

## EDITORIAL

### AAD GURU GRANTH SAHIB

#### ਪੋਥੀ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਕਾ ਬਾਨੁ ॥ ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਿ ਗਾਵਹਿ ਗੁਣ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਪੂਰਨ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗਿਆਨੁ ॥

**T**he *Gurbani*, incorporated in the *Aad Guru Granth Sahib* (AGGS) [1], is the only source of Sikh philosophy that has been authenticated by Guru Arjan and Guru Gobind Singh. Therefore, the *Gurbani* should be taken as a touchstone for resolving discrepancies reported in the earlier literature on Sikhism. Unfortunately, many fallacies, even about the procurement of *Gurbani* (*Bani* of the Sikh Gurus) by Guru Arjan for compilation into a Granth, have been fabricated. Prof Sahib Singh [6] and Principal Harbhajan Singh [3] have reported that such fallacies have been written by Santokh Singh in his book, *Gurpratap*

*Suraj*; by Swarup Das Bhalla in his book, *Mehma Prakash*; by Giani Gian Singh in his book, *Twarikh Guru Khalsa* and same fallacies are found in *Gurbilas Patshai Chhevin*, anonymous. According to these scholars, before Guru Arjan no Guru had written his *Bani*. The idea of writing *Bani* and compilation of *Bani* of other Gurus into a Granth came to Guru Arjan

only. Thus, Guru Arjan had to procure the *Bani* of his predecessors from other Sikhs who had written the *bani* by their own hands for their own purpose.

There is another fallacy about the procurement of some *Bani*, compiled into booklets (*Goindval pothian* or *Baba Mohan valian pothian*), from Baba Mohan (for details see references # 2, 3, and 6). Earlier scholars have fabricated a story that when Guru Arjan failed to procure the '*pothian*' through Bhai Gurdas and Baba Budha Jee, then Guru Arjan went himself to Baba Mohan as directed by the spirit of Guru Amardas. The spirit appeared before Guru Arjan when he was bathing at "*Baoli Sahib*" at Goindval. The appearance of the spirit of Guru

Amardas is not possible according to *Gurbani* and science. All the above deceptions can be challenged to be wrong when tested on the *Gurbani*, the touchstone of truth:

ਪੀਉ ਦਾਦੇ ਕਾ ਖੋਲਿ ਡਿਠਾ ਖਜਾਨਾ ॥

ਤਾ ਮੇਰੈ ਮਨਿ ਭਇਆ ਨਿਧਾਨਾ ॥

AGGS, M 5, P 186.

"As the inherited treasure (*Gurbani* of ancestors - *Gurus*) was opened and viewed, then my mind was illumined with treasure (*Gurbani*)."

Based on this verse and other information Prof Sahib Singh [6] inferred that Guru Nanak handed over his

*Bani* to Guru Angad. Guru Angad added his *Bani* in it and handed over to Guru Amardas. Guru Amardas added his *Bani* in it and handed over to Guru Ramdas. Guru Ramdas added his *Bani* and finally Guru Arjan received it as an ancestral treasure in which he had added his *Bani*. With this test all the stories about collection of *Bani* fall apart.

**Although the AGGS was compiled in 1604 CE, the style of writing of AGGS by Guru Arjan is comparable to the modern writing of a thesis or a dissertation embodying results of original research or substantiating specific views.**

**Guruship:** Bestowing of Guruship onto Granth also needs to be tested on *Gurbani*, the touchstone of truth. Guru Nanak bestowed the Guruship to the *Sabd* in his *Bani*:

ਸਬਦੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਧੁਨਿ ਚੇਲਾ ॥ AGGS, M 1, P943.

"*Sabd is Guru, consciousness and intention toward it make one its disciple (Sikh).*"

Thereafter, all the Gurus of the House of Nanak taught the same basic principle, i.e. *Sabd* (*Bani* - word) is the Guru:

ਬਾਣੀ<sup>1</sup> ਗੁਰੂ<sup>2</sup> ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਬਾਣੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸਾਰੇ ॥

ਗੁਰੂ<sup>3</sup> ਬਾਣੀ ਕਹੈ ਸੇਵਕੁ<sup>4</sup> ਜਨੁ<sup>5</sup> ਮਾਨੈ<sup>6</sup> ਪਰਤਖਿ<sup>7</sup> ਗੁਰੂ ਨਿਸਤਾਰੇ<sup>8</sup> ॥

AGGS, M 4, P 982.

{2 & 3 ਗੁਰ, ਗੁਰ, ਗੁਰੁ and ਗੁਰਿ means ਗੁਰੁ according to

Bhai Kahn Singh's *Mahan Kosh* and *Martand* [4, 5]  
Who is the Guru here?

