
GURU GRANTH WORSHIP THE SIKH WAY

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ABSTRACT

In the religious traditions before Guru Nanak, a Guru was always a person in a human form that was looked upon as a spiritual guide and as a deity to worship. To practice the tradition, there evolved many rituals and formats of the initiation rituals and practices of the Guru worship. During the lifetime of ten Sikh Gurus, many Guru worship practices inherited from other religions continued. However, in the year 1708, human or any other physical form of the Guru ended among Sikhs. Thereafter, the forms of the Guru worship had to be drastically changed. These changes turned into novel concepts and formats. The new format had to uproot many deep-rooted practices into something having little precedence in the annals of religious history. Previously, when a deity was not living, an idol, painting, or a statue of the person Guru was invented and worshiped. Now the Word Guru is physically personified in the verses, the songs, the teachings, and the inspirations. To accommodate this novel paradigm the Guru worship needed entirely novel types of religious practices, rituals, and above all, channels of communication suitable with the Word form of the Guru. It would need to meld wisdom and faith in creating a novel culture in spiritual traditions that people could learn to relate to and still not feel lost or outmoded. To date, Sikhs have evolved traditions in which to worship their Guru is a very enlightening experience. They go into a unique way of reading, reciting, listening, and contemplating on their scripture. The founders of Sikhism helped this process by laying foundation of several institutions of exegesis and expositions as part of religious practices. These practices inculcate intellectual deliberation, humbling wisdom and meditation, while keeping deep faith in the institution of the Word Guru.

Editorial Note:

The above article is partly based on the following article of the author, which has already been published in this Journal. The ABSTRACT has been printed which covers the additional information of this topic:
Lal, (Bhai) Harbans. 2000. Guru Granth Paath: The Sacred Reading, *Understanding Sikhism Res. J.* 2 (1): 30-36.
