

**Coalition of Gurdwaras of California
7940 Mission Blvd, Riverside, CA 92509**

**Open Letter
Socio-Political impact of Sikh Religious Studies**

June 28, 2009

Dr. Jaspal Singh, Vice-Chancellor
Punjabi Univeristy Patiala
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Respected Dr. Jaspal Singh Ji:

Migration of Sikhs from India to North America has been traced back to the 1890s. Initially they went through a period of struggle and existence due to their identity and difficulties in preaching, practicing, and spreading authentic message of Sikh faith and its history. Sikhism now has become the fifth largest and the third fastest growing religion of the World. Studies pertaining to Sikhs and Sikhism are being currently conducted around the World in various academic institutions.

There is a dire need to encourage sharing the authentic message of the Sikh scriptures: Sri Guru Granth Sahib, not only to help unfortunate people who unwittingly miss the message, but to dissuade those who misrepresent and misinterpret Sikhism.

Any nation's survival depends upon protection of its scripture and identity. Sikh religion is being established as one of the World's major universal religions. In order to continually present authentic Sikh religion, Sikh scholars must deal with the academic challenges of the 21st century. If Sikhs ignore these challenges, we are afraid, it will lead to tremendous socio-psychological change hindering in the understanding of Sikh religion by the future generations of Sikhs especially those in Diaspora, the western World will have a lopsided view of Sikhism, doctrinal base of Sikhism as enshrined in Aad Sri Guru Granth Sahib will erode, economical and political problems of Sikhs in Punjab downplayed, and Sikh parents will fail to fulfil their moral duties.

Sikhs who migrate from India have very deleterious effects from inaccurate literature. Since coming generation of Sikhs in Diaspora may not be able to visit Punjab as often, reading inaccurate books will lead to doubting the authenticity and integrity of our living Guru: Guru Granth Sahib, and the great heritage given to us by the Gurus.

Sikhs living in India and Punjab are better positioned, we feel, to deal with these problems since they reside in place where Sikhism was born. Study of Sikh history, Religion, Philosophy, and Literature has recently developed into an academic discipline with Chairs of Sikh and Punjabi Studies being established in Westren countries. We appreciate the efforts of Punjabi University Patiala in actively pursuing research on Sikh Studies and publishing good publications on

various aspects of such studies. Though the Sikh Studies have developed into an academic discipline, issues have arisen which require immediate attention of authentic Sikh scholars. One of the most important and pressing issue is the evolution of a 'Draft Theory' of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Some scholars, specially propagated in the west, have floated the 'Draft theory', claiming that many working drafts were prepared under the direct supervision of Guru Arjan.

Textual studies on any scripture require sources that have their origin in the pre-canonical stage. Their antiquity, authority and authenticity have to be established on the basis of academic norms. Besides one is required to identify the tradition from which these sources have descended. Every manuscript has a purpose therefore; a scholar has to find out the purpose and prospect of these manuscripts. In a research related to Sikh studies manuscript 1245, a heretic text, has been projected as an early draft of the Adi Granth. In order to prove pre-conceived formulations some scholars are flaunting the theory of 'Working Drafts' and asserting that in addition to manuscript 1245, texts: Bahawal and Vanjara Pothi(s) of other schismatic groups must also be regarded as 'Working Drafts' prepared by different scribes under the direct supervision of Guru Arjan.

The "working draft hypothesis" requires:

1. The availability of manuscripts whose authenticity has been proven without doubt on the basis of their origin, scribe, date and place of writing. But the fact remains that the drafts: Manuscript 1245, Vanjara and Bahawal Pothis have no such information.
2. A draft is prepared to initiate something all together anew. But Bani of Gurus already existed, all it needed to be compiled. Therefore, this theory in relation to Guru Granth is irrelevant and ridiculous
3. The mere thought of a draft of revealed Bani is incongruous, contradictory and self defeating in the case of Sikh Scripture.
4. Draft theory presupposes to make changes in text and improve contents. But immortal word of God as revealed to Gurus cannot be modified, a fact well established by the Sikh Gurus.
5. The draft theory can be applied only to history grounded religions i.e. whose scriptures were written after the demise of their respective Prophets, but not in the case of Sikh scripture, Guru Granth, which was compiled by the living Gurus. Even in the case of Bible, where numerous manuscripts are available, Pope Benedict XVI "dwelt upon the fundamental criteria of biblical exegesis, upon the dangers of a secularized and positivistic approach to the sacred Scripture, and upon the need for a closer relationship between exegesis and theology", affirming that the doctrine of biblical inerrancy cannot be challenged.

