

AAD GURU GRANTH SAHIB

Fallacies and Facts

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ABSTRACT

ਪੋਥੀ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਕਾ ਬਾਨੁ ॥ Guru Arjan

The Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) [1] is the most respected and sacred Granth of the Sikhs. Some fallacies and facts around its compilation; its salient features; and the language used for writing the Bani in the Holy Granth have been discussed. It has also been tried to resolve two important issues: 1. How to address the Holy Granth of the Sikhs? 2. How to refer the Bani from the Holy Granth?

INTRODUCTION

The Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) [1] is the most respected and sacred Granth of the Sikhs. *Sikhi* (Sikhism) is based on Nanakian Philosophy embodied in the Gurbani, which is incorporated in the AGGS. And the religious and social lives of Sikhs also revolve around it. Sikhism is a scientific and logical religion of the world but 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. One of the reasons has been explained by Dr Gopal Singh [22] 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 [6, 18]. However, the idol worship is condemned in Nanakian Philosophy. Moreover, 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 [11 - p 411]. It appears that such is the impression about Sikhism in the printed literature.

FALLACIES AND DECEPTIONS

The irony is that the 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’ [10, 14, 20]. 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 understand the philosophy given in the AGGS. Guru Nanak had already pointed out this fact in his Bani:

ਬਾਣੀ ਬਿਰਲਉ ਬੀਚਾਰਸੀ ਜੇ ਕੋ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਹੋਇ ॥
ਇਹ ਬਾਣੀ ਮਹਾ ਪੁਰਖ ਕੀ ਨਿਜ ਘਰਿ ਵਾਸਾ ਹੋਇ ॥

AGGS, M 1, p 935. [1]

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 one becomes Gurmukh).

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 to be called as Gurmukh, is so true today as it was then at the time of Guru Nanak. There are many (apparent) Gurmukhs, but rare are those who understand the Bani in its real perspective. Therefore, Guru Nanak thought it necessary to emphasize the importance of listening, understanding, practicing the philosophy embodied in the Bani (Stanzas # 8-15 of JAP. See Ref. 9).

Guru Amardas also noticed that many Sikhs used to come to have his *darshan* (just to visit the Guru to see/meet him) but were not interested to listen to his philosophy:

ਸਤਿਗੁਰ¹ ਨੋ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਵੇਖਦਾ ਜੇਤਾ ਜਗਤੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ॥
ਡਿਠੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਵਈ ਜਿਚਰੁ ਸਬਦਿ ਨ ਕਰੇ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ॥

AGGS. M 3, p 594.

All the humans of the world desire to behold the True Guru¹. One does not get salvation by merely seeing (the True Guru¹), Unless one deliberates/contemplates

on his *Sabd* (Word).

Guru Amardas clearly means that it is the ‘Sabd’ that is the ‘Guru’ not the human body as the ‘Guru’. The same situation is seen in these days that most of the Sikhs visit the Gurdwara just at the time of *Bhog* and paying their respect to the Aad Guru Granth Sahib for a few minutes then go to *Langar* Hall.

Since the Granth has been declared as Guru more and more attention is being paid to treat it as an idol and to have its *Darshan* (seeing). Moreover, continuous recitation of the AGGS (*Akhand Paath*) is considered as a *mantram* for their worldly benefits as pointed out by Dr Gopal Singh [22] or it has become a fashion to entertain relatives and friends but never for deliberation of *Sabd* to understand the wisdom given in the *Sabd* Guru [6, 18]. (Also see articles of Mr Gurcharan Singh Bhatia and Mr Harcharan Singh)

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*. (Also see ‘Resolution’ passed at the Seminar at page 76.)

However, we should also not forget the fact that the Granth is ‘Guru’ ipso facto that the ‘Sabd Guru’ is enshrined in it. And the Granth commands all respects being the Guru.

HOW TO ADDRESS THE HOLY GRANTH OF THE SIKHS?

The Sikhs have just finished celebration of the **Quadricentennial of Compilation and Installation (Parkash Divas) of their Holy Granth**. Even after 400 years of its compilation they still do not have a standardized title for it. Every Sikh and non-Sikh is addressing the Holy Granth with different name of his/her choice.

Did Guru Arjan Give Any Title?

It is not clear from the review of the history of the Holy Granth if Guru Arjan has assigned any title to the Granth at the time of its compilation [14-17, 20, 22, 24, 26, 29, 32, 34, 36, 38, 39, 42]. However, Bhai Jodh Singh [29] reported a letter of Bhai Kahn Singh in which Bhai Kahn Singh has shown that two titles, *Pothi* (book, *Granth*) and *Guru Baba* (Guru Father) were used at the end of the Table of Contents of the *Kartarpuri Bir*. The exact wordings reported by Bhai Kahn Singh are as follows: ਸੰਮਤ ੧੬੬੧ ਮਿਤੀ ਭਾਦੋਂ ਵਦੀ ੧ ਪੋਥੀ ਲਿਖ ਪਹੁੰਚੇ ॥ ਸਾਰੇ ਪੜਚੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਬੇ ਦੇ ੯੭੪ ॥ (*Samat* 1661 dated *Badhon* 1 of second half, writing of *Pothi* was achieved. Total folios of *Guru Baba* are 974).

But Bhai Jodh Singh has given an entirely a different version, when he examined the *Kartarpuri Bir*. His version is as follows: ਸੰਮਤ ੧੬੬੧ ਮਿਤੀ ਭਾਦੋਂ ਵਦੀ ਇਕਮ ੧ ਪੋਥੀ ਲਿਖਿ ਪਹੁੰਚੇ (there are differences in some spelling also)॥ (*Samat* 1661 dated *Badhon* first 1 of the second half, writing of *Pothi* achieved). He further says that these words were in the beginning of the Table of Contents rather than at the end as reported by Bhai Kahn Singh. Moreover, he [29] categorically refuted Bhai Kahn Singh’s statement "Total folios of *Guru Baba* are 974" by saying that these words were not found written in the Table of Contents or anywhere else in the *Kartarpuri Bir*.

It is strange that two well-known scholars made two different observations in the Table of Contents of the same *Bir*. Who is right? Just possible both may be right and they might have examined two different *Birs* offered by the custodians of the *Kartarpuri Bir* since they may have more than one copy of the Holy Granth.

