

## EDITORIAL

# QUADRICENTENNIAL OF COMPILATION AND INSTALLATION (PARKASH DIVAS) OF AAD GURU GRANTH SAHIB

**T**he Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) is the most respected and sacred Granth of the Sikhs. It was compiled and installed (*Parkash*) in the Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple), Amritsar on September 1, 1604 CE according to Nanakshahi Calendar. The religious and social lives of Sikhs also revolve around it. The AGGS contains Nanakian Philosophy, which is embodied in the Bani of Guru Nanak. Nanakian Philosophy has been further interpreted and strengthened by the other five Sikh Gurus, who succeeded to the 'House of Nanak' in their Bani, which is also incorporated in the AGGS. Beside this it also contains the philosophy of the great Bhagats and Saints of various regions of India. Moreover, there are panegyrics / eulogies / high praises of Guru Nanak and other four Sikh Gurus. The Bani of Guru Teg Bahadur was added in it by Guru Gobind Singh around 1705 CE [For details see article on the AGGS at pp 11-22.].

*Sikhi* (Sikhism) is based on Nanakian Philosophy embodied in the Gurbani, which is incorporated in the AGGS. Although Sikhism is a scientific and logical religion of the world, it is being represented as mythical and ritualistic religion. It is so because of philosophy embodied in the Bani of the AGGS has not been comprehended in its real perspective. Moreover, misinterpretation of Gurbani and misrepresentation of Sikhism found in the old as well as in the current literature have further complicated the case. Dr Gopal Singh [6] said that due to improper understanding of 'Sabd' (Guru's Word) the Granth started to be worshipped more than read, uttered as a magical formula or a *Mantram* for secular benefits. Now in almost all the Gurdwaras in the world, whether they are under the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), Amritsar or any other organization, the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) is treated almost as an idol [5]. However, the idol worship is condemned in Nanakian Philosophy. This happened because many Sikhs are following the historical information in which the 'Sabd Guru' has been successively changed to 'Granth Guru' to 'Visible Body of the Guru' to 'Darshan Guru' [3]. Consequently, the Sikhs started to pay more and more attention to ritualistic aspects to the 'Granth Guru' than on the deliberation on the 'Sabd Guru'.

During the year 2004 the Sikhs all over the world had

celebrated 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary (Quadricentennial) of its compilation and installation in the Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple), Amritsar. Such celebrations were held mainly by recitation of one or more than one or even in some cases close to 100 Akhand Paths were completed in Gurdwaras throughout the world. In many cases the Nagar Kirtans (Processions of the AGGS on the road) were performed. Many universities and many Sikh Institutions held seminars and conferences on the AGGS.

The irony is that during the last 400 years since the AGGS was compiled and installed in the Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple), Amritsar many fallacies and deceptions around its compilation are still unresolved. For example, Dr Dhillon enlisted them as follows [4]:

1. The history of the text of the *Adi Granth*, as it stands today, is quite obscure.
2. Before taking the scribal form the hymns of the Sikh Gurus have been in circulation through oral or musical tradition.
3. The text of the *Adi Granth* that we have in its present form lacks in originality.
4. The Bani of Guru Nanak Dev and his immediate successors has been revised in the final version.
5. Guru Arjan Dev has frequently modified his own hymns.
6. The *Mul-Mantra* found in its present form has undergone a series of changes.
7. A considerable number of genuine hymns of the Sikh Gurus have been left outside the *Adi Granth*.
8. The writings of the *Bhagats* have been in and out of the Sikh scriptures due to secular motives.

On the other hand some scholars have written a lot to disagree with the above views, which are still not acceptable by the scholars who raised the above issues.

It is quite apparent that a lot of research is still necessary to discover the true history of compilation of the AGGS by the scrupulous scholars, having *babaek budhi* (discriminating intellect). The irony is that the so-called authority on Sikhism, Gurdwara Management Committees, Sikh Institutes and Sikh scholars did not care to resolve such issue for the last 399 years even during 2004, they remained busy in celebrations of

Quadricentennial of Compilation and Installation (*Parkas Divas*) of the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) all over the world.