The 'Draft Theory' grossly misrepresents and misinterprets facts and its hypothesis in compilation of the Adi Granth does not find validity in the entire Sikh history. Internal and external evidence supports that these manuscripts have not been prepared by Guru Arjan.

In Vanjara Pothi, for instance, there is an apocryphal composition Sahansar Nama attributed to Mahalla 6. Scholars know well that Guru Hargobind, the sixth Guru, has not authored any composition. It was Prithi Chand, the Mina guru who wrote Kachi-bani in the name of Nanak which is recorded in the Mina works under the authorship of Mahalla 1/6. A Sikh study researcher in a western university knowingly attributed it to Guru Hargobind and misleads the

scholars, “Interestingly the last composition was added later on with a different pen”. However a close look at the manuscript reveals that it is in the hand of primary scribe written with the same pen and is in the same shade of ink.

There is no doubt that stories pertaining to religious marvels in past centuries in India can be found in abundance. Largely these stories were mythological and narrated by non-Sikh traditions and factions. The quest to investigate Guru Granth Sahib now academically criss-crosses fictional narrations, and physical evidence of texts of dissentients, similar to the patterns used by unconventional non-Sikh heretics in the past. Leaders of such non-Sikh sects, Hariji and Meharban, indulged in producing numerous texts which are available even today. Resurrection of such texts bears stark resemblance to unrelenting pursuit of Hariji and Meharban to mingle mythology with Sikh Guru’s word. Western scholars are very convincing in creating a fictional scene, like fables, where Guru Arjan at Ramsar in the central place of Amritsar directly supervised scribes to work independently and produce their version of the Sikh Scripture. A researcher has affirmed that in Vanjara Pothi the Vars contained only stanzas (Pauris) to which Salokas were affixed later-on. But, Salokas along with their authorship in the Vars of the Pothi’s folios 109-398 are clear and definitive. Comparison of this text to Sikh scripture is inaccurate because contrary to his remarks that even the authorship was inserted in the Kartarpur Bir in between the lines later on with a fine pen could not be established. The Pothi contains an apocryphal composition, Sahansar Nama Dakhni Mahalla 6. Pothis containing such type of writings belong to the sect of Prithi Chand and his descendants. The Pothi contains Sahansar Nama, which according to renegade researcher was added later, with a different pen conveniently overlooking a major detail that it is in the hand of primary scribe and bears the same shade of ink on folios 814-820. Additionally, a major inconsistency exists in the Pothi that the number 6 is written over the number 1, therefore it was consciously done to attribute this composition to Guru Hargobind. These discrepancies and the fact that 6th Guru, Guru Hargobind, did not compose any hymns in Guru Granth Sahib suggest it belongs to anti-Sikh sects and dissentients. The heretical Guru, Prithi Chand, under the penmanship of Mahalla 6 authored compositions found in the literature of non-Sikh sects (Simarjit Singh; Demeaning the Sikh Tradition, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2006, p.126). Also, many composition of Pran Sangli had their origin in the sectarian camp (Simarjit Singh, p.147). Guru Arjan neither commissioned a scribe to record non-Sikh hymns nor supervised any drafts. Authoritative association of this Pothi with non-Sikh sect refutes the claim that Guru Arjan revised the hymns of Guru Nanak.

Examination of Bahoval Pothi reveals that its folios do not have a colophon either, authenticating that it belongs to a non-Sikh tradition. Bahoval Pothi outlines clear differences of hymns of Sikh Scriptures: Adi Granth’s to the apocryphal hymns of non-Sikhs. Its a manuscript of Sikh-like heretical societies. A schismatic group lead by Prithi Chand’s son Meharban existed during Guru Arjan’s time and was thought to be extinct. Some scholars are resurrecting the heretical leader’s folios and audaciously referring to it as a draft of Adi Granth. A close look at the contents of this apocryphal Pothi reveals that the form of invocation i.e. Ik Onkar Satiguru Parsadi and Guru Sat in its brief has been employed in whole manuscript before ragas. In Guru Granth Sahib one finds that twenty six ragas start with full version of Mūl Mantar. Therefore the Pothi has identical version used by non-Sikh sectarian elements within the Panth and its insignificance is compounded by the presence of a hymn attributed to Bhai Gurdas in the text of Bhavan Akhri. Half of its hymns are without any reference to Ghar; some of its Ragas viz. Sri Raga Dakhni, Rag Gauri Poorbi Dakhni Mahalla 5 Sukhmani, Asa Mahalla 4 Maneela Chhants, Hidol