Anyhow, not going into further discussion on this entry and date of compilation, it will suffice to say that there were at least two titles, e.g. *Pothi*, and *Guru Baba*, of the Granth in its Table of Contents at least in one of the *Birs* at Kartarpur. The use of titles ‘*Pothi*’ and ‘*Guru Baba*’ are justified on the bases of the declaration, ਪੋਥੀ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਕਾ ਥਾਨੁ ॥ (AGGS, M 5, P 1226) by Guru Arjan in 1604, in which ‘*pothi*’ and ‘*Parmeshar*’ have been used where ‘*Pothi*’ means ‘*Granth*’ and ‘*Parmeshar*’ has been used as a metaphor for ‘*Guru*’ as Enlightener.

However, Professor Sahib Singh [39] gave another title, ‘*Aad Bir*’, to this *Pothi* when he wrote a book, *Aad Bir Baray*. I cannot figure out in what context Prof Sahib Singh has used the adjective ‘*Aad*’ for the ‘*Bir*’ compiled by Guru Arjan. Since then almost all the scholars have taken ‘*Aad Bir*’ as the ‘*First Bir*’ prepared by Guru Arjan.

Although the titles, *Pothi* and *Guru Baba*, are found in the Table of Contents of *Kartarpuri Bir(s)*, but some Sikh scholars have assigned their own titles. Now the most prevalent titles found in the old and contemporary Sikh literature are as follows:

1. “*Pothi*” and “*Guru Baba*” in the Table of Contents in one of the *Birs* at Kartarpur.
2. Some Sikhs use titles like, *Baba Ji*, *Guru Baba Ji*, *Baba Ji Di Bir*, *Guru Babay Di Bir*, verbally.
3. Professor Sahib Singh was the first who used a new title, *Aad Bir*, for *Kartarpuri Bir*.
4. Some scholars translated the *Aad Bir* into *Adi Granth* in English.
5. Then some scholars dropped the adjective *Aad* (*Adi*) and replaced it with *Guru* and named it *Guru Granth*

- for the Bir, which was sanctified as Guru, by Guru Gobind Singh in 1708.
6. Then some devout scholars started adding prefixes and suffixes in the title of the ‘Granth’ as follows:
 - a. *Guru Granth*
 - b. *Guru Granth Sahib*,
 - c. *Sri Guru Granth*,
 - d. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*,
 - e. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji*
 - f. *Aad Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji* (This title is being used for the last 28 years for all the Granths printed by Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), Amritsar and by all other printers),
 - g. The Institute for Understanding Sikhism has adopted the title ‘*Aad Guru Granth Sahib*’ by dropping ‘*Sri*’ and ‘*Ji*’ from the title used by the SGPC, to be used in articles in its periodical, *UNDERSTANDING SIKHISM – The Research Journal*, its books, and other articles for other journals. Dropping of ‘*Sri*’ and ‘*Ji*’ from the SGPC’s title is well explained in details in Ref # [4].

Recently when I used ‘*Aad Guru Granth Sahib*’ in my missives for the Sikh Diaspora (SD) Discussion Group on Internet, there was a great hue and cry from some members against the use of ‘*Aad*’. The irony is that none of the critics even cared to look into the title of the Holy Granth published by the SGPC, Amritsar before criticising me. The recent inquiry has confirmed that the SGPC has been using the title ‘*AAD SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB JI*’ since 1976. **It is interesting that none of these critics have criticised the SGPC against the use of ‘*Aad*’ in the title of the Holy Granth during the last 28 years.** However, recently I found that Dr IJ Singh [Sikh Diaspora Discussion Group] has criticized the SGPC to use this title saying that it is imprecise and misleading:

“The volume compiled by Guru Arjan may be called the first resenscion*, or Aad(i) Granth or the Pothee Sahib, and some few people do so. (To me the word Aad(i) literally means the first.) Most Sikhs do not distinguish this volume from the definitive Guru Granth that came later. I think the distinction is important because the two versions are not identical; the Guru Granth has significant additional entries in it, specifically the writings of Guru Tegh Bahadur. I think my argument would carry weight even if there were minimal difference between the two. This does not mean that Sikhs should have less reverence for one than the other. Keep in mind that better than 90 percent of the Guru Granth is in the Aad(i) Granth. I know that the Guru Granth published by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) carries this moniker,

and I would argue that it is imprecise and even misleading to use the term "Aad(i) Granth" for the Guru Granth Sahib. Why? Because this implies a second revision, yet to come. Even to think of a second revised version of the Guru Granth would indeed be heresy.”

*resenscion = I think he means ‘recension’.

(Later this has also appeared in The Sikh Review. August, 2004 and this view was accepted by Gurmit Singh of Australia, and Gajinder Singh of Mohali, Chandigarh in the SR of October 2004. And in the Sikh Bulletin, August – September 2004.)

It has been discussed [10] in details that addition of the Bani of Guru Teg Bahadur does not change the Nanakian Philosophy embodied in the Bani of Guru Nanak. Moreover, the Bani of Guru Teg Bahadur is interpreting and strengthening the Nanakian Philosophy as indicated by Dr Taran Singh [40] that the Bani of the Sikh Gurus, who succeeded to the ‘House of Nanak’, is the interpretation of Nanakian Philosophy, embodied in the Bani of Guru Nanak.

Since the addition of Bani of Guru Teg Bahadur does not change the basic Nanakian Philosophy, therefore, the ‘*Aad Granth*’ remains the ‘*Aad Granth*’. Moreover, it is wrong to interpret ‘*Aad*’ as ‘*First*’ when the ‘*Dadda*’ in ‘*Aad*’ (ਆਦ) is with *siari*, which means ‘*Eternal*’ as is explained in details in ref. [10].

INHERITED TREASURE

There are many fallacies about the procurement of Gurbani (Bani of the Sikh Gurus) by Guru Arjan. Prof. Sahib Singh [39] in his book, ‘*Aad Bir Baray*’ and Principal Harbhajan Singh [26] in his booklet, *Guru Maneo Granth* 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. This has been compounded by Dr Pashaura Singh in his PhD thesis [35]. 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. The later view is also held by Kohli [15], a reputed Sikh scholar.

