

SABD (ਸਬਦ) THE GURU OF NANAK

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INTRODUCTON

In Wikipedia the word ‘Sabda’ has been discussed under ‘shabda’ as ‘sabda’ is the Sanskrit word for "speech sound". In Sanskrit grammar, the term refers to an utterance in the sense of linguistic performance. “It is further described that “**shabda** is a Sanskrit word that was first used as a religio-philosophic term in the context of Hinduism. It refers to the verbal testimony (of revealed scriptures - *shruti*) that is indispensable to gain knowledge of the ultimate reality, *brahman*”. [1]

Dr Jagadanand Das, my French neighbour, in Laval, Quebec, Canada, who lives in India, is expert in Vedanta. According to his view Gurmukhi basic word *sabd* (ਸਬਦ) is spelled in Devanagari script as शब्द (*sabd*) but spelled as *sabda* in the classical scholarly transliteration system. He also agrees that *sabd* has many different meanings in Vedanta from one Holy Scripture to that of others. (Personal Communication.)

Prof Muthu Mohan, Center for Sri Guru Granth Sahib Studies, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar spells ਸਬਦ as *sabad*.

(personal Communication.)
In the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS), published by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), Amritsar, the basic word, ਸਬਦ (*sabd*), is found with many spellings,

e.g. ਸਬਦਿ, ਸਬਦੁ,
ਸਬਦੰ, ਸਬਦਾਰ, ਸਬਦੀ, ਸਬਦੀਂ,

ਸਬਦੇ, ਸਬਦੈ, ਸਬਦੇ, ਸਬਦੇ keeping in view the grammar and poetic form of the sentence/verse. [2] The irony is that Sikh theologians, writers, *kathakaars* (those who teach Sikhism through stories) and *Kirtanias* (hymn singers) pronounce it as *shabad* instead of *sabd*.

The word, ‘sabd’, is very closely connected with another word, ‘guru’, in gurbani incorporated in

Two words, ‘sabd’ and ‘guru’ and their combination as ‘sabd guru’ have been extensively used in the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS). It is usually understood that the word ‘sabd’ is derived from Sanskrit and is spelled as ‘sabda’ in English, however, in this paper it will be spelled as ‘sabd’. In Hinduism every person or spiritual leader must have a Guru. For example, in the Bhagavad Gita, Arjun, a Kshatriya prince, accepts Krishna as his Guru on the battlefield. The Siddhas had Gurakh Nath as their Guru and Bhagat Kabir had Ramanand as his Guru. Many Hindu families have their own personal Gurus. In the same sense, the Siddhas wanted to know the Guru of Nanak during a discourse (Siddh Gost) between Nanak and Siddhas. Nanak replied that his ‘guru’ is ‘sabd’ (sabda). This paper will discuss the intrinsic meanings of ‘guru’ and ‘sabd’ (sabda): what is that ‘sabd’, which is the ‘guru’ of Nanak, and how did ‘sabd’ become ‘sabd guru’ and how did ‘sabd guru’ become ‘granth guru’. This paper will also discuss implications of accepting the ‘granth’ as the ‘guru’ instead of ‘sabd, as the ‘guru’?

the AGGS. Most of the time both the words occur together as ‘sabd guru’ or ‘gursabd’. Therefore, to understand gurbani in its real perspective it is necessary to understand the intrinsic meanings of ‘sabd’, ‘guru’ and ‘sabd guru’.

SABD

Jodh Singh ([3] p 64) says that “*sabad has been accepted as Guru*” based on the *Siddh Gost* of Guru Nanak. He further says that “*This*

conception of Shabada as God and Guru by Guru Nanak is consistent also with the Indian religious tradition, in which Shabda-brahman principle has been widely accepted.” (Note: The original spellings of ‘Sabd’ used by Jodh Singh have been kept intact.

Similarly, the different spellings of ‘sabd’ used by different authors have been kept intact.)

Jodh Singh [3], Manmohan Singh [4] and some other authors follow *Faridkote Vala Teeka* and interpret ‘मघट्ट’ (sabd) as ‘God’ under the influence of Indian religious tradition. On the other hand Prof Sahib Singh [5] took courage to reject ‘मघट्ट’ as ‘God’ instead transliterated ‘सघट्ट’ as ‘sabd’ in his Punjabi translation and Manmohan Singh also transliterated ‘मघट्ट’ as ‘sabd’ in his English translation. Moreover, whenever the word ‘मघट्ट’ (sabd) appears in

Gurbani most of the time it is just transliterated as ‘sabd’ by many authors. The irony is that neither Prof Sahib Singh nor any other author has ever tried to explain what this ‘मघट्ट’ (sabd) means.

McLeod [6], a Christian Missionary and a Historian, had discussed ‘sabd’ in much details than any Sikh theologian or Sikh scholar. He also spelled ‘sabd’ as ‘shabad’ as is being spelled by many Sikh theologians and pronounced by *kirtanias* (hymn singers) and *kathakaars* (those who teach Sikhism through stories). He interpreted ‘sabd’ as sound, voice or tone, word, utterance, speech but in gurbani it means ‘hymn’ or ‘sacred word’ revealed by Guru.

He has further added that according to Nyaya and Vaisesika systems, ‘sabda’ means ‘knowledge’ but according Yaska, Panini and Katyayana ‘sabda’ is unite of language or speech. On the

other hand, ‘sabda’ in *Maitri Upanishad* occurs in two types: ‘sabd Brahman’ and ‘asabd Brahman’ meanings with sound and without sound Brahman, respectively. But according to Tantric system ‘sabd’ stands for ‘power’ (*Shakti*).

Analysis of gurbani by McLeod [6] indicates that for Guru Nanak and his successor Gurus ‘sabd’ means the ‘Word of Divine revelation’. Moreover, interpretation of most of the quotes from gurbani used to explain different meanings of ‘sabd’ is almost very much comparable to many of the Sikh theologians. I will try to find out the meanings of ‘guru’ and ‘sabd’ from gurbani as close to reality as possible.

GURU

Guru in Hinduism

The word *Guru* is mentioned in Vedas as follows [7].

गुशब्दस्त्वन्धकारः

स्यात् रुशब्दस्तन्निरोधकः।

अन्धकारनिरोधित्वात् गुरुरित्यभिधीयते ॥ १६ ॥

The syllable *gu* means darkness, the syllable *ru*, he who dispels darkness, because of the power to dispel darkness, the guru is thus named.

— *Advayataraka Upanishad, Verse 16*.

Etymologically the term "guru" is based on the syllables *gu* (गु)

and *ru* (रु), which stand for “darkness” and “light that dispels it”, respectively as described in *Advayataraka Upanishad, Verse 16*. The ‘guru’ is seen as the one who ‘dispels the darkness of ignorance’. *Chandogya Upanishad* in chapter 4.4 says that it is only through ‘guru’ that one attains the knowledge that matters, the insights that lead to Self-knowledge. The

Katha Upanishad in verse 1.2.8 declares the ‘guru’ as indispensable to the acquisition of knowledge.