(solitary), Bilaval–Gond (composite), which suggests that it belongs to an unorthodox and non-Sikh musical tradition. Furthermore, presence of Mira Bai's (ardent mythical worshiper of Hindu God) Pada under Rag Maru folio no. 566 (Man Hamara bandyo kanwal nain Apney) in the Pothi indicates that it belongs to texts of heterodoxy.

Guru Arjan's revision of hymns and editing is a pointless argument considering the internal and external inconsistency of folios being researched in many academic institutions. Relentless pursuit of some scholars for making a case legitimate brings to the forefront the wavered attitudes of the various non-Sikh sectarian groups who would have succeeded in adulterating the Adi Granth had it not been compiled by Guru Arjan in 1604 AD. The dissenting groups, during seventeenth century, within the Sikh community were plenty and by means of their own theosophies refused to yield to the Guru's word. They were perturbed at the inclusion of hymns of some non-Sikh saints into the Adi Granth by Guru Arjan. Instead of accepting the Sikh Scriptures they recklessly constructed their own folios of Bhagats. Research on some Chairs of Sikh Studies constructively deciphers the works of unorthodoxy rather than enlighten the academia of uniqueness of unedited hymns of Sikh Scriptures preserved over centuries.

Similarly, manuscript 1245, which is being falsely considered as an 'early draft of the Adi Granth', has several inconsistencies. Point in turn it carries a colophon on folio 1255 in which death date of Guru Arjan i.e. Jeth Sudi 4, 1663 BK. (1606 AD) has been recorded. So the question arises: However could Guru Arjan record his own death date on the folio?

Sikh community, as you are aware, believes in the revelatory character of Gurbani that holds truth to the fact that its original and authentic scripture has been well preserved by Guru Arjan in the Adi Granth compiled in 1604. Therefore the 'Draft Theory' confuses readers and believers about the original and correct version of the Sikh Scripture. Hence it's pertinent for Sikh scholars of Punjabi University Patiala to address the textual analysis of these spurious, so-called, early drafts of the Adi Granth.

Another issue which demands immediate attention relates to the text and status of Dasam Granth. The published version of the current Dasam Granth, as you are well aware, is based on the findings of the Sodhak committee in 1895AD. The questions before the Sikh Panth are: What is the history of the presently Published Dasam Granth? What was the original writing? And where is the original authentic version? The same issue was raised in 1895AD with the Sodhak committee which was published in Khalsa Akhbar?. Who were the authors? What was the exact order of arrangement? What is the earliest manuscript evidence of Dasam Granth? And Did Sikh nation pay any respect to presently Published Dasam Granth in 18th century? All these issues have not been addressed properly. So far scholars have not researched into the text and history of the Dasam Granth. Its original text needs to be fixed on the basis of textual criticism.

Unfortunately, some of the institutions are according it equality to Sri Guru Granth Sahib. It is a gross violation of the edict of Sri Guru Gobind Singh. Its status should be decided once for all. Punjabi University should depute scholars to search original text, its history and academically refute status of the Dasam Granth from the religious perspective. We understand this Academic issue is very sensitive and request the research on Dasam Granth be kept in light of Gurmata No: A: 3/08/3143 from Sri Akal Takhat Sahib Resolved and adopted in a meeting of the five high priests at Sri Akal Takhat Sahib on June 06, 2008 Jeth23, Sammat540, Nanakshahi (Copy

attached). English translation of this Gurmata, translated By Dr. Darshan Singh, Professor Emeritus, Punjab University Chandigarh is as follows:

