

The Sikh Scripture Guru Granth Sahib

An Introduction



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*One God,
One Humanity*



*O Merciful, keep all human beings in your care,
Let grain and water be in plenty,
Take away the suffering and penury of all
(Guru Granth Sahib, page 1261)*

Guru Granth Sahib

The Sikh faith was founded by Guru Nanak (1469-1539 AD) and his nine successor Gurus. The Sikh Scripture is called Guru Granth Sahib. The word Sikh means a disciple-learner and Guru means an enlightener, a teacher.

The Sikhs believe the verses of Guru Granth Sahib as the Revealed Word, the Divine Word of the Supreme Being.

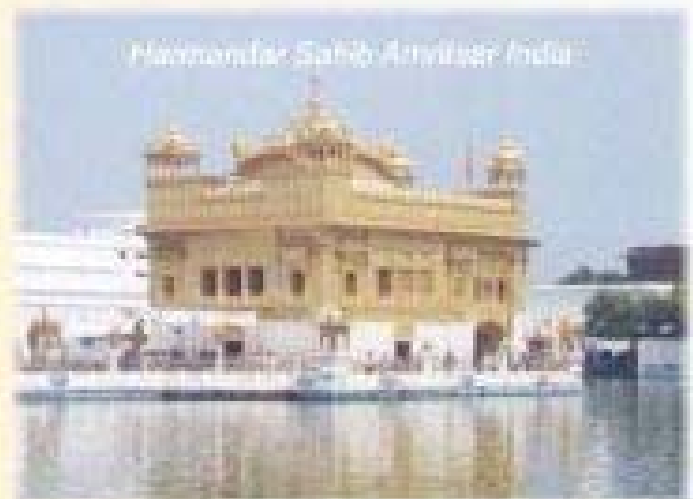
"As the Word of the Master comes to me, so do I make it known." (p 722)

Besides compositions of the Sikh Gurus, Guru Granth Sahib also has compositions of other contemporary saints from the Indian sub-continent.

The History and Structure

In 1604 AD Guru Arjan, the fifth Sikh Guru, did the first compilation of the Sikh Scripture in one volume. The present volume was finalised by Guru Gobind Singh the tenth Guru. In 1708 AD he ordained the scripture as the Eternal Guru of the Sikhs.

Guru Granth Sahib has 1430 pages. The verses of Guru Granth Sahib are compiled in musical measures called *Raag*. The script used is *Gurmukhi*, a *Punjabi* language script developed by the Gurus themselves. The verses are coded in a logical and systematic way, with each hymn beginning with the *Raag* and author information.



Harmandir Sahib Amritsar, India

The first compilation of Guru Granth Sahib was opened for devotees here in 1604 AD.

The Divine Teachings

Guru Granth Sahib is a spiritual treasure and has messages on many areas of human life and society. Some of the teachings enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib are illustrated below.

Akal Purakh - One God, The Supreme Creator

"One Supreme Being, Eternal Truth, the omnipresent Creator, without fear, inimical to none, beyond time, formless, beyond birth and death, self-existent, realised through the grace of the Guru." (p 1)

The Supreme Being pervades all of Creation and can be attained through contemplation on the Divine Word and practising truthfulness in thought and actions.

"Deep within the self, the Lord abides; do not go wandering outside looking for Him." (p 728).

Life's purpose and thereafter

"This human form that you have, use this opportunity to meet the Lord." (p 12)

"Such is the Glory of God; emancipation can be achieved while practicing family life." (p 661)

"All are merged and immersed in the Infinite, where all beings come from. He alone really knows this." (p 1329)

Truthful living and good actions

"Truthful living is the highest of all virtues".
(p 62)

"Never do any actions or deeds for which you might repent or feel ashamed." (p 918)



The mind and human behaviour

"The mind is engrossed in lust, anger, greed and emotional attachments. The Divine Word of the Master has liberated me from these self-inflicted bonds." (p 804)

"Ego is a chronic malady, it's a bondage that keeps humans in a vicious cycle. When His Divine laws are observed, the sorrows caused by egoist behaviour depart." (p 466)

Universal fraternity-equality of humans

The Gurus in their lifetimes advocated a society based on social justice and equality of all human beings.

"One God is the father; we, human beings, are all His children." (p 611)

"Call everyone high and noble, no one is inferior. God, the potter, has fashioned all the vessels - the humans. It is His light that shines in all." (p 62)

"God's Grace falls on the land where the lowly and the down trodden are looked after." (p 15)

Charity and Service

"One who gives something out of his honest earnings to charity, has found the way to the Lord." (p 1245)

Women, the equals in society

"Why call her inferior, when it's from her that everyone, including kings, take birth." (p 473)



God's creation, a fair place for all

"The gracious Lord has now promulgated His ordinance. None shall domineer or cause pain to others. All shall abide in peace and joy, as governance is to be gentle and compassionate." (p 74)

Guru Granth Sahib and the Sikh way of life

Guru Granth Sahib states that meditation alone is not the way to realise God. Sikhs are required to maintain high moral values, be virtuous in their actions, earn their living through honest means and donate a part of their earnings to charitable causes. The faith also requires individuals to work for the betterment of the society they live in by combating social ills, inequality, injustice and oppression.

Guru Granth Sahib plays a significant role in Sikh peoples' lives. Sikhs seek guidance, inspiration, blessings and solace from Guru Granth Sahib during life events such as birth, baptism, marriage and death. All Sikhs are encouraged to read and listen to the hymns from Guru Granth Sahib and reflect upon the teachings.

Access to Guru Granth Sahib

Guru Granth Sahib can be seen at a Gurdwara (the Sikh place of worship), where a visitor can also join the congregation and listen to hymns from Guru Granth Sahib. The English translation of Guru Granth Sahib is available at: www.srigranth.org and www.sikhs.org

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