

# SABD GURU TO GRANTH GURU - A Study

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sbdigrllsriq Dīn c] w ] Guru Nanak  
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## ABSTRACT

*Sikhism is a scientific and logical religion of the world but it is being represented as ritualistic religion. It is so because of misinterpretation of Gurbani and misrepresentation of Sikhism found in the old as well as in the current literature. The time has come to analyze what are the causes of Sikhism becoming a ritualistic religion? There could be many causes but present study indicates that the change of 'Sabd Guru' to 'Granth Guru' may be the main cause of introduction of ritualism in Sikhism. This study represents how the Sabd Guru was changed steadily and stealthily to Granth Guru as an idol and its implications to convert Sikhism from scientific and logical religion into a ritualistic religion.*

## INTRODUCTION

Time and again I have mentioned in my articles [2-6] that Sikhism is a scientific and logical religion of the world but it is being represented as ritualistic religion. It is so because of misinterpretation of Gurbani and misrepresentation of Sikhism found in the old as well as in the current literature. The time has come to analyze what are the causes of Sikhism becoming a ritualistic religion? There could be many causes but I think that the change of 'Sabd Guru' to 'Granth Guru' and treating it as an idol may be one of the main causes of introduction of ritualism in Sikhism. Consequently more and more attention started to be paid towards rituals around the 'Granth Guru' than on the deliberation and comprehension of the 'Sabd Guru'.

The critical analysis of the following observation of Dr Gopal Singh [18] will clearly indicate that due to poor understanding of Guru's Word (*Sabd*), the Granth started to be worshipped more than read, uttered as magical formula or a *Mantram* for secular benefits:

*"The confusion of interpretation has occurred because the Sikhs themselves, for historical and other reasons, have never seriously attempted a scientific and cogent exposition of the doctrines of their faith, based on the Word of the GURU-GRANTH and related to the historical lives of the Gurus who uttered it. Without reference either to one or the other, casual attempts made at the interpretation of small portions of the Granth have resulted in such interpretations being incoherent, lop-sided, and therefore unreliable. During the present (now last) century, several attempts were*

*made by the Sikhs to translate into Punjabi the Word of the Guru, but all such attempts ended in an all-too-literal translation, leaving the seeker as uninitiated to the Guru's Word as he was before. And the word of the GURU-GRANTH became as involved and distant for an average reader as the Word of the Vedas, and it started to be worshipped more than read, uttered as magic formula or a Mantram for secular benefit than as a disciple of spiritual life for the achievement of ideals higher and beyond the world of sense and for the integrity of mind and soul in the world of the living."*

Under the circumstances as explained above by Dr Gopal Singh [18], now in almost all the Gurdwaras in the world, whether they are under the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar or any other organization, the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) [1] is treated almost as an idol [15] although the idol worship is condemned in the Nanakian Philosophy. I was surprised to note, when I was casually glancing through "*The Cambridge Factfinder*", which says under the subheading of **Beliefs in Sikhism** as: "**Worship of the Adi Granth**" as one of the beliefs [9 - p 411].

The practice of reciting as many as 101 *Akhand Paaths* of the AGGS under one roof has become an important feature of many Gurdwaras [6]. During these *Akhand Paaths* nobody (even those for whom the *Akhand Paath* is arranged) is listening to *Paath*. Deliberation on the *Sabd* (verse) is totally absent except that which is done by a few *parcharak* (preachers) without involving the *Sangat*

(congregation) in the deliberation of the Sabd. The effective deliberation is that which is two-way that is between the *parcharak* and the Sangat when the Sangat can ask questions and express their views also [2].

The Granth as Guru has become an established fact in Sikhism and in the minds of every Sikh. Now we recite the following phrase in different modified forms everyday in the Gurdwara after the *Ardas* (Prayer) as follows:

ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਕੀ ਬਚਨਿ ਸਾਠਿ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਿ ਕੀਯੋ ਪੈ ॥

ਸਬਿ ਇਕਨਿ ਕੋ ਬਚਨਿ ਹੀ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਅਹੁਗੁ ॥ 30 ॥

(Rehit Nama Bhai Prahlad Singh.) [13].

