

# “Artificial Intelligence and Nanak Bani: From Computational Knowledge to Spiritual Wisdom.”

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**Abstract** The 21st century is marked by the rapid growth of Artificial Intelligence (AI), a technological system driven by data processing, machine learning, and algorithmic decision-making. While AI efficiently transforms raw data into information and functional knowledge, it fundamentally lacks wisdom—the ethical, compassionate, and self-aware dimension of human understanding. This research paper establishes an interdisciplinary dialogue between Artificial Intelligence and the spiritual philosophy of Guru Nanak Dev Ji (Nanak Bani) through the framework of the Data–Information–Knowledge–Wisdom (DIKW) hierarchy.

The study critically examines how Nanak Bani challenges the mere accumulation of information and instead emphasizes *Vivek Budhi* (discerning spiritual wisdom), ethical consciousness, and self-realization. By comparing the computational structure of AI with the spiritually grounded consciousness articulated in Gurbani, the paper explores contemporary issues such as materialism, digital isolation, existential loneliness, and the decline of empathy in technological society. The perspectives of Western thinkers such as René Descartes, David Chalmers, and John Searle are also examined in relation to consciousness, self-awareness, and the limitations of machine intelligence.

The study argues that although AI may imitate certain dimensions of human cognition and perform complex intellectual tasks, it cannot attain subjective experience, spiritual consciousness, or moral wisdom. In contrast, Nanak Bani offers a timeless ethical and spiritual framework that guides humanity beyond a purely data-driven existence toward inner balance, ethical awareness, and universal human welfare in the age of intelligent machines.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, Existential Philosophy, Human Consciousness, Nanak Bani, Root Wisdom, Sarbat da Bhala, Spiritual Intellect, Techno-Ethics.

**Introduction** The contemporary world is witnessing a major transformation driven by the rapid development of Artificial Intelligence (AI). As AI evolves from a technological tool of automation into a system capable of simulating human cognition, language, and creativity, it has begun to challenge traditional understandings of intelligence, consciousness, ethics, and human existence. Although AI represents one of humanity’s greatest scientific and intellectual achievements, it simultaneously exposes a profound absence of moral consciousness, empathy, and spiritual awareness. This research paper therefore attempts to establish a philosophical dialogue between Nanak Bani and Artificial Intelligence by examining the relationship between technological intelligence and spiritual wisdom.

Nanak Bani offers a timeless and holistic framework rooted in the principles of Ik Onkar, Hukam, truth, humility, and universal welfare. According to Guru Nanak’s philosophy, true wisdom is not limited to the accumulation of information or intellectual capability; rather, it is deeply connected with ethical consciousness, self-realization, and service to humanity. In contrast, AI functions through data processing, algorithms, and logical computation. While AI possesses the ability to analyze information and imitate certain dimensions of human reasoning, it remains devoid of subjective consciousness, spiritual awareness, and moral understanding.

In the contemporary technological age, increasing dependence upon digital systems has also intensified problems such as materialism, existential loneliness, emotional isolation, and the weakening of genuine human relationships. Contemporary society has achieved unlimited informational access, yet psychological and spiritual dissatisfaction continues to increase. In this context, Nanak Bani becomes highly relevant because it guides humanity toward inner balance, compassion, humility, and spiritual consciousness.

This study further explores the philosophical perspectives of Western thinkers such as René Descartes, David Chalmers, and John Searle regarding consciousness, self-awareness, and the limitations of machine intelligence. Through the framework of the Data–Information–Knowledge–Wisdom (DIKW) hierarchy, the paper critically examines whether AI can attain genuine wisdom or whether it remains confined to mechanical forms of cognition.

The study argues that technological advancement without ethical discipline may intensify human alienation rather than contribute to collective well-being. In this context, Nanak Bani offers a timeless moral and spiritual framework capable of guiding humanity beyond a purely data-centered civilization toward wisdom, balance, and universal welfare (Sarbat da Bhala). Through this interdisciplinary

exploration, the paper seeks to demonstrate that the future of technology must remain connected with human consciousness, ethical responsibility, and spiritual awareness.