On the other hand Dr Dhillon [13] says that Guru Nanak was writing his religious experience himself in a *Pothi*. Nevertheless, he has also mentioned that his Bani was written by his devout associates:

“We are told that some devout Sikhs accompanied him had also taken upon themselves to commit the Bani into writing on its revelation. For example, *Majh ki Var* and

Sidh Goshti had been recorded by Saido Gheeho, who was with Guru Nanak on his tour to Southern India. Similarly *Malar Ki Var* had been reduced to writing by Hassu and Shihan who were accompanying the Guru during sojourn in Kashmir. Guru Nanak's stay at Kartarpur was most productive and eventful for the development of Sikh Scribal tradition. Bhai Mansukh, a trader of Lahore who had come into the fold of Guru Nanak's faith, stayed for three years at Kartarpur, primarily to prepare *Pothis of Gurbani*. Here at Kartarpur, besides explaining the significance of Japuji, Guru Nanak directed his spiritual heir (Guru) Angad to reduce it to writing and recite it, obviously to get it endorsed from him. It indicates that what had been composed and recorded by Guru Nanak so far was entrusted to (Guru) Angad to arrange it into a *Pothi*. Thus, well before the departure of Guru Nanak, first redaction of his sacred writings had come to be preserved in a codex, which he bestowed to Guru Angad on his appointment to the Guru-ship."

There is no such instance as reported by Dr Dhillon above in the findings of Prof Sahib Singh [39] and Principal Harbhajan Singh [26].

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 # 16, 26, 35, 39). This story has been fabricated by early scholars and it has been corroborated by citing *Sabds* from the AGGS. It is a long story where it has been mentioned 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 before Guru Arjan and guiding him for the procurement of *pothis*, most probably, has been added by these scholars to create belief in miracles in Sikhism.

The appearance of the spirit of Guru Amardas is not possible according to Gurbani and science. Similarly, to advise Guru Arjan to be humble to Baba Mohan is also not logical. Because the Bani of Guru Arjan shows that humility was always his mace:

ਗਰੀਬੀ ਗਦਾ ਹਮਾਰੀ ॥

AGGS, M 5, P 628.

Humility is my mace (spiked club).

It is further said in the above story that Guru Arjan, while seated in the street in front of the house of Baba Mohan, recited the following Sabd:

ਮੋਹਨ ਤੇਰੇ ਉਚੇ ਮੰਦਰ ਮਹਲ ਆਪਾਰਾ ॥

ਮੋਹਨ ਤੇਰੇ ਸੋਹਨਿ ਦੁਆਰ ਜੀਉ ਸੰਤ ਧਰਮ ਸਾਲਾ ॥

AGGS, M 5, p 248.

(Dr Gopal Singh [22] has given a note under this Sabd that the second, third and fourth verses are for the praise of Baba Mohan to persuade him to procure the *pothis*.)

If we keep in view the allegories, metaphors, and similes used in this verse then its interpretation will be as follows:

"Hey! The Almighty, You abide in a heavenly home (temple) of infinite glory and boundary.

Hey! The Almighty, Your abode is beautiful, the sanctuary of the saints."

The above interpretation does not give any indication that Guru Arjan is addressing Baba Mohan. All the above fallacies have been refuted by Principal Harbhajan Singh [26] and by Professor Sahib Singh [39]. In spite of the refutation of the above fallacies, these are still in vogue after 400 years with scholars and preachers that not only degrade the reality and entirety of the Gurbani but also make Sikhism a religion of myths and miracles.

On the other hand Harinder Singh Mehboob [17] pointed out in his book, *Sehje Rachio Khalsa* (in note # 2 on page 1124) that there is no proof of hand written Gurbani of Sikh Gurus so far. Most probably the theory of Mehboob is based on the information given by the early scholars like Santokh Singh, Swarup Das Bhalla and Giani Gian Singh mentioned earlier. He has also mentioned that the draft of Granth prepared by Guru Arjan and the original Gurbani of Guru Teg Bahadur are not available. He tried to explain that the Gurbani was passed on from one Guru to the successive Gurus through transcendental power (*Gurliv*), and Guru Arjan dictated the Granth through this transcendental power. Similarly, Guru Gobind Singh dictated the whole Granth and added the Gurbani of Guru Teg Bahadur at appropriate places in the AGGS through transcendental power or through the power of clairvoyance.

There is no doubt in the mind of anybody or of any Sikh that Gurus could remember their own Bani and that of the predecessors by heart, and Guru Arjan and Guru Gobind Singh could dictate the whole Granth by heart. But it is not logical at all that the Gurus did not write their Bani and did not preserve it to be used by the successive Gurus and their Sikhs.

Dr Mann [16] has again confirmed all the fallacies about the compilation of the AGGS. He has tried to justify again that the emergence of the present form of the AGGS was a continuous process and *Goindval Pothis* or *Baba Mohan Vali Pothis* are the earliest Sikh canons in this process. He justified that either the *Pothis* were

given to Baba Mohan to be kept in Goindwal, the place of Guru Amardas or it was a part of scheme to forgive Baba Mohan for having shown disrespect to his brother-in-law, Guru Ramdas.

He based all his findings on the information given in the following books: *Mehma Prakash* of Sarupdas Bhalla; *Sikhan di Bhagatmala*, anonymous; *Sri Gurbilas Patshai 6* of Nirmala scholars; *Sri Gur Pratap Suraj Granth* of Bhai Santokh Singh; and *Tvarikh Guru Khalsa* of Giani Gian Singh. The information about the compilation of the AGGS, given in these books, was already declared illogical by Prof Sahib Singh and others. When I examined a few stories and events in a book, *Sodhi Chamatkar*, interpreted by Sodi Teja Singh [41], which is based on the books of Bhai Santokh Singh and Giani Gian Singh, I found many of them to be unscientific, illogical and contrary to Gurbani.

Moreover, it is hard to accept that Guru Amardas would bestow the Guru-ship onto Guru Ramdas but he would not consider Guru Ramdas worth for keeping the Gurbani of the preceding Gurus for preaching the philosophy of Guru Nanak and would give the *pothis* to Baba Mohan instead. If we consider the research of Prof Sahib Singh [39] and Principal Harbhajan Singh [26] it is evident that *Goindval Pothis* or *Baba Mohan Vali Pothis* have no connections with the inherited treasure (Gurbani) received by Guru Arjan from his father, Guru Ramdas.

