

(c) Ik Khurpe Wall Rani Sahwen Nau Kriar  
Di Dhar Bhali

### Domestic/Family Life

According to Dr. Swaran Singh, popular convictions and beliefs in Social Life may not come true on the criteria of principles or logic, but they are important due to their traditional values. Many folk proverbs reflect our domestic life. As per Dr. Bedi, these proverbs include the importance of home, mutual husband-wife relations, dominance of man over woman, inefficiency of a clumsy woman, disputes between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law and a satirical mention

of women's dealings with their parents and parents -in-law. Here are some examples.

Home:

- (a) Apne Ghar Har Koi Badshah Ae
- (b) Ghar Teewian De, Nan Mardan De. Man-Woman -

- (a) Mard Di Maya, Birchh Di Chhaya.
- (b) Mard Mitti Da Vi Maan Nahin.
- (c) Janani Mange Pede Ohnu Den Wale Bathere Mard Mange Ata, Ohnu Aate Da Vi Ghata.
- (d) Dil Sunder Ghori, Muchh Sunder Mard Roop Sunder Gori, Sing Sunder Majjh.

### **Nature of Woman**

- (a) Gall in Pai Te Vassnon Rahi
- (b) Rann Gai Syape, Ghaf Aave Tan Jaape.

### **Hard Work**

Hard work is the routine of Punjabi Life. Dr. Vanjara Bedi says that Punjabis are very industrious people. They are not idlers. Many proverbs are popular about this aspect of their personality.

### **Dignity of Labour**

- (a) Chorion Mehna, Yaarion Mehna Mehnaton Ki Mehna
- (b) Kamm Pyara Ke Chamm ?

### **Fruit of Labour**

- (a) Kar Mazdoori, Kha Ghoori.
- (b) Dabb Ke Vah, Rajj Ke Kha. Job (Naukari)

(a) Naukari Ki Te Nakhra Ki.

(b) Sipahi Di Rann  
Na Vidhwa Na Suhagan.

**Loyalty in Job:** Jis Da Loon Khaiye, Tis De Gun Gaiye.

### **Fatalism**

Punjabi life lays sufficient stress on fate. Punjabis are of the view that one has to face to consequences of some earlier lives' misdeeds in this life. Our ideology of fatalism is nicely woven in our proverbs:

- (a) Honi Hoi Amitt, Bhawen Ro Te Bhawen Pitt.
- (b) Vah Karman Deya Balia, Ridhi Kheer Te Ban Gaya Daha.
- (c) Maaye Puttar Janendiye, Karara Na Deniye Vand, Ik Pae Charhende Ghoriye, Ik Tukde Khande Mang.
- (d) Eh Dekho Kismat De Khel Parhe Farsi Veche Tel.

Superstitions-Superstitions are a part of the cultural life of a society. In folk-mind, love turns into fear or superstitions. Like other communities Punjabis, too, have their own superstitions. Here are some examples

1. About Stars: Bodi Wala Tara Ja Charhe Tan Hoi Ujada.

2. About days:

(a) Aitvar Na Langhna Para Mate Jittan Aave Haar.

(b) Budh Sanichar Kappda, Gehna Aitvar.

3. About Birds/animals: Dine Na Bole Gidri Raat Na Bole Kan, Ik Tan Raja Mahiye, Ik Tan Ujde Giran.

4. About Handicapped: Annha Kana Tepra, Bakhsh Lain Parmeshra.

Social-Graps-Folk-literature also depicts the economic set up of a society. The socio-economic gaps can be gauged from the folk-proverbs- Kithe Raja Bhoj, Kithe Gangu Teli.

Social Evils -Although in miniscule form, our social evils are also indicated in our proverbs:

(a) Posta Dil Dosta, Tera Mudhon Putawan Boota Vasde Ghar Ujar Ke Hatth Pharauna Ae Thootha.

(b) Pio Bhangan to sovo Baghin, Pichhle Jeewan Apne Bhagin.

### **Conclusion**

In nutshell it can be said that like other forms of folk-literature, Punjabi proverbs also reflect the socio-cultural picture of a society. This is a very important role of the folk-proverbs which cannot be ignored.