*“With the order of the Almighty the Panth was created.*

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

Recitation of this phrase (in various modified forms) in every Gurdwara has lead the Sikhs to treat the AGGS as a deity for worshipping, although recitation of such phrase is not recommended in the *Sikh Rehit Maryada* (SRM) published by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), Amritsar. I wonder who has introduced this phrase to be recited after the *Ardas*? Most probably it has been introduced by some *Biprans* (Persons, who work against the Nanakian Philosophy) for making the Sikhs to treat the Granth as their own deity as a replacement of many deities in Hinduism.

Recently the Indian Supreme Court has recognized the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) as a juristic person. 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 in the AGGS is rejected [22].

Now there is a big question.

### **IS IT THE SABD THAT IS THE GURU OR THE GRANTH IS GURU?**

This question can be discussed under the following two major headings:

- A. Concept in History
- B. Concept in Nanakian Philosophy

#### **A. Concept in History**

A new controversy on the declaration of Granth as Guru was started by McLeod [12]. Since the Granth Guru had become an established fact in Sikhism, Prof

Madanjit Kaur wrote a detailed article entitled, *“The Guruship and Succession of Guru Granth”* [11] to justify that Granth is Guru. She stated that this article was written to refute the following statement of McLeod [12]: *“...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.”*

Recently Grewal [10] had also pointed out the contention of McLeod [12] 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 the above both contentions it appears that McLeod [12] refused to accept that Guru Gobind Singh declared the Granth as Guru in 1708 CE. He believes 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.**

In response to the above contention of McLeod [12], Justice Gurdev Singh, Harbans Singh and Ganda Singh {Cited from [10]} and Madanjit Kaur [11] and Ganda Singh [17] have proven historically that it was Guru Gobind Singh, who bestowed Guru-ship to the Granth in 1708 CE at the time of his demise.

Prof Pyara Singh Padam [14 - p 24] also supported that it is an historical fact that Guru-ship was bestowed onto the Granth by Guru Gobind Singh, not by Singh Sabha as is heard from some mischievous persons (Discussed later).

Nevertheless, when I examined the information (data) given in *Gurbilas Patshahi 6* [25], *Sri Gur Sobha* [16], *Rahitnamae* [13], and other historical evidence, and Gurbani a new picture appeared that originally ‘Sabd’ was accepted as ‘Guru’ but later ‘Sabd Guru’ was changed to ‘Granth Guru’ and then bestowing of Guru-ship was ritualized steadily and stealthily. It is explained in the present study as follows:

#### **i) Sri Gur Sobha**

Ganda Singh [Ref.16-p52] quoted a part of the following phrase from Sainapat’s *Sri Gur Sobha* to show that Guru-ship was bestowed onto the Granth:

ਸਿਗਰੁ ਠਹਿਰਾ ਅਪ੍ਰ ਅਪ੍ਰਿ ਸਬਦਿ ਬਚਨਿ ਅਜ ਰ ਜ ਰਿ ॥

ihrdy Dr iDAwnl acrl bwnl pd inrbwnl Apr prll] 43 ] 808 ]

From this phrase he had interpreted only a portion, *Apr* *Apw* *Sbd* *ibcw*, as follows:

*"Guru-ship was bestowed onto the Sabd, Eternal and limitless."*

The above translation indicates that Guru-ship was bestowed onto the Sabd but Ganda Singh misconstrued this phrase to justify that Guru-ship was bestowed onto the Granth. Madanjit Kaur [11] also followed Ganda Singh's interpretation to support her thesis. Moreover, a critical analysis of this phrase shows that Ganda Singh [Ref.16-p52] has not paid any attention to the previous stanzas of the above phrase to interpret it properly. If we look into the previous stanza of the above phrase # 808 then real interpretation will emerge. The previous stanza is as follows:

*^w s ^ws khw'isel j w k'ihrd'Brm n hæl [*  
*Brm BK qyrh'inAw so ^w s siqgr'lhmrw [...808*  
*"Khalis is that who has no superstitions in his/her mind.*  
*And that who remains free from superstitions and*  
*Religious garb, is my Khalis (Pure) Satguru (True*  
*Guru)."*