Information in Vedas and Upanishads indicates that a person must have a Guru to attain knowledge. The importance of finding a guru, who can impart transcendental knowledge (*vidyā*), is emphasized in Hinduism. One of the main Hindu texts, the *Bhagavad Gita*, is a dialogue between God in the form of Krishna and his friend Arjun, a *Kshatriya* prince, who accepts Krishna as his guru on the battlefield. Krishna advised Arjun about finding a “guru”:

“Acquire the transcendental knowledge from a Self-realized master by humble reverence, by sincere inquiry, and by service. The wise ones who have realized the Truth will impart the Knowledge to you.” - *Bhagavad Gītā*, c4 s34 [7]

Therefore, in Hinduism every person or spiritual leader must have a Guru. For example, Arjun had Krishna as his Guru, Siddhas had Gurakh Nath as their Guru and Bhagat Kabir had Ramananda as his Guru. Similarly, many Hindu families have their own personal Gurus. Now the Sikhs are not lagging behind to have various persons, *Sants* or *Babas*, as their Gurus. They celebrate their anniversaries in Gurdwaras with great pomp and show all over the world where the Sikhs reside.

Guru in Buddhism [7]

In the Tibetan tradition, the ‘guru’ is seen as the Buddha, the very root of spiritual realization and the basis of the path. In Tibetan texts, great emphasis is placed upon praising the virtues of the guru. Blessed by the guru, whom the disciple regards as a ‘*Bodhisattva*’ or the embodiment of ‘*Buddha*’, the disciple can continue on the way to experiencing the true nature of reality.

Guru in Sikhism

In general, 'guru' is a teacher/leader. Traditionally, the spiritual authority in Sikhism has always been on the word, **sabd**, of Sikh Gurus and which has been preserved in the AGGS. However, all the ten Sikh religious teachers/leaders are also called the 'Guru'. Moreover, the AGGS was also declared as the 'Guru' of the Sikhs by the Tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, in 1708. Consequently, there are 11 Gurus for the Sikhs.

But Guru Gobind Singh says in *Chaupai* that his Guru is God [8], who created Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and created the world and everything and is One and Only. However, there is a controversy whether this *Chupai* was composed by Guru Gobind Singh?

ਕਾਲ ਪਾਇ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਬਪੁ ਧਰਾ ॥ ਕਾਲ ਪਾਇ ਸਿਵਜੂ ਅਵਤਾਰਾ ॥

Kaal Paaei Barahamaa Bapu Dharaa ॥
Kaal Paaei Shivajoo Avataaraa ॥
In due time Brahma appeared in physical form; in due time Shiva incarnated;

ਕਾਲ ਪਾਇ ਕਰਿ ਬਿਸਨ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਾ ॥ ਸਕਲ

ਕਾਲ ਕਾ ਕੀਯਾ ਤਮਾਸ਼ਾ ॥੩੮੩॥

Kaal Paaei Kari Bishana Parakaashaa ॥
Sakala Kaal Kaa Keeyaa

Tamaashaa ॥383॥

In due time Vishnu manifested himself; all this is the play of the Temporal Lord. 383.

ਜਵਨ ਕਾਲ ਜੇਗੀ ਸਿਵ ਕੀਯੇ ॥ ਬੇਦ ਰਾਜ

ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਜੂ ਥੀਯੇ ॥

Javana Kaal Jogee Shiva Keeyo ॥

Beda Raaja Barahamaa Joo Theeyo ॥
The Temporal Lord, who created Shiva, the Yogi; who created Brahma, the Master of the Vedas;

ਜਵਨ ਕਾਲ ਸਭ ਲੋਕ ਸਵਾਰਾ ॥ ਨਮਸਕਾਰ ਹੈ

ਤਾਹਿ ਹਮਾਰਾ ॥੩੮੪॥

Javana Kaal Sabha Loka Savaara ॥

Namashakaar Hai Taahi Hamaara ॥384॥

The Temporal Lord who fashioned the entire world; I salute the same Lord. 384.

ਜਵਨ ਕਾਲ ਸਭ ਜਗਤ ਬਨਾਯੇ ॥ ਦੇਵ ਦੈਤ ਜੱਛਨ ਉਪਜਾਯੇ ॥

Javana Kaal Sabha Jagata Banaayo ॥
Deva Dait Jachchhana Aupajaayo ॥
The Temporal Lord, who created the whole world; who created gods, demons and yakshas;

ਆਦਿ ਅੰਤਿ ਏਕੈ ਅਵਤਾਰਾ ॥ ਸੋਈ ਗੁਰੂ

ਸਮਝਿਯਹੁ ਹਮਾਰਾ ॥੩੮੫॥

Aadi Aanti Eekai Avataara ॥ Soeala

Guroo Samajhiyahu Hamaara ॥385॥

He is the only one from the beginning to the end; I consider Him only my Guru. 385.

On the other hand Bhai Kahn Singh [9, 10] defines 'guru' as follows: The word 'guru' (spelled differently in Gurmukhi – ਗੁਰ, ਗੁਰੁ, ਗੁਰੂ, ਗੁਰਿ) comes from Sanskrit word 'gri', which means to engulf, to make understand, the one which removes ignorance.

(ਸੰ. ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੁ. ਸੰਗਯਾ. ਇਹ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਗ੍ਰੀ (ਗ੍ਰੁ)

ਧਾਤੁ ਤੋਂ ਬਣਿਆ ਹੈ, ਇਸ ਦੇ ਅਰਥ ਹਨ

ਨਿਗਲਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਝਾਉਣਾ, ਜੋ ਅਗਿਆਨ ਨੂੰ

ਖਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਤਤ੍ਵਗਿਆਨ

ਸਮਝਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ. ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿੱਚ

ਗੁਰ, ਗੁਰੁ, ਗੁਰੂ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਿ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਇੱਕ ਹੀ

ਅਰਥ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਏ ਹਨ, ਯਥਾ- "ਗੁਰੁ ਅਪਨੇ

ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ".)

In Hinduism every person or spiritual leader must have a 'guru' as discussed earlier. For example, Siddhas had Gurakh Nath as their 'guru'. Under this very system the Siddhas posed following questions to know the 'guru' of Nanak:

Who is your Guru?

ਕਵਣ ਮੂਲੁ¹ ਕਵਣ ਮਤਿ² ਵੇਲਾ³॥

ਤੇਰਾ ਕਵਣ ਗੁਰੂ ਜਿਸ ਕਾ ਤੂ ਚੇਲਾ ॥

Kavaṇ mūl kavaṇ maṭ velā.
Ferā kavaṇ gurū jis kā tū chelā.
AGGS, M 1, p 943. [2]

What is the source of beginning¹ and which type of philosophy² is of this Age³?

