Chapter-II

Compilation of Guru Granth Sahib and its Nature

A book is only a ‘Scripture’ in so far as a group of persons perceive it to be sacred or holy, powerful and portentous, possessed of an exalted authority, and in some fashion transcendent of, and hence distinct from all other speech and as writings.\textsuperscript{47} What is a Scripture? How does it come into being? How does it attain its canonical status in a particular religion? What is its true relationship with the community of believers? How do the believers appropriate and interpret their Scripture? And how do the millions of devotees keep the canon alive in their hearts and in their tradition? These are some fundamental questions that have fascinated the human imagination throughout the centuries. The study of religious traditions of all the communities in the world leads to the fact that all have tried to address these questions in their own way. This quest for satisfactory answers has always inspired the scholars to look at their own religion more closely.

Literally, the word ‘Scripture’ has been derived from the Latin term \textit{scriptura} which means a holy writ, holy writing, or sacred book. In scholarly discourse, however, the concept of Scripture is usually referred to as a canonical text, whose boundaries were fixed long ago, and whose authority within the community of believers is unquestioned. William Graham, in this context, says that Scripture is a relational concept. He defined that a text

becomes Scripture only in an active and subjective relationship to persons and as part of cumulative communal tradition. From a historian’s point of view, the sacredness of a book is not a priori attribute but one that realized historically in the life of communities, who respond to it as something sacred or holy. We respond to it as something sacred or holy. We cannot acknowledge of any text as being sacred or authentic in isolation from a community.\textsuperscript{48}

The true meaning of Scripture is the solid historical reality of the continuum of actual meanings over centuries to actual people. It is as mundane, or as transcending, or both, as have been those actual meanings in the lives and hearts of persons.\textsuperscript{49} Wilfred Cantwell Smith has made a clear distinction between Scripture and text in his recent work, \textit{What Is Scripture}, in which he emphatically states that Scriptures are not merely texts. He further says that Scripture is a human activity in which people make a text into Scripture by treating it in a certain way.\textsuperscript{50} In his analysis, Smith defines Scripture as trilateral term referring to ‘a relation — an engagement — among humans, the transcendent, and a text’, thereby stressing the human dimension along with the traditional emphasis on the divine origin of any sacred text.\textsuperscript{51}

The main focus in the study of Scripture until recently has been on the methods of critical analysis which determine the cultural, historical, and literary influences that gave rise to individual texts based upon the interdisciplinary of Scripture. In recent years, however, scholars have shifted their attention from the content of religious texts to the forms of Scriptural

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Ibid.}  \\
\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 18.  \\
\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 239.
\end{flushright}
traditions.\textsuperscript{52} Thus, the study of a text as a Scripture is not only concerned with its textual problems, the reconstruction of its history, and its contextual meaning, but also with its ongoing role in the cumulative tradition of a religious community, both as a normative source of authority and as a prodigious force.\textsuperscript{53}

The religion is based on the experience of the Numinous. The same experience of Numinous is enshrined in the Scriptures. In order to make the mystical experience intelligible and accessible to the common reader the explanation and the interpretation of the Scripture is needed.\textsuperscript{54} An exposition or interpretation of the Scripture is needed not only because of the mystic and of symbolic language but also because of the nature of Divine knowledge. In fact, almost whole of the Scriptural lore is the result of the devotional and intuitional set of mind. Hence, for the reasons enumerated above the Scripture needs interpretation. According to R.E. Macnally its exposition and interpretation is of great import to set forth and explain their full thoughts.\textsuperscript{55} Therefore, the purpose of the present study is to understand the Divine revelatory nature of the Word or Sabad in the context of Guru Granth Sahib. Before we venture to address this issue, however, the need is to define the introduction, historical background of compilation, and significance of Guru Granth Sahib.

Guru Granth Sahib is the holiest Scripture of the Sikhs. Much more than that, it is their Eternal Guru; that is, their authoritative religious

\textsuperscript{53} Wilfred Cantwell Smith, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 18.
and spiritual guide, their preceptor and enlightener for all times. The word ‘Granth’ traditionally is used for the books containing primarily sacred knowledge. Its meaning in Sanskrit is a knot which binds the book and according to Bradley refers to the knot in the thong which held together a palm-leaf manuscript to form a crude book.\textsuperscript{56} Guru Granth Sahib has been called ‘Adi Granth’ before it was anointed as the Guru Eternal by the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh. ‘Adi’ means primordial and it came to be used after the Granth of the Tenth Master came into being. The terms ‘Guru’ and ‘Sahib’ came to be associated with the Granth as prefix and suffix and both refer to the reverence and respect attached to the Granth. The term ‘Sahib’ is from the Arabic root which means master.\textsuperscript{57} The term ‘Guru’ came to be associated with the Granth after the year 1708 A.D. when the Tenth Guru bestowed Guru-ship on the Granth\textsuperscript{58} and enjoined the Sikhs to regard Guru Granth Sahib as the Guru,\textsuperscript{59} which is primarily Sabad as held in Sikhism from the time of Guru Nanak Dev. Hence, forward the faith in Guru as a living body came to an end and the Guru Granth Sahib as revealed Word came to be worshipped among the Sikhs.

