

## Appendix - I

# The 3rd Centenary : Conferment of Guruship on Granth Sahib

The conferment of living Guruship in perpetuity to *Granth Sahib* which now became *Guru Granth Sahib* or *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* (SGGS), and to the Sikh Panth (the community) on October 5, 1708, was an unparalleled and unique event in the world history. Hitherto, no holy book/Granth had been conferred that title; neither the Old or New Testament, or the Quran, nor any of the other works of religions/dharmas that arose in India. Hinduism, earlier known as Sanatan Dharma, that was the oldest *dharma* in the world was not a religion in proper sense, but a conglomeration of heterogeneous thoughts and doctrines, often at conflict with one another. The incoming of Islam, however, helped to give it a sense of unity in servitude.

SGGS was straightaway accepted as the living Guru of the Sikhs who were ordained to search for Guru's directions from the holy *Word* (ਸਬਦ). Practically, the Guruship was conferred on the *Word*, and not the volume. This was widely mentioned by the contemporary and near contemporary sources. Even the hostile source like *Gurbilas Patshahi 6* written by Sohan Kavi in 1718 took due note of the 1708 edict. At that time there was no other Granth/book that could come up to stand as a rival, nor was anyone authorized by Guru Gobind Singh to search for some alternative source. It was an irrevocable, conclusive and final decision taken by Guru Gobind Singh putting to an end the line of living Sikh Gurus.

The various works on Sikh history, contemporary Court historians, and about 30 European works do not mention at all of any "Bir/Granth/manuscript of *Dasam Patshah ka Granth*, or *Bachittar Natak Granth* with matching contents of presently published Dasam Granth as corrected (1895-97) and published (1900).<sup>1</sup>

A small brochure, titled *Bachittar Natak* of only 14 Cantos, written by whom and at what times, one does not know, could have been in circulation. So may have been the case with *Charitropakhyan*, a product by *Vam Margis* who used sex as a medium of achievement of communion with gods/goddesses. Also *Chaubis Avatar* may have been in production and use.

Significantly, *Gur Sobha* of Sainapat a contemporary of Guru Gobind Singh and produced in 1711, of hostile *Gurbilas Patshahi 6*, written by Sohan

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1. Cf. Jasbir Singh Mann, "British Connection and Text of Dasam Patshahi da Granth", *The International Journal of Sikh Affairs*, (Edmonton, ALTA, Canada, June 2008 p. 37.

Kavi in 1718, *Gurbilas Patshahi* 10 of Koer Singh in 1751, Kesar Singh Chhibbar's *Bansavli Nama of 1769*, Sarup Singh Bhalla's *Mehma Parkash* of 1776 and Sukha Singh's biography of Guru Gobind Singh in *Sarab Loh pustak*, (to use his own words) 1797 are cases in point, of absence of any mention of a work like *Dasam Patshah ka Granth* or even of *Bachittar Natak*. Chhibbar mentions of a mysterious *Vidya Sagar Granth* which was lost in over-flooded Sirsa rivulet. Sukha Singh, *Granthi* at Patna Sahib Gurdwaras, after helping himself with *bhang*, hemp, reproduced or produced a *Sarab Loh pustak* of an armed struggle between apocryphal *Devi/Devtas* and *Daints* (Demons) i.e. Aryans and Aborigines, as also later Muslims, but added considerably, without any reference to the earlier struggle, a biography of Guru Gobind Singh. This entire work, he averred a *bihangam* (peripatetic on the move) *Sadhu* had delivered him, saying that it was work of *Guru Gobind Singh* in pre-Khalsa period. Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha raises legitimate questions as to how could it mention of Khalsa, and certain other events leading to *Gurgaddi* to *Guru Granth* and *Panth*, and of certain other events which happened is post-Guru Gobind Singh period. He, therefore, legitimately rejects it for its spurious character, or worst a spurious work of Bhai Sukha Singh himself.<sup>2</sup> Patna at the time was part of Calcutta Presidency. This variation in outlook of people outside Punjab especially those that came under the influence of the English, and those struggling inside Punjab against foreign invasions and local forces for political supremacy was a fact of life.