This indicates that the **'Khalis'**, who is free from superstitions and religious garbs, was declared as the **'Satguru'**, and then the meanings of second part, *siqgr'lhmrw* *Apr* *Apw* *Sbd* *ibcw* *Aj r j r*], would be different than that given by Ganda Singh:

Its real interpretation will be as follows:  
*"The Satguru (Khalis, the pure one free from superstitions and religious garbs as discussed above) is above all limits (Apr Apw), who contemplates/ deliberates on the Sabd ( Sbd ibcw), and who can bear the unbearable difficulties (Aj r j r)".*

**Here in this phrase it is crystal clear that the 'Khalis' (pure one) is the 'Satguru', who contemplates on Sabd. There is nothing that supports that 'Granth is Guru' in above phrase # 808 as misconstrued by Ganda Singh. Misconstruing of some statements is very common among the Sikh scholars to support their own view about Gurbani and Sikhism.**

The next stanza, *hrdy Dr iDawl acrl bwl pd inrbwl Apr prl*], also explains the characteristics of the Khalis:  
*"{Khalis is that} who imbibes the Bani in the mind and recites the Bani with full concentration, consequently, he attains the status that cannot be described."*

Although Ganda Singh failed to interpret phrase # 808

completely and properly, still one can easily find out from Sainapat's phrase # 808, a very important message, which has been ignored by many scholars. Guru Nanak's message is that:

**The Khalis is one, who is free from superstitions and religious garb and when he/she contemplates/ deliberates on Sabd becomes Satguru (True Guru/ perfect teacher of Gurbani).**

The other important message is that:  
**It is the Sabd that is to be contemplated/deliberated by the Khalis (the pure) to become Satguru.**

This is in direct corroboration with the Nanakian Philosophy where 'Satguru' (True Guru) is described as follows:

*ij suimil A'win hie An'us siqgrukh'AI]*  
 AGGS, M 4, P 168.  
*"My meeting whom, one obtains tranquility, is called Satguru (True Guru)."*

*siqgruivc Ap'urikanukir prgtuAwK sk'ieAw]*  
 AGGS, M 1, P 466.  
*"The God has Itself made the Satguru to Say (the Sabd)."*

*siq pr'Kuj in j winAw siqgruas k'w n'wau]*  
*iqs k's'lg isk'uaDr'n'wink hir gn g'wau]*  
 AGGS, M 5, P 286  
*"Satguru (True Guru) is that who has realized the Ever-Existing Entity.*

*In the company of such Satguru, the Sikh is saved from bad influence,*  
 Nanak says:  
*Praise the attributes of God (Ever-Existing Entity)."*

*so siqgruj suird'n'wau]*  
 AGGS, M 5, P 287.  
*"Satguru (True Guru) is that whose mind has realized Naon (God)."*

*gr'lisikuisKugruh'ekogr apd'sucl wey]*  
 AGGS, M 4, P 444.  
*"Guru is Sikh and Sikh is Guru since the same teachings/ philosophy is taught by the both."*

'Sri Gur Subha' of Sainapat is supposed to be the first book written just after about three years (in 1711 CE) of demise of Guru Gobind Singh; therefore, it might be representing the historical facts very close to the truth. From the above information it is clearly indicated that Guru Gobind Singh declared a person who contemplates/deliberates on Sabd is pure (Khalis) and becomes Sat Guru, which is in direct corroboration with Nanakian Philosophy. **It appears that Sabd was**

**considered as Guru but not the Granth as Guru at the time of Guru Gobind Singh and even thereafter.**

### ii) Rehitnama of Bhai Nand Lal

Ganda Singh also mentioned that Bhai Nand Lal tells us in his *Rehitnama* {written in *Magar Sudi 9 Samat 1752* (1695 CE) about 13 years before the demise of Guru Gobind Singh} that the Guru told him:

inrgx srgx gr-Sbd h'qih smj wie [

n'hl | | , rihqn'nm [Ref.16-p53]:

*"Made him (Nand Lal) to understand that the Transcendent and Immanent Guru is the Sabd."*

**Here again there is no indication that 'Granth is Guru', it was the Sabd that was Transcendent and Immanent Guru.**

If above information given in *Sri Gur Sobha* and *Rehitnama* of Bhai Nand Lal is true then it means Guru Gobind Singh had accepted 'Sabd as Guru' right from the beginning of his life, therefore, according to the information available in *Sri Gur Sobha*, it is also quite logical that at the time of his demise, Guru Gobind Singh had declared 'Sabd as Guru' but not the 'Granth as Guru' as is generally believed.

From the above information, given in phrase # 808 and the *Rehitnama* of Bhai Nand Lal, Ganda Singh has drawn an inference which again indicates that it is the Sabd that is the Guru not the Granth:

"mnKI srlr n'sv'm h' [ sm'w p'w ky a'is ny A'w'm mnKI srlr'w v'lg Av-S hl ibns j'w'w h' [ pr b'wl ny il Kq ivc A'w gel b'wl ny kdl n'w nhl h'w [ ies l el gr'w'w mnKI srlr Asl gr'w'w h' [ Asl l gr'w'w as dl b'wl h' [ gr'w'w srlr k q'r q'j lal'by h' v' y Bl gr'w'w b'wl r'w'w hl apd'§ krd'w Aq'is-KA'w id'w'w sl [" [16, p 52].

*"Human body is perishable. During the course of time the Guru's body like the common human body will be perished. But (his) Bani, when comes into written form, will never perish. Therefore, the human body of the Guru cannot be a real (Eternal) Guru. The real (Eternal) Guru is his Bani. Guru (Gobind Singh), even in his bodily form as Guru, was teaching and preaching from the Guru Bani (Bani of the Gurus from the Granth)."*

Ganda Singh's above inference also supports the fact that after compilation of the Bani into a Granth by Guru Arjan in 1604, Guru Arjan and the other Sikh Gurus, who succeeded to the House of Nanak, taught and practiced Guru Bani from this Granth. It also indicates that Sabd of the Gurus was the Guru right from 1604, the time of compilation of the Granth,

although Sikh Gurus were simultaneously also present in the bodily form along with the Sabd Guru in the written form in the Granth.

### iii) Importance of Guru Nanak's Philosophy in History

There is very important information available in *Gurbilas Patshahi 6* (anonymous, written in 1718CE, i. e. after 10 years of demise of Guru Gobind Singh) [25] that *Sikhia* (teachings – philosophy) was imparted from the Sabd of Guru Nanak, incorporated in the Granth, by Guru Hargobind. And Guru Har Rai was also advised by Guru Hargobind in the presence of Baba Buddha Jee and Bhai Gurdas to do so:

j oisKXw gr n'wk ky l [ sod'nl sKis'w'Gny l [ rhl j'w'w inis j'w'w gn klj y [ m-j n' n'w'w ivK'w'w m'w'w dlj y [ S'w'w q'w'w sil Dir A'w'w Cp'w'w'w [ siq'w'w'w m'ik m'w'w'w Al w'w'w [ eyibid isKXw del Ap'w'w [ gr hir r'w'w h'leysB D'w'w [ (AiDA'w'w 21, p'hw 796) [25, p 99]

*The teachings that were imparted by Guru Nanak, gives infinite pleasure.*

*Disseminate that teaching.*

*By contemplating day and night he (Nanak) realized the collyrium<sup>1</sup> Naam*

*After attained tranquility he (Nanak) declared to repeat Satnam<sup>2</sup> as mantra<sup>3</sup> with mouth.*

*Guru Har Rai! Imbibe this in mind that these teachings (way of Guru Nanak) is highest of all.*

1. The substance, surma Naam, that makes one see/ understand better.
2. It shows that during those days 'Satnam' was the mantra that has been changed to 'Waheguru' in these days. The irony is that no Guru has ever recommended 'Waheguru' as Mantra in Gurbani incorporated in the AGGS.
3. **Mantra:** It was declared to remember (or say) that **Naam** is **Sat** (Which exists forever) and not to be treated as Mantra as recommended in Vedas.