\textsuperscript{57} Kahan Singh Nabha, \textit{Gursabadraattnakar Mahan Kosh}, Bhasha Vibhag Punjab, Patiala, 1974, p. 177.
Arnold Toynbee says that of all known religious Scriptures, this book is the most highly venerated.\(^\text{60}\)

**Compilation of Guru Granth Sahib**

A living religion has three distinct features. It has its own Scripture, own set of laws and a well-set tradition. Without these three pillars, many religions which sprang up have passed into oblivion. In fact, these are the primary factors without which one is unable to think of an independent religion.

The compilation of Guru Granth Sahib marks a watershed in the history of spiritual heritage of Indian sub-continent. It includes the sacred writings of Guru Nanak and his five successors, Bhagats, Saints, Sufis and some Guru-oriented persons associated with the court of Sikh Gurus. It comprises the Divine Sabad, indicates the spiritual union with Ultimate Reality. Since its first codification in 1604, Sikh Scripture has been looked upon as the most authentic repository of the Divine Word.

The history of the Sikh Scripture can easily be traced back from the times of Guru Nanak; the founder of Sikhism. In fact, his Divine experience of the Numinous forms the very basis of its origin. Guru Nanak's writings reveal that he intensely felt himself to be an intermediary of Divine Truth to proclaim His Will, he says:

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\text{As the word of the Lord comes to me, so do I utter, O Lalo.}\]

Therefore, the Gurbani is not merely an outcome of poetic imagination but relates to the revelation of God. It is informed that during the missionary odysseys of West-Asia, Guru Nanak carried with him a book which is believed to be a collection of his hymns including the writings of Bhagats that he had collected over the years. Before he breathed his last at Kartarpur, a volume of his hymns, he bestowed on his successor, Guru Angad on his succession to Guruship. All these factors indicate that the formation of Sikh Scripture had already started with Guru Nanak himself.

Guru Nanak’s sacred writings left an indelible mark on the subsequent growth of Scriptural tradition. It provided powerful stimulus to his successors to add new hymns to the received text. Though, Guru Angad’s writings are not many in numbers, yet he underlines the character and significance of the Bani in comparison to the traditional Hindu texts. He gives stress that the Bani is nectar, it reveals the essence of Ultimate Reality. It has come through God-oriented Guru to be understood by Guru-oriented persons. Only the blessed praise it and meditate on it. Guru Angad’s emphasis on the spiritual value of the Bani laid down doctrinally the requirement of compiling the Sikh Scripture.

Guru Amar Das not only preserved the sanctity of Sikh scriptural tradition but also made a significant contribution by adding new hymns to it. He highlights the status of Bani when he says Bani of God-oriented is God himself. According to him, it is the light of the world. O dear Sikhs, come and

61 ਤੇਲੀ ਮੇ ਤਰੱਧੇ ਧਾਰਮ ਦੀ ਸਤਨੀ ਦੇਸਤਾ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਲਾਭੀ। Guru Granth Sahib, p. 722.
sing the true Bani. Sing the Bani of true Guru which is the purest form of revelation. He underlines the Eternal character of Sikh revelation by maintaining that it resounds in the four Yugas. It is the genuine voice of truth. On the basis of genre and style, it has been concluded that the collection of Bhagat-Bani which began with Guru Nanak was also available with his successors. Guru Amar Das’ lighting comments upon the compositions of Farid and Kabir coupled with his appreciation of the spiritual perfection of Namdev and Kabir indicate that their writings have not only found acceptance but also become a part of the Sikh scriptural tradition. With the addition of third Guru Amar Das’ writings and that of the Bhagats, the size of collected content had increased; consequently he thought it prudent to arrange the codex afresh and then he handed it over to his successor, Guru Ram Das.

The fourth Guru Ram Das was closely associated with the organizational structure of the Panth under Guru Amar Das. Therefore he was in full knowledge of the Sikh scriptural tradition that had developed into the hands of his predecessors. In its continuity he introduced new Ragas and metres to the scriptural text which marks a new stage in the development of Sikh Scripture. He employs the word ‘Bani’ in modern sense which later developed into the doctrine of Guru Granth Sahib. The contemporary evidences suggest that Guru Ram Das had taken keen interest to prepare codices in which authenticated text had been arranged.

In line with his predecessors Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth master, is credited for nurturing the Sikh scriptural tradition in more than one way. By
employing various Ragas and metres he composed about 2312 hymns\textsuperscript{62}, which is the single largest contribution by any author to the Guru Granth Sahib. Following the footsteps of his predecessors, he reiterates that I do not speak by my ownself, I utter what has been ordained. His words that the Pothi is veritably the abode of God, remind that installation of Adi Granth in the Darbar Sahib is not far away.