*Bani (Sabd)<sup>1</sup> is Guru<sup>2</sup> and Guru is the Bani and it contains the elixir of life."*

What is the *Bani* here?

*"Guru<sup>3</sup> says Bani and the servant (Sikh)<sup>4,5</sup> accepts<sup>6</sup> and practices<sup>6</sup> it. Obviously<sup>7</sup>, this is the Guru that helps to get salvation<sup>8</sup>."*

Finally, based on the principles cited above the Granth, containing the *Sabd* of Gurus, was equated as Guru (Enlightener) by Guru Arjan some time before its compilation in 1604 CE as is indicated in his following verse:

ਪੋਥੀ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ\* ਕਾ ਬਾਨੁ ॥

ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗਿ ਗਾਵਹਿ ਗੁਣ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਪੂਰਨ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗਿਆਨੁ ॥

AGGS, M 5, P 1226.

*"The Granth is equivalent to the Enlightener\* (From which) the noble people discuss (sing) the attributes and deliberate on wisdom (philosophy) of the Almighty in the congregation."*

(\* *Parmesar* = the Almighty = Guru = Enlightener)

It means, the day (in 1604 CE) the *Pothi* (Granth) was compiled it was given the status of Guru based on the philosophy given in the above verses. Since then preaching of Nanakian philosophy (philosophy of Guru Nanak that was preached and strengthened by the Sikh Gurus succeeded to the House of Nanak) was carried on from this Granth by Guru Arjan himself and by all the succeeding Gurus to the House of Nanak.

The irony is that very few Sikhs understand the above verses as was predicted by Guru Nanak:

ਬਾਣੀ ਬਿਰਲਉ ਬੀਚਾਰਸੀ ਜੇ ਕੋ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਹੋਇ ॥

ਇਹ ਬਾਣੀ ਮਹਾ ਪੁਰਖ ਕੀ ਨਿਜ ਘਰਿ ਵਾਸਾ ਹੋਇ ॥

AGGS, M 1, P 935

*"Only rare Guru-oriented will deliberate/contemplate on the Bani (word).*

*This Bani (word) is of the pre-eminent preceptor, that is imbibed in one's own mind (only through its deliberation)."*

The above verse clearly indicates that Guru Nanak predicted that there would be very few Sikhs, who will deliberate on the *Bani/Sabd*. Because of this fact (not deliberating seriously on *Sabd*), today I find that there are many Sikhs, who sternly believe that Granth was declared Guru only by Guru Gobind Singh in 1708 at the time of his demise. It happened so because most scholars depended heavily on the information given in the extraneous writings, i.e.

writings outside of the AGGS, and ancient philosophy instead of on the *Sabd* of the Gurus, incorporated in the AGGS. Consequently, in these days less and less attention is being paid towards the deliberation of *Sabd* instead, more and more ritualistic respect is being paid to the Granth. It took about 239 years for Guru Nanak to take the *Panth* out of the ritualism and ancient philosophy, it is a pity that the both (ritualism and ancient philosophy) are being amalgamated into Sikhism by some scholars now.

*The Institute earnestly accepts that the Granth is the Guru because of the fact that the Sabd of the Sikh Gurus is enshrined in it.* With the current issue the Institute enters into the second year of dissemination of *Gurbani* and *Sikhi (Sikhism)* in their real perspective, based on the Nanakian philosophy: ਸਿਖੀ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਗੁਰ ਵੀਚਾਰਿ ॥

AGGS, M 1, P 465.

*"Sikhism is the philosophy of the Guru."*

### SALIENT FEATURES OF THE AGGS

Although the AGGS was compiled in 1604 CE, the style of writing of AGGS by Guru Arjan is comparable to the modern writing of a thesis or a dissertation embodying results of original research or substantiating specific views.

It contains **Summary** (essence) in the beginning as **Jap** then a discourse on Sikh philosophy with reference to Vedic and Semitic literature. It also contains the work of contemporary Bhagats and

Saints, and even the Bhagats of the time before the Sikh Gurus. At the end, there are **Conclusions** as a **seal, Mundanvani**. Finally, the **Acknowledgments** are recorded under the heading of a **Slok**. This is the end of the whole text of the AGGS. However, after this slok there is a small script called **Raag Maala** (Musical modes). There is a lot of controversy about the authenticity of **Raag Maala** being a part of AGGS. As it is written after **Mundanvani** and the **Slok** that suggests the end of AGGS, therefore, it cannot be considered as a part of AGGS under any circumstances. But according to the *"Sikh Rehit Maryada"* published by the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC), Amritsar the *"Bhog of Akhand Path"* (uninterrupted recitation of the whole AGGS) can be performed after recitation of the AGGS up to **Mundanvani** including **Slok** or recitation of **Raag Mala** could also be included. The SGPC left it to the choice of the *Granthis* (who recite the *Akhand Path*) or the individuals, to recite

ਪੀਉ ਦਾਦੇ ਕਾ ਖੋਲਿ ਡਿਠਾ ਖਜਾਨਾ ॥

ਤਾ ਮੇਰੈ ਮਨਿ ਭਇਆ ਨਿਧਾਨਾ ॥

AGGS, M 5, P 186.