At the time of his demise Guru Hargobind also advised the Sikhs to serve the Sikhs and accept the guidance of Guru Nanak:

griskn kl sy'w krix'w [ ek t'k gr n'wk DrIx'w [ (AiDA'w'w 21, p'hw 796) [25,p 99]

*"Serve the Sikhs of the Guru. Accept the guidance only of Guru Nanak."*

The above historical evidence shows that 'Sabd' was the 'Guru' right from the beginning. It is also clear that all the Gurus of the House of Nanak were teaching and practicing the 'Sabd' of Guru Nanak. The final test to prove that 'Sabd' of Guru Nanak is 'Guru' is discussed briefly later under Section B. **Concept in Nanakian Philosophy.**

#### iv) 'Sabd Guru' Changed to 'Granth Guru'

##### a. Rehitnama Bhai Prahlad Singh

In spite of the above information available in *Sri Gur Sobha* and *Gurbilas Patshahi 6* that 'Sabd' was the 'Guru', Madanjit Kaur [11] and Ganda Singh [16] have accepted the following statement of Bhai Prahlad Singh as true without testing its authenticity with the Nanakian Philosophy:

ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਕਯੋਚਨ ਚਿਤ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕੀ ਖੋਪੜੀ [ 30 ]  
ਸਭ ਚਿਤ ਕਯੋਚਨ ਹੀ ਗੁਰਮੁਖੀ ਅਹੁ ਗੁਰੂ [ 30 ]

(Rehitnama Bhai Prahlad Singh.)

*"With the order of the Eternal Lord Panth has been established.*

*All the Sikhs are hereby ordained to obey the **Granth as the Guru.**"*

{Interpretation cited from [11, 16]}.

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

ਗੁਰੂ ਕੀ ਸਾ ਮੰਨੀ ਆਇ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੀ ਚਿਤ [ 21 ]  
ਜੋ ਸਿਕ ਮੋ ਮਿਲੀ ਬੀ ਚਿਹ ਕੀ ਚਿਹ ਮਿਹੀ ਚਿਹ [ 21 ]

*"Accept the Khalsa as Guru and Khalsa is the body of the Guru.*

*Those, who want to meet me search in the Khalsa."*

According to Bhai Prahlad Singh there are two Gurus: Khalsa Guru and Granth Guru. It was the word 'Khalis' used by Sainapat in *Sri Gur Sobha* which has been changed to 'Khalsa' by Prahlad Singh. It is important to know the differences between 'Khalis' and 'Khalsa'. Bhagat Kabir in his Bani has used 'Khalsae' (plural form of Khalis) in the context of 'Pure' as follows:

ਖੁਕਬਰ ਜ ਨਿ ਬੈਕੁਲ ਸਿਧ ਬਗਿਕਿ ਜ ਹ ਜ ਮਨੀ [ 655 ]

AGGS, Kabir, p 655.

Kabir says: *Those who have realized the devotion of God become Khalsae (Pure ones).*

Sainapat has also used 'Khalis' in the same context of 'Pure' in his book, *Sri Gur Sobha*, as discussed previously in phrase # 808. But the word 'Khalsa' means different than that of 'Khalis' in Rehitnama of Bhai Prahlad Singh and in others. The word 'Khalsa' has its roots in Persian and Arabic language, which means the land or the property that belongs to the king. In some *Hukmnamae* Guru Gobind Singh has used Khalsa for his *Sangat* (congregation). It means the Sangat belong to Guru Gobind Singh. This Sangat was composed of Amritdhari Sikhs as well as non-Amritdhari Sikhs and also Hindus and Muslims who accepted Guru Gobind Singh as their Guru.

##### b. Bansawalinama

Another work, which we may refer to here, is *Bansavalinama* of Kesar Singh Chhibbar (completed in 1769 CE, i.e. 61 years after the demise of Guru Gobind Singh). Kesar Singh's ancestors had been in the service of Guru Gobind Singh as *diwans*. He claims 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 (ਗੁਰੂ ਹੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਏ ਪਕਵਹੁ ਅਕਾਲ - 679)** {As stated by Madanjit Kaur [11] and Ganda Singh [16]}.

