

DASAM GRANTH – It's History

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INTRODUCTION

Since the time of the writings or pothis, to be later compiled and called the Granth of the Tenth Master, were originally found, there has been a controversy about their authorship, authenticity and historicity. Very few persons have made a serious study about their genuineness. The issue is important, and writers like O'Connell and others have often made accusations like: "A conspicuous deficiency already mentioned is the general reluctance to grapple effectively with the Dasam Granth. The period whence it comes is absolutely crucial, and until it is adequately treated, we shall continue to grope in our efforts to trace the course of Sikh history or development of Sikh tradition." It is, therefore, necessary to assess the veracity of facts, and to indicate the probabilities of the issue, so that it is understood in its right academic perspective.

HISTORY - 18TH CENTURY CHHIBBER'S STORY

Most of the evidence about the present work called 'Dasam Granth' is negative. The earliest reference about some writings by the Tenth Master is by Chhibber in his *Bansavalinama*. Contemporary historians of the period of Guru Gobind Singh like Sainapat, Bhai Nand Lal, Chaupa Singh, Sewadas, Koer Singh or Bhai Mani Singh, make no mention of the Dasam Granth or any such writing of that period. This negative evidence is quite significant and strong. For example, had there been any compilation like the Dasam Granth, these contemporary chroniclers could never have failed to mention it. The first reference to some writings by the Tenth Guru is in Chhibber's *Bansavalinama* written 71 years after the Guru's demise. This volume, as assessed by scholars like Jaggi, Kohli and others, has not been found to be very reliable as to its dates and other particulars. Besides, the author himself says that he is no chronicler, but has based the writing merely on hearsay, and just as a matter of his hobby: "I state what I had heard and what I could recollect." "This hearsay I record just by way of my hobby (shauk)."[1] Thus, Chhibber himself discounts the historical accuracy of his statements; for, he claims to belong only to the third generation of a Brahmin family whose head was a contemporary of the Tenth Master.

Further, two important points have also to be kept in view. First, most Brahmin writers always have a strong, natural and understandable bias to give a Brahmanical colour to the Sikh religion and its history, even though all the Sikh Gurus were emphatic to proclaim the independence of their system and the Panth. The Fifth Master wrote:

I keep not the Hindu fast, nor do I observe Muslim month of fast;

I serve only Him, who emancipates all; He is my Gosain;

He is my Allah; I have found release from the Hindus as from the Turks;

I visit not the pilgrim places of Hindus, nor go to Kabah for Hajj;

I serve only God, I serve not any other;

I worship not the Hindu way, nor say the Muslim prayers;

I bow to the one God within my heart;

I am neither a Hindu, nor a Muslim;

For, my body and life belong to Him, Allah and Ram. [2]

Second, Guru Gobind Singh had put the final seal on this complete separateness, by the creation of the Khalsa, the Nash Doctrine (Dharam Nash, Bharam Nash, Karam Nash, Sharam Nash and Janam Nash), and the declaration of Guru Granth Sahib as the sole Ideological Guide and Living Guru of the Sikhs. Yet, these writings have shown a subtle tendency to reshape and reframe Sikh events, so that these are accepted by the gullible as a part of the Brahmanical tradition.

Following is what Chhibber records: "The Guru got written a Granth (book) called 'Saundra Sagar.' Later he got it thrown in a river." "Later still he composed other writings." "But, during the battles at Anandpur, the leaves of these writings or packets (sanchian) were scattered to the wind and lost." [3] Chhibber is vague about the contents or nature of these writings. Once he calls it 'Samundar Sagar', at another time 'Avtar Leela.' There is no reference at all to 'Dasam Granth', 'Bachittar Natak', 'Chandi Charitar', 'Chandi di Var', 'Charitropakhyan' or 'Chaubis Avtar', as these are called now.

It is clear that it was peacetime when the Guru had thrown the Samundar Sagar Granth in the river. Could it ever happen that he would destroy Gurbani, his own or that of earlier Gurus, or anything of value to Sikhs? Gurbani has always been considered sacred, and been venerated more than even the Guru. Evidently, the writings were such as could conveniently be discarded. The argument applies doubly to the packets that were never completed or compiled, and were allowed to be scattered.

