

Key concepts

- It is the supreme authority of the Sikhs as it is considered a living Guru. It has the authority of the Gurus' teachings rather than the word of God. It is sometimes called 'Gurbani', meaning the Guru's utterance.
- The Guru Granth Sahib contains the teachings of the Gurus and the Bhagat Bani; it was installed in the Harmandir by the fifth Guru, Arjan, as the orthodox expression of Sikh belief and it was made Guru by Guru Gobind Singh, thus bringing an end to the line of human gurus. This act has enormous implications for the role of the book within the community.
- It is seen as a living guide and teacher and expression of the word of God. The nature of the authority of the Guru Granth Sahib is not the dogmatic assertions of doctrine but more an attitude of respect and devotion to the insights of living Gurus into the nature of God and the importance of complete faith in God.
- Authority of the message that salvation depends not on caste, ritual or asceticism but on constant meditation on God's name and immersion in his being. Hindu and Muslim writings are included in the Guru Granth Sahib in support of this teaching.
- Relationship between Adi Granth and Guru Granth Sahib.
- The Guru Granth Sahib has a central and essential role in naming ceremonies; rites of passage; worship; formation of doctrine; education.
- On a daily basis, Sikhs receive a hukam or divine order in the form of a hymn from the Guru Granth Sahib, either in a Gurdwara or at home. Similarly, at the end of a service, after the ardas, the Adi Granth is opened at random and a portion is read. Many Sikhs do this daily, regarding the verses as words from God which they will find helpful during the day. This is called vak lao, taking advice.
 - On special occasions, the Granth Sahib is recited non-stop from cover to cover by a string of readers. This continuous reading of the Guru Granth Sahib is known as an akhand path. It is regarded as the highest and the noblest ceremony in the Sikh religion, and can be performed on any important occasion.
 - A saptahak path is a daily reading of Guru Granth Sahib to be completed in seven days. It is sometimes undertaken in private homes as a mark of supplication on special occasions.



Key quotes

'Do not utter even a single harsh word; your True Lord and Master abides in all. Do not break anyone's heart; these are all priceless jewels.' (129)

'The minds of all are like precious jewels; to harm them is not good at all. If you desire your Beloved, then do not break anyone's heart.' (130) (Sheik Farid – Guru Granth Sahib – 1384)

'One Universal Creator God. By The Grace Of The True Guru: Where should I go? My home is filled with bliss. My consciousness does not go out wandering. My mind has become crippled. One day, a desire welled up in my mind. I ground up sandalwood, along with several fragrant oils. I went to Brahman's (God's) place (Temple) and worshipped Him there. That God showed me the Guru, within my own mind. Wherever I go, I find water and stones. You are totally pervading and permeating in all. I have searched through all the Vedas and the Puraanas. I would go there, only if the Lord were not here.' Bhagat Ramanand (Sheik Farid – Guru Granth Sahib - 1195)

Key words

Guru	Gurbani	Harmandir	Guru Arjan	caste
asceticism	Adi Granth	Gurdwara	ardas	hukam
vak lao	akhand	saptahak	ritual	Bhagat Bani
Guru Granth Sahib				

Issues for analysis and evaluation

Key arguments/debates

Some would argue Sikhs worship the Guru Granth Sahib. Others would argue that Sikhs only worship God. Some would argue that there are similar elements to worship in the way that the Guru Granth Sahib is treated in Sikhism.

Key questions

Is the Guru Granth Sahib relevant to the life of Sikhs today?
Can a book take the place of a human leader?