

A Glimpse of Sri Guru Granth Sahib

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BHAI GURDAS, the blessed scholar who inscribed the first copy of Sri Guru Granth Sahib as Guru Arjan Devji, writes in the 1st ballad of his classic *Varan Bhai Gurdas* (Var 1, Pauri 32) that when Guru Nanak went to Mecca, he carried a staff in his hand and a book under his arm, evidently comprising his own inspired poetry.

Sahib Singh, reputed scholar of Gurbani, has stated in 'Sri Guru Granth Darpan' [Part III Pp 803 – 916] that Guru Nanak invariably had a notebook (Pothi) with him, while travelling, and noted the inspired hymns uttered by him in that note book. He also collected the compositions of other holy persons during his travels.

According to *Puratan Janam Sakhi*, a biography of Guru Nanak, the Guru handed over the manuscript to Guru Angad Dev when he conferred the spiritual Guruship on him. The second Guru added his own and handed over to his successor. The 3rd and 4th Gurus followed the same practice.

Late Professor Sahib Singh, a renowned scholar of Gurbani, authenticates this fact by giving many examples, showing similarity in vocabulary used by different Gurus and quoting hymns composed by them.

In a sacred hymn, Guru Arjun Dev has mentioned in SGGS (186), 'when I opened up and gazed at the treasures of my father and grandfather, my mind became filled with joy.'

Guru Arjun added his own compositions. He realized the necessity of compiling all the sacred hymns into a single Granth, inscribed with the help of Bhai Gurdas.

There is a hymn by Guru Arjun (SGGS: 248) in praise of 'Mohan'. Some people have constructed a story on the basis of this hymn that Guru Ji went to Baba Mohan, s/o Guru Amar Das, the 3rd Master, praised him and begged for the notebooks (Pothis) containing the hymns of his predecessors. The hymn starts:

'O beloved, lofty are Thy mansions and unsurpassed Thy palaces. My charming Lord! Beauteous are Thine gates. They are the places where the saints worship.'

Late Prof. Sahib Singh (who is considered an authority in interpreting Guruvani, has refuted this theory. He writes that in Guru Granth Sahib the phrase Mohan has been used many times for God, the Beloved, charmer. Here, too, it stands for God and not for Baba Mohan as he had no lofty building and mansions where saints assembled to pray. I also fully agree with Prof. Sahib Singh. This word has been used for God at Pages 245, 830, 1112, 1182 and 1187 of Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

Arguably authenticity is the outstanding feature of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. It is **the only holy scripture** in the world which has been written – under inspiration - by those who experienced and uttered it, preserved, verified and compiled by the fifth founder of the religion and enthroned by the Tenth Master who added on the scripture of Guru Tegh Bahadurji. Since its consecration, there has been no further addition nor there will be any. Not even a letter has been added or deleted. Every hymn is numbered.

Once Ram Rai s/o Guru Har Rai, the seventh Master, changed a single term of a hymn simply to please Aurangzeb, the then Mughal monarch. When Guru Har Rai came to know of it, he ordered that Ram Rai must never show his face and the Sikhs should never deal with him. This stern gesture demonstrates the fact that authenticity of Sri Guru Granth Sahib is forever sanctified.

Max Arthur Macauliffe, a British scholar serving as a judicial officer in the Punjab in the late 19th century, who resigned his job and with the help of his Sikh friends like Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, a well known scholar of his time, translated SGGS into English. In the second chapter of introduction of his book *The Sikh Religion* (volume 1), [edition 1963 at page 53] – Macauliffe explains:

“The Sikh religion differs as regards the authenticity of the dogmas from most other great theological systems. Many of the great teachers the world has known have not left a line of their own compositions, and we only know what they taught through tradition or second hand information. If Pythagoras wrote any of his tenets, his writings have not descended to us.

We know the teachings of Socrates only through the writings of Plato and Xenophon. Buddha has left no written memorials of his teachings. Kung fu-tze, known to Europeans as Confucius, left no documents in which he detailed the principles of his moral and social system. The founder of Christianity did not reduce his doctrines to writing, and for them we are obliged to trust to the Gospels according to Mathew, Mark, **Luke and John. The Arabian Prophet did not himself reduce to writing the chapters of Qur’an. They were written or compiled by his adherents and followers. But the compositions of the Sikh Gurus are preserved and we know at first hand what they taught”.**

This perception is both authentic and exemplary – urging the Sikhs – and the rest of the world – to study reverently and to practice the moral and spiritual message of Guru Granth Sahib.