Thus, Chhibber's story adds nothing to our knowledge about the Dasam Granth writings, their compilation or loss. Therefore, the negative evidence of all contemporary chroniclers, coupled with the evidence of Chhibber's story, shows that till the end of the 18th century, there was nothing known about any Granth of the Tenth Guru, or any writings now regarded as its chapters or contents. In fact, the only Granth or compilation mentioned in the literature is 'Vidya Sagar' or 'Samundar Sagar Granth', the contents of which have no relation to the present Dasam Granth.

CHHIBBER'S STORY CONTRADICTED

Chhibber alleges three facts. First, that the Tenth Master initially created a Granth called Samundar Sagar, and had it thrown into a river. Later, some papers (sanchis) were prepared, but these, too, were scattered to the wind and lost in the time of battles. Second, he records that in 1725 A.D. Bhai Mani Singh compiled a Granth combining the bani of Aad Granth and the writings that subsequently came to be called Dasam Granth. [4] For doing this mix-up, and thereby violating the prescribed sequence or method of writing GURBANI, a poor Sikh, when he saw the combined Granth, cursed Bhai Sahib saying that just as he had disjointed the GURBANI and mixed it up, he would also be cut to pieces. [5] Chhibber never writes chronologically. For example, in a still later couplet No. 389, he writes that in 1698 A.D. Guru Gobind Singh rejected the request of the Sikhs to combine the Aad Granth with his own writings. [6] It is very significant that the entire book of Chhibber is packed with his use and narration of Brahmanical practices, and stories of demons, fairies, Hom, mantras, curses, etc., even though he knows that these are opposed to the doctrines in Guru Granth Sahib. In short, his Brahmanical faith and prejudices are

glaringly evident.

In addition, the above version of Chhibber, we find, is contradicted both by Gian Singh and Sarup Das Bhalla on all the essential points concerning Dasam Granth writings. Gian Singh never mentions that Samundar Sagar Granth or sanchis of Avtar Leela stories were prepared, thrown or lost. He also contradicts Chhibber that Sikhs at any time made a request to the Guru to combine his bani with the Aad Granth. All he states is that once Sikhs requested the Guru to compile his own bani, but he categorically declined to do so, saying that such a request should never be made again. [7] He also contradicts Chhibber's version that Bhai Mani Singh ever combined the two, and later suffered a 'curse' from a poor Sikh for doing so. He only states that in response to a suggestion by some Sikhs, he wrote Gurbani in separate words for the purpose of explaining its meaning (teeka), and that the sangat disapproved of it, saying that he would suffer for it. But the sangat conceded that his faith in the Guru would remain unshaken. This satisfied Bhai Sahib. [8] However, he indicates that on the request of Sikhs, he collected the bani of Guru Gobind Singh. [9]

Mehma Parkash of Sarup Das Bhalla, a late 18th century or an early 19th century production, materially gives the same impression, as does Gian Singh. Bhalla, a non-Brahmin, contradicts all the three assertions of Chhibber, namely, the preparation or loss of any Granth like Samundar Sagar or sanchis of other writings, the request of Sikhs to the Guru to add his bani to the Aad Granth, or any combined compilation by Bhai Mani Singh, and the curse by a poor Sikh. On the other hand, Bhalla gives the story that the Guru got prepared a Granth, since lost, called Vidya Sagar, which constituted translations of Sanskrit literature. [10] He does not say that the Sikhs ever requested the Guru to include his bani in the Aad Granth, nor that Bhai Sahib ever produced any such compilation.

These being the realities, there is little doubt that Chhibber's version is not only unworthy of reliance, but is clearly the result of a prejudiced twist to facts as they really were. For, it is unthinkable that Bhai Sahib would ever combine the two, as alleged by Chhibber and as now sought to be supported by the presence of the Delhi and Sangrur birs, when he knew full well that the Guru had clearly frowned upon such an idea. Had Bhai Sahib prepared any bir, it would be the authentic version, and there could never have been the possibility of such widely variant versions of the Granth, and as actually exist now. For, every bir would have been a copy of it. Nor is there any reason for the complete disappearance of it. Because, we find, that the Delhi bir, which has no history, is certainly not Bhai Sahib's production.