Unfortunately, at this stage the Sikh scriptural tradition once again had come under serious threat of interpolation chiefly because of the Minas, the rivals of Guru Arjan Dev. To purge the entry of spurious writings into Guru Granth Sahib, Guru Arjan Dev decided to codify into a shape. The process of canon formation required utmost concentration of mind. It is a well-known fact that at one stage as Kahna, Chhajju, Shah Hussain and Pilu came in favour of their writings to be considered in Guru Granth Sahib but Guru Arjan found them unsuitable, as he would not compromise anything less than Divine Word (Bani) which was the basic tenet of his faith. Only those writings of the medieval Bhagats which were in consonance with the spirit of Sikhism and had been proved authentic were elevated to the status of canon to find a place in Guru Granth Sahib. The basic qualification to be included in Guru Granth Sahib was the intensity of love present in the compositions of the contributors. Though there are varieties of expressions for the Divine worship, yet we find almost similar type of craving amongst the composers for the Divine emergence of their individual souls. This is perhaps the basic qualification of all the hymns composers of Guru Granth Sahib. The gigantic task of compilation and

canonization carried on meticulously culminated in the form of a volume popularly known as the Adi Granth Sahib.

The traditional Sikh scholars describe that Guru Arjan had procured Bani from different sources, especially from the Sikh Sangat and devout Sikhs settled in different regions of the Sikh world. They assume that full text of Gurbani was not available and it lay scattered in different sources at flung places. There is no reason to disbelieve that being the spiritual heir of Guru Nanak’s mission Guru Arjan had not inherited the whole mass of scriptural writings associated with his predecessors. The range of Sikh mission had expanded, yet the most intense concentration of the Sikhs was in the Upper-Bari Doab region of the Punjab. Almost all the immediate successors of Guru Nanak had remained busy in the confines of this region. All the major Sikh centres that had come up so far were situated in and around the above region. In the light of above factors toconceive that Guru Arjan was unfamiliar with the scriptural writings of his predecessors and to procure them he had to depend on the Sikhs settled at far away places, does not look plausible. Hence, the canonization of the Sikh scriptural tradition should not be viewed as a later development related to Guru Arjan Dev only but it was an ongoing process, co-extensive with the pontificate of his predecessors as well. With the codification of Adi Granth in 1604 the Sikh canon had been closed.\textsuperscript{63}

\textbf{Editing of Guru Granth Sahib}

Guru Granth Sahib begins with the word Ek Onkar — one all-pervading being, who is ever consistent. These are the divine verses of Mul Mantra, composed by Guru Nanak Dev in his composition named Japu (ਜਨਪੁ). This composition comprises 38 Pauris or stanzas, a Prologue and an Epilogue. Due to its venerability and popularity the composition Japu is also known as Japuji Sahib. This is the morning prayer of the Sikhs. The next compositions have two parts— So-dar and So-purakh. The first composition So-dar contains five Sabads and the second includes four Sabads. This is called the evening prayer of the Sikhs, which is known as Rehras. The next composition Sohila containing five Sabads is known as the bed-time prayer.

**Language:** All the compositions in Guru Granth Sahib are composed in poetic form. Most of the hymns have been arranged according to the Ragas in which they were composed. This is a well-known fact that there are thirty-one Ragas in Guru Granth Sahib. The Divine verses of Guru Granth Sahib represent many languages and dialects. The authors of these hymns especially the saints and Bhattas hailed from different parts of India. Thus, most of their hymns have a strong influence of their mother-tongue. Many saints and Bhagats preferred to compose their verses in Sant language, Sant-Bhasha— a nationally understood language of that period. The languages used in Guru Granth Sahib are as follows:

(i) The Sikh Gurus: Punjab (main languages— various variants of Punjabi and other languages used including Sindhi, Multani, Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit, etc.)
(ii) Kabir, Ravidas, Ramanand, Beni, Bhikhan and Surdas: Uttar Pradesh (main languages—Hindi, Braj, Sanskrit)

(iii) Dhanna: Rajasthan (language—Hindi)

(iv) Jaidev: Bengal (language—Bengali)

(v) Sadhna: Sind (language—Sindhi)

(vi) Namdev, Parmanand, Pipa, Tarlochan: Maharashtra (languages—various variants of Marathi and Gujarati, Namdev’s hymns also have influence of Persian and Arabic)

(vii) Farid: Punjab (language—Punjabi)

(viii) Sain: Madhya Pradesh (languages—various variants of Hindi)

(ix) Mardana, Sundar, Satta and Balwand: Punjab (language—variant of Punjabi)

(x) Bhatts: Punjab/Uttar Pradesh (languages—variants of Hindi and Punjabi)

The examples given below further illustrate the languages used in Guru Granth Sahib:

(a) Hymns of Guru Nanak Dev in Eastern Punjabi:

Man may possess thousands and lacs of wits, but not even one goes with (him) or (avails him in the Lord’s court).

