

Three hundred years of faith

Oct 19 2008

Pune gurudwaras begin their grand celebrations for the 300th anniversary of Gurta Gaddi from today, as a precursor to the main event that will take place at Nanded later this month

Three hundred years ago, Guru Granth Sahib, the holy book of the Sikhs, which contains invaluable teachings (vani) of six gurus, among other words of wisdom, was accorded the status of the eternal guide of the Sikhs by Guru Gobind Singh. Three hundred years on, the Sikh community is reliving that cherished moment and commemorating the consecration by celebrating tercentenary of Gurta Gaddi, with great pomp and show. "This tercentenary celebration of the consecration asserts more significance as during the centenary celebrations India was under the Mughals, the 200th anniversary commenced when Indians were fighting the British rule but the tercentenary will be celebrated by free India," informs Bhola Singh Arora, one of the members of Prabandhak committee.

Takhat Sachkhand Sri Hazur Abchalnagar Saheb, Nanded, is the site where the main celebrations will start from October 27 and continue till November 3. October 30 marks the day of consecration and November 3 was the day when Guru Nanak left for his parlok gaman. Back home the Gurudwara Shri Guru Singh Sabha, Ganesh Peth is also organising pre-event celebrations. The celebrations in Pune will take place from October 19 to October 25. Myriad arrangements are being made to mark this seven-day spiritual extravaganza. Gracing the city streets on the opening day will be the nagar kirtan, a procession of the devotees, that will start from Gurudwara Shri Guru Singh Sabha, Nana Peth and will culminate at Gurudwara Gurunanak Darbar, Camp. "This procession will be aimed at spreading the message of peace and brotherhood. Around 15 to 20 thousand devotees are expected to join the procession," says Gurudev Singh Rajpal, a member of the Prabandhak committee. Several archgates and stages have been constructed in various parts of the city to welcome this procession. The procession will be attended by former State director general of police and chairman, teen sau saala committee Nanded P S Pasricha, Pune district's guardian minister Ajit Pawar and mayor Rajlaxmi Bhosale. Many communities have also come forward to welcome the procession at various places. During these seven days, the committee plans to conduct a seminar on universal welfare and brotherhood in reference to the teachings of Guru Granth Sahib and elaborate kirtans for which renowned kirtankars from Delhi, Amritsar and Chandigarh will be there. "We have set up almost 100 invitation boards across the city. All communities are invited to celebrate the occasion with us" says Bhola Singh.

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Serving the community remains an important activity. During the seven days, blood donation camps will be set up in the premises of the gurudwara at Ganesh Peth and all those who will be donating blood will be given a nominal insurance cover free of cost. The funds collected as donations from devotees will be used for funding cataract operations of around 300 needy patients. Also an amount of Rs 2000 each will be spent on 25 children selected by the various gurudwara committees in the city, for funding their school fees.

As a part of this elaborate affair, the teen sau saala committee has been distributing decorative candles, a key chain and a gold plated coin to families on a first-come-first serve basis. There is also a special effort by the committee to prevent the sale of intoxicants during these seven days. "We have ensured that at the gurudwara road at Ganesh Peth, no intoxicants are sold during these seven days and keeping in mind the spiritual importance of this event we earnestly request all the Puneties to ensure the same all over the city," adds Arora

[Siri Guru Granth Sahib Day, Proclaimed in Illinois, Chicago, Palantine](#)



Chicago: Governor Rod. Blagojevich of Illinois, Mayor Richard Daley of Chicago, Mayor Rita Mullins of Palatine, all proclaimed Oct. 20, 2008 as "Siri Guru Granth Sahib Day" in the state of Illinois, city of Chicago and the village of Palatine, and encouraged their respective citizens to be aware of, recognize, and participate in the celebrations.

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Sikh Religious Society
Gurdwara at 1280
Winnetka Street, in Palatine
Illinois is having special
celebrations on Sunday
October 26, 2008, 8 am to 2
pm. All are welcome.

Sikhism originated in India
in 1469 and is the fifth
largest religion in the world.

Twenty five million Sikhs around the world, including about half a million in the US are celebrating the declaration of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, (the Sikh Holy Scripture), as the Eternal Guru (spiritual guide) of the Sikhs as proclaimed by the Tenth and the last living Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh on October 20, in 1708 at Nanded, Maharashtra in India at the time of his passing.

The scripture then known as Adi Granth was first compiled by the Fifth Sikh Guru, Arjan Dev, in 1604 in the city of Amritsar, Punjab India. It was finalized by the Tenth and the last living Sikh Guru Gobind Singh in the year 1705-6 at Damdama Sahib in Punjab India. Perhaps it is the only scripture of a major world religion compiled and authenticated by the founders of the religion.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib is regarded as The Shabad Guru: Word of God and a Living Personification of the Ten Sikh Gurus. Its adoration is an article of faith with the Sikhs.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib rests on a pedestal in a throne-like setting in congregation halls of every Sikh Gurdwara (place of worship). The visitors walk up to it in humility and pay their obeisance for the Divine Wisdom, and Blessings, before taking a seat in the congregation.