For the reasons and facts given above there is little doubt that the story of Chhibber stands belied, and that the version that Bhai Mani Singh compiled the Dasam Granth, is a distortion that has no historical, ideological or factual basis or possibility.

19TH CENTURY

The existence of Dasam Granth is mentioned for the first time in mid-nineteenth century by Bhai Santokh Singh, and later by Giani Gian Singh and others. Later, Bhai Kahn Singh and others repeat the story of Bhai Santokh Singh, suggesting that the bir of Dasam Granth was compiled by Bhai Mani Singh. It is also stated that there were many objections to the compilation in one volume of the various writings that had earlier existed separately. But, the final decision to do so or not, rested on the chance factor of the success or otherwise of the mission of Sukha Singh and Mehtab Singh against Massa Ranghar. The reality, however, is that none of these writers have given any shred of evidence to support the story of its compilation. In the absence of any authentic historical evidence, it is simply impossible to attribute the present collection, or any part of it, to Bhai Sahib. It is equally impossible to believe that if a respected contemporary of the Guru like Bhai Sahib had really compiled the Granth, or any part of it, there could ever have been a controversy about it among the Sikhs so as to require them to resort to the chance decision depending on the success of Mehtab Singh and Sukha Singh. Bhai Mani Singh's position being

pre-eminent as a trusted scribe and devout Sikh of the Guru, could any Sikh or Panth disregard or doubt his testimony about the Dasam Granth, if it had been there? There is, thus, little doubt that the story of Dasam Granth's compilation by Bhai Sahib has no historical basis. In fact, it is a motivated fabrication to give credence to the story of Dasam Granth compilation.

LETTER BY BHAI MANI SINGH

The supportive story of a letter written by Bhai Sahib, about the collection of Charitropakhyan, to Mata Ji at Delhi is another fabrication. Dr Jaggi has examined in detail the veracity of this letter and found it to be unreliable. The method of writing separate words, as in this letter, was not at all in vogue in the time of Bhai Sahib. Nor is the practice visible in the contemporary manuscripts. The words or language used also relates to a later period. Besides, the use of bindi, other features, matras and shape of letters are comparatively modern. Very probably the letter is written by a metallic nib, which was not available in those times. The words used are rather unsophisticated and could not have been from a learned gurmukh like Bhai Sahib. It is also strange that the letter mentions 303 charitars or stories, whereas everywhere else the number is 404. [11] Nor has the letter been forthcoming from a natural custody. It was never heard of in the 18th or 19th centuries, and its appearance is only a mid 20th century phenomenon. It is strange that Dr Ashta who accepts it, has done so virtually without any examination of it. Charitropakhyan is a writing which no Sikh, Granthi, or scholar has been willing to read or send to his mother, sister or daughter. No one has so far read it out in the open sangat. It is, indeed, unlikely that a gurmukh like Bhai Sahib would send its manuscript to venerated Mata Ji. It is, thus, historically baseless to connect Bhai Sahib or Mata Ji in any manner with the collection or compilation of Dasam Granth or any part of it.

The above rationale makes it plain that there is no evidence whatsoever of the existence of Dasam Granth or any part of it in the 18th or even the 19th century. All we now know is the later appearance of some manuscripts or birs of the Dasam Granth. Four of them are regarded as the oldest. We shall consider their reliability or authenticity.

BHAI MANI SINGH BIR

Raja Gulab Singh of Delhi purchased a bir in 1944-45, which is known as the Bhai Mani Singh Bir. Nothing historically verifiable is known about it, except a story given by him that a soldier of Ranjit Singh found or looted it during an attack on Multan in 1818 A.D. The soldier then shifted to and settled at Hyderabad. How the bir got to Multan and remained unknown for 125 years is quite enigmatic and unexplained. External evidence about its history is completely missing. The bir is far from being a speaking manuscript. For, the authorship is unknown, as also the place or time of its compilation. In a corner of a page there is a slanting postscript, recording 1713 A.D. as the date of it. Jaggi's examination and its photocopy clearly show it to be a suspicious interpolation. The ink and writing of this entry are different from those of the original bir. The handwriting and shape of letters are also comparatively crude. Its introduction in slanting lines in a corner proves its belated character. [12] In fact, it is a thoughtless fabrication of the date. For, the story of Bhai Sahib's collection of its parts and the Panthic decision to have them in one volume following Massa Ranghar's death, relate to a time about two decades later.