“Tercentenary (300th Gurta Gaddi Diwas) of Sri Guru Granth Sahib’s coronation is a golden opportunity for the entire Sikh Panth, to submit in faith to the ideal of oneness of ‘Guru’s Granth-Guru Panth’. In obedience of Guru Gobind Singh Ji’s last command “Accept Granth as Guru. This is my order for the Panth.” The Sikh Panth has always stood by it and has been consistently blessed with guidance by living Light, eternal Guru for the solution of every national crisis. The current controversy about the Dasam Granth is totally uncalled for. No one has any right to create controversy about the specific writings contained in Dasam Granth that have been recognized and accepted by the Sikh Panth for Sikh Code of Conduct, prescribed recitation in daily prayer and Sikh Baptismal (Khandey De Pahul). Be it known to the entire Sikh Panth that Sri Dasam Granth is an integral part of Sikh literature and history but, Guru Gobind Singh Ji did not recognize it equal to Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Since, he bestowed Guruship only on Sri Guru Granth Sahib therefore; no other Granth can be installed along with Sri Guru Granth Sahib”.

These issues are fundamental to Sikh Studies with core impact on existence of Sikhism itself. Scholars of Punjabi University are fully qualified and competent to conduct research on Sikh Studies. University should take upon the responsibility of financing above mentioned research projects. If there are any financial constraints, we are ready to provide the assistance. To begin, an advisory committee of scholars, well versed in the above issues, may be formed. Proper research projects along with their estimate may be submitted. In due course of time we can discuss other modalities to execute our proposal.

We hope due diligence and appropriate consideration is given to our request at earliest convenience.

Sincerely,
Spokespersons, Coalition of Gurudwaras of California
Dr. Jasbir Singh Mann
Dr. Baljeet Singh Sahi

Attachments; 12 New articles on Authenticity of Sri Dasam Granth Presented to Dr.Jaspal Singh Vice Chancellor Punjabi University Patiala On June 28th 2009 at Fullerton, Ca, USA

June 28th 2009 Index/List Of attachments Presented To Dr.Jaspal Singh with open letter.

Gurmata # 1 June 6th 2008 Jathedar Sri Akal Takhat-Be it known to the entire Sikh Panth that Sri Dasam Granth is an integral part of Sikh literature and history -English Translation Dr Darshan Singh Punjab

university Chandigarh AND 1973, Opinion of Singh Sahiban Darbar Sahib and Jathedar Sri Akal Takhat On Chritropakhyan In Dasam Granth.

ARTICLES

1. Dasam Granth Authenticity Based on Historical Sources(Gurumukhi) By Prof.Sukhdial Singh Panjabi Universty. Patiala

2. Presently Published Dasam Granth and British Connection; Guru Granth Sahib as the only sikh canon By Dr.Jasbir Singh Mann

3. Textual Analysis, History and Academic Issues of Important Dasam Granth manuscripts/ Birs Reported in Literature By By Dr.Jasbir Singh Mann.

4. Sri Guru Granth Sahib and Dasam Granth in Legal Literature. By Prof. Kashmir Singh Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar

5. A Search into the History of the Text of Dasam Granth Some Excluded Writings; By Dr.Balwant singh Dhillon. Professor Dept. of Guru Nanak Studies GNDU Amritsar

6. *Place of Dasam Granth in Sikh literature* Professor Balkar Singh, Punjabi Universty Patiala. 7. *Guru Gobind singh Ji di Bani (gurmukhi)* Professor Balkar Singh, Punjabi Universty Patiala.

8. The Doctrinal Inconsistencies in Dasam Granth : In relation to Avtarhod (PartI) by Professor Gurnam Kaur Punjabi Universty Patiala.

9. The Doctrinal inconsistencies in Dasam Granth : In relation to Devi Pooja, Shaster as Pir, Anti-long Hair intoxicants and Woman (PartII): Professor Gurnam Kaur Punjabi Universty Patiala. (Pages 342-356)

10. Four LETTERS to editor Articles from Khalsa akhbar 1895 requesting to find original Authentic Version of Dasam Granth

11. DR. BALBIR SINGH M.A., Ph D History & Textual Analysis of 1. Dasam Granth Di Hazuri tey Daskhati Birh so called Anandpuri Bir. 2. Bhai Mani singh Wali Aad Tey Dasam ikhathi Birh(Delhi Birh). After review of above two Dasam Granth Birhs He concludes on page 164 "Still Detail Inquiry and research needs to be done on Dasam Granth enlightening all aspects and great efforts must be made to do so"

12. Who Is the author Of Dasam Granth; Dr. Baldev Singh.

PS: Each Article submitted reflect the personal opinion of the individual authors and not of Dr. Jasbir Singh Mann. These articles will be updated and submitted again whenever if requested.