Who is that 'guru' of whom you are his disciple? (Note # 1)

Guru Nanak answers about his 'guru' as follows:

ਪਵਨ¹ ਅਰੰਭੁ² ਸਤਿ³ ਗੁਰ⁴ ਮਤਿ⁵ ਵੇਲਾ⁶ ॥

ਸਬਦੁ⁷ ਗੁਰੂ⁸ ਸੁਰਤਿ⁹ ਧੁਨਿ¹⁰ ਚੇਲਾ¹¹ ॥

Pavan arambh satgur maṭ velā.
Sabaḍ gurū suraṭ dhun chelā.
The air¹ is the beginning² of every life and this is the Age⁶ of enlightenment⁵ through True⁴ Guru³.

Who is that true guru?

It has been explained in the second sentence:

The sabd⁷ is the guru⁸ (enlightener) and my keen¹⁰ conscience⁹ is its disciple¹¹. (Note 2)

Which is that 'Sabd' that is the 'Guru' of Nanak?

Guru Nanak himself in stanza #38 of *Jap Bani* has described that 'sabd' as follows:

ਜਤੁ¹ ਪਾਹਾਰਾ² ਧੀਰਜੁ³ ਸੁਨਿਆਰੁ⁴ ॥

ਅਹਰਣਿ⁵ ਮਤਿ⁶ ਵੇਦੁ⁷ ਹਥੀਆਰੁ⁸ ॥

Jaṭ pāhārā dhīraj suniār.
Ahraṇ maṭ ved hathiār.
Self-control¹ should be the furnace², and patience³ of the goldsmith⁴. Wisdom⁶ should be the anvil⁵ and knowledge⁷ should be the tools⁸.

ਭਉ⁹ ਖਲਾ¹⁰ ਅਗਨਿ¹¹ ਤਪ ਤਾਉ ॥

ਭਾਂਡਾ¹² ਭਾਉ¹³ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ¹⁴ ਤਿਤੁ¹⁵ ਢਾਲਿ¹⁶ ॥

ਘੜੀਐ¹⁷ ਸਬਦੁ¹⁸ ਸਚੀ ਟਕਸਾਲ¹⁹ ॥

Bhāo khalā agan tap tāo.
Bhāṅḍā bhāo amṛiṭ tīt dhāl.
Ghāṛīai sabaḍ sachī taksāl.

Love⁹ for Eternal Entity (God) should be the bellows¹⁰ to blow air into fire¹¹ to make it super-hot.

The body (mind), full of love¹³, is the melting pot¹² where the above-mentioned self-control, patience, wisdom and knowledge as matter¹⁵ to be melted¹⁶ together to coin¹⁷ the sabd (idea/philosophy)¹⁸ as an Amrit (elixir)¹⁴ in the mint¹⁹ of truth.

ਜਿਨ ਕਉ ਨਦਰਿ²⁰ ਕਰਮੁ²¹ ਤਿਨ ਕਾਰ²² ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਨਦਰੀ²³ ਨਦਰਿ²⁴ ਨਿਹਾਲ²⁵ ॥੩੮॥

Jin ka^o naḍar karam ṭin kār.

Nānak naḍrī naḍar nihāl. ॥38॥

Such type of work²² to coin sabd (idea/philosophy) can only be done by those who have the capability²¹ of vision²⁰.

The Eternal Entity (God) is happy²⁵ for such people who have this type of vision^{23, 24}. 38.

AGGS, Jap # 38, p 8. (Note 3)

This stanza # 38 of Jap Bani clearly indicates that the word, ‘sabd’, means that ‘idea’ or ‘philosophy’ which enlightens a person to discover the right path of life. Therefore, ‘sabd’ is interpreted as ‘Enlightening idea/philosophy’.

Guru Nanak further explains that human inherit four characteristics, e.g. seeing, hearing, sensation, thinking and finally analysing the data collected. I would interpret the following stanza by keeping in view the involvement of various sciences - Biology, Neurosciences, Physiology, Physics and Chemistry:

ਚਾਰਿ¹ ਪਦਾਰਥ² ਲੈ ਜਗਿ³ ਆਇਆ⁴ ॥

ਸਿਵ ਸਕਤੀ⁵ ਘਰਿ⁶ ਵਾਸਾ⁷ ਪਾਇਆ ॥

ਏਕੁ⁸ ਵਿਸਾਰੇ⁹ ਤਾ ਪਿੜ¹⁰ ਹਾਰੇ¹¹ ਅੰਧੁਲੈ¹² ਨਾ

ਮੁ¹³ ਵਿਸਾਰਾ¹⁴ ਹੇ ॥੬॥

Chār padārath lai jag āiā.

Siv saktī ghar vāsā pāiā.

Ēk visāre ṭā piṛ hāre andhulai nām visārā he. ॥6॥

AGGS, M 1, p 1027.

Man was born⁴ into this world³ with four¹ characteristics²:

(Seeing, hearing, sensation and thinking/capability to analyse the data collected.)

In fact, all these characteristics of humans⁶ are based⁷ on Universal Energy⁵.

If one forgets⁹ about these four characteristics⁸ then that innocent (human)¹² loses¹¹ all his study/capability¹⁰ and also forgets¹⁴ to use Laws of Nature¹³ for betterment of one’s life.

In the above stanza # 38 Guru Nanak explains how a sabd (idea/philosophy) is coined (formulated) as the Amrit (life-giving elixir) – the way of living, which will mould a person to be highly moral and progressive. Guru Amardas explained about the Amrit (idea/philosophy), which is already present in the body (mind) but one has to be awakened to that Amrit (See note 3). However, Guru Nanak continues to explain further that body and mind have the four faculties: seeing, hearing, sensation, thinking/capability to analyse the data collected. In spite of the above teachings of Guru Nanak the Sikhs continue to follow Eastern philosophy that a personal human Guru is necessary to guide a person to achieve a moral life, to meet God and mukati (salvation). That is why many Sants/Babas have appeared in the Punjab, who are brainwashing their followers to be dependent upon their advice rather than to use their own intellect to coin that sabd taught by Guru Nanak. Of course, some persons may need a Guru (teacher) to teach those qualities to coin that ‘sabd’ and to develop four qualities discussed earlier to resolve their problems to across the so-called dreadful sea of life.

During the discourse (Siddh Gost)

the Siddhas continued to pose other questions to Guru Nanak:

What is your philosophy?

ਕਵਣ ਕਥਾ⁴ ਲੇ ਰਹਹੁ ਨਿਰਾਲੇ⁵ ॥

ਬੋਲੈ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਸੁਣਹੁ ਤੁਮ ਬਾਲੇ⁶ ॥

Kavaṇ kathā le rahhu nirāle.

Bolai Nānak suṇhu ṭum bāle.

Question 42 b:

What type of unique⁵ philosophy⁴ do you have?

Speak out, O child⁶ Nanak, we are ready to listen to you.

And

What is that Sabd, which can help us to cross the dreadful sea of life?

ਏਸੁ ਕਥਾ⁷ ਕਾ ਦੇਇ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ⁸ ॥

ਭਵਜਲੁ⁹ ਸਬਦਿ¹⁰ ਲੰਘਾਵਣਹਾਰੁ¹¹ ॥੪੩॥

Ēs kathā kā deie bīchār.