The irony is that both these 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 ਹੀ ਕੁਲ ਸਾ, ਕੁਲ ਸਾ ਹੀ ਗੁਰੂ) and "*Accept the command of Granth Sahib but discover the value of the command by researching the Sabd.*" {ਅੰਗ ਅੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ, ਕਰਨੀ ਸਬਦ ਦੀ ਕੀ ਨੀ (680)}

**Here many scholars have ignored the important message in it. It is very clear that the command of the Granth is in the Sabd and Kesar Singh Chhibbar gives importance to discover the value of the command by research on the Sabd.**

The irony is that although Ganda Singh had explained in his earlier discussion that it is the 'Sabd' that is the 'Guru' even then he rode the bandwagon of other Sikh scholars who have accepted the 'Granth as the Guru' instead of the 'Sabd as the Guru'.

##### v) Ritualism Introduced

As soon as the 'Sabd Guru' was changed to the 'Granth Guru' ritualism was introduced. **Koer Singh** [23], the author of *Gurbilas Patshahi 10* (written in 1751 CE after 43 years of demise of Guru Gobind Singh) tells in explicit terms that Guru Gobind Singh discontinued the line of personal Guru-ship and did not appoint anyone to succeed him as Guru. The author records that the Guru addressed his Sikhs before his demise and instructed them that there would be no successor to him, the *Sarbat Sangat* (the whole congregation) and the Khalsa should deem Sri Guru Granth Sahib as Supreme. **Koer Singh further states that with five paise and a coconut in his hand the Guru paid homage to the Holy Granth and declared its succession as the Guru** [As stated by Madanjit Kaur and Ganda Singh in Ref # 11 and 16, respectively].

The latest discovery of Giani Garja Singh (1907-1977)

from *Bhatt Vehi Talauda Parganah Jind*, reported by Harbans Singh [19], also confirms the above information found in the old writings. Guru Gobind Singh asked Bhai Daya Singh on Wednesday, *Shukla chaouth* of the month of *Katik*, 1765 BK (October 6, 1708) to fetch Sri Granth Sahib. The Guru placed before it five *paise* and a coconut and bowed his head before it. He said to the Sangat,: *"It is my commandment: Own Sri Granthji in my place. He, who acknowledges it so, will obtain his reward. The Guru will rescue him. Know this as the truth."*

It is very strange that in this information the Granth has been declared as Guru in place of Guru Gobind Singh: *"It is my commandment: Own Sri Granthji in my place."*

Prof Pyara Singh Padam [14, p 24] also joins the band wagon of other scholars to confirm the ritualistic ceremony of bestowing of Guru-ship onto the Granth by Guru Gobind Singh, not by Singh Sabha as is heard from some mischievous persons, in his edited work on *Bansawalinama* as follows:

“*guru gōbīndh īsṭ mhl dsmll, bjt w grl qg bhadr j l kw, mkrim nndv, qt gdwvrl, djs d-kx, sqrl s'p'lst, kwrqk mīsy sīdl cāQ Skl w pkybdvwr kyidhll Bīel dieAw īsṭ sybcn hAw -'sṭ gō sīhb l yAwE[ 'bcn pīre dXw īsṭ sṭ gō sīhb l yAwE[ gruj l nyp'lc p'sy ek nī l'er Awgy Bjt rwiK mīQw tkw[ srb slgīq sykhw 'myrw hkm h' myrl j gh gruj sṭ gruj gō j l ko j nnnw[ j oīsk j nngw, iqs kl Gwl Qwīell pegl, gruj iqs kl bhīhl krgw, siq kir j nnnw [” (B-t vhl ql aīFw, prgxw j llb)*