There is another big task to represent the philosophy in Bani of the Sikh Gurus, Bhagats, Sants and Bhattas embodied in the AGGS into Punjabi and English in their real perspective. This task remained ignored by the Sikh authorities and the Sikh scholars for the last 400 years. There are many translations of the AGGS into Punjabi, English, French, German (coming up), and other Indian Languages but a casual survey will show that all of them are very literal, which do not convey the philosophy in its real perspective. Moreover, many of them are based on ancient philosophy.

Therefore, there is a dire need of representation of philosophy of Bani of the Sikh Gurus, Bhagats, Sants, and Bhattas in their real perspective first into Punjabi and English by a group of specialists in various fields: theology, various sciences, philosophy, psychology, history, languages (especially in archaic Punjabi), etc, which can later be translated into other languages.

#### Achievements of the IUS

The Institute for Understanding Sikhism (IUS) started to celebrate the Quadricentennial of Compilation and Installation (*Parkash Divas*) of the Aad Guru Granth Sahib by holding seminar every year starting from 2001. During these seminars the following important topics from the AGGS were discussed:

- The First International IUS Seminar, 2001  
**GURDWARA: History, Meaning and Functions.**
- The Second International IUS Seminar, 2002  
**Sabd Guru, Conscience and Consciousness.**
- The Third International IUS Seminar, 2003  
**Doctrines of Guru Nanak in JAP.**
- The Fourth International IUS Seminar, 2004  
**Philosophy and Teachings of Aad Guru Granth Sahib**

Proceedings of all the seminars are available from the IUS. Besides holding seminars the IUS has been regularly publishing **Understanding Sikhism: The Research Journal**, twice a year since 1999.

#### Books

1. Chahal, D. S. 2003. **JAP: The Essence of Nanakian Philosophy.** Publishers: Institute for Understanding Sikhism; Distributors: Singh Brothers, Amritsar. ISBN 0-9734291-1-9  
(*This book discusses the JAP, which is considered as the essence of Nanakian Philosophy, scientifically and logical for the humanity of the Science Age. The Commencing Verse, so-called Mool Mantra has been discussed in details to prove that it is not a Mool Mantra but a precise and concise definition of the*

*Almighty.*)

2. Chahal, D. S. 2004. **SABD GURU TO GRANTH GURU: An In-depth Study.** Publishers: Institute for Understanding Sikhism; Distributors: Singh Brothers, Amritsar. ISBN 0-9734291-0-0  
(*This book has been written especially to explain the intrinsic values of 'Sabd', 'Guru', 'Sabd Guru', and 'Granth Guru'. It has also been emphasized that Granth is 'Guru' because the 'Sabd Guru' is enshrined in it. However, real emphasis is on the understanding the intrinsic values of 'Sabd' and 'Guru'.*)

#### Books Under Pen

1. Oankar Bani
2. Asa Di Var
3. Sidh Gost

#### Chapter

Chahal, D S. 2004. **Sikh Perspectives on Bioethics.** In John F Peppin, Mark J Cherry, and Ana Iltis (Eds.), **Annals of Bioethics: Religious Perspectives in Bioethics.** Taylor & Francis, The Netherlands, Leiden, London, and New York. ISBN 90 265 1967 2  
(*This chapter is first of its kind on Sikh Perspectives on Bioethics. It has been demonstrated that Sikh perspectives on Bioethics are quite different than that of Hinduism.*)

In addition to above achievements the IUS has also standardized the 'System for Referencing the Bani' from the AGGS [1]; and the spellings in Roman of some Punjabi words have also been standardized.

#### REFERENCES

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4. Dhillon, B. S. 1999. **Early Sikh Scriptural Tradition – Myth and Reality.** (Punjabi). Singh Brothers, Amritsar.
5. Sidhu, Sarjeet. 1999. Is there any place of ritualism and idolism in Sikhism? *Understanding Sikhism Res. J.* 1 (2): 37-41 & 17.
6. Singh, Gopal (Dr). 1987. **Sri Guru Granth Sahib (English Version).** Vols 4. World Sikh Centre Inc. New Delhi, London, New York

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