Bhāvjal sabaḍ langhāvaṇhār. ॥43॥

Question 42c:

Could you, please, deliberate⁸ on your unique philosophy⁷?

What is that sabd¹⁰ (your idea/philosophy) which could help¹¹ us to cross the dreadful⁹ sea of life?

Guru Nanak answers as follows:

ਸੁਰਤਿ¹ ਸਬਦਿ² ਭਵ³ ਸਾਗਰੁ⁴ ਤਰੀਐ⁵ ਨਾਨ

ਕ ਨਾਮੁ⁶ ਵਖਾਣੈ⁷ ॥

Surat sabaḍ bhav sāgar tarīai Nānak nām vakhāṇe.

Nanak explains⁷ that understanding the Laws of Nature⁶ and turning one’s conscience¹ towards such sabd² (as described above) will help to cross⁵ the dreadful³ sea of life⁴.

AGGS, M 1, p 938.

Guru Nanak continues to explain that that ‘sabd’, as explained in Stanza #38 of Jap Bani, is answer to various problems of the life:

ਗਿਆਨ¹ ਵਿਹੁਣੀ² ਭਵੈ³ ਸਬਾਈ⁴ ॥

ਸਾਚਾ⁵ ਰਵਿ⁶ ਰਹਿਆ ਲਿਵ⁷ ਲਾਈ ॥

ਨਿਰਭਉ⁸ ਸਬਦੁ⁹ ਗੁਰੂ¹⁰ ਸਚੁ¹¹

ਜਾਤਾ¹² ਜੋਤੀ ਜੋਤਿ¹³ ਮਿਲਾਇਦਾ¹⁴ ॥੮॥

Giān vihuṇī bhavai sabāi.

Sāchā rav rahiᵐā liv lāᵐī.

Nirbhāᵐo sabaḍ gurū sach jātā jotī jot milāᵐidā. ||8||

A person, without² using intellect¹, is wandering³ all around⁴ to understand the Eternal Entity (God).

That person could not understand that Eternal Entity⁵, which is prevailing⁶ everywhere as if imbibed⁷ in everything.

A person, who is not afraid⁸ of anybody/anything, can understand¹² that Eternal Entity (God)^{11,12} through¹⁴ the enlightening philosophy¹³ (sabd guru). AGGS, M 1, p 1034.

Many of the interpreters translate ‘sabd’ as ‘sabd’ and ‘guru’ as ‘guru’. But nobody tries to explain the meaning of ‘guru’ and of ‘sabd’ as explained above.

Guru Nanak further explains that that ‘sabd’ is the real ‘guru’ in life:

ਘਘੈ ਘਾਲਾ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਜੇ ਘਾਲੈ ਸਬਦਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੈ ਲਾਗਿ ਰਹੈ ॥

ਬੁਰਾ ਭਲਾ ਜੇ ਸਮ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਣੈ ਇਨ

ਬਿਧਿ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਰਮਤੁ ਰਹੈ ॥੮॥

Ghaghāi ghāl sevak je ghālai sabaḍ gurū kai lāg rahai.

Burā bhālā je sam kar jānai in bidh sāhib ramat rahai. ||8||

If a dedicated¹ devotee² remains devoted^{3,6} to the concept of enlightening⁵ philosophy (sabd)⁴ and considers¹⁰ bad⁷ and good days equally⁹ as a part of life that person understands that Eternal Entity¹² through this method¹¹ and remains attached¹³ to That Eternal Entity. AGGS, M 1, p 432.

Guru Nanak continues to advise about the use of ‘sabd’ and its use in life:

ਅਮਲੁ ਕਰਿ ਧਰਤੀ ਬੀਜੁ ਸਬਦੋ ਕਰਿ ਸ ਚ ਕੀ ਆਬ ਨਿਤੁ ਦੇਹਿ ਪਾਣੀ ॥

ਹੋਇ ਕਿਰਸਾਣੁ ਈਮਾਨੁ ਜੰਮਾਇ ਲੈ ਭਿਸਤੁ

¹² ਦੇਜਰੁ¹³ ਮੂੜੇ¹⁴ ਏਵ ਜਾਈ ॥੧॥

Amal kar d̥hartī bīj sabdo kar sach kī āb niṭ d̥eh pānī.

Hoᵐe kirsān īmān jammāᵐe lai bhīsat dojak mūre ev jānī. ||1||

Make good deed¹ as the soil² to sow the seed³ of that sabd⁴ (idea/philosophy realized) and always⁷ water that seed with the water⁸ of habit⁶ of speaking truth⁵.

Be such a type of farmer.

If one accepts¹⁰ to be such type of farmer⁹, then it will become¹¹ clear to that innocent one¹⁴ (farmer) about the meanings of heaven¹² and hell¹³.

AGGS, M 1, p 24. (Note 4)

Guru Arjan has also used ‘sabd guru’ in the same sense as used by Guru Nanak:

ਹਰਿ ਹਮਰਾ ਹਮ ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਦਾਸੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਬ

ਦੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਚੁ ਦੀਨਾ ਜੀਉ ॥੪॥੧੪॥੨੧॥

Har hamrā ham har ke dāse Nānak sabaḍ gurū sach dīnā jīᵐo.

||4||14||21||

Guru Arjan claims that Eternal Entity (called Har) belongs to him and he is the servant of that Eternal Entity (God). This has happened through the sabd as the Guru (as taught by Nanak). (Note 5)

AGGS, M 5, p 100.

ਨਾਮ* ਨਿਧਾਨ ਤਿਸਹਿ ਪਰਾਪਤਿ ਜਿਸੁ ਸਬ

ਦੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਨਿ ਵੂਠਾ ਜੀਉ ॥੨॥

Nām niḍhān ṭisēh parāpat jis sabaḍ gurū man vūṭhā jīᵐo. ||2||

The Naam* treasure can be achieved by those who have understood the sabd as the Guru. (Note 6)

AGGS, M 5, p 101.

* ਨਾਮ (Naam): Laws of Nature.

ਜੈ ਜੈ ਕਾਰੁ ਹੇਤੁ ਜਗ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਸਬਦੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਰ

ਸੁ ਚਾਖੈ ॥੧॥

Jai jai kār hoṭ jag bhīṭar sabaḍ gurū ras chākhai. ||1||

The One who has understood the sabd as the Guru gets honor in the whole world.

AGGS, M 5, p 630.

In all the above phrases Guru Arjan is endorsing that ‘sabd’ is the ‘guru’ as described by Guru Nanak in Jap Stanza # 38.

Finally, Guru Nanak sums up that ‘sabd’, as explained in Stanza 38 of Jap Bani, helps to become and enlightened person:

ਏਕੁ ਸਬਦੁ ਜਿਤੁ ਕਥਾ ਵੀਚਾਰੀ ॥

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਹਉਮੈ ਅਗਨਿ ਨਿਵਾਰੀ ॥੪੪॥

Ēk sabaḍ jīṭ kathā vīchārī.