(b) Hymns of Guru Nanak Dev (influence of Sanskrit):

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64 Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1.
You read books, say vespers prayers and argue, you worship stones and sit in trance like a crane.\(^{65}\)

(c) Hymns of Bhagat Namdev in Sant Bhasha:

*Meeting with the Bright True Guru, I have merged in the world-incarnate Lord. Pause.*

*Where the dazzling light is seen there plays the celestial strain.*

*The light of the Luminous Lord is pervading there.*

*By Guru's grace I have known it.*\(^{66}\)

(d) Hymns of Guru Arjan Dev (influence of Arabic and Persian):

*O the slave of the Boundless Lord God, renounce thou the thought of all the worldly occupations.*\(^{67}\)

(e) Hymns of Guru Arjan Dev (influence of Sindhi):

*My love is with Thee.*

*I have seen all other loves to be false.*

*A long as I behold not my Beloved, the clothes and food seem dreadful to me.*\(^{68}\)

(f) Hymns of BhagatJaidev (influence of Bengali):

\(^{65}\) *Bhagat Prasanta Mittal Karm.

\(^{66}\) *Ibid., p. 470.*

\(^{67}\) *Ibid., pp. 656-657.*

\(^{68}\) *Ibid., p. 1083.*
I worship Him, who is worthy of worship, trust Him, who is worthy of trust and like water in water, I merged in the Lord.

Says Jaidev, I have mediated on the Triumphant, Luminous Lord and becoming absorbed in His love, have obtained the Detached Lord.69

(g) Hymns of Bhagat Namdev (influence of Marathi and Sanskrit):

In whose home abides the virgin goddess of wealth.

The moon and the sun are His two lamps.

The poor death, which exhibits wondrous plays and which levies tax on all, is His police-official.

Such is that venerable Man lion Emperor.70

Structure of Hymns

The structure of hymns is explained as follows:

Sabad

A Sabad in Guru Granth Sahib may consist of 2, 6, 8, 16 sections/paras/parts called Padas, i.e., Ik-Tuke, Do-Tuke, Ti-Tuke, Chau-Tuke. The examples of Padas in different number of Tukas are given as under:

(i) Ik-Tuke

He who is seen physically alive, shall assuredly die.

He who is dead in life, shall remain eternal.71

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(ii) Do-Tuke

Thou tearest off the leaves, O lady-gardener but in every leaf there is life.

The stone (idol) for which thou pluckest the leaves, that stone is life-less.\(^{72}\)

(iii) Ti-Tuke

Whom should I beg and whom worship, when all are created by the Lord?

Who-so-ever appear to be the greatest of the great, they all will ultimately mix with the dust.

The Fearless, the Formless Lord, the Destroyer of dread, gives all comforts and nine treasures.\(^{73}\)

(iv) Chau-Tuke

To mother and father their son is dear and to the father-in-law the wise son-in-law.

To the boy and girl, their father is very sweet and to a brother, the brother.

\(^{72}\) Ibid., p. 374.

\(^{73}\) Ibid., p. 479.
On the issuing of Lord’s command, the mortal leaves home abroad and in a moment everything becomes alien.

An apostate remembers not the Name, gives not in charity, takes not the bath and so his body rolls in dust.\textsuperscript{74}

**Sloka**

The Slokas are short compositions of two or more verses, but in Guru Granth Sahib, there are Slokas of twenty-six verses as well. There are sixteen hundred and fifty-six Slokas in Guru Granth Sahib, most of which are included in Vars. Some Slokas are included in Chhants and some are included in specialist compositions, e.g. ‘Slok Varan Te Wadeek’. In addition to Gurus, the Bhagats like Kabir and Farid have also composed Slokas. Some Slokas of the Bhagats also appear in the Bani of the Gurus (Var Bihagra), whereas the Slokas of Gurus also appear in the Bani of the Bhagats on pages 1375, 1376, 1378, 1380, etc. of Guru Granth Sahib. The Slokas composed in Sindhi are called Dakhni. This word is used on pages 80-81 of the Guru Granth Sahib.

\textit{There is but One God. True is His Name, creative His personality and immortal His form. He is fear-free, without enmity, beyond birth and self-illumined. By the Guru’s grace, is He attained.}

\textit{Asa 1st Guru.}

\textit{The dirge of praise with sloks.}

\textit{The sloks, too, of the first Guru are written.}

\textsuperscript{74} माहिति सा से बेटा तीजा सहूलि छहबु कोहरी।
भगी लिंगाय से सम्पूर्ण विनास का स्वरुप स्मरित करी।
गुरुभु वों ऊंसु लघु श्रीभक्ति सिंधू नवी कसी कसी।
साहिब लघु निमित्त से मनुष्य निर्दुर्क दति यूँ कसी कसी। \textit{Ibid.}, p. 596.
The stanzas should be sung to the tune of Tunda As Raja.

Slok 1st Guru.

A hundred times a day, I am a sacrifice unto my Guru.⁷⁵

Slok 3rd Guru

There is but One God. By the True Guru’s grace, is He attained.

These are not called mendicants, within whose mind there is doubt.⁷⁶

There is but One God. True is His Name, creative His personality and immortal His form. He is fear-free, without enmity, beyond birth and self-illumined. By the Guru’s grace, is obtained. The Slokas in addition to the Vars.

1st Guru.