All the internal evidence of the bir is against its authenticity. Jaggi finds that the writer of the bir does not seem to be a good scribe or to have a good knowledge of the Gurmukhi script or the Punjabi language. [13] Therefore, it is not at all possible to connect this bir with Bhai Sahib. On the other hand, the scribe is a Hindi-knowing person who is distinctly interested in distorting the Sikh doctrines and mixing up Sikh literature with Puranic literature. And this is, exactly what he has done. The bir comprises both the bani of the Gurus and that of the Dasam Granth. Gurbani has not been recorded as in Guru Granth Sahib, i.e., raag-wise. It is done Guru-wise and Bhagat Bani is mostly at the end of the combined volume. It shows conclusively that the scribe is a non-Sikh who, without any knowledge of the prescribed method of

writing Gurbani, is out to do the heretical distortion of mixing-up dhur ki bani with Puranic myths about worship of deities and avatars. For, no Sikh, and much less a gurmukh like Bhai Sahib, could ever plan to combine the two and flout the sacred sequence of Gurbani (written raag-wise) laid down by the Gurus. The shape of writing and its language suggest that the distortion was done long after the demise of Bhai Sahib, when the Sikh world was engaged in its life and death struggle with the Empire and the invaders.

Thus, the lack of any history of the manuscript for over 200 years, its internal evidence of interpolation, shape of letters and language, together with the heretical change of method in writing Gurbani, and its mix-up with Puranic and avatar-worship literature, conclusively exclude the possibility of the bir being a production of Sikh quarters. On the other hand, the probability is that it is a compilation by those either un-conversant with Sikh doctrines, tradition and literature, or those out to confuse the Sikh ideology. In any case, the manuscript has no historical or academic value as an authentic bir.

MOTI BAGH BIR

The bir of Moti Bagh is another manuscript that has no verifiable history. In 1959, one Natha Singh stated that his ancestor, one Hakam Singh had given this bir to Maharaja Mohinder Singh (1862-1876 A.D.), that earlier one Nahar Singh had obtained it from Charat Singh, son of Sukha Singh, and that the former had been obtaining for it a grant from Maharaja Ranjit Singh. [14] But, no part of its history is verifiable, or is otherwise corroborated. Nor is there anything in the internal evidence of the bir to support the story or any part of it. The bir shows that it had been compiled by more than one person. Jaggi opines that the age of the paper and the character of words and writing show that it could not have been compiled earlier than a hundred years after the demise of the Tenth Guru.

SANGRUR BIR

The Granthi at gurdwara Deodi Sahib Dewan Khara, Sangrur, says that in 1857 A.D. the bir had been presented to the Raja by a Pathan of Delhi, when he had gone there in aid of the British. The bir was in two parts, pages 1 to 600 contained Gurbani from Guru Granth Sahib, and pages 601 to 1166 the chapters that form Dasam Granth. The first part stands lost. Its history before 1857 A.D. is unknown. [15] Internal evidence suggests that it is a combined collection of bani from Guru Granth Sahib and the chapters of Dasam Granth. Since the very system of combining dhur ki bani with puranic and avatar and other literature is opposed to the specific tradition laid down by the Gurus, the heretical mix-up has been done, as explained earlier, by non-Sikh elements. For, it is inconceivable that a composition like the Charitropakhyan, which even the SGPC, vide its letter No. 36672 dated 3.8.1972, has declared to be a composition from Hindu mythology and not by the Tenth Master, could have been combined with sacred Gurbani by any Sikh. This fact alone shows conclusively that the Dasam Granth, which contains Charitropakhyan, could never be a compilation of Sikh quarters, much less could it be by the Tenth Guru. The bir, thus, is of no historical or academic value.