Some factors need to be kept in mind. One, because of struggles and vagaries of life, the Sikhs in Punjab could not lead a settled life from at least 1715 to 1765 i.e. for full half a century, if not more. This resulted in new people, joining the forces of Khalsa, being kept unlettered about the teachings and philosophy of the new faith.<sup>3</sup>

Two, the Sikh shrines during the period were taken possession of and managed by Udasis and Nirmalas (later, some from the two classes degenerated as Mahants) who interpreted Sikh scriptures in the light of Vedanta. To justify this infiltration of Vedanta, a canard was spread that Guru Gobind Singh had sent five Sikhs clandestinely to Benaras to learn the secrets of Brahminism, and that they came back after several years. This virtually amounts to character assassination. The Sikh Gurus never in their various facets of life indulged in any such thing, and such an assertion goes against the kernel of Sikh philosophy. What was there that was not known about Brahminism or not discussed by Guru Nanak or in the Sikh scriptures?

2. Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, *Mahan Kosh* or Encyclopaedia of Sikh Literature, (reprint Delhi 1990) p. 167.

3. This has relevance to the situation that has emerged in Sikh rural life from about 1982 to the present, when the rural areas have gone without education, despite Badal's first administration, 1997-2002, and the second one from 2007 till now, or that of Capt. Amarinder Singh that went inbetween, 2002-07, when practically nothing was done for rural education. A most unfortunate result of this has been that the Sikh down-trodden classes, Mazhbis, etc. and bulk of Jats in rural areas have remained unlettered.

Three, Brahmins, I am not talking here of general body of Hindus, were almost hostile to Sikhism or Guru Nanak's philosophy, and they cooperated most heartily against the Sikhs in 18<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>4</sup> till they resorted to a strategy of infiltration, and subversion. They had earlier done that to Buddhism as well. Here was a human material that was readily available on sale for a price.

Before proceeding further, we may now look at what the partisans of the British and now those of Gandhi/*Gangu Brahmin*, or Hindutava/RSS (*Rashtriya Svymsewak Sangh*) all of which have a community of outlook, have to say. They have endless representatives: I am here talking of only one of them, namely, Gurinder Singh Mann from Leicester U.K. He himself mentions that people like him are "branded about like 'Brahminical Octopus'," or are "labelled as agents of RSS"<sup>5</sup>. Though there is no evidence that there was any work such as *Dasam Patshah ka Granth* in Punjab or Delhi, or one can say anywhere in India, he says, firstly, that "since the late 1700s the *Shri Dasam Granth* has been seen as the equal of the *Guru Granth Sahib*", and secondly, "In the period of the Misls(,) Gurmattas were taken with both Granths lying side by side" i.e. when they swore by unity. With such thoughtless people arguing for a concocted and fictitious cause, and also laying down the guidelines for the mercenary Sikh clergy, about which we shall talk later, the *Tat Khalsa* faces an uphill task, especially when the Government of India is controlled by hostile forces.

This brings us to the first Satan of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Lt. Col. John Malcolm, the most powerful military and political leader in East India Company's service in India; he by 1810 invented a rival *granth*, *Dasam Patshah ka Granth*, to distort Sikh history, religion and philosophy. His principal objective was political: to weaken the Sikh power which had Guru's *Word* and *amrit*, baptism, as its fulcrum. He knew that sometimes the Sikhs fought amongst themselves as a result of *Brahminical* contrivances, but used to rally together when faced with a national calamity. He sought to break them from their commitment to the *Word* and ushered in a rival work advocating *Hinduisation* of the Sikhs – acceptance of idols and idolworship, multiple gods, goddesses and goblins, and acceptance of whims, rituals and superstitions<sup>6</sup>.

John Malcolm came to the Punjab, upto river Sutlej, in the terrain of

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4. I have already mentioned that they always approached the Sikhs when their women were taken away by the ruling class. In their distress they never approached a co-Hindu for two reasons. One, they did not think that a Hindu raja or overlord would risk his everything for such a cause; and, two, he was not sure that such a lady once recovered, would be restored to him without being enjoyed by her recoverers. In case of recovery by the Sikhs who were known to be firm in abstinence of others women, the Brahmin straightaway put her in his harem without any purification ceremony, for there was none in use.
  5. Cf. Gurinder Singh Mann, "*Dasam Granth* – There is No Debate: The Magazine Approach to Guru Gobind Singh's Writings Dissected", in *Sant Sipahi*, Jalandhar, January 2008, p. 46.
  6. The English saw that of all the subjects, Brahminical Hindus were the most docile, as against others. Muslims then in power were losing to the English, and had reservations. The