O proud bride of elevated breasts, grasp thou profound sobriety.⁷⁷

Pauri

The literal meaning of the word ‘Pauri’ is a rung of a ladder or steps. In Guru Granth Sahib, the word has been used to refer those Sabads which carry forward ideas from one stanza to another stanza. The compositions of Pauris

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⁷⁵॥ पदि मार तभु ब्रज्र बुध विबृद्धु विबृद्धु मतवाल भूविन्द्र अमूतित मैथि कुव पुरुषि॥ नमस भक्ति ॐ ॥ जय मजेस मालिक मतें भी मारे भरवी वै कमु दुज अम जने ली पुत्री॥ मतें मालिक ॐ ॥ मैथि कुव भाष्टरे दिलित्रानी मथ दक॥ नििब., p. 462.

⁷⁶॥ पदि मार तभु त्र सिि नाटि कुव पुरुषि॥ अत्मिनवत हृदि र जान्विनङ्गनित रति वै मर मारि भक्ति॥ नििब., p. 1413.

⁷⁷॥ पदि मार तभु ब्रज्र बुध विबृद्धु विबृद्धु मतवाल भूविन्द्र अमूतित मैथि कुव पुरुषि॥ मतें मालिक ॐ ॥ जय मजेस मालिक ॐ ॥ नििब., p. 1410.
differ in size and metre. The compositions which are composed in Pauris are Japuji Sahib, Anand Sahib, etc. The word has been spelt in two different ways, e.g. Pauri and Pavri.\textsuperscript{78}

**Var**

It is a long poem in which the praises of a hero are sung. There are twenty-two Vars in Guru Granth Sahib, which are as follows:

(i) Guru Nanak Dev— 3 Vars in Raga Majh, Asa, Malar.

(ii) Guru Amar Das— 4 Vars in Raga Gujri, Suhi, Ramkali, Maru.

(iii) Guru Ram Das— 8 Vars in Raga Sri, Gauri, Bihagra, Kanra, Wadhans, Sorath, Bilawal, Sarang.

(iv) Guru Arjan Dev— 6 Vars in Raga Gauri, Gujri, Jaitsri, Ramkali, Maru, Basant.

(v) Satta and Balwand (Bards)— 1 Var in Raga Ramkali.

Example of Var:

\begin{quote}
*Var of Basant*

5\textsuperscript{th} Guru

*There is but One God. By the True Guru’s grace, He is attained.*

*Contemplating God's Name, flower thou, O my brother.*
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{78} For more references see *Guru Granth Sahib*, pp. 139, 142, 143, 250 and 1097.
In accordance with the writ of destiny, thou are blessed with this beauteous season. °

Chhant (A Special Sabad of Praise)

The word ‘Chhant’ is derived from the Sanskrit word ‘Chhandas’ which refers to a para of Vedas. In Guru Granth Sahib, the word has been used to label Sabads of special praises, in the context of God. The Chhants are also known as Chhands, these are said to be the Divine songs of praise. There are one hundred twenty-seven Chhants in Guru Granth Sahib. The majority of the Chhants have no Slokas, but some have Slokas especially which are composed by Guru Arjan Dev in Raga Asa, Wadhans, Jaitsri, Bilawal and Ramkali. Out of thirty-one Ragas in Guru Granth Sahib, only fourteen Ragas have Chhants. Most of the Chhants in Guru Granth Sahib have four Padas, each Pada containing 4-6 verses, though most of the Padas contain six verses.

Rag Suhi Chhant

Ist Guru

There is but One God. By the True Guru’s grace, is He obtained.

Inebriated with the wine of the prime of youth, I know not that I am but a guest at my parents home.

I am sacrifice unto my Lord.

My soul is soiled with sins and without the Guru, virtues enter not my mind.°

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79 すみれのひの 新年 おめでとう ひびきのひばり くも
かすりのひの 新年 おめでとう ひびきのひばり くも

80 すみれのひの 新年 おめでとう ひびきのひばり くも
かすりのひの 新年 おめでとう ひびきのひばり くも

Ibid., p. 1193.

Ibid., p. 763.
Swaya (Stanzas of Undefined Length)

Most of the Swayas in Guru Granth Sahib are composed by Guru Arjan Dev and eleven Bhattas. Guru Arjan has composed twenty whereas Bhattas have one hundred and twenty-three Swayas. All Swayas have been recorded on pages 1385-1410 in Guru Granth Sahib. The Swayas have been composed with different arrangements of long and short syllables at the end of the verses. Most of the Swayas used in Guru Granth Sahib can be classified as: Malind, Saman, Dandkala, Madira and Chandarakala.

There is but One God. True is His Name, creative His personality and immortal His form. He is fear-free, without enmity, beyond birth and self-illumined. By the Guru’s grace, is He attained. Saways uttered in person by the sire

5th Guru.

O my primal Lord, the Creator, Thou Thyself art the Doer of all the deeds.

Thou art fully filling all and art contained in all hearts.81

There are some other types of compositions in Guru Granth Sahib, i.e. Patti, Bawan Akhri, Dakhni Onkar, Pahire, Barah Mah, Thitti, Rutti, Gatha, Phune and Chaubole. Guru Granth Sahib is the world’s one of the master pieces of Divine poetry, bank of old languages and repository of Indian music and there is no parallel to this holy treatise.