PATNA BIR

The Patna Bir has also no historical value. Nothing worthwhile about it was narrated to Jaggi when he examined it there. [16] The writing is simple, except that red ink has also been used. The arguments against the authenticity of its compilation, production, and mix-up of the Tenth Gurus's bani with Charitropakhyan, as noted earlier, also apply to this volume. Jaggi feels that the condition of the paper, shape of letters, writing, etc., suggest that it is a production of the 19th century.

NO BIR IS AUTHENTIC

Dr Jaggi's detailed descriptions of these and other birs shows that in matters of contents, number of

hymns and chhands, sequence of topics, list of writings, distribution of writings, or headings, etc., etc., there is no uniformity between any two birs. In fact, some of these contain additional material clearly known to be from non-Sikh sources. The conclusion is inevitable that these birs are odd, assorted and belated compilations or collections of unconnected and disjointed materials, made by individuals from non-Sikh quarters, who were neither conversant with the Sikh literature, nor with the method and sanctity of writing Gurbani. Their only interest was to mix-up Sikh literature with puranic and avatar literature so as to show both of them as parts of a single tradition. For, had the compilers been acquainted with Sikh practices and quarters, there would not have been such a variation in contents, combinations, sequence, number of hymns, as is evidenced by the different birs. Nor are these birs, for the same reasons, copies from one traceable or authentic source.

This conclusion is fortified by the facts that not only have these birs virtually no known history, but the earlier ones relate to the period when struggle with the Empire was intense and there was a price on every Sikh head. And, later when peace came, in the late 18th or early 19th century, these writings containing mixed-up literature were quietly introduced and got copied without much scrutiny. Otherwise, how could it be that no bir bears any authentic date or name of a known Sikh scribe of the Guru, of the early Sikh period? We also find that some of the errors are too gross to be committed by a person conversant with Gurbani. Jaggi has listed many of these errors in chapter six of his book. These errors and their repetition show their non-Sikh origin. These are very significant aspects of the old compilations, and in any serious assessment of their value, the importance of their import and implications cannot be ignored.

Here it is necessary to mention an unverified story that the Tenth Guru had initiated a move to translate into Gurmukhi some ancient literature. It is well-known that in his short life he was faced with colossal tasks, and his accomplishments, as declared by H.R. Gupta, were indeed superhuman in every field of his activities: "His dreams and deeds brought a wonderful change in his own generation in the religious, military and political life of the people. His personality was so fascinating, so bewitching, so dynamic, so momentous and so unforgettable, that we are seized with wonder at the changes, which took place in Punjab within one year and half of his death. He was the greatest genius of his age. Whenever we touch that short life, as he died at the age of forty-two, we are at once brought into contact with a live wire. He was a meteor that consumed itself to light the world. He was luminous like the sun and had conquered death. He possessed a rare combination of so many excellences, supreme self-denial, marvelous intellect, superhuman willpower, great heart and limitless energy...." [17]

It is quite apparent that whatever translations were done by Brahmins and Sikhs, were lost, and could not be suitably compiled or scrutinized about their utility in his time or even later. In any case, there is no historical evidence to this effect. Very probably it is only the Brahmanical quarters who had later the time and interest to compile those translations and combine them with Gurbani. This view, we feel, explains all aspects of the Dasam Granth and what Jaggi considers its numerous inconsistencies and contradictions.

INTERNAL EVIDENCE

Historical Contradictions: There are, as detailed by Jaggi, many historical and other incongruities in the Dasam Granth which it would be naive to attribute to the Tenth Guru.¹⁸ We give only two instances:

(i) In the story of Prithoo Raja, the author has shown that the legendary Shakuntala had connection not with Prince Dushyant, but with the mythical Prithoo. According to Bhagwat Puran, Prithoo was an avtar of Vishnu who appeared in Treta Yug. But Shakuntala's story of love with Dushyant in Bhagwat Puran is entirely different. [19] Thus, the writer who has joined Prithoo and Shakuntala, could not be concerned with the purity of Puranic stories. But his only interest appears to be to link the bani of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib with concocted Hindu legends, so that he is shown to be part of the Brahmanical lore and legend.