**Dialogue Between Nanak Bani and Artificial Intelligence** In the contemporary technological age, the structures of national, communal, and collective consciousness are undergoing continuous transformation. Rapid technological advancement, particularly in the field of Artificial Intelligence, has significantly reshaped human life, intercultural relationships, and global consciousness. Through computerization, mechanization, and advanced digital systems, humanity has entered an era in which technology increasingly influences everyday existence and patterns of thought. Simultaneously, global cultural influence has also transformed Punjabi society, affecting its values, traditions, and social paradigms.

Within this changing technological environment, it becomes essential to establish a dialogue between emerging technological knowledge and human consciousness in the context of Nanak Bani. Although technology has become inseparable from modern life, human beings continue to experience loneliness, anxiety, stress, and spiritual unrest. Increasing materialism and consumerist tendencies have weakened inner peace and emotional balance.

In this context, Nanak Bani reconnects humanity with spiritual equilibrium, humility, selfless service, and inner consciousness. Therefore, the reinterpretation of Guru Nanak's philosophy has gained renewed relevance in the age of Artificial Intelligence. This study attempts to establish a dialogue between modern technology, human consciousness, and Nanak Bani within the framework of contemporary technological transformation.

**Artificial Intelligence and the Nature of Machine Intelligence** In the context of Artificial Intelligence (AI), "intelligence" refers to the development of systems capable of simulating human abilities of thinking, understanding, learning, and decision-making. AI systems analyze large volumes of data and generate predictive responses through algorithmic learning models. Through Machine Learning, AI systems improve their performance using previous experiences and large datasets, enabling them to make decisions in new situations with increasing efficiency.

Another significant dimension of AI is its capacity for logical decision-making and problem-solving. AI algorithms evaluate multiple possibilities and generate systematic solutions, thereby influencing fields such as healthcare, education, business, and scientific research.

John McCarthy, one of the pioneers of AI, defined Artificial Intelligence as:

"Artificial Intelligence is the science and engineering of making intelligent machines." (McCarthy, 2007, p. 2).

Similarly, Stuart Russell and Peter Norvig describe AI as the discipline concerned with creating "intelligent agents" capable of perceiving their environment and taking rational actions to achieve desired goals (Russell & Norvig, 2021, pp. 1–25).

In this sense, AI represents a system designed to imitate human intelligence; however, this intelligence remains fundamentally computational and data-driven in nature.

**Nanakian Concept of Wisdom and Spiritual Intelligence** In contrast to Artificial Intelligence, Guru Nanak's philosophy does not define intelligence merely as analytical reasoning or information processing. Within Gurmat thought, intelligence is deeply connected with ethical consciousness, spiritual awareness, humility, and self-realization.

According to Sikh philosophy, intellect that remains trapped within ego, greed, and ignorance is incomplete, whereas true wisdom guides human beings toward truth, selfless service, and remembrance of the Divine (Guru Granth Sahib, Ang 1245). Therefore, the center of intelligence in Nanakian philosophy is not information itself, but inner transformation and spiritual realization (Guru Granth Sahib, Ang 441).

Guru Nanak Sahib states:

*"Akalī sāhib sevāi akalī pāīai mān.*

*Akalī paṛh kai bujhāi akalī kīchai dān.*" (Guru Granth Sahib, Ang 1245)

In this verse, "Akal" (wisdom/intellect) is understood not merely as intellectual scholarship, but as ethical and spiritual understanding that inspires service, charity, and truthful living. Similarly, Gurbani states:

“*Man tū jot sarūp hai āṇṇā mūl pachhān.*” (Guru Granth Sahib, Ang 441)

The phrase “āṇṇā mūl pachhān” emphasizes the realization of one’s inner consciousness and divine origin. Thus, within Nanakian philosophy, intelligence involves both understanding the external world and recognizing the Divine Light within oneself.

