

The Guru Granth Sahib Project

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SIKHRI

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The Guru Granth Sahib Project

Accessing Sabad for Today and Tomorrow

The Vision

In today's divisive world, the message flowing from the Guru Granth Sahib is needed more than ever. This project aspires to make the Guru Granth Sahib accessible to English speakers globally.

As the Sikh Panth (Collective) has diversified and the Diaspora spans the globe, we are searching for a link that will connect the entire community. On the 550th anniversary of the *Prakash Purab* (Illumination Day) of Guru Nanak Sahib, the Sikh Research Institute (SikhRI) re-commits itself to follow the Guru's vision and foster Nam-culture based on that which connects us: *Sabad* (Infinite Wisdom).

The Sikh identity is no longer defined by a residency in Panjab. The Sikh identity is defined by living and promoting a set of principles espoused by the Guru through a potential of 30 million ambassadors globally.

It is about connecting with *Sabad* and allowing it to strengthen our minds and hearts. It is the universality of that wisdom that moves beyond Panjab, into the global realm, truly embodying the core principle of *IkOankar* (1Force) given to us by the First *Patshah* (Sovereign).

It is about developing a better understanding of that Wisdom. It is through connecting with *Sabad* that we as a community will be able to foster Sikh values and confront the challenges facing both the Panth and the world at large.

All content development is driven per *Gurmat* principles (the Guru's thought). To ensure this, the team of researchers, subject matter experts, trans-creators, editors, designers, technologists, translators, and calligraphers will consider all resources while relying firstly and fore-mostly on the internal evidence of the Guru Granth Sahib.

Seeking the Living Guru-Wisdom

Sabad is infinite, yet as humans, we are very finite. Therefore, special attention is being paid to the transcreation process. Transcreation is unlike translation. In that, it is our understanding at the moment — in our current contexts as seekers, which was different yesterday and may evolve tomorrow, as we deepen our relationship with *Sabad*, which is eternal. An example of transcreation is to aspire to learn and retain

the *IkOankar* attributes as they appear in the original text and avoid terms like God, Lord, or even Divine, which puts a distance between the reader and the Guru-Wisdom.

Focusing Global Expertise

The project will enable global collaboration for Guru Granth Sahib's annotation and exegesis. The process, when in full rhythm, will encompass the equivalent of at least fifteen full-time subject-matters experts (SMEs) to participate in the collaborative effort and curate content.

Much of the work is in making annotations in Panjabi in the Gurmukhi script, which fuels the transcreation in both Panjabi and English. Linguistically, we are working word by word, providing meaning, grammar, and etymology. Then, developing meaning (literal translation and interpretive transcreation) for each stanza, so that everything is placed in context for a better understanding and interpretation.

We want to stress the importance of curating a diverse array of schools of thought and interpretation because if we do not discuss where the diversions are, we will not be able to create a meaningful commentary. Historical, musical, and poetical dimensions are a part of version 1 deliveries too; other dimensions such as philosophy, governance, cosmic insights, environment, interfaith, and so on, will be explored in the next versions.

The project is making use of technology to create online content that will be freely available to the global audience.

The Roadmap: A 20+ Year Journey

Instead of working on the Guru Granth Sahib from cover to cover, the project is following the tradition of working by *Banis* (compositions). In the 1st phase, the focus is on Guru Nanak Sahib's *Banis*. Phase 2 will continue with *Banis* from the other contributors as well.

The 1st phase has begun. The goal is to complete the entire Guru Granth Sahib over the next two decades, thereby creating a free, accessible, and collaborative platform for all seekers globally, enabling them to move forward in their journey with Sabad.

Research, interpretation, and technology converging to make Guru Granth Sahib accessible to all!

The Disclaimer

Interpretation of the Guru Granth Sahib is extremely challenging. It requires a team effort and a rigorous discipline. Everyone tries to interpret the Guru Granth Sahib according to their own knowledge, understanding, and capacity. No one can claim it to be the final interpretation.

There can never be only one correct translation. A variety of translations are possible for all texts, without having to conclude that one of them must be “correct” and the others are “wrong.” It is even possible that different translations could all be “right” in different ways; some can be more correct or accurate than others. Or they could all be “wrong” or inadequate. This ambiguity, imprecision, and multivalence of language is probably one of the greatest challenges in translating religious texts reliably.

This version serves as a DRAFT for Asa Ki Var. This working draft document is being presented to solicit feedback from the community-at-large and scholars. The information contained herein is subject to change based on the feedback received.

About Sikh Research Institute

Sikh Research Institute (SikhRI) is a global non-profit organization based in North America, whose mission is to provide educational resources to Sikhs to lead a Guru-inspired life. SikhRI inspires individuals to connect with their roots, and organizations to think critically based on Guru Granth Sahib’s paradigm of *IkOankar*, 1-Ness. SikhRI is an oasis for development and dialogue based on values of excellence, integrity, and service in order to realize full human potential.

SikhRI actively works towards promoting global harmony by building stronger relationships among the Sikh and non-Sikh communities. Our primary activities include facilitating group training, providing curriculum materials, creating global awareness of Sikhi, and delivering strategic solutions to key challenges facing the global Sikh community. SikhRI is focused on developing critical thinking for Sikh institutions via *State of the Panth* report series and developing open-source decoding of the Guru Granth Sahib in contemporary Panjabi and English for a global audience. SikhRI also produces a diverse range of immersive programs, webinars, podcasts, workshops, online courses, and lectures that cover topics as wide as spirituality, history, culture, politics, language, community, family, and self-development. Its flagship program Sidak is a 2-week immersive leadership development course for college students and young professionals.

SikhRI's publications include textbooks, children's bilingual books, translations, and anthologies.

Textbooks: Guru Granth Sahib - Its Language & Grammar; Gurbani Language & Grammar workbook.

Bilingual children's books: Daddy's Turban; My Gurmukhi Khajana; Thank You, Vahiguru.

Children's lesson plans: Anandu Sahib; Barah Maha; Getting to know Guru Nanak Sahib; Guru Granth Sahib-Summer unit; Seva; Sojhi.

SikhRI's online course offerings: Anandu Sahib; Anjuli; Barah Maha; Divine Names; Ghorla; Grammar of Gurbani; Introduction to Sabad Kirtan; Japu Sahib; Lav; Mul Mantra; Sadu; Sidh Gosti.

SikhRI also lends its expertise in the fields of art and literature. In 2016, SikhRI curated the *Emperor-Prophet: Guru Gobind Singh Sahib* exhibition for the Government of Bihar in partnership with the Panjab Digital Library. In 2019, SikhRI was the sole content curator for *IN5 EXPERIUM – The Golden Temple*, an audio-visual exhibition launched in Toronto, Canada in partnership with PDA Trade Fairs Pvt Ltd. In 2020, SikhRI curated the *Guru Nanak Sahib: 1-Ness to 1-Identity* exhibition which was launched at the National Museum in New Delhi, India in partnership with VOYCE (Vision & Opportunity for Youth & Community Empowerment).

SikhRI is deeply grateful to its volunteers and donors and values their contributions to making high-quality Sikh educational resources freely accessible to anyone wanting to learn.