Lord Lake in pursuit of Holkar. He himself mentions that Raja Bhag Singh of Jind in 1804 presented him a recension of *Guru Granth Sahib*, as obviously such a thing as *Dasam Patshah ka Granth* was not heard of, much less available. It was during this period that he made an assessment of the Sikh's political power, their ideology and commitment to the ideals they cherished most – the unity of the “*granth*” and the “*panth*”. The English worked silently upon the Sikh rulers, and by May 3, 1809, issued a proclamation taking Cis-Sutlej Sikh Chiefs under the protection of the East India Company. This was the first strike at the Sikh unity, as it struck at the body of the Panth dividing it into two. Secondly, Malcolm told Bhag Singh and others that the “*Granth*” which they had was only an “*Adi Granth*” i.e. a preliminary or first *granth*, and envisaged a subsequent one<sup>7</sup>. In his work *Sketch of Sikhs*, 1810 he talks of *Dasam Patshah ka Granth* procured by Colebrook with indefatigable research” in 1805. It seems that Nirmala priest Atma Ram of Calcutta worked with Bhai Sukha Singh at Patna and other Nirmalas to ‘create, compile and promote’ this *granth*. He hoped that Nirmalas and Shahids (he meant Nihangs) who read the sacred writings, may hereafter introduce some changes”<sup>8</sup>.

Sukha Singh implanted parts of his *Sarab Loh book* into *Dasam Patshah ka Granth*. Malcolm's work incorrectly mentions of creation of Khalsa in 1696 in his *Sketch of Sikhs*. It seems, he never came into contact with Bhai Sukha Singh, nor had he access to 18<sup>th</sup> century works on the Sikhs, like Sainapat's 1711, Koer Singh's work of 1751, Kesar Singh Chibbar's or Sarup Das Bhallas works.<sup>9</sup> He was groping in the dark, but had clear objectives. Malcolm, significantly, accepts the contribution of Atma Ram, whom he knew in creating *Dasam Patshah ka Granth*.<sup>10</sup> It was a hanky panky business, and it was soon planted into India Office Library.<sup>11</sup>

The English in late 1820s got wind of entente cordiale between the Nizam of Hyderabad and Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and proceeded to contain its impact. This eventually led to Maharaja Ranjit Singh's sending troops to Hyderabad and their later assignment to construct the shrines at Hazur Sahib. After the passing away of Guru Gobind Singh in 1708, for over a

• Brahmins, then slaves for eight centuries or more, had nothing to lose in changing their masters. They rather gained in securing lucrative jobs, and became equal to Muslims, the ruling class. The English incorrectly thought that Brahmins idolatory and multiple gods and goddesses were positive factors in their mental framework of slavery. They wanted to promote that in Sikhism, too. Besides, whereas Muslim had the concept of *Ummah* and the Sikhs that of *Panth*, the Hindus had no corresponding concept. They were just a herd of people without a unifying force or feeling

7. Jasbir Singh Mann, n. 1 p. 35.

8. Even his partisan, Gurinder Singh Mann concedes that *Adi* word was introduced by John Malcolm. Cf. Gurinder Singh Mann's “Description of the Dasam Granth from the ‘*Sketch of Sikhs*’”. *Sant Sipahi*, Jalandhar, April 2008, p. 46-47.

9. Cf. n. 13 of Gurinder Singh Mann's article, *Sant Sipahi*, Jalandhar, April 2008.

10. The Granth had no formal shape and went on adding and deleting portions, as per whim of copyists.

11. Jasbir Singh Mann, n. 1 p. 35.

century his followers especially Nihangs at nearby Mata Bhago shrine had been carrying on the worship in the same manner. Meanwhile, as a result of English alacrity, around 1830, some Sadhus aligned to Nirmala Atma Ram with a tinge of Kali shrine at Calcutta took over some shrines at Nanded. The construction of the shrines by Ranjit Singh around 1837, some with huge residential complexes, and the land grants caused considerable enhancement in the revenues/income. The settlement of the Sikhs from Ranjit Singh's army there led to a small but devoted set of followers. This was a general period of infiltration of *Brahminical* contrivances in Sikhism, and what finally emerged in Hazur Sahib only reflected a negation of Sikh ideology.

The negation of any *Dasam Patshah ka Granth* in the voluminous writings of Bhai Santokh Singh and his *Suraj Parkash* granth, 14 volumes, 1825-1843, speaks volumes about the truth. But during the period, the English inspired the manufacture of a spurious letter allegedly from Bhai Mani Singh to Mata Sundari written in 1720s about the *bani* of Guru Gobind Singh. This letter is written, firstly, with a nib, invented sometime in 1830s, and secondly, it uses separated Punjabi words with some diacritical marks which were not in use in early 18<sup>th</sup> century in Punjabi language. This rendered the exercise suspicious and betrayed its dubious character, but only for those who have an open mind. It speaks volume about the truth.