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81 *Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 1385.
Rahau (Pause) (ਰਹਾਊ)

In Guru Granth Sahib, a special word ‘Rahau’ denoting a verse has been used in almost all the Sabads composed in musical measures. The word ‘Rahau’ is a label of one or more verses in these compositions. The scholars called Rahau verse as the theme verse of the composition.

O my sovereign Lord, Thou belongest to the saints and the saints belong to Thee.

Thy slave has nothing to fear and the death’s minister comes not near him. Pause.

Musical Arrangements

Raga

All compositions in Guru Granth Sahib are divided into different Ragas except Japuji Sahib in the beginning and Swayas and Slokas at the end. The hymns have been composed in thirty-one Ragas and seventeen Ghars (tunes). A Raga is a particular set of the seven Swars, or a selection of them. Their interrelationship and sequence is governed by strict rules. It is a well-known fact that each Raga has its own emotional character and is associated with a particular time of a day and a particular period of a season. There has also been a traditional division between the male Ragas and their consorts or Ragi

82 मेरे कभ साहित नूँ मेन्त्र वा मेन्त भेंगे।
जें भें मेन्त्र बहु रहद विभ रूढ़ि नम रूढ़ि भादे भेंगे।॥ रहूँ॥ Ibid., p. 749.
Raga. The time and season is also given with the name of Raga. The compositions composed by the Sikh Gurus in different Ragas are as follows:

(i) Guru Nanak— 19 Ragas — Sri, Majh, Gauri, Asa, Gujri, Wadhans, Sorath, Dhanasari, Tilang, Suhi, Bilawal, Ramkali, Tukhari, Bhairav, Basant, Sarang, Malar, Parbhuti etc.

(ii) Guru Amar Das— 17 Ragas — All the Ragas used by Guru Nanak except Tilang and Tukhari.

(iii) Guru Ram Das— 29 Ragas — All the Ragas except Kaidara and Jaijawanti.

(iv) Guru Arjan Dev— 30 Ragas — All the 30 Ragas except Jaijawanti.


**Ghar (Thaats) (ग्हर)**

‘Ghar’ means rhythm or Tal. It also denotes the pitch and variations of the notes. It is a rhythmic cycle comprising a fixed number of time units (Matras) of equal value. In Guru Granth Sahib, Guru Arjan Dev has introduced seventeen Ghars. These Ghars contain the range of Ragas using the same group of notes but are timed and distributed differently producing the mood variations.

Thus, this is the brief introduction about the compilation, editing and internal structure of Guru Granth Sahib. Its design and format was
finalized by Guru Arjan Dev at Ramsar, Amritsar, during 1601 to 1604 A.D. In order to comprehend the idea of how Akal Purakhi reveals the Divine Word to the Guru or Bhagat through direct communication and how that Word becomes the primary focus in the evolution of Sikh religion, one needs to understand the nature of Gurbani.

**Nature of Gurbani**

Bhai Vir Singh explains that the essence of Gurbani is beyond space. It is from the Primal One, Guru is full of Nectar. Gurbani is message of unapproachable and limitless Ultimate Being that is why it itself is beyond limits. But one should try to understand the meaning and ideas of Gurbani with the help of Gurbani itself. In this way, it is an institution which provides knowledge, when one joins it as a student, it is a key to Gurbani and imperfect man may commit an error.  

The concept of revelation is an important factor in the acknowledgment of authority to sacred texts. It is based on the assumption that the texts possess absolute authority if they have a very special origin, that is, if they have originated from a Divine source. In its basic sense, revelation may be defined as ‘a Divine communication shaped to the particular times’, and the proper context of revelation may be understood as the ‘nature of an object of supreme value, of a final goal for human life’, and of the way to achieve this

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goal. There is no independent method to determine the nature of revelation. The only way, we can understand the truth — claim of revelation in various religious traditions is to allow the scriptural text to speak in itself. Although these conflicting truths — claims are beyond the province of the history of religions, we can try to understand their impact on the historical development of a particular religious tradition. In this significant section, therefore, our primary concern is to understand the concept of the revelation or nature of Gurbani, from the Sikh perspective. This particular understanding of revelation is based upon the doctrine of the Sabad-Guru, enunciated by Guru Nanak and the succeeding Gurus. It is known as ‘Dhur Ki Bani’ and ‘Khasam Ki Bani’. The word ‘Khasam’ indicates the Divine Reality and ‘Bani’ means the Divine words. Hence, the Gurbani is the revealed Word of Ultimate Being. Guru Nanak calls himself as a messenger of Ultimate Being. The above reference proves itself that there is no space for illusion.

**Sabad as All-pervading Light**

On the metaphysical plane Sabad is the pervading and illuminating principle of the transcendent Ultimate Being. The Gurbani is primarily secular in nature. In fact, the Bani call for a cordial co-operation among the humanity.