*Raag Maala* or not, till further decision is taken by the SGPC. About 54 years have elapsed since the above decision was taken, the controversy has not been resolved yet.

### Raags (Musical Modes)

There are 31 *raags* (musical modes) under which most of the *Gurbani* and *Bani* of Bhagats have been incorporated in the AGGS. These *raags* are: Sri, Majh, Gouri, Asa, Gujri, Devgandhari, Bihagra, Vadhans, Sorath, Dhanasri, Jaitsri, Todi, Bairari, Tilang, Suhi, Bilawal, Gound, Ramkali, Nat Narain, Mali Goura, Maru, Tukhari, Kaidara, Bhairon, Basant, Sarg/Sarang, Malar, Kanra, Kalyan, Prabhati, and Jaijvanti.

### The Authors

The AGGS contains the *Bani* of Guru Nanak (1469-1539), Guru Angand (1504-1552), Guru Amardas (1479-1574), Guru Ramdas (1534-1581), Guru Arjan (1563-1606) and Guru Teg Bahadur (1621-1675). Almost every verse of *Gurbani* ends with the name of **Nanak** as the author, whether it was composed by Guru Nanak or the other Gurus. This is a **unique system**, designed by Guru Arjan, for presenting oneness in the authorship of all the Sikh Gurus and oneness in the whole philosophy of the Sikh Gurus under **Nanak**. Nevertheless, the identity of the contributing Guru is specified under their succession number to the **House of Nanak**. The House of Nanak has been represented as **Mahla** by Guru Arjan. Thus, the contribution of Guru Nanak is identified as **Mahla 1** as he is the founder of Sikhism; the verse of the Second Guru, Angad, is identified as Mahla 2 as he is the second in succession to the House of Nanak; the verse of the Third Guru, Amardas, is identified as Mahla 3; and so on.

The AGGS also contains the *Bani* of 13 Bhagats (devotees) namely Kabir, Farid, Namdev, Ravidas, Trilochan, Beni, Dhana, Jaidev, Sain, Pipa, Sadhana, Ramanand, and Parmanand; 4 *Sants* namely Bhikhan, Surdas, and Sundar (a couple of verses by Guru Nanak addressed to Mardana are erroneously assigned to the authorship of Mardana by some scholars); and eulogies (praises) (*swayiae*) of first five Sikh Gurus by 17-19 Bhattas (bards) namely Kal, Kalsahar, Tal, Jalap, Jal, Kirat, Sal, Bhal, Nal, Bhikha, Jalan, Das, Gayand, Sewak, Mathura, Bal, Harbans, Satta and Balwand. The names of some

bards are confused with those of words of their verses, that is why the number of Bhattas is variable in the literature.

**The present issue is dedicated to the AGGS**, the only authenticated source on the Sikh philosophy. In the Section on **Feature Articles** Sirdar Saran Singh exposes the lack of vision in the Sikh leadership under the Editorial from Across the World; Dr W O Cole discusses "The Sikh Concept of Guru"; Prof D S Chahal gives scientific and logical interpretation of the Commencing Verse of the AGGS; Prof H S

Virk discusses the Concept of Reality, and Bhai (Dr) Harbans Lal explains about the *Paath* of the AGGS. More articles, like, the language of the AGGS; *Sabd* Guru, Dr A S Dhaliwal's serial on the behavioral science experiment of Guru Gobind Singh, etc.

will be discussed in the next issue. System of Referencing *Bani* from the AGGS has already been discussed by Prof D S Chahal in the Inaugural Issue (*Understanding Sikhism Res. J.* 1(1): 9-15, 1999).

In the Section of **News and Views**, Definition of a Sikh in Gurdwara Act, and Controversy on Nanakshahi Calendar, and other current topics have been discussed. Section on **Book Review** reports review on a book. The Discussion on the previous articles are reported in the Section of **Discussion**.

### REFERENCES

1. AGGS: Aad Guru Granth Sahib . 1983 (Reprint). pp 1430. Publishers: Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar. (M = Mahla, i.e., succession number of the Sikh Gurus to the House of Nanak, P = Page of the AGGS.)
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