The most authentic information about the procurement of Gurbani is given by Prof. Sahib Singh [39], in his book, *Aad Bir Baray*, that the Gurbani written by the Gurus themselves was passed on to the successive Gurus until it reached Guru Arjan as an inherited treasure. He also mentioned that Guru Nanak had collected appropriate Bani of Bhagats and saints that were also passed on to the successive Gurus. All the Bani were already written under different *ragas* (musical modes). Thus, Guru Arjan re-arranged the Bani systematically under different ragas according to the succession of the Sikh Gurus and then of his own and finally of the Bhagats and the saints. When this arrangement was ready, it was given to Bhai Gurdas for copying it into a Granth. The above views have been endorsed by Principal Harbhajan Singh [26].

The contemporary scholars from Western world as well as at home (Punjab, India) are formulating different types of theories based on information available in such literature on this issue without testing with Gurbani, science and logic – the touchstones of truth. Dhillon [13] has summarized their views of some scholars on this issue as follows:

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 in general remained busy during this year 2004 in celebration of Quadricentennial of Compilation and Installation (*Parkas Divas*) of the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) all over the world but none of them had done any research on this issue.

It is a pity that scholars working on this issue did not care to look into the AGGS, their Guru, to find the right answer to the above question about the procurement of Gurbani. There is solid evidence in the AGGS that the inherited treasure (Gurbani) of predecessors was received by Guru Arjan from his father, Guru Ramdas, who received it from Guru Amardas, and Guru Amardas received it from his predecessors, Guru Angad, and Guru Angad received it from Guru Nanak. The following verse of Guru Arjan explains this fact very clearly:

ਪੀਉ ਦਾਦੇ ਕਾ ਖੋਲਿ ਡਿਠਾ ਖਜਾਨਾ ॥
 ਤਾ ਮੇਰੈ ਮਨਿ ਭਇਆ ਨਿਧਾਨਾ ॥੧॥
 ਰਤਨ ਲਾਲ ਜਾ ਕਾ ਕਛੂ ਨ ਮੋਲੁ ॥
 ਭਰੇ ਭੰਡਾਰ ਅਖਟ ਅਤੋਲ ॥੨॥
 ਖਾਵਹਿ ਖਰਚਹਿ ਰਲਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਭਾਈ ॥
 ਤੋਟਿ ਨ ਆਵੇ ਵਧਦੇ ਜਾਈ ॥੩॥
 ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਿਸੁ ਮਸਤਕਿ ਲੇਖੁ ਲਿਖਾਇ ॥
 ਸੁ ਏਤੁ ਖਜਾਨੇ ਲਇਆ ਰਲਾਇ ॥੪॥
 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). Compared with this treasure the jewels and rubies have no value.

The chest is full of inexhaustible and immeasurable treasure (Gurbani). Let us utilize it together, and dispense (disseminate) it among others, O'Brothers. The Treasure (Gurbani) will not be exhausted instead it would multiply manifold.

Nanak says: *Whosoever has the desire in his mind to have it, can be a shareholder of this Treasure (Gurbani).*"

SALIENT FEATURES OF THE AAD GURU GRANTH SAHIB

Although the AGGS was compiled in 1604 CE, about 400 years ago, the style of writing of the 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 under the following major headings:

1. Commencing Verse
2. Summary
3. Main Text
4. Conclusions
5. Acknowledgments

1. Commencing Verse

The AGGS commences with a special verse. This verse is commonly known as **Moolmantra** (the first mystical formula of invocation or incantation as in Hinduism), even there is no such title for it in the AGGS. The critical interpretation of the Commencing Verse of the AGGS will clearly indicate that it is not a mantra or Moolmantra in any respect but a precise and concise definition of the Almighty. The 'definition' of the *isht* of a poet is called **Manglacharan** in Punjabi.

The Commencing Verse of the AGGS is as follows:

ੴ १
ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ
ਸੈਭੰ २
ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ३ ॥

AGGS, Commencing Verse (*Manglacharan*) p 1.

*The One and Only, Oh, the Infinite¹;
Exists;
Creator;
Without fear
(Not governed by any other – Not under any Law of
Universe);
Without enmity;
Timeless (Without effect of time and space);*

*Neither takes birth nor dies;
(Never comes into any anthropomorphic form)
Created by Itself²;
Enlightener; and Bounteous³.*

This Manglacharan is also repeated in the beginning of every major section and then in various abbreviated forms at every sub-section of the AGGS to remind the readers about the salient characteristics of the Eternal Entity. This was considered necessary to caution the readers not to be confused with the specific names (*Kirtam Naam*) as Ram, Gobind, Gosain, Allah, Madho, etc. as the real names of the Eternal Entity, since these are the metaphoric names commonly used by the people for the God. However, no specific name has been coined by Guru Nanak for the Eternal Entity. For more details about the Commencing Verse see ref # [5] and the book on JAP [9].

2. Summary

It is generally accepted that the essence or summary of the Gurbani is compiled in a verse that is entitled as **JAP**. The JAP begins with a Sloka and ends with a Sloka and contains the essence of whole Nanakian Philosophy embodied in the Bani of Guru Nanak in the main text of the JAP [9].

The first Sloka again describes the main characteristics of God as the Eternal Entity:

ਆਦਿ^੧ ਸਚੁ^੨ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ^੩ ਸਚੁ ॥
ਰੈ^੪ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ^੫ ਸਚੁ ॥ ੧ ॥

AGGS, Jap, p 1.

It is important to understand the meanings of ਸਚੁ (*sach*). ਸਚੁ (*sach*) and ਸਤਿ (*sat*) are commonly used in the Gurbani and both means 'true' or 'truth' and/or 'exist' or 'existence' depending on the context these words have been used. Here the word '*sach*' means 'exists'. Dr Sahib Singh [38] and Giani Harbans Singh [23] also interpreted '*sach*' as 'exists'. This '*sach*' represents that Entity, which has no descriptive/specific name, but exists. Therefore, it is interpreted as follows:

*Was in existence² before the beginning of the time and space¹;
Was in existence in the past³; Is in existence in the present⁴;
Will remain in existence forever⁵ (in the future)."* [9]

The beauty of Nanakian Philosophy is that Guru Nanak has not coined any specific name for God. In this Sloka he even did not mention any other commonly used metaphoric name for God [9].