*All are called partners in Thy grace.*

*Thou art seen alien to none.*

Gurbani is marvellous because of its oneness and unity in ideology. Although the contributors of Guru Granth Sahib are from different

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84 सत्संगित मंत्रलिखिति द्वृत्ति ज्ञिमें गुरु ग्नानक सर्वज्ञ तार्किक। Guru Granth Sahib, p. 97.
regions and religions, yet their spiritual level and the unity in their ideology marks special footprints on the history of India.

Guru Granth Sahib opens with the numeral ‘one’ written as ‘੧’ in the Gurbani numerology. This numeral stands for uncompromised monotheism. It indicates God’s perfect oneness. It signifies that God is the absolute and ultimate oneness of the entire multiplicity as one infinite reality. The unity of God expressed by it has been reaffirmed time and time again in Gurbani.

*My Lord is but one.*

*He is one alone, O brother.*

*He is one in one.*

*That Spouse of mine is fully contained in all the places.*

*Unique is my Lord, over whose head is the royal umbrella, there is not any other (like him).*

The numeral One also reflects the absolute simplicity. The absolute simplicity means that it is not composed of any distinct elements such as essence and existence, matter and form, potentially and actuality. It indicates its limitless nature from time and space.

*The Lord has neither form nor outline, nor any colour.*

*He is exempt from three qualities.*

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85 स्विम्बु में हेमें हेमें हे॥

86 पुरुष तविष्कार सुकृत द्वारा द्वारा धर्मु शरीर॥

Amongst all the forms, the Lord Himself is contained.

Through all the eyes, He Himself is the beholder.

The whole creation is His Body.

His praises He Himself hears.\textsuperscript{88}

This Divine simplicity of Gurbani spells its Divine perfection and omnipotence.

\textit{The Lord is Omnipotent to do and to have done everything; He is possessed of all the powers. O brother.}\textsuperscript{89}

The \textit{anadi}, without beginning and \textit{ananta}, without end, nature of Gurbani spells its eternity. At all places and in all times, it appears to be the same. The succession signifies time but it is beyond time. The Gurbani is infinite; it is infinite in all perfection. Its infinity is absolute, mysterious and utterly ineffable.

\textit{The Lord is limitless but I can only describe Him within limits.}

What do I know, as to what is He like?\textsuperscript{90}

\textit{My Master is eternal.}

\textit{He is seen by practising the Name-meditation.}

\textsuperscript{88} \textit{सद स हूँ आधिप्रवत्तन।}
\textit{सद स हूँ आधिदेशकर।}
\textit{महार महावीर ता जा उठ।}
\textit{एवम यथा अध्य जी मूल।} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 294.

\textsuperscript{89} \textit{कर्ता लोकसम्बन्धि जगत।}
\textit{सर्व जगत ब्रह्म ब्रह्मतत्त्व।}
\textit{Ibid.}, p. 640.

\textsuperscript{90} \textit{यदि तिन्क्षेत जगी भान्दित दशस्य तिब निस्म देहि कैम दे।} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 612.
He is never perishable and neither He is born, nor does he die.\footnote{Ibid., p. 509.}

The ubiquity and immutability are the two significant features of Gurbani, which make it splendid in itself. It is pertinent to note that this ubiquity is its omnipresence.

In the region of land, the region of water and the mansion of four directions, is Thine seat, O Lord.

O Master, Thine is the only personality to fashion the entire universe and the word of Thy mouth is the mint.\footnote{Ibid., p. 596.}

The text of Gurbani consists of revealed Word. This revealed Word, in the form of Gurbani gives it to the feature of nectar. In the whole mode of Gurbani, there is no space for any kind of individual fear, effect, and intention. Hence, the Gurbani is immutable and ineffable in its Divine nature.

The creation and deluge occur through the Lord’s Word.\footnote{Ibid., p. 117.}

Through the Word the creation evolves again.

By Guru’s instruction, the Name wells up in the mind and by Guru’s instruction, the mortal is united in the Lord’s union.

Without the Name, the entire world is insane and loses its life in vain.\footnote{Ibid., p. 117.}
In this world, sublime is the practice of the Lord’s Name.

Without the Name, all else is the darkness of worldly love.

Through the Guru’s holy word, man keeps the Name enshrined in his mind.

Through the Guru’s holy word, man obtains sublime understanding and the door of salvation.\textsuperscript{95}

The spirituality and mysteriousness are the other significant central themes of the Gurbani.

He, whose commodity, the Name is, that Lord alone knows and he, alone obtains it whom He gives.

Supremely beauteous, unapproachable and unfathomable is this commodity, the Name. Through the perfect Guru, the unknowable Lord is known.

He who tastes it, alone knows its relish; it is like a dumbman’s sweet.

By concealing, the emerald remains not concealed, even though one may try to conceal.\textsuperscript{96}

In thy own home is everything, O man, and there is nothing without.

\textsuperscript{94} सब्रे जी राखूं दुई लोगे सब्रे मेहति निधित्व।।
विद्व गुरु वर्तेत नाम बृहत साधक नाम जाहतिग्न।।
Ibid., p. 644.

\textsuperscript{95} हिंदु सब्रे अभिषेक सबरु वर्तहै सागु।।
विद्व गुरु वर्तेत नाम बृहतु।।
सब्रे नाम वर्तें टूटें वात्ति।।
सब्रे जाति अभिषेक भूपुल भागू।।
Ibid., p. 1342.