Gurmukh haᵐumai agan nivārī. ||44||

The one, who deliberates^{3,4} on that one¹ sabd², can eliminate⁸ fire-like⁷ ego⁶, to become an enlightened person⁵. (Note 7)

AGGS, M 1, p 943.

IS MEANING OF “SABD” AS “GURU” BEING LOST

Guru Nanak has explained the meanings of ‘sabd’ and also how to coin that “Sabd”.

Let us examine if the “sabd” is being understood the same way as explained by Guru Nanak?

We have to go back to the time of 1604 when the bani of Sikh Gurus was compiled by Guru Arjan into a *Pothi* or *Bir* (book or volume). According to Prof Sahib Singh [11] Guru Arjan received the bani of Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, and Guru Amardas from his father, Guru Ramdas, when he looked into this treasure he exclaimed as follows: ਪੀਊ ਦਾਦੇ ਕਾ ਖੇਲਿ ਡਿਠਾ ਖਜਾਨਾ ॥

ਤਾ ਮੇਰੈ ਮਨਿ ਭਇਆ ਨਿਧਾਨਾ ॥੧॥...

ਖਾਵਹਿ ਖਰਚਹਿ ਰਲਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਭਾਈ ॥੧੦॥

ਤੇਟਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਵਧਦੇ ਜਾਈ ॥੩॥

Ṗᵐᵐ d̥āde kā kh̄ol diṭhā khajānā.

Tā merai man bhāᵐᵐā niḍhānā. ||10||

Khāvēh kharchēh ral mil bhāᵐᵐ.

Fot na āvai vadḥᵐᵐo jāᵐᵐ. ||3||

When I opened up the inherited^{1,2} treasure³ of bani of my forefathers

then my mind⁴ was illumined⁵.
 Oh Brothers¹⁰! Let us understand⁶ its
 philosophy together^{8,9} and
 disseminate⁷ it to others
 By doing so it will not be exhausted¹¹
 instead it will be increasing¹² when it
 reaches to others at places far and
 wide.3. (Note 8)
 AGGS, M 5, p 186.

Guru Nanak declared that ‘sabd’ is his
 ‘guru’, therefore, it should also be the
 ‘guru’ of everybody. However, Guru
 Ramdas declared ‘bani’ is ‘guru’ and
 vice versa:

ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਬਾਣੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ
 ਸਾਰੇ ॥

ਗੁਰੁ ਬਾਣੀ ਕਹੈ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਜਨੁ ਮਾਨੈ ਪਰਤਖਿ
 ਗੁਰੁ ਨਿਸਤਾਰੇ ॥੫॥

Baṇī gurū gurū hai baṇī vich baṇī
 amrit sāre.

Gur baṇī kahai sevak jan mānai
 partakh gurū nistāre. ॥5॥

Bani is Guru and Guru is bani and in
 this bani is the elixir of life.

Guru says bani and the followers
 accept it.

Thus that Guru will help the follower
 to across the sea of life.

AGGS, M 4, p 982.

Almost every theologian interprets

ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ (Baṇī gurū gurū
 hai baṇī) as “The bani is the guru and
 the guru is the bani” but without
 defining ‘bani’ and ‘guru’. Scholars
 are also silent about; “who is that
 ‘guru’ who says ‘bani’ (ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਣੀ ਕਹੈ -
 Gur baṇī kahai).” It was Guru Ramdas
 again, who has very clearly identified
 that it is Guru Nanak, who says
 ‘bani’:

ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ² ਬੋਲੈ ਗੁਣ³ ਬਾਣੀ⁴ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ

⁵ ਹਰਿ⁶ ਨਾਮਿ⁷ ਸਮਾਇਆ⁸ ॥੪॥੫॥

Jan Nānak bole guṇ baṇī gurbāṇī har
 nām samāiā. ॥4॥5॥

AGGS, M 4, p 494.

Nanak², the person¹, speaks bani⁴ of
 distinctive wisdom³;

this is the enlightening-bani⁵ in
 which the Laws of Nature⁷ of that
 Eternal Entity (God)⁶ are found⁸.
 (Note 9)

Note: ਬਾਣੀ⁴ (bani): Utterance.

It is evident from Guru Ramdas’
 bani that ‘ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ’ (gurbani) is the
 utterance of Guru Nanak. On the
 other hand, Bhai Kahn Singh [10]
 says that besides the bani of Guru
 Nanak all other bani of Sikh Gurus,
 who succeeded to the ‘House of
 Nanak’, is also called gurbani. Bhai
 Gurdas [12] still goes further to say
 that all the bani (including of
 Bhagats and Bhattas) in the AGGS is
 ‘gurbani’. **It appears that there is
 no unanimity about explanation of
 ‘ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ’ (gurbani)**’.

On receiving bani of predecessors,
 Guru Arjan decided to compile all
 bani of his forefathers (first four
 Gurus) and his own into a *pothi* or
bir (book or volume). It is also
 accepted in the history of the Sikhs
 that he included the bani of Bhagats,
 Sufis, of some Sikhs and also added
 the bani of Bhattas in this *pothi*. Its
 title as *Pothi* (*granth*, book) is
 evident in the index of the original
Pothi: ਸੰਮਤ 1661 ਮਿਤੀ ਭਾਦੋਂ ਵਦੀ

ਏਕਮ (1) ਪੇਥੀ ਲਿਖਿ ਪਹੁੰਚੇ। (Samat
 1661 miti Bhadoo vidi akam (1)
 pothi likh pohnachai). The writing of
Pothi was completed on first *Bhadoo*
 of second fortnight (dark half of
 Moon) of Samat 1661, which
 corresponds to August 16, 1604
 according to the Nanakshahi
 Calendar. However, it was installed
 (*parkash*) in the Darbar Sahib,
 Amritsar on September 1, 1604
 according to Nanakshahi Calendar
 after its binding done at Lahore. The
 manuscript prepared by Guru Arjan
 is believed to be in the possession of
 the Sodhi family of Kartarpur (near
 Jalandhar). Guru Arjan, during
 compilation of this *Pothi*, included

the following *raha*o (phrase/pause), in
 it:

ਪੇਥੀ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਕਾ ਥਾਨੁ ॥

ਸਾਧਸੰਗਿ ਗਾਵਹਿ ਗੁਣ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਪੂਰਨ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ

ਗਿਆਨੁ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

Pothī pamesar kā thān.

Sādhsang gāvahi guṇ gobind pūran
 barahm giān. ॥1॥ rahāo.

This phrase is invariable interpreted
 by many scholars as follows:

*This Holy Book is the home of the
 Transcendent Lord God.*

*Whoever sings the Glorious Praises of
 the Lord of the Universe in the Saadh
 Sangat, the Company of the Holy, has
 the perfect knowledge of God.*

॥1॥Pausell (Translation by Sant
 Singh Khalsa from Web site of Dr KS
 Thind [4]).