Sikh historian Jagtar Singh Grewal argues that Guru Nanak’s teachings initiated a transformation in human consciousness by elevating individuals beyond ritualism toward ethical and spiritual awareness (Grewal, 1969, pp. 112–130). Similarly, Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh explains that Guru Nanak connected wisdom with compassion, equality, and spiritual experience rather than mere academic learning (Singh, 1995, pp. 52–60). W.H. McLeod also emphasizes that Gurbani views knowledge as a means of moral and spiritual elevation (McLeod, 1968, pp. 145–160).

Thus, the concept of intelligence in Nanakian philosophy fundamentally differs from the computational intelligence of AI. While Artificial Intelligence is based upon algorithms and calculation, Gurmat wisdom connects humanity with truth, humility, service, and spiritual consciousness.

**Consciousness: Western Philosophy and Gurmat Perspective** Consciousness is generally understood as awareness through which human beings recognize themselves, their surroundings, thoughts, emotions, and experiences. It forms the basis of self-awareness and existential realization.

René Descartes considered consciousness the foundation of human existence. His famous statement, “Cogito, ergo sum” (“I think, therefore I am”), established thought and self-awareness as the primary proof of existence (Descartes, 1637/1641, pp. 17–19).

David Chalmers, through the “Hard Problem of Consciousness,” argues that science may explain neurological brain functions, yet it remains unable to explain how subjective experience emerges from physical processes (Chalmers, 1996, pp. 3–31).

In contrast, John Searle presents consciousness as a biological phenomenon produced through brain activity. According to Searle, computers and Artificial Intelligence systems cannot possess genuine understanding because they lack intrinsic semantics and subjective awareness (Searle, 1992, pp. 1–26).

Parallel to these Western debates, Sikh philosophy presents consciousness as spiritual awareness expressed through concepts such as “Surat” and “Bibek Budhi.” Gurbani states:

“*Man tū jot sarūp hai āṇṇā mūl pachhān.*” (Guru Granth Sahib, Ang 441)

This verse suggests that the highest form of consciousness emerges through recognition of one’s divine origin and spiritual reality.

**From Data to Wisdom: DIKW Hierarchy and Nanak Bani** One of the central questions in the age of Artificial Intelligence is whether machines merely process information or whether they can ever attain consciousness and wisdom. This debate may be understood through the framework of the Data–Information–Knowledge–Wisdom (DIKW) hierarchy.

Artificial Intelligence efficiently transforms raw data into information and knowledge through algorithmic systems. However, this process remains limited to computation and pattern recognition.

John Searle’s “Chinese Room Argument” demonstrates that machines may imitate language and syntax without possessing genuine understanding or subjective meaning (Searle, “Minds, Brains, and Programs,” 1980, pp. 417–457). Similarly, David Chalmers argues that computational systems may imitate functional processes of the mind, yet they cannot explain conscious experience itself.

Within Gurmat philosophy, true wisdom cannot emerge merely from data processing or mechanical intelligence. Consciousness is understood as the manifestation of Divine Light rather than algorithmic computation. In this context, the movement from “data” to “wisdom” parallels the spiritual journey from “Manmukh” consciousness toward “Gurmukh” consciousness. Wisdom in Gurmat transcends informational intelligence because it is rooted in ethical consciousness and spiritual realization. Gurbani declares:

“*Vidia vīchārī tām parupkārī.*” (Guru Granth Sahib, Ang 356)

This verse suggests that knowledge becomes meaningful only when reflected upon ethically and used for the welfare of humanity. Although AI may possess immense analytical capability, it cannot attain spiritual consciousness (“Surat”), self-realization, or moral wisdom.

**Materialism, Digital Isolation, and Existential Crisis** One of the major consequences of technological modernity is the growth of materialism, emotional isolation, and existential anxiety. Although digital technologies and Artificial Intelligence have increased physical convenience, they have also intensified loneliness, online comparison, and psychological unrest.