The success of English since late 1830s, firstly, to the events of First Sikh War in 1846 could be seen to yield dividends in the betrayal of the forces of Khalsa at the hands of *Brahminical* Hindus including the Dogras.<sup>12</sup> Secondly, the Sikh States in Cis-Sutlej kept aloof and let the annexation of Punjab finally in 1849, against all solemn commitments. After the treaty of Bhairawal (1846), when the English virtually became masters of Punjab, *Dasam Granth* was rewritten in February 1847 under English supervision. Under Orders of the Governor General of India some parts of *Shabad Hazarey* and *Khalsa Mehma* were deleted, and instead *Chhake Bhagauti ji ka*, with 137 *Chhands* added. A copy was donated to British Library too, and it was mischievously, presented as the work of Guru Gobind Singh, founder of the Sikh faith. This constituted, in the words of Dr. Jasbir Singh Mann, a "very important evidence of British involvement".<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, in 1840s Rattan Singh Bhangoo, a descendent of Mehtab Singh, of Sukha Singh-Mehtab Singh fame, was commissioned by the English Resident in Ludhiana to write the history of Sikhs based on what he learnt from his elders, and some from his personal memory. In the process, he was made to dilate on the compilation of *Bachittar Natak*, as if an extended one. His

12. If the entire Kingdom of Ranjit Singh has been taken over by the English and merged in Company's Empire, a meaningful partition of the sub-continent could have been effected in 1947. But the betrayal of the Sikhs leading to the establishment of Dogra rule in Jammu & Kashmir, led to betrayal of Muslims in 1947/1953, and upsurge of Brahmanical Hinduism. Jammu, a Punjabi speaking part, was treated as Hindui.

13. Cf. Jasbir Singh Mann, note 1, and his detailed study of the subject available at internet (Click on [http://www.Globalsikhstudies.net/r\\_link/dasam.htm](http://www.Globalsikhstudies.net/r_link/dasam.htm)).

writings constitute the very first one, however brief on the subject, reflecting the dubious briefings he got from the English. Bhai Sukha Singh-Mehtab Singh's forage into controversy over extended Bachittar Natak was a myth, shady and very questionable. It, however, had an objective. The English bias against the Sikhs controlling their shrines in Punjab soon translated themselves into British prejudices standing as a bulwark. By early 1880s, the Hindu and Muslim shrines were liberated from the government control, the Britishers continued to keep their foothold over the Sikh shrines.<sup>14</sup>

This brings us to the second set of two Satans in end-19<sup>th</sup> century to give a formal shape and respectability to *Dasam Patshah ka Granth*: this by now had grown into 32, possibly more, versions, and needed reconciliation, or rather a final one. The obverse side of the coin was represented by Bhai Manna Singh who was Secretary of Gurmat Granth Pracharak Sabha, Amritsar. This Sabha was an affiliate of Singh Sabha Amritsar controlled by Sir (Baba) Khem Singh Bedi who represented reverse side of the coin, and the real propeller of the show from behind. He had grown from a Baba to a Prince, since the annexation of Punjab by the English. As a result of increase(s) in his Jagir he controlled 28,272 acres of land in Montgomery Distt alone, and enjoyed Government's munificence with a title of Sir. He was a bitter opponent of Tat Khalsa led by Lahore Singh Sabha of Prof. Gurmukh Singh, Giani Ditt Singh and others. He openly preached that Sikhs were Hindus, considered *Guru Granth Sahib* as fifth Veda – the essence of Vedanta and Upanishads. He claimed descent from Guru Nanak's son Lakhmi Das, but since 16<sup>th</sup> century, his descendents have seldom played a constructive role in Sikh history – even *Guru Granth Sahib* mentions that Guru Nanak's sons had evil in their mind and were in revolt at the decision of their father transferring Guruship to Bhai Lehna, now named Guru Angad.<sup>15</sup> Khem Singh claimed himself to be the 15<sup>th</sup> Guru of the Sikhs.

The other Sikh organizations especially Lahore Singh Sabha had serious reservations about the exercise of finding out the authentic version. Their three letters published in *Khalsa Akhbar* of October-November 1895 cast aspersions on the distortions being practiced in editing of *Dasam Granth*. It found fault with the evidence being adduced at the forthcoming exercise to dissect various copies of *Dasam Granth* and wanted Sardul Singh of Sodhak Committee to take corrective steps to arrive at a right solution. It kept the general body of the people aloof.<sup>16</sup>

\* The general body of Sikhs, held back, contributed only Rs. 53 as against the expenditure of Rs. 603; the balance was contributed, of course, by

14. It is this British control over the Sikh shrines that constitutes the rationale behind the Government of India's control over SGPC after Panjab's Reorganization in 1966, and the attempt of Hindutava forces to takeover the Sikh shrines around the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century, and now in not too distant a future, as we shall see.