Faridkot Vala Teeka says that this
pothi (Holy Scriptures) is a place of
 God. However, Prof Sahib Singh
 suggests that *Gurbani* is a place to
 meet God. Most English speaking
 Sikh scholars interpret the (*Aad*)
Granth as the abode (dwelling) of
 God. Because of such interpretations
 many Sikhs treat the Holy Scriptures
 as the *Parnesar* (God). With such
 types of interpretations, however,
 Sikh theologians and scholars have
 ignored the characteristics of ੴ.

The ੴ captures Guru Nanak's vision
 of that Eternal Entity (God) which
 represents “One and Only That is
 Infinite” and prevails everywhere but
 not at any particular place.

However, the real message of Guru
 Arjan in this phrase is as follows:

ਪੇਥੀ¹ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ² ਕਾ ਥਾਨੁ³ ॥

ਸਾਧਸੰਗਿ⁴ ਗਾਵਹਿ⁵ ਗੁਣ⁶ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ⁷ ਪੂਰਨ ਬ੍ਰ

ਹਮ⁸ ਗਿਆਨੁ⁹ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

Pothī pamesar kā thān.

Sādhsang gāvahi guṇ gobind pūran
 barahm giān. ॥1॥ rahāo.

This granth¹ is place (source)³ where-

in one can find the attributes of that Eternal Entity (God)².

Therefore, Guru Arjan is advising: *By sitting in the company of noble people⁴ try to comprehend⁵ the attributes⁶ of that Entity (God)⁷ and great knowledge⁹ about the Universe and social life⁸ from this pothi (granth/book).*

AGGS, M 5, p 1226.

This phrase clearly indicates that Guru Arjan is explaining that this pothi (granth) is a source of attributes of Eternal Entity (God) and great knowledge about the Universe and the social life.

‘Sabd Guru’ Changed to ‘Granth Guru’

Since the pothi has been equated to Parmesar (God) (ਪੈਸੈ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਕਾ ਥਾਨੁ) by Guru Arjan, therefore, bani was preached from this pothi (granth) by Guru Arjan himself and by all other Gurus, who succeeded to the House of Nanak, and that view has been expressed in the early writings, i. e. *Sri Gur Sobha* [13] and *Gurbilas Patshahi 6* [14].

Thereafter, according to the *Rehit Nama of Bhai Prahlad Singh* the Granth was declared as Guru by Guru Gobind Singh [15]:

ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਕੇ ਬਚਨ ਸਿਉਂ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਚਲਾਯੋ ਪੰਥ ।

ਸਭ ਸਿਖਨ ਕੇ ਬਚਨ ਹੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਾਨੀਅਹੁ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ । 30।

Akal Purakh ke bachan sion pargat chalaio panth.

Sab Sikhnan ko bachan hai Guru maneo Granth.

With the order of God, the Panth was created.

*It is ordained to all the Sikhs to accept the **Granth as their Guru.***

Now the Sikhs recite the following phrase as modified by Giani Gian Singh every day in the Gurdwaras

after the Ardaas (Prayer) as follows [16]:

Aagiya bhaee Akal kee tabhai chalaio panth.

Sabh Sikhnan ko hukam hai Guru maanio Granth.

Guru Granth ko maanio pragat guran ki deh.

Jo Prabh ko milbo chahe khoj sabad mein leh. (Note 10)

Literal English translation:

When the command came (to Guru Gobind Singh) from the Akal (God), then (he) initiated a (new) panth (religion).

(Now Guru Gobind Singh)

*commands to the Sikhs (the panth) to accept **Granth as the Guru.***

*(And also) accept Guru Granth as the **living-body of the Gurus** (10 Gurus).*

(Guru Gobind Singh also says)

*Those who desire to meet God should **search in the SABD.***

According to Giani Gian Singh [16], Guru Gobind Singh issued three distinct commands:

The Granth is the Guru.

The Granth is the living-body of the Gurus.

To meet God search It in the sabd.

Many Sikh theologians and the Sikhs at large are accepting the first two commands very sacredly but rare are the Sikhs who care to look into the third command.

Recitation of this phrase (in variously modified forms) in every Gurdwara has lead the Sikhs to treat the ‘Guru Granth’ (Aad Guru Granth Sahib – AGGS) as a deity for worshiping, although recitation of such phrase is not recommended in the *Sikh Rehit Maryada* (SRM) published by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), Amritsar. [17] (See Note 10 for the modified form of the above stanza.)

Recently the Indian Supreme Court has also recognized the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) as a juristic person [18]. The AGGS was declared as a juristic person to avoid conflict on holding the properties attached to the AGGS and Gurdwaras. However, it is a matter of pride for all the Sikhs that Supreme Court thinks in the right direction when it also declared very clearly that the AGGS should never be taken as an idol because idol worship is rejected in Nanakian philosophy.

A controversy on the declaration of Granth as Guru was started by McLeod [19]. He believed that it was a later addition after the execution of Banda Bahadur the Granth was declared as Guru as a cohesive force for the leaderless community. Prof Madanjit Kaur [20] wrote a detailed article entitled, *The Guru-ship and Succession of Guru Granth* to justify that Granth is Guru and Guru-ship was bestowed by Guru Gobind Singh in 1708. She stated that this article was written to refute the following statement of McLeod: *“...tradition which conferred his (Guru Gobind Singh's) personal authority upon the sacred scripture and the corporate Panth may perhaps be a retrospective interpretation, a tradition which owes its origin not to an actual pronouncement of the Guru but to an insistent need for maintaining the Panth's cohesion during the later period.”* [19]

Grewal [21] had also pointed out about the contention of McLeod as follows: *He (Justice Gurdev Singh) thinks it is unfair on McLeod to suggest that Granth Sahib was installed as Guru to serve as a cohesive force for the leaderless community after the execution of Banda Bahadur and not because of injunction of Guru Gobind Singh.”* In response to the above contention of McLeod, Harbans Singh [22] has also proven historically that it was Guru

Gobind Singh, who bestowed Guru-ship to the Granth in 1708 CE at the time of his demise.

Historical Aspect about Guru-ship to Granth

According to Giani Gian Singh [23] in his 'Panth Parkash' the *Damdami Bir* (which is based on 'Kartarpuri Bir' in which the *bani* of Guru Teg Bahdur was added) was declared as the 'Guru' of the Sikhs on October 20, 1708 according to Nanakshahi Calendar:

ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਜੀ ਮਾਨਓ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਗੁਰਾਂ ਕੀ ਦੇਹਿ ।
(Guru Granth ji maneo pargat guran ki deh.)
Accept the Guru Granth as the visible body of the Gurus.

On the other hand Madanjit Kaur [20] and Ganda Singh [24] have accepted the following statement of Bhai Prahlad Singh as true without testing its authenticity with the Nanakian philosophy:

ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਕੇ ਬਚਨ ਸਿਉਂ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਚਲਾਏ
ਪੰਥ ।

ਸਭ ਸਿਖਨ ਕੇ ਬਚਨ ਹੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਾਨੀਅਹੁ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ
। 30।

Akal Purakh ke bachan sion pargat chalo panth.