Social media culture has created virtual visibility while simultaneously weakening authentic human relationships. Individuals increasingly construct “virtual identities” and seek validation through digital engagement, gradually distancing themselves from genuine emotional responsibilities and inner self-awareness.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji critically addresses material attachment and psychological unrest in *Ramkali Mahalla 1, Sidh Goshit*:

“*Antar haumai mera meri,*

*Jis vich bikham bhram bahu feri.*” (Guru Granth Sahib, Ang 939)

These lines explain that ego, possessiveness, and attachment trap human beings within confusion and suffering. According to Gurmat thought, true fulfillment cannot be achieved through material accumulation or external recognition, but through inner wisdom and spiritual realization. Similarly, Gurbani raises existential questions concerning human identity and purpose:

“*Jāto jāe kahā te āvai,*

*Kah kāraṅ sansār samāvai.*” (Guru Granth Sahib, Ang 938)

These lines encourage human beings to recognize their authentic self and reconnect with their “mool” (ultimate spiritual origin) beyond the illusions of virtual existence.

**Nanak Bani and the State of Sahaj** The contemporary technological age has produced a crisis of spiritual emptiness and emotional disconnection. Although communication technologies have expanded globally, compassion, empathy, and genuine human interaction continue to decline.

According to Gurmat philosophy, the resolution to this crisis lies in attaining the state of “Sahaj” — a condition of spiritual equilibrium, inner stability, and natural balance. Guru Nanak Dev Ji states in *Ramkali Mahalla 1, Sidh Goshit*:

“*Kapat khulānā gurmukh mel.*

*Bin ras rāte mukat na hoī.*

*Kiā kahīai bin būjhe koī.*” (Guru Granth Sahib, Ang 939)

These lines suggest that liberation from illusion and suffering becomes possible only through spiritual understanding, divine awareness, and inner transformation. Nanak Bani therefore offers contemporary society a path beyond the mechanical accumulation of information toward wisdom, empathy, and spiritual consciousness.

Thus, Nanak Bani offers contemporary society—deeply affected by “wisdom deficiency”—a path beyond the mechanical accumulation of AI-driven data toward the state of *Sahaj* (natural spiritual balance and equilibrium). In this state, human beings reconnect with their authentic self, revive empathy and emotional responsibility within relationships, and become capable of living as truly conscious human beings rather than merely functioning like machines.

**Conclusion** As a conclusion to the present study, it may be argued that the contemporary age of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and advanced technology has elevated human civilization to an unprecedented level of knowledge and information; however, at the same time, it has also brought humanity to the threshold of a profound existential and spiritual crisis. The philosophical perspectives of Western thinkers such as David Chalmers and John Searle clearly demonstrate that regardless of how advanced machines become in computation and data processing, they cannot replace the subjective inner experience of human consciousness or genuine semantic understanding. Artificial Intelligence may provide instant answers and unlimited access to information, yet it remains entirely incapable of offering the true meaning of life, existential purpose, or authentic human empathy.

The blind pursuit of materialism, the false validation culture of social media, and the obsession with virtual identity have increasingly alienated human beings from their authentic self and meaningful relationships, thereby pushing humanity toward digital isolation and

spiritual emptiness. This research study highlights that data-driven knowledge alone gradually renders human beings internally hollow and mechanistic unless it is accompanied by wisdom and ethical consciousness. In Gurmat philosophy, wisdom transcends mere informational knowledge because it is inseparable from ethical responsibility, spiritual awareness, and self-realization.

In the midst of this global crisis, Nanak Bani (Gurmat philosophy) emerges as a timeless and universal solution that liberates humanity from the overwhelming flood of data and guides individuals toward the higher spiritual states of “Surat” (inner consciousness), “Bibek Budhi” (discerning wisdom), and “Sahaj” (natural spiritual balance and equilibrium). The eternal teaching of Gurbani—that human beings must move beyond mechanical distraction and recognize the divine light within themselves, “*Man tū jot sarūp hai āṇṇā mūl pachhāṇ*” (“O mind, you are the embodiment of the Divine Light; recognize your true origin”)—holds immense relevance for contemporary technological society.

Ultimately, this study reinforces the argument that global progress cannot be sustained merely through technological advancement; rather, it must also be accompanied by spiritual consciousness, moral wisdom, and human sensitivity. The true preservation of humanity lies not merely in thinking or accumulating information, but in self-realization, ethical living, and the attainment of a balanced and harmonious state of existence.

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