

Gurū Arjan and the compilation of Ādi Granth

An important step in the separate consolidation of the religion was the compilation of the Ādi Granth as the sole and authentic scripture of the Sikhs. It has a significant feature. Besides the hymns of the five Gurūs, it contains the hymns of Hindu and Muslim saints. The Ādi Granth was formally installed at the Amritsar temple on the annual gathering of the Sikhs. From the very start it was recognized as the Sikh scripture. Emperor Akbar made an offering of 51 gold coins to the Ādi Granth. Its installation at the only Sikh temple constructed then by the Gurū and the appointment of the most venerated Sikh as its Granthī (the one who *knows* the granth) show that it was meant to be the exclusive scripture of the Sikhs and the embodiment of the Gurūs' system and thought. In this way conjectures about links with the other systems or scriptures were set at rest for ever. This is an important step, especially when we find that in Gurū Granth Sāhib no status or sanctity has been given to any gods, goddesses or avatars.

This compilation is a landmark in the history of Sikhī. It is a clear testimony of the fact that the Gurū took this vital step to emphasize that their message and missions were prophetic. This fact comes out in all its glaring singularity when we see that, in the entire religious history of man, no other prophet felt it essential to authenticate his message so as to secure its purity and exclude the possibility of interpolation and misinterpretation. In fact, in most cases the utterances of the prophets were compiled by their devotees long after their ministry. This authentication of the scripture by the Gurū himself once and for all ensured its separate identity and purity. In the case of other prophets, their opponents can say that the prophets themselves never meant to declare any new truths, but their overzealous followers made it into a separate system not intended by the prophets. Nothing of that kind can be asserted about the Gurūs and Gurū Granth Sāhib.

It is something very extraordinary that, in line with Gurū Nānak's hymn that 'with the help of other God-conscious beings he would help every one to be a God-centered person', the Gurū included in the Ādi Granth hymns of Muslim and Hindu saints. It is a singular example of the Gurū's sense of personal anonymity. He truly felt that in accomplishing this task he was working only as an agent of God's mission. We also find that contemporary saints like Mīām Mīr and Pīr Budhū Shāh, irrespective of religion and race, remained closely associated with the mission of the Gurūs.