\textsuperscript{96} निमं जी वर्ते हा भने मीत हरे मील ने दीर्घ सा धरे।।
बाहुल भागू हरे भजन भवित् वर्तु पूर्व भवित् वर्तु भागू।।
निःर रंजित हरे मीत ना चुर्के जी भवित्।।
वर्तु जाहतिग्न हांढे राघी ने वर वर ज्वारप्रो।।
Ibid., pp. 607-08.
By Guru’s grace everything is obtained and the doors of the mind are opened.

From the True Guru, God is attained, O brother.

The Name Treasure is within the man, which the Perfect Sat Guru has shown it to me.⁹⁷

It is a well-known fact that so many variants of poetic modes (Chhants), ornamentations, etc. are used in the Gurbani. The main purpose to use these modes in Gurbani is not to give it a miraculous and magical form; but to give it a feature of unambiguousness in its nature. Gurbani itself is tranquil in its nature and it gives tranquility and peace to its followers in various forms.

My soul, thou art thee embodiment (image) of Divine light, so know thy source.

O my soul, the reverend Lord is with thee. By Guru’s teaching enjoy His love.⁹⁸

Becoming desire-free, if the mind abides in home and is dyed red in the fear of the True Lord, it shall then enjoy the Supreme Nectar of Divine knowledge and shall not fell hunger, again.

Nanak, subdue this mind and meet the Lord, thus thou shalt suffer agony no more.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ ḫẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖchet

⁹⁸ ṭẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖchet

⁹⁹ ṭẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖẖchet

Ibid., p. 21.
The Gurbani is didactic in its nature. There are so many references in it, which shows the right path of emancipation to its followers:

_He who prides on himself; him prick the thorns and there is none to draw them out._

_Here he cries bitterly of prick-pain and afterwards burns in the frightful hell._

_They who wear white clothes, but whose heart is filthy and relentless; with their mouth they utter not the Name and are thieves, engrossed in duality._

_They who understand not their origin; they are beasts and they are the animals._

Therefore, revelation can be defined as the way God discloses and communicates Himself to humanity. The Hindu belief is that God occasionally becomes incarnate as an _avatar_ and thus communicates Himself through his word and action while living on this earth. For the Muslims the revelation consists in actual words in the form of direct messages conveyed from God through the angel Gabriel, to the Prophet. Another belief is that God communicates not the form but the contents of the words, i.e., knowledge, to man. A related view is that, as a result of the mystic unity they achieve with universal self, certain individuals under Divine inspiration arrive at truths which they impart to the incarnation theory... nor did they acknowledge the existence of angels or nevertheless conscious of their Divine mission and

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100  "कवृक्ति कुक्षीयिनि सिन्हा नृत्ये कपाल कुद्रि राजि।"  
"अनै न चं चं चं चं चं चं चं कलार रजसं चं चं कलार।" _Ibid._, p. 969.

101  "सितर तिरिले ब्रव्ये तिरिले चं चं चं चं चं चं चं सिंह।"  
"निम्न भूपी गुप्ते न निम्ने निम्ने विभिन्नं चं चं सिंह।।"  
"सुभद्र न फूलति अपरांने से प्रभुभा से चं सिंह।।" _Ibid._, p. 751.
described the knowledge and wisdom contained in their hymns as God-given...

It is in this sense that Gurbani is revelation for Sikhs. It is for them God’s Word mediated through the Sikh Gurus or Word on which the Sikh Gurus had put their seal. The Gurbani echoes the Divine truth; it is the voice of God…  

The discussion given above provides that Guru Granth Sahib is not merely a result of poetic imagination but relates to the revelation of Ultimate Being. It has been looked upon as the most authentic repository of the Divine Word. It emphasizes on the doctrine of Sabad. The Sabad is the Guru, and in the Guru, the Divine light is Sabad. The contributors of Guru Granth Sahib are from different regions and religions. It reflects the secular nature of Guru Granth Sahib. The ubiquity and immutability are the two significant features of Gurbani which make it splendid in itself. The Gurbani is infinite, eternal, immutable and ineffable in its Divine nature. Further, spirituality and mysteriousness form the central themes of Gurbani.

Thus, Gurbani shows the right path of emancipation to its followers.

*Good many men praise the Lord, who has neither end nor limit.*

*The Master has created His creation in many ways and of various kinds.*  

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103 "ਧੁਨੂਲਿਂਦੀ ਤਕਨੀ ਅਤੇ ਤੇਲ ਅੰਤ ਦ ਧਿਆਨਮਾਨ।।
ਸਤਗਾਹ ਵਲਾਹੁ ਪੁਲਰ ਲਹਿਦੀ ਕਤਲੀ ਸਤਿ ਸਿਰੀ ਅਤੇਲਾ ਪਤਬਰਿਣ।।" Guru Granth Sahib, p. 275.
What praise and what commendation should I attribute to my Perfect Lord? He is filling all places.\footnote{Ibid., p. 1236.}