Sab Sikhnan ko bachan hai Guru maneo Granth.

With the order of God, the Panth was created.

It is ordained to all the Sikhs to accept the Granth as their Guru.
(*Rehit Nama* Bhai Prahlad Singh [15])

In the same *Rehit Nama* Bhai Prahlad Singh has also declared 'Khalsa as Guru' and 'Khalsa as the Body of the Guru' in the following phrase:

ਗੁਰੂ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮਾਨੀਅਹਿ ਪਰਗਟ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੀ
ਦੇਹ ।

ਝੇ ਸਿਖ ਮੇ ਮਿਲਬੈ ਚਹਿਹ ਖੇਜ ਇਨਹੁ ਮਹਿ
ਲੇਹੁ ।21।

Guru Khalsa maneo pargat guran ki deh.

Jo Sikh mo milbai chehe khoj inhi main leh. 21.

"Accept the Khalsa as the 'guru' and Khalsa as the body of the 'guru'.

If any Sikh wants to meet the 'guru' should search in the Khalsa."

(See Note # 2 for variation in the above stanza.)

According to Bhai Prahlad Singh there are two Gurus:

'Khalsa Guru' and 'Granth Guru' instead of 'Sabd Guru'. Moreover, if a Sikh wants to meet the 'guru' should search in Khalsa but not in the 'sabd'.

Another work, which we may refer to here, is *Bansavalinama* of Kesar Singh Chhibbar (completed in 1770 CE, i.e. 62 years after the demise of Guru Gobind Singh). Kesar Singh's ancestors had been in the service of Guru Gobind Singh as *diwan*. He claimed to have seen and consulted in his early days a *vehi* (account book) of the 'House of the Guru'. The tenth chapter of *Bansavalinama* deals with the life of Guru Gobind Singh. In stanzas 678-683, the author mentions the death of the Guru and his last commandment in reply to the question of the Sikhs: ***The Granth is the guru, you hold the garment (seek the protection) of the Timeless God*** (ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਹੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਲੜਪ ਕਰਹੁ ਅਕਾਲ

679) as stated by Madanjit Kaur [20]

and Ganda Singh [24]. The irony is that both the scholars, Madanjit Kaur and Ganda Singh, have ignored to mention that Kesar Singh Chhibbar also reported that "*The Guru is Khalsa, the Khalsa is Guru*" (ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ

ਖਾਲਸਾ, ਖਾਲਸਾ ਹੈ ਗੁਰੂ) and "*Accept*

the command of Granth Sahib but discover the value of the command

by researching the Sabd." (ਆਗਿਆ

ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ, ਕਰਨੀ ਸਬਦ ਦੀ ਖੋਜਨਾ

[680]

Granth Guru to Visible Body of the Guru

According to **Munshi Sant Singh's *Bayan-i-Khandan-i-Nishan-i-Bedian*** (account of the Bedi family of Una), when Guru Gobind Singh was about to die at Nander in the Deccan (*Katik Sudi 5, 1765 Bikrami* (1708 CE)), all the Singhs and disciples asked him as to who would be the future Guru. The Guru replied; '**Guru Khalsa, Khalsa Guru**'. Then the Guru, *with five paise and a coconut in his hand, bowed before the Guru Granth Sahib* and said, '*Ye all community should recognize the Granth Sahib as the Guru after me and obey the commandments contained therein.*'

Then he uttered the following couplet: ***Recognize the Guru Granth as the Visible Body of the Guru.***" as stated by Madanjit Kaur [20] and Ganda Singh [24].

Granth Guru to Darshan Guru **Sohan Lal Suri** tells us in *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh* that during the last moments of Guru Gobind Singh's life a disciple of his asked him as to whom he had appointed as Guru after him. Thereupon, the Guru replied that, the '*Guru is Granthji*'. There is no difference between the Granth and the Guru. By the *darshan* (seeing/glancing) of Granthji one shall have the happy *darshan* of the Guru Sahib. (Cited from Ref.[20]). I think the above information is based on following stanza from *Gurbilas Patshahi 6* ([25] - p 84):

ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਕਲਿਜੁਗ ਭਯੋ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰ ਰੂਪ

ਮਹਾਨ ।

ਦਸ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀਆਂ ਰੂਪ ਇਹ ਗੁਰ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ
ਸੁਖਖਾਨ ।

ਗੁਰੂ ਦਰਸ ਜਿਹ ਦੇਖਨਾ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ

ਦਰਸਾਏ ।

ਬਾਤਾਂ ਕਰਿ ਗੁਰ ਸੋ ਚਰੈ ਪੜੈ igRMQ ਮਨੁ

ਮਾਇ |

Guru Granth Kaljug bheao sri gur rup mahan.

Das patshahian rup eh gur granth sukhkhan.

Guru dars jeh dekhna sri gur granth darsai.

Batain kar gur seon cheheh parai granth man maiai.

Guru Granth came like a Great Guru in the Kaljug (the present Age).

This Guru Granth, the image of 10 kings (Gurus), is mine of pleasure (bliss).

If you want to see the Guru, then see Sri Guru Granth.

If you want to talk to Guru, then read the Granth attentively.

The irony is that many Sikhs believe in seeing the ‘granth’ rather than reading the ‘granth’.

CONCLUSIONS

‘Sabd’ is the Guru of Nanak.

Guru Nanak has explained in stanza (*pauni*) #38 of *JAP Bani* the process for coining that ‘sabd’ (idea/philosophy) through self-control, having patience and use of wisdom and knowledge as an Amrit (elixir) in the mint of truth.

Etymologically the term ‘guru’ is based on the syllables *gu* (गु) means ‘darkness/ignorance’ and *ru* (रु) means ‘light that dispel darkness’-enlightenment that removes ignorance.’

Therefore, ‘sabd’ means that idea or philosophy coined as explained by Guru Nanak is the ‘guru’, who will remove the ignorance to lead a virtuous life.

Although the ‘granth’ is the ‘guru’ in all the commandments of Guru Gobind Singh but there is emphasis to discover the value of the command by research on the ‘Sabd’ in one of the commands. Therefore, it is evident that the ‘sabd’ is the ‘guru’ as

ordained by Guru Nanak in response to the question of Siddhas. And it is that ‘sabd’ which has been explained in details in stanza #38 of *Jap Bani*. Since this ‘sabd’ is enshrined in the Granth, ipso facto, the Granth is Guru.

The critical examination of phrase, **ਪੋਥੀ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਕਾ ਥਾਨੁ** ॥ (Pothī

parmesar kā thān.), clearly indicates that Guru Arjan is demonstrating that *pothi* (granth) is a source of attributes of God and great knowledge about the Universe and social life rather than a dwelling place of God. Therefore, one should sit in an assembly of noble people to comprehend those attributes.

According to Giani Gian Singh [16], Guru Gobind Singh issued three distinct commands:

The Granth is the Guru.

The Granth is the living-body of the Guru.

To meet God search It in the sabd. Now many Sikh theologians and the Sikhs at large are accepting the first two commands very sacredly but rare are the Sikhs who care to look into the third command.