The concluding Sloka of JAP explains that the earth and its all resources are open to be shared by the whole

humanity of the world. Moreover, it is only the good deeds that will bring a person close to or keep away from the contemplation of the Almighty:

ਪਵਣੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਪਾਣੀ ਪਿਤਾ ਮਾਤਾ ਧਰਤਿ ਮਹਤੁ ॥
 ਦਿਵਸੁ ਰਾਤਿ ਦੁਇ ਦਾਈ ਦਾਇਆ ਖੇਲੈ ਸਗਲ ਜਗਤੁ ॥
 ਚੰਗਿਆਈਆ ਬੁਰਿਆਈਆ ਵਾਰੈ ਧਰਮੁ ਹਦੂਰਿ ॥
 ਕਰਮੀ ਆਪੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਕੇ ਨੇੜੈ ਕੇ ਦੂਰਿ ॥
 ਜਿਨੀ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਇਆ ਗਏ ਮਸਕਤਿ ਘਾਲਿ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਤੇ ਮੁਖ ਉਜਲੇ ਕੇਤੀ ਛੁਟੀ ਨਾਲਿ ॥ ੧ ॥

AGGS, Jap, p 8.

“The air is as the Guru, water as the father, the great earth as the mother.

Days and nights are as the nurses in whose laps the whole humanity lives (play).

Our good and bad deeds are evaluated according to the Laws of the Nature.

It is only your deeds on which bases you will be judged to be near to or far from the Almighty.

Those, who comprehend / contemplate on the Almighty get rid of their difficulties.” [9]

3. Main Text

The main text contains three sections:

- i) Bani of the Sikh Gurus
- ii) Bani of Bhagats, *Sants* (saints), and Sufis
- ii) Bani of Bhatts

i) Bani of the Sikh Gurus

Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, promulgated a philosophy and that was preached and strengthened by the next nine Sikh Gurus, who succeeded to the ‘**House of Nanak**’. This philosophy or the Bani of Guru Nanak and that of the other Sikh Gurus that has been incorporated in the AGGS is called **Gurbani**. *Gurbani* has also been defined by Bhai Kahn Singh as follows [31]: *The Bani, uttered by the mouth of Satguru Nanak and his successor Gurus through the inspiration of the Almighty, is called Gurbani*. Although Bhai Gurdas used this term, *Gurbani*, for the *Bani* of others also, but according to Bhai Kahn Singh [31] this term is specially reserved for the *Bani* of the Sikh Gurus. The philosophy promulgated by Guru Nanak in his Bani, which was preached and strengthened by the other Sikh Gurus, who succeeded to the ‘House of Nanak’, is termed as **Nanakian Philosophy**, an Anglicized term for the philosophy of Guru Nanak in his Bani [7].

This section is composed of the *Bani* of Guru Nanak (1469-1539), Guru Angad (1504-1552), Guru Amardas (1479-1574), Guru Ramdas (1534-1581), Guru Arjan (1563-1606) and Guru Teg Bahadur (1621-1675). Almost every verse of *Bani* of each Sikh Guru ends with the pen name of ‘**Nanak**’ as the author, whether it was composed by Guru Nanak himself or by the other Sikh

Gurus who succeeded to the House of Nanak. 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 Guru Nanak under the pen name of ‘**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. This system has been followed consistently throughout the main text of the AGGS.

ii) Bani of Bhagats

This section 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).

These Bhagats were involved in the Bhagati Movement in the medieval India. They revolted against the malpractices in various religions of India.

First 13 pages of the AGGS contain the *Bani* of Sikh Gurus, which are not under the major sections of Raga System, although Raga Asa and Raga Gauri have been used for some verses. Then major portion of the *Bani* is categorized under different Ragas. First Raga is ‘Sri’. As a general rule the *Bani* of Guru Nanak has been incorporated first, which is followed by that of other Sikh Gurus in succession. Each verse of every Guru is ending with a pen name, ‘**NANAK**’, whether the author of the *Bani* is Guru Nanak or any other Sikh Guru. However, their *Bani* was identified by the Mahla and his succession number to the House of Nanak as explained above.

Thereafter, a new section is started by identifying the *Bani* under the names of the Bhagats, as on page 91 it says Sri Raga, Kabir Jio Ka., on page 92 as Sri Raga Trilochan Ka, etc. Then on page 323 under Raga Gauri the *Bani* of Bhagats has been identified clearly as “**Raga Gauri, Bhagatan Ki Bani**” “**Gauri Guarari, Sri Kabir Jio Kay Caupadhay**”, and so on under every Raga.

ii-a) Controversy on Bhagat Bani

Dr Sahib Singh [38] has pointed out that some scholars think that the philosophy of the Bhagat is different than those of the Sikh Gurus. However, he is a strong

protagonist of the general accepted concept that Bhagat Bani and Gurus' Bani have the same philosophy and many accept his views. However, a few conscientious scholars have pointed out some variances between Gurbani and Bhagat Bani:

1. Daljit Singh and Kharak Singh [19]: Undeniably, the world-view of Bhagats is different from that of the Gurus. They also say that references of myths and stories mentioned in the Guru Granth Sahib are mostly symbolic, idiomatic or allegorical, and involves no acceptance of their historical reality.
2. Harchand Singh [27]: Bhagat writings, at places are at variance with those of the Sikh Gurus and when such variances do occur, the Sikhs have to follow the writings of their Gurus.
3. Puran Singh [37], a spiritual person says that the Third Guru, Amardas, and the Fifth Guru, Arjan, take the *Slokas* of Farid which are full of intellectual pessimism and corrected the outlook of his poetry by inserting the messages of joy, of beauty, of glory, of pleasure, of hope (page 306). Same types of corrections and suggestions have been given by the Sikh Gurus in some verses of Kabir and other Bhagats.
4. Sikh Rehit Maryada (SRM), published by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), Amritsar says at the end of instruction, **How to take a Hukm (Waak Lena)** as follows: Chapter VI, Article VII, e.: For taking the command (*Hukm*), the hymn that is continuing on the top of the left hand page must be read from the beginning. If the hymn begins on the previous page, turn over the page and read the whole hymn from the beginning to the end. If the scriptural composition that is continuing on the top of the left hand page is a *var* (ode) then start from the first of the slokas preceding the *pauri* and read up to the end of the *pauri*. **Conclude the reading at the end of the Hymn with the line in which the name 'Nanak' occurs.** The name "Nanak" only appears at the end of the sabd of Sikh Gurus, i.e., Gurbani, This name is not found in Bhagat Bani or Bhattan de Swayiae. It clearly indicates that the SGPC recognizes the distinction between Gurbani and Bhagat Bani. However, at Darbar Sahib sometimes the Waak is also taken from the Bhagat Bani, which is a direct violation of Chapter VI, article VII, e of SRM.
5. The observations of Cunningham [12 – p 34] about the contributions of Bhagats and those of Guru Nanak are also worth noting: “*They (Bhagats) aimed chiefly at emancipation from priestcraft, or from the grossness of idolatry and polytheism. They formed pious associations of contented Quietists, or they gave themselves up to the contemplation of futurity in*

the hope of approaching bliss, rather than called upon their fellow creatures to throw aside every social as well as religious trammel, and to arise a new people freed from the debasing corruption of ages. They perfected forms of dissent rather than planted the germs of nations, and their sects remain to this day as they left them. It was reserved for NANAK to perceive the true principles of reform, and to lay those broad foundations which enabled his successor GOBIND to fire the minds of his countrymen with new nationality, and to give practical effect to the doctrine that the lowest is equal with the highest, in race as in creed, in political rights as in religious hopes.”

iii) Bani of Bhattas (Swayiae)

Bani of Bhattas (*Swayiae*) contains panegyrics / eulogies / praises of first five Sikh Gurus. They are about 19 in number 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.

In addition to the *Swayiae* of Bhattas, the AGGS also contains the *Swayiae Sri Mukh Baak Mahla 5* (AGGS, pp 1385-1389). The *Swayiae* on pages 1385-1387 clearly explain that Nanak is the ‘Guru’. I have noticed that this was the most important advice by Guru Arjan for the Sikhs that has been ignored by most of the Sikh and non-Sikh scholars, and by the Sikhs at large. Similar type of information is also available in the *Sri Gur Sobha* [21] where it is mentioned that Nanak is the ‘Guru’ and other Sikh Gurus, who succeeded to the House of Nanak, are following and preaching the philosophy of Guru Nanak.

3. Conclusion

Mundavani (Seal or Conclusion)

At the end of the AGGS Guru Arjan has clearly mentioned allegorically in the conclusion (Mundavani) that there are three things, truth, contentment, and philosophy; and the elixir from the Almighty is found by deliberating (*Khavay*) and practicing (*Punchay*) the Nanakian Philosophy incorporated in the AGGS:

ਮੁੰਦਾਵਣੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ॥

ਬਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਤਿੰਨਿ ਵਸਤੂ ਪਈਓ ਸਤੁ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਵਚਾਰੋ ॥

ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਨਾਮੁ ਠਾਕਰੁ ਕਾ ਪਇਓ ਜਿਸ ਕਾ ਸਭਸੁ ਅਧਾਰੋ ॥

ਜੇ ਕੋ ਖਾਵੈ ਜੇ ਕੋ ਭੁੰਚੈ ਤਿਸ ਕਾ ਹੋਇ ਉਧਾਰੋ ॥

ਏਹ ਵਸਤੁ ਤਜੀ ਨਹ ਜਾਈ ਨਿਤ ਨਿਤ ਰਖੁ ਉਚਿ ਧਾਰੋ ॥

ਤਮ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਚਰਨ ਲਗਿ ਤਰੀਐ ਸਭੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਪਸਾਰੋ ॥

AGGS, M 5, p 1429.

“*In the platter (the Granth) are found three subject*

matters -

Truth, contentment and the vichaar (philosophy).

Therefore, the elixir (Amrit) from the Almighty is also there,

For which everybody has the desire to have it.

Whosoever adopts (khavay) it and practices (bhunchay – digests) it, gets salvation.

These subject matters in no way can be ignored or discarded,

Keep them all the time in mind.

The sea of darkness can be crossed by following

The instructions (charan lag) (recorded in the Granth).

Nanak says: The Almighty pervades everywhere.”

4. Acknowledgments

Finally, the acknowledgments are recorded under the heading of a *Sloka*. This is the end of the whole text of the AGGS. Guru Arjan has thanked the Almighty for enabling him to complete this big task of compilation of the divine wisdom into a Granth:

ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ॥

ਤੇਰਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਤੋ ਨਾਹੀ ਮੈਨੋ ਜੋਗੁ ਕੀਤੋਈ ॥

ਮੈ ਨਿਰਗੁਣਿਆਰੇ ਕੋ ਗੁਣੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਆਪੇ ਤਰਸੁ ਪਇਓਈ ॥

ਤਰਸੁ ਪਇਆ ਮਿਹਰਾਮਤਿ ਹੋਈ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਸਜਣੁ ਮਿਲਿਆ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਤਾਂ ਜੀਵਾਂ ਤਨੁ ਮਨੁ ਥੀਵੈ ਹਰਿਆ ॥ ੧ ॥

AGGS, M 5, p 1429.

I am unable to acknowledge Your Blessings for enabling me

(to complete this big task of compilation of the Divine Wisdom into a Granth).

I am without any merit and have no ability but

You took pity on me (to do the above task).

By Your Mercy and Blessings I met Friendly (Buddy) True Guru.

On meeting the Almighty my body and mind bloom into great pleasure.”

Ragas (Musical Modes)

There are 31 *Ragas* (musical modes) under which most of the *Gurbani* and *Bani* of Bhagats have been incorporated in the AGGS. These *Ragas* 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.