“*Guru Gobind Singh, son of Guru Teg Bahadur, at place of bank of river Gudawari in the country of Daccan in 1765 of Katrik month, sudi chauth (4<sup>th</sup>) shukla pakhe (afternoon) of the day commanded to Bhai Daya Singh, 'Bring Sri Granth Sahib'. Accepting the command Daya Singh brought Sri Granth Sahib. Guru Ji offered 5 paise and a coconut before the Granth and bowed his head. He said to the whole Sangat, 'It is my command; know Sri Guru Granth as Guru in my place. The Sikh, who would know this, his efforts will be accepted, Guru will help him, accept this as a truth.'” (Bhat Vehi Talaunda, Parganah Jind)*

Further, the account of the death of Guru Gobind Singh as given in *Mehima Prakash* by **Sraup Das Bhalla** is another historical source on this topic. This account was completed in 1801 CE, after about 93 years of demise of Guru Gobind Singh. According to *Mehima Prakash*, before his death, Guru Gobind Singh called his Sikhs to his presence and said, *"Our ten forms have come to an end. Now recognize the*

*Guru Granth Sahib in my place. He who wishes to talk to me should read the Granth Sahib. I have entrusted you to the lap of the Almighty"* [As stated by Madanjit Kaur and Ganda Singh in Ref # 11 and 16, respectively].

#### vi) 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 praise and a coconut in his hand, bowed before the Guru Granth Sahib* and said, **'Ye all community should recognize the Guru Granth Sahib as the Guru after me and obey the commandments contained therein.'** And then he uttered the following couplet:

**"Recognize the Guru Granth as the Visible Body of the Guru."** [As stated by Madanjit Kaur and Ganda Singh in Ref # 11 and 16, respectively].

#### vii) Granth Guru To Darshan Guru

**Sohan Lal Suri** tells us in *Umdat-u-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. From the *darshan* (seeing/glancing) of Granthji one shall have the happy *darshan* of the Guru Sahib {Cited from [11]}. I think the above information is based on following stanza from *Gurbilas Patshahi 6* [25 - p 84]:

*grl'igD kil j'g BXoSk gr r'p mhn [*  
*ds pqSihlAw r'p ieh gr igD sKKn [*  
*grl'drs ij h dKw sṭ gr igD drsīe [*  
*bwqW kir gr sl'ch'pV'igD mnumīe ]*

*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 above discussion {item # A - (i) to (vii)} clearly indicate that it was 'Sabd Guru' in early historical data, i.e. *Sri Gur Sobha* and *Gurbilas Patshahi 6*, but in the later history 'Sabd Guru' has successively been changed to 'Granth Guru' to 'Visible Body of the Guru' to 'Darshan Guru'.

#### B. Concept in Nanakian Philosophy

Let us examine what does Nanakian Philosophy, incorporate in the AGGS, says about 'Sabd Guru' and

'Granth Guru'. To understand the word 'Sabd Guru' it is necessary to understand 'Sabd' and 'Guru' separately and then together as 'Sabd Guru'. This topic has been discussed extensively in my previous article [7] appearing in this issue on pp 11-18. Although this topic has been discussed extensively by Dr Cole [8] and Dr Jodh Singh [20] and also by many others, the important point is to look into the intrinsic values of 'Sabd' and 'Guru' before their meanings are implied to interpret Gurbani. In that discussion it was concluded that:

*'Sabd' has many meanings depending on the context in which it has been used. For example, word, sound, speech, conversation, duty/religion, advice/message, philosophy, purifier, vehicle to realize God, peace of mind, elixir of life (Amrit) and it also means Guru. 'Sabd' and 'Bani' are interchangeable words meaning the same as the 'Sabd'. Therefore 'Bani' is 'Guru' and 'Guru' is 'Bani', and it is the 'Guru' who says the 'Bani'. Consequently, Sabd is the Guru [7].*

### Now the Question is Should the Granth be called as the Guru?

Since the Sabd is the Guru, therefore, the *Pothi* (Book/Granth), in which the Sabd of Gurus was incorporated, was equated to as Parmeshar (Enlightener/Guru) by Guru Arjan some time before its compilation in 1604 CE as is indicated in his following stanza:

ਪੌਠੀ<sup>1</sup> ਪਰਮੇਸਰ<sup>2</sup> ਕੀ ਠਾਨ<sup>3</sup> ]  
ਸਿਠ ਸਿਠ ਗਵਿਹ ਗੁਕ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਪੀਰਨ ਬਿਹਮਿ ਗਿਆਨੁ ] ਰਹਿਅੈ ]  
AGGS, M 5, P 1226.