IMPLICATIONS IN ACCEPTING GRANTH AS GURU

Since the ‘granth’ is accepted as the ‘Guru’ and/or ‘Living Body of Ten Gurus’, therefore, it is treated and worshiped as a deity.

Under these circumstances, the meaning of ‘sabd’ as the ‘Guru’ has been lost.

There is no unanimity about the definition of ‘Gurbani’ among the Sikhs.

The above three statement raises a question: What is the status of the bani of Bhagats and Bhattas?

Under these circumstances, the SIKHI founded by Guru Nanak has also lost its originality and has become a ritualistic and

institutionalised religion like others.

The Sikh intelligentsia needs to look into if ‘Sabd is Guru’ or the ‘Granth is Guru’ or ‘Living Body of Ten Gurus’; and what was the SIKHI founded by Guru Nanak.

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Notes:

1. ਵੇਲਾ³ (Age³): A distinct period of history. For example, the Stone Age, the Copper Age, the Bronze Age, the Iron Age, the Middle Ages (1066 -1485), the Atomic Age, the Space Age, and the Computer and Information Age. Thus, the Siddhas were questioning: What is that 'Age' we are passing through and who is the 'guru' of Nanak?
2. ਸਤਿ³ ਗੁਰ⁴ ਮਤਿ⁵ ਵੇਲਾ⁶ = this is the 'Age of Enlightenment' found through the 'true guru'. And the 'true Guru' is the 'Sabd'.
3. In the above stanza almost all of the theologians and researchers under the heavy influence of ancient philosophy interpret ਨਦਰਿ (*nadar*) as "Grace/ Blessing of God" and ਕਰਮੁ (*karam*) as the "effect of deeds of the last life". Since there are many meanings of each word whether it is of English or of Punjabi language, therefore, it is very important to apply most appropriate meaning of *nadar* and *karam* to interpret the bani in order to understand the message of Guru Nanak in its real perspective. It is only the SGGS Punjabi to Punjabi Dictionary of Gurbachan Singh [4] and also Bhai Kahn Singh's *Mahan Kosh* [4] which gives the meanings of these words, other than usually accepted under the influence of ancient philosophy, as follows:
ਨਦਰਿ (*nadar*) means ਨਜਰ (*nazar*) which means 'vision' in English. Vision means an image or concept in the imagination;

visions of power and wealth: farsightedness - the ability to anticipate possible future events and developments. These meanings are same as given for the Arabic word:

ਨਦਰਿ (*nadar*) is from 'nazar' from the Arabic language. There are two different meanings of this word:

a. *Nazar*: Vision as explained above, critical examination, sight, see,

b. *Nazar*: Gift, present given to a higher authority, Paying under the table (corruption)

ਕਰਮੁ (*karam*) means ਕੰਮ, ਅਮਲ, ਕਰਨੀ, ਕਰਤੱਬ, ਕਰਤੱਵ, ਕਾਰਜ, ਕਿਰਿਆ, ਕਿਰਤ-ਕਮਾਈ, ਨਿੱਤ ਦੀ ਕਾਰ, ਚਾਲ ਚਲਨ, ਆਚਾਰ, ਆਚਰਨ, which mean work, capability, method, daily work, routine, etc. in English.

ਕਰਮੁ (*karam*) is also an Arabic word having the same meanings. ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ (*Amrit*) here also means idea/philosophy as is that for Sabd. Guru Amardas explains that the Amrit is already present in the body (mind) but it has to be realized:

ਘਰ ਹੀ ਮਹਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਭਰਪੂਰੁ ਹੈ

ਮਨਮੁਖਾ ਸਾਦੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਆ ॥

Ghar hī meh amrit̥ bharpūr hai manmukhā sād̥ na pāiā.

ਜਿਉ ਕਸਤੂਰੀ ਮਿਰਗੁ ਨ ਜਾਣੈ ਭ੍ਰਮਦਾ

ਭਰਮਿ ਭੁਲਾਇਆ ॥

Jiō kastūrī mirag na jānai bharmadā bharam bhulāiā.
The body / mind is full of Amrit (Sabd- ideas/philosophy) but the ignorant is unable to recognise it. This case is very similar to a musk deer who does not know that fragrance is coming from his own musk but he is looking for its source somewhere else.

- AGGS, M 3, p 644.
(*Kasturi*): Musk is a substance with a persistent odor. It is obtained from a gland of the male musk deer situated in its back/rectal area.
4. ਆਬ (āb): Although in Persian it means ‘water, but according to Bhai Kahn Singh ਆਬ (āb) also means Habit , Character (ਆਦਤ. ਸੁਭਾਉ. "ਸਚ ਕੀ ਆਬ ਨਿਤ ਦੇਹਿ ਪਾਣੀ"). Here it means habit.
5. ਨਾਨਕ (Nanak): Here Nanak is not a pen name of Guru Arjan but Guru Nanak himself.
6. ਨਾਮ (Naam) hear means understanding about the working of Laws of Nature.
7. ਸਬਦੁ (Sabd): Here it is that ‘sabd’ described by Guru Nanak in *Jap Bani* Stanza # 38. ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ (Gurmukh): Gur = enlightenment + mukh = Oriented – The one who is oriented towards ‘enlightenment’.
8. ਪੀਉ ਦਾਦੇ ਕਾ ਖਜਾਨਾ has been interpreted as the bani of Guru Ramdas, the father and of Guru Amardas, the grandfather, in Goindwal Vali Pothe received from Mohan Ji by some writers. However, Guru Ramdas was not the son of Guru Amardas. It means names of Guru Nanak and Guru Angad have been omitted. However, here ਪੀਉ ਦਾਦੇ ਕਾ ਖਜਾਨਾ is a Punjabi idiom meaning “inherited treasure” (bani) of first four Gurus – Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amardas and Guru Ramdas (forefathers).
9. Here Nanak is a person not a pen name for Guru Ramdas. Nanak with *Onkar* means Nanak himself not as a pen name. However, at some places Nanak with *mukta* is also person but it all depends on the context in which Nanak has been used.
10. Dr Joginder Singh Ahluwalia (personal discussion) says that the following modified form of that phrase is as follows (Personal Communication):
Aagiya bhaee Akal kee tabhai chalaaiio panth.
Sabh Sikhian ko hukam hai Guru maanio Granth.
Guru Granth ko maanio pragat guran ki deh.
Jo Prabh ko milbo chahe khoj sabad mein leh.
(From Giani Gian Singh's *Panth Prakash*, 1987, Bhasha Vibhag Punjab, p. 353. Giani Gian Singh wrote it first in 1874).
Dr Ahluwalia further adds as follows:
The troubling line is: ***Guru Granth ko maanio pragat guran ki deh.*** Although the next line clearly says: *Jo Prabh ko milbo chahe khoj sabad mein leh*, the notion of "deh" still persists. We treat the Granth as if it were a living person, in flesh and blood, sensitive to heat and cold, who has to be put to bed for rest etc.”