To Sikhs it offers a perfect set of values and a practical code of conduct for the way of life and the path to spiritual salvation. The extinction of the ego or self is the corner-stone of Sikhism. The Sikh philosophy is of action, deeds and consequences. It moves away from quietism, passivity, abstractions, and superstitions. A person finds fulfillment only by immersion in the sea of life. Thus, the path of renunciation, abdication, aloofness,

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flagellation etc. stand rejected. The emphasis is on shared communal experience, and on pragmatic, purposive and idealistic involvement.

God is omnipotent and omniscient. He is the Initiator and the End. He is Self-Creator and Self-Propeller. Guru Granth Sahib recognizes and honors the sanctity of all faiths and spiritual paths.

It passionately enunciates that the purpose of life is to know and fall in love with God and the way to know God is through righteous living, Naam Simran (meditating on God's name), and Seva (selfless service).

The contents of this 1430 page scripture is not stories or chapters, but all hymns and verses in praise of God, that could be sung in prescribed Indian classical musical ragas. Thirty one ragas are included. The words are known as Gurbani (utterances of the Gurus).

One of the greatest glories of the Guru Granth Sahib is its catholic character. It includes the compositions of Hindu bhaktas, Muslim divines, Sufi poets, high-born Brahmins and the proud Kashatriyas, as also of the so called lowly Shudras and the unlettered Jats.

It contains the compositions of the six Sikh Gurus: Nanak Dev, Angad Dev, Amar Das, Ram Das, Arjan Dev, and Teg Bahadur, and twenty Hindu saints (Namdev, Jaidev, Ramanand, Ravidas, Trilochan, and others) and Muslim Saints (Baba Farid, Bhagat Kabir) and others from various regions, castes, and spiritual traditions. Perhaps it is the only scripture of its kind which contains the hymns and utterances of a wide variety of saints, sages and bards of other religions. Of course, their hymns and couplets rendered in their own language and idiom find a ready accord to the Sikh Guru's teachings.

The entire Gurbani whose printed version in its current format comes to 1430 pages is divided into 33 sections. While the first section comprises the soulful and inspiring song of the Japji composed by Guru Nanak as also a few selected pauris or couplets, the final section is collection of assorted verses including the shalokas and the swayyas of the bhattas. The remaining 31 sections are named after the well-known classical ragas such as sri, magh, gauri, gujri, devghandhari, dhanassari, bilawal, kedara, malhar, kalyan etc. The division, thus, is strictly based on Indian musicology. Furthermore, each psalm or song is preceded by a number (mohalla) which denotes the name of the composer-Guru from Guru Nanak onwards.

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The major hymns-Japji (Guru Nanak), Anand (Guru Amar Das), Sukhmani (Guru Arjan Dev), Rehras (Guru Nanak, Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjan Dev) are widely recited solo and in congregation by the faithful as morning and evening prayers.

Written in Gurumukhi script, composed in some of the local Punjabi dialects, it was leavened with expressions from Punjabi, Khari Boli, Devnagri, Dakhni, Marathi, Bengali, Sanskrit, Prakrit, Persian and Arabic. Obviously, the idea of Guru Arjan Dev was to affirm the fundamental unity of all religions and regions . This was done at a time when the caste system in India had paralyzed the conscience of man.

The revolutionary egalitarianism which such a step symbolized became the creed of the Sikhs.

The event is being celebrated in all the Sikh Gurudwaras in Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, Michigan etc. with seminars, spiritual reflections, and special congregations

Punjab Declares State Holiday for Gurta-Gaddi Celebrations

Friday 17th of October 2008

Patiala, Punjab (KP) – The Government of Punjab has declared October 20th as a State Holiday for the entire state of Punjab. All Government and Educational institutes will be closed to celebrate the 300th Gurta-Gaddi celebrations of Guru Granth Sahib Ji. The announcement was made in Kanuri, Sangrur, as the SGPC Official Kiranjot Kaur announced the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee's plans to hold a large-scale function at Talwandi Sabo on October 20th.

Sikh leaders rejoiced at the move by the Punjab Government to announce October 20th a State Holiday as it will provide a reason for students and workers to spend time learning

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about the philosophy of Guru Granth Sahib Ji and the Sikh religion.

Sikhs living all over the world are expected to join the celebrations in Punjab on October 20th and Hazoor Sahib by October 30th. Programs have been on-going for the past several weeks in different places throughout Punjab and the world.

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