15. Cf. Ramkali ki Var, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* pp. 966-969. Baldev Singh. "Who is the Author of Dasam Granth" on internet p. 4; Dr. J.S. Mann, n. 1, p. 36 Also on internet, see n. 13 above.

16. Even Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha writing over three decades later did not take any notice of

Bhai Manna Singh, but actually by Sir Khem Singh Bedi who constituted the spirit behind the move.

- \* The Akal Takht was not at all involved either in contributing space or money, or even the customary *Karah Parshad*. They, however, gave some volumes of *Dasam Patshah ka Granth* for the exercise. The main work of the committee was done in the main hall of Malwai Bunga, near Akal Takht.
- \* It was obvious that no original volume of the *Dasam Patshah ka Granth* existed. To begin with they used as Presidium Bir, known as *Dasam Granth di Khas Hazuri tay Daskhati Bir* (also known as Anandpuri Bir). The original Bir was taken to have been destroyed. The Anandpuri Bir had no *Chandi di Vaar &c*. Some stanzas of *Ardas* (now standard Sikh prayer) were added. Perhaps, for the first time, this part of *Ardas* became part of the Sikh lore. It was given out anonymously that Guru Gobind Singh had himself written the preliminary banis and then the work was taken over by other writers. It was presumed, for convenience, that the Guru had overseen the entire work. At the end of the exercise, this Bir was nowhere to be seen. Instead, at the instance of Sir Khem Singh Bedi, the one matching Colebrook version with India Office Library was approved as the final version. "Textual evidence", in the words of Dr. Jasbir Singh Mann showed, "that eight compositions including *Khalsa Nama* supposed to be attributed to Guru Gobind Singh Ji were deleted." *Sodhak* Committee mentioned only *Sahansarnama* and *Var Malkauns* to have been deleted, while Piara Singh Padam mentioned deletion of three such compositions in published Birs.<sup>17</sup>

It may be kept in view that Gurdwaras in Punjab were under control of the British directly or indirectly.

- \* Manna Singh followed no known standards of honesty or impartiality. It was high time for unprincipled falsifiers. It was taken as a standard truth that Guru Gobind Singh was compiler of all that was being reproduced. He accepted Shyam and Ram pseudonyms of the 10<sup>th</sup> Guru in *Chaubis Avatar*, but presentation of Shyam born in dark phase of *Satbhikha* planet presented difficulty, as Guru Gobind Singh was known to be born in light half of *Poh*.<sup>18</sup>

• this *Sodhak* Committee, which had been a big *tamasha*. Of course, it has caused a big damage. Some salient features of functioning of this *Sodhak* Committee, 1895-96, and again 1897, which worked for eight plus three months in all, need be cited.

17. Cf. Jasbir Singh Mann, n.1, p.36 for internet cf n.13 above. Gurtej Singh, "An Assessment of the Report of the *Sodhak* Committee", *The International Journal of Sikh Affairs*,. Edmonton, ALTA, Canada, pp. 19-21.

18. Following Manna Singh or Sir Khem Singh, partisans of *Dasam Granth* including the followers of Bhai Randhir Singh, and Kathakars like Giani Sant Singh Maskeen have shown critical •

Still people persist with strange reasons to stand for *Dasam Patshah ka Granth*. The whole proceeding was non-serious in character. Gurtej Singh who made a detailed study of *Sodhak* Committee Report opines, "The mode of nominating the reader is not indicated. Whether the reader changed from one session to another is not mentioned. No method is indicated to show how original was calculated to emerge by following this procedure."<sup>19</sup>

In the first phase only four persons attended daily and other nine persons attended 'once in a while'. And they had to reconcile 32 Birs. What a mockery.

It was worse that after the event, under instructions of Sir Khem Singh Bedi they named the emerging work as *Dasam Granth*, attributing it to Guru Gobind Singh, instead of *Dasam Patshah ka Granth* i.e. a work relating to the era of 10<sup>th</sup> Guru. That is why, I equate Sir Khem Singh Bedi as a big or a bigger Satan, who was the puller of strings and a controlling deity It was just beyond the capacity or concept of Bhai Manna Singh, who was just a bootlicker, a parasite. The spirit of Lt.Col. John Malcolm must be taking a turn in