First 13 pages of the AGGS contain the Bani of Sikh Gurus, which are not under the major sections of Raga System, although Raga Asa and Raga Gauri have been used for some verses. Then major portion of the Bani is categorized under different Ragas. Similarly, the Bani on pages from 1352 to 1430 is also without any Raga. This portion contains the Additional Bani of the Sikh

Gurus; *Swayiae Sri Mukh Baak Mahla 5*, that means *Swayiae* written by Guru Arjan; and Bani of Bhattas under the headings of *Swayiae* of the first five Gurus as “*Swayiae Mahla Pehlae kae, Swayiae Mahla Dujae Kae*, and so on.

Music forms the basis of the classification of the hymns. Under each Raga, the hymns are arranged in the following order:

1. *Chaupadas*: hymns of four verses.

2. *Ashtapadas*: hymns of eight verses.

3. Long hymns.

4. *Chhants*: Verses of six lines.

5. Short hymns.

6. *Vaars*: consisting of two or more Slokas and a *Pauri*.

7. Hymns of Bhagats are also in the same order.

The hymns are further classified according to the musical clef (*ghar*) in which each is to be sung. Although according to the index of Ragas in *Raag Maala*, the total number of Ragas and Raginis is 84, the Guru has used only 31. So the Granth is arranged firstly according to the Ragas, secondly, according to the nature or meter of the hymns, thirdly authorship, and fourthly the clef.

The verses of Sikh Gurus are arranged according to their succession number of each Guru to the House of Nanak as Mahla 1, Mahla 2, Mahla 3, and so on followed by the verses of Bhagats. The *Swayiae* of Bhattas are grouped together under one section in the AGGS. The number of verses contributed by the Sikh Gurus, by the Bhagats, and *Swayiae* of Bhattas recorded in the AGGS are as follows:

Mahla 1 (Guru Nanak) = 947

Mahla 2 (Guru Angad) = 63

Mahla 3 (Guru Amardas) = 869

Mahla 4 (Guru Ramdas) = 638

Mahla 5 (Guru Arjan) = 2312

Mahla 9 (Guru Teg Bahadur) = 115

Kabir = 534

Farid = 123

Sundar = 6

Sadhna = 1

Surdas = 2

Sain = 1

Jaidev = 2

Trilochan = 5

Dhanna = 4

Namdev = 62

Parmanand = 1

Pipa = 1

Beni = 3

Bhikhan = 2

Mardana = 2 (these verses belong to Guru Nanak

addressed to Mardana. But these are erroneously assigned to the authorship of Mardana by some scholars.)

Ravidas = 40

Ramanand = 1

Bhatts = 123

RAAG MAALA

After the Sloka (acknowledgments) 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 *Sloka*, which 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 *Sloka* or recitation of *Raag Maala* could also be included. The SGPC left it to the choice of the *Granthis* (who recite the *Akhand Path*) or the individuals, to recite *Raag Maala* or not, till further decision is taken by the SGPC. About 60 years have elapsed since the above decision was taken; the controversy has not been resolved yet. Recently Gyani Gurdit Singh has again raised this issue in his book, *Mundawani**, which has been recently banned by Bhai Iqbal Singh, Jathedar of Takht Patna Sahib. His critical study indicates that it is not the part of the AGGS and *Mundawani* is seal of the AGGS.

(*Singh, Giani Gurdit. 2004. *Ithas Guru Granth Sahib: Mundawani*. (Punjabi). Publishers: Sahitya Prakashan, 56 Sector 4, Chandigarh, India.)

Is the AGGS Interfaith Scriptures?

In fact the scholars who are involved in this controversy have failed to understand the Nanakian Philosophy before drawing their conclusions. It is generally accepted that Guru Nanak collected the Bani of medieval and contemporary Bhagats and it was passed on to Guru Angad along with his own Bani and then to the next Guru to the House of Nanak till it was received by Guru Arjan. Now some researcher will raise a question. Why did Guru Arjan incorporated the Bhagat Bani in the AGGS? The answer lies in the fact that Nanakian Philosophy encourages for understanding and sharing the philosophy of the other faiths or religions as is indicated in the following verse of Guru Nanak:

ਗੁਣਾ ਕਾ ਹੋਵੈ ਵਾਸੁਲਾ ਕਢਿ ਵਾਸਿ ਲਈਜੈ ॥

ਜੇ ਗੁਣ ਹੋਵਨਿ ਸਾਜਨਾ ਮਿਲਿ ਸਾਝ ਕਰੀਜਾਐ ॥

ਸਾਝ ਕਰੀਜੈ ਗੁਣ ਕੇਰੀ ਛੇਡਿ ਅਵਗਣ ਚਲੀਏ ॥

AGGS, M 1, p 765

"If you have a box full of virtues,

Open it so that everybody can share your virtues.

*(Similarly) If your friends have virtues,
Share with them together.
Share only the virtues,
Abandon the vices."*

Keeping in view the above philosophy of Guru Nanak, Guru Arjan added the Bani of Bhagats to make the Sikhs aware of the *Bhagati* Movement started during the medieval period against the malpractices among the Indian religions to understand their philosophy. *Gurbani*, incorporated in the AGGS, itself contains interfaith dialogues of Sikh Gurus with Kabir, Farid, *Sidhs*, Yogis, Pundits, Muslim clergy, and common human.

Unfortunately this open mindedness of Guru Nanak and Guru Arjan to include the Bhagat Bani in the AGGS has been misinterpreted by some scholars to declare that Sikhism is a syncretism, which is a combination of Hinduism and Islam. Nevertheless, the critical analysis of the AGGS will clearly indicate that the Nanakian Philosophy is unique and independent of all the other philosophies or schools of other thoughts whether included in the AGGS or found in other scriptures.

The Language of the AGGS

Some scholars claim that Bani of the AGGS is written in at least 22 different languages without any critical analysis of archaic Punjabi. However, the study of the Bani in the AGGS suggests that the Sikh Gurus used the language spoken during their period between 15th and 17th century for writing their Bani. Similarly the Bani of the Bhagats indicates that the language used by them was the language spoken by the then peoples during their period between 12th and 17th century. During the period of Bhagats and the Sikh Gurus Persian was official language of the rulers and Sanskrit was the language of the Vedas and other sacred books. Still the Gurus and Bhagats preferred to use the language, spoken by the people, to compose their Bani, so that their message was easily understood by the average person. If the language spoken by the peoples in the united Punjab about 57 years ago and the language of Punjabi literature of 18th and 19th centuries is compared with that of the language of the Bani of 15th to 17th centuries one would easily agree to that the language of the AGGS is archaic Punjabi with various dialects mixed with Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit words.

There are some verses (AGGS, M 1 & 5, p 1353) compiled under the heading of *Sahskriti Sloks*. According to Dr Gopal Singh [22], Dr Sahib Singh [38], and Talib [42] *Sahskriti Sloks* are not in Sanskrit but in a language that is between Prakrit and Sanskrit. However, according to Bhai Kahn Singh [30] *Sahskrit* is a language that originated from Pali, Prakrit and Sanskrit. Further analysis of the language used in the AGGS

clearly suggests that, there is not even a single verse in the AGGS that can be identified as pure Sanskrit. But there is an extensive use of Persian and Sanskrit vocabulary in many verses. Nevertheless, there is a very interesting observation that the language used by some Bhagats, who lived in North-eastern, Central, and South-western regions of India (far away from Punjab), resembles very much with that of the archaic Punjabi used by the Sikh Gurus. The similarities of the language of these Bhagats with that of the Sikh Gurus needs further study by the linguists.

The language spoken today in the Punjab (India) is quite different from that spoken during the period between 12th and 17th century when the Bani was composed by Bhagats and Sikh Gurus. Although the Bani was composed and written in the language spoken by the then people, with the time it has become very difficult to understand and interpret it now. Therefore, knowledge of old languages and their grammars is essential to understand the Gurbani in its entirety and originality. [See ref. # 8 for more on the origin of Punjabi Language.]

SYSTEM OF REFERENCING BANI FROM THE AGGS

It is a pity that the Sikh scholars have not yet decided a uniform system of referencing Bani from the AGGS. The system of citation varies tremendously from one author to that of the others. So much so that even same author uses different systems of citation in his same book or in his same article. This is common with almost all the authors. For example, Dr Gurbachan Singh Talib [43] has used at least four different systems for referencing Bani from the AGGS in his book entitled, *An Introduction to Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, published by the Punjabi University, Patiala in 1991.

It clearly indicates that there is no consistency in referencing Bani from AGGS for research papers, books or popular articles. The new system of referencing Bani from the AGGS has been devised by Chahal [4], which is explained briefly as follows:

As a rule the citation should be as short as possible but must be complete in its information. Therefore, it is suggested to cite the Bani of the Sikh Gurus as follows:

AGGS, M 5, p 103.

It means this citation is from the Aad Guru Granth Sahib, abbreviated as AGGS, which has been published by the SGPC; M 5 means that the author is Fifth Guru to the House of Nanak, i. e. Guru Arjan; and this quote of Bani appears on page 103 of the above source, i.e. AGGS.

Similarly, the Bani of a Bhagat, a Saint or a Bhatt should be cited as follows:

AGGS, Kabir, p 323.

That means the citation is from the AGGS; the author is

Bhagat Kabir; and the page 323 is of the source, i.e. AGGS.

With the above information one can easily find the quoted verse in the AGGS. But there is only one difficulty in the use of the above system of citation when the citation is from *Jap* because no authorship in the form of M has been used for this Bani. Therefore, under these conditions the verse from *Jap* should be cited as follows: AGGS, (Jap with verse number), (page number of the AGGS).

This is the only exception in the proposed citation system described above. Thus, the verse (*pauni*) number 5, "*Thapia na jai kita na hoi...*" of *Jap* at page 2 of the AGGS should be cited as follows:

AGGS, Jap 5, p 2.

The first verse (Sloka) of *Jap*, i.e., *Aad sach jugad such...*, and the second verse, *Soche soch no hovi...* on page 1, carry the same numerical, i.e., 1. Thus, both verses could be cited as:

AGGS, Jap 1, p 1.

Similarly, there is another difficulty in citing the first verse, i. e. before *Jap* written in the beginning of the AGGS. The first verse is commonly named as "Moolmantra" by many scholars, although there is no such title in the AGGS. But it cannot be cited as Moolmantra under any circumstances as discussed earlier. As the AGGS begins or commences with this verse, thus, this verse could be cited under the heading of **Commencing Verse**. Therefore, the first verse of the AGGS could be cited as follows:

AGGS, Commencing Verse, p 1.

OR

As the first verse is a definition of the Almighty and definition means *Manglacharan* in Punjabi, therefore, this verse can more appropriately be cited as follows:

AGGS, Manglacharan, p 1.

There is also no standardized system to write the reference of the AGGS in the list of "Literature Cited" or in the list of "References" given at the end of the article or the book. As we know its title, the names of the editors, the years of editing and the publishers, thus, the AGGS could be referred to by three different styles as follow:

Aad Guru Granth Sahib. 1983 (Reprint). Pp 1430.

Publishers: Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), Amritsar [1].

OR

Guru Arjan (1604) and Guru Gobind Singh (1705) Eds.

Aad Guru Granth Sahib. 1983 (Reprint). Pp 1430

Publishers: Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), Amritsar.

OR

Arjan, Guru (1604) and Singh, Guru Gobind (1705) Eds. Aad Guru Granth Sahib. 1983 (Reprint). Pp 1430 Publishers: Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), Amritsar.

The first system is the most suitable than the other two. It is easy to refer to as AGGS in the text. In the next two styles one has to refer to it as Guru Arjan and Guru Gobind Singh (1604 and 1705) or as Arjan and Singh (1604 and 1705) which is not desirable because there is no such authorship or editorship assigned by either Guru Arjan or Guru Gobind Singh in the AGGS. We should respect their decision.

I would like to make it clear here that: these are suggestions to be followed by scholars for uniformity in referencing Bani from the AGGS. The Institute for Understanding Sikhism (IUS) has adopted this system for all its publication and I use the same system in all my publications. I am pleased to report here that Dr Balwant Dhillon, Head, Department of Guru Nanak Studies, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar has used this system in his book, *Early Scriptural Tradition – Myth and Reality*, except that he spells ‘Aad’ as ‘Adi’ in the Aad Guru Granth Sahib [13]; and many other scholars are also using this system as devised by Chahal [4]

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