*The pothi<sup>1</sup> is equated<sup>3</sup> to the Enlightener/Guru<sup>2</sup>. (From which) the noble people discuss (sing) the attributes of the Almighty and deliberate on the wisdom (philosophy) of the Almighty in the congregation.*

1. Pothi is interpreted as Bani by some scholars and as a book (Granth) by others, the later meanings are more appropriate.
2. According to Bhai Kahn Singh [21] "*Parmesar* means *Parm* + *Ishwar*. *Parm* means great and *Ishwar* has many meanings: Shiv, Swami, God, and also a particular teacher (Guru) of Jogis who teaches the philosophy of Gorakh. Therefore, it is very clear that the word *Parmesar* used here is equivalent to the Guru (Enlightener).
3. *Thaan* means a place, location, in place of, instead of, etc. Here it has been interpreted as 'in place of' meaning 'equated to'

### DECLARATION OF GRANTH AS GURU

**It means, the day in 1604 CE the Granth was compiled it was equated to the Guru (ਪੌਠੀ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਕੀ ਠਾਨ) because of the fact that Sabd is Guru as discussed above, which has been enshrined into the**

**Granth. Since then preaching of Sabd (Nanakian philosophy) was carried on from this 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. *Gurbilas Patshahi 6* [25] and *Sri Gur Sobha* [16]. Therefore, the Granth is Guru ipso facto the Sabd Guru is enshrined in it. But nowhere in the Gurbani this Pothi (Granth) has been declared as a deity.**

### DECEPTION

The irony is that the Sikhs are following the historical aspect where the 'Sabd Guru' has been successively changed to 'Granth Guru' to 'Visible Body of the Guru' to 'Darshan Guru', as discussed earlier. Consequently, the Sikhs started to pay more and more attention to ritualistic aspects to the Granth Guru than on the deliberation on the philosophy given in the Sabd Guru.

It happened so due to the fact that a very few Sikhs understood the philosophy given in the Granth. Guru Nanak had already pointed out that there would be very few persons who will deliberate on the Sabd:

ਬਿਖਲਿ ਭਰਿ ਅਭਿਚਿੰਸਿ ਜਿ ਕੋ ਗੁਰਮਿਕ ਹੀਏ ]  
ਏਹ ਬਿਖਲਿ ਮਹਿ ਪਰਿ ਕੀ ਚਿ ਗਿਰਿ ਵਸਿ ਹੀਏ ]

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 to be imbibed in one's own mind (only through its deliberation)."*

The above verse clearly indicates that Guru Nanak's observation that there would be a very few Sikhs, who will deliberate on the Bani/Sabd, is so true today as it was then at the time of Guru Nanak. Because of this fact (not deliberating seriously on Sabd) today there are many Sikhs, who sternly believe on the bases of unauthentic information available in old literature (history) that Granth was declared Guru only by Guru Gobind Singh in 1708 CE at the time of his demise. The irony is that many Sikh and non-Sikh scholars are still preaching that Granth was sanctified/canonized as Guru, by Guru Gobind Singh in 1708.

If the Granth was declared as Guru only in 1708 at the time of demise of Guru Gobind Singh then it means the Granth compiled by Guru Arjan in 1604 remained dormant for about 104 years and no teaching was done from it during this period. It means it was activated only by Guru Gobind Singh in 1708 by performing ritual of placing five *paise* and coconut and bowing before it. This ritual is very similar, but very brief, to that complex one performed by Brahmans to initiate an idol of a deity in a temple.





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*Let us resolve today to deliberate/ contemplate the Sabd and stop treating the Granth Guru as an idol for Darshan and for mere recitation of Akhand Paaths. However, we should also not forget the fact that the Granth is Guru ipso facto the Sabd Guru is enshrined in it. And the Granth commands all respects being Guru.*