(ii) Similarly, in the story of Raghu Raja, to say that Sanyasis regarded him as Dutt, Yogis as Gorakh Nath, Bairagis as Ramanand, and Muslims as Prophet Mohammad, shows that the interest of the story writer is not to narrate any rational history or myth. [20] He only seeks to represent that the Guru accepted Hindu mythology and tradition, and for the purpose to distort Sikh doctrines and ideas.

By no means can the authorship of such cock-and-bull stories be attributed to the lofty personality of the Guru. Obviously, the interest of the authors of these incongruities is quite extraneous to any faithful representation of events, doctrines, ideas, or even myths.

Another fact that seriously affects the historicity of these writings is quite significant. Normally, the preparation, compilation or reproduction of a Granth by a scholar is a great achievement, and the same is kept as a treasure, which the author or his family is always reluctant to part with. But, in the case of these manuscripts or birs not only their history and names or identity of compilers are unknown, but, we also find, that none of the compilers or custodians ever showed any reluctance to part with them. On the other hand, an apparent aim seems to have been that the compilation reaches an important place or a distinguished person that could confer authenticity to it.

Ideological Contradictions: The unity of spirit of all the Ten Gurus is a fundamental of Sikhism, which stands emphasized and recorded in Guru Granth Sahib. The second basic and unalterable concept of Sikhism, as opposed to that of Brahmanism, is that God does not incarnate. This concept is an integral element of the creedal hymn Mul Mantra. [21] of Guru Nanak in the very beginning of Guru Granth Sahib. This concept is the corner stone of Sikh theology. So much so, that the Guru says: "May that mouth burn which says that God incarnate." [22] "God alone is the one who is not born of a woman." [23] "God is self-existent, without form and incarnates not." [24] The Gurus clearly deny belief in the theory of incarnation of God. In order to dispel such ideas they state, "The Formless alone, Nanak, is without fear, many are Ramas as the dust of His Feet, many Krishnas. Many are their stories and many are the Vedas." [25] The Gurus write that He created countless Brahmas, Sivas and Vishnus.

The above is the categorical thesis of the Gurus and Guru Granth Sahib, the sole Ideological Guide of the Sikhs. We have to test any idea, doctrine or practice on the touchstone of Gurbani. For, it is unimaginable that any Guru or Sikh could approve of anything incongruous with the creedal statement of Guru Nanak. It is in the above context that we have to examine and test the authenticity of what is in any Granth, not specifically authenticated by the Gurus.

DEVI AND AVTAR WORSHIP IN THE DASAM GRANTH

Dr Jaggi has made a detailed examination of the issue. He finds that except for about 70 pages of the Dasam Granth, including *Jap Sahib*, *Swayyas*, *Akal Ustat* (excluding hymns in praise of Durga), *Asphotak Chhand* and *Zaffarnama*, the other contents, which involve worship of avatars, devis and mahakal, are mostly from the Puranic literature. Following are some instances of Devi worship. (For details see chapter 9 of Jaggi's book).

(i) Tribhangi Chhands (201-220, In Akal Ustat) are clearly in praise of the Devi.

(ii) In Shashtarnama in the beginning there is a whole chapter (27 chhands) in praise of the Devi.

(iii) Chandi Charitar I & II, Chaubis Avtar, Rudra Avtar including parts of Charitropakhyan, all relate to the Puranic myths that are in praise of the devi and avatars.

(iv) Similarly, in the above Puranic stories there are numerous hymns in praise of Maha Kal, who is a

Tantric or Sakat deity, pages 55, 56, 57, 58, 73, 156, 157, 183, 185, 254, 310, 612, 613, 642, etc.

(v) Worship of devi under the name of Kalika, Chandi, Siva or Durga is found at pages 74, 76, 99, 117, 255, 118, 309, 310, 116, 673, 675, etc., etc.

(vi) Apart from the Var of Durga, there is the entire Puranic story of the devi coming to the rescue of the mythical Indra and fighting battles with demon Maikhasur, involving trillions of soldiers (devi worship chhands and narration of the myth).

(vii) In Chandi Charitar Ukat Bilas the author mentions that he has virtually made the composition from 700 slokas of Markand Purana. He adds that whoever hears or recites the same for any specific boon, the devi would certainly grant it instantaneously (Chandi Charitar, Ukat Bilas – sloka 232).

(viii) In Chandi Charitar II in the sloka 261 the author writes that whoever remembers or worships the devi with devotion, shall attain salvation. Similarly, in the Durga Var the author writes that whoever recites the same, will achieve salvation and not be born again (stanza or pauri - 55).

(ix) Whether it is Rama Avatar, Parasnath Avatar, Krishna Avatar, Brahma Avatar, or the other Puranic stories, these all relate to the worship to the devi and avatars.

(x) Charitropakhyan, too, involves worship of the devi and Kal or Maha Kal (charitra 405, chhands 52, 77, 126 and 132). The very facts that no Sikh is willing to read it in the presence of women or the sangat, and that the S.G.P.C. has called it a Puranic myth and not work of the Tenth Guru, show that it is no longer considered a part of the Dasam Granth.

The above few instances prove that, apart from the about 70 pages or so, the writings in the Dasam Granth positively accept and involve devi and avatar worship. Accordingly, these writings (Chandi Charitra and Chandi Di Var - 126 pages, Chaubis Avtar - 744 pages, Brahm Rudra Avtar - 383 pages, Charitropakhyan and Hikayat - 923 pages) are opposed to the doctrines of the Gurus and Guru Granth Sahib.

GURU GRANTH SAHIB ON DEVI AND AVTAR WORSHIP

About mythical writings and devi and avatar worship Guru Grant Sahib records:

(i) "O brother, fools worship gods and goddesses. They do not know that these imaginary deities can give nothing." [26]

(ii) "The Vedas, Brahma, gods and goddesses know not His secrets, and have no knowledge of the Creator." [27]

(iii) "The fools, the ignorant and the blind forget the Master Lord, and instead, worship His slaves, the goddesses and Maya." [28]

GURU GOBIND SINGH ON DEVI WORSHIP

Hereunder we give the bani of the Tenth Guru as in the Akal Ustat:

(i) "There are millions of Indras and incarnations of Brahma, Vishnu and Krishna. But, without worship of God none are accepted in His Court." (Stanza 38).

(ii) "Millions of Indras are servants at His door. Countless are the insignificant Shivas, Ramas and Krishnas." (Stanza 40).

(iii) "Some worship Shiva (Mahadev); some say Vishnu is master of the universe, and that by devotion to him, all calamities disappear. O, fool, think over a thousand times and understand that at the last moment everyone will leave you in the lurch to die alone. Remember only the One Lord who will never forsake you." (ibid).

(iv) "There was a Shiva; he was gone, and there appeared another and he was gone too. There are innumerable avatars like Rama or Krishna." "Countless are Brahmas, Vishnus, Vedas, Puranas and Simritis that have come and gone." (Stanza 77).

These being the categorical hymns of Guru Granth Sahib and the clear statements of the Tenth Guru himself, does it make any sense that he approved of or could ever have accepted any of the writings mentioned earlier, which so clearly involve worship of deities and devtas, and some of which faithfully reflect and reproduce Puranic writings and myths in praise of avatars and the deities, suggesting faith in the efficacy of the mantr system discarded by Guru Granth Sahib?

CHANGING NAME OF THE GRANTH

There is another important factor suggesting that the major part of the Dasam Granth is actually taken from some other sources, and has been mistakenly or deliberately combined with the bani of the Tenth Guru. For example, the writings were originally all separate and unconnected pothis, or compilations. For that reason these were first called 'Dasam Patshah Ka Granth.' This name does not suggest any authorship of the Guru, but only seeks to link his name by way of reference to his period or quarters. Later, the Granth was called Dasam Granth and still later Sri Dasam Granth, and so on. The frequent changes in name only reflect the interests of the writers or the publishers.

That this is a deliberate mix-up is evident from the fact that originally most parts of the Granth were called Bachittar Natak Granth. This name appears 151 times in the Puranic parts of the compilation. It is repeated at the end of each composition, story, chapter or poem. This name appears 19 times in Rama Avtar, 67 times in Krishna Avatar, 33 times at the end of the stories of other Avatars, etc.

The probability is that the mix-up has been done deliberately. For, Puranic verses, and chhants in praise of deities are interpolated in the midst of what are clearly the bani of the Tenth Guru, as seen in the light of Guru Granth Sahib. Similarly, some couplets, which are the bani of the Tenth Guru, as seen in the context of Guru Granth Sahib, stand introduced in the midst of Puranic stories.

The bani in Guru Granth Sahib is the Sole Guru and Guide of every Sikh. It is the Light that alone shows us the way to truth, especially when one may be wavering or in doubt. May we ask if there is any objection to accepting what is clearly in consonance with it and avoiding what is admittedly, theologically and logically, opposed to it?

CONCLUSION

Our discussion makes it plain that such contents of the Dasam Granth as suggest worship of gods, goddesses and avatars, are opposed to the doctrines of Sri Guru Granth Sahib and the Gurus. These are also opposed to the unanimously accepted bani of Guru Gobind Singh, quoted above. By no stretch of reason can it be suggested that those writings are consonant with the bani and doctrines of Guru Granth Sahib. On the other hand, they clearly support the theory of avatarhood, which the Gurus have emphatically rejected. Further, we find that there is not a shred of historical evidence to suggest that the

Guru at any time approved of it. In fact, he had thrown away or permitted to be scattered, whatever was not worth presentation. On the other hand, Guru Granth Sahib was declared the Guru. Gurbani has been given to us to test what is valid or true and what is unacceptable or spurious. That test is final and unalterable.

It is also evident that none of the devi or avatar-worship writings are the collection of a Sikh or indicate the authorship of a Sikh as the original scribe or compiler. On the other hand, the manner in which this mix-up has been done, and the method of writing Gurbani laid down by the Gurus, grossly violated in the old birs, show that the author could not be a Sikh. Further, already the S.G.P.C. has accepted the position that 923 pages of Charitropakhyan are Puranic myths, unconnected with the Guru.

Many outside scholars have clearly stated that in the absence of clarification of the position about the Dasam Granth, the stand and history of the Tenth Guru cannot be clear. The oblique suggestion is that the Tenth Guru brought the Panth into the Hindu fold, and drew inspiration from the Puranic past and the Shakti cult, even though it is a historical fact that the hill princes, the staunch worshippers of the Shakti or devi cult, not only opposed the Guru, but also voluntarily accepted the supremacy of the mighty Mughal instead of confronting him.

Another scholar, Ramji Lal, writes that Sikhs are Hindus, saying, "The Khalsa was constituted to emancipate the Hindu society from the contemporary evils including idolatry, caste system, superstition and ritualism." "Again at that time among the disciples of the Great Guru Gobind Singh - Bhai Nand Lal, Bhai Kanahya and Mohkam Chand, all were Hindus. Bhai Mati Das and Bhai Dayala who sacrificed their lives along with Guru Tegh Bahadur, were also Hindus." "Not only this, but Guru Gobind Singh himself revered Hindu Goddesses - Chandi and Durga and the Hindu avatars including - Sri Ram Chander and Lord Krishna." [29]

While it is well known that views of many scholars like Bhai Ardaman Singh of Bagrian, Dr Jaggi, Shamsheer Singh Ashok, Prof. Jagjit Singh, Principal Harbhajan Singh, Principal Jagjit Singh, Dr Rann Singh, Sardar Harnam Singh, Maj. Gen. Narinder Singh, Sardar M.S. Marco, Bhai Ashok Singh and others are the same as ours. Open attempts at ideological erosion, as quoted above, are being made. Hence the need of academic clarification. For, no Sikh can accept that anything opposed to the categorical rejection of the doctrine of avatarhood in Guru Granth Sahib, could ever be from an authentic Sikh source, much less from the Tenth Guru. It is undeniable that Guru Granth Sahib is our Living Guru, and its principles and doctrines are our Sole Guide to test the veracity or acceptability of any idea, concept, writing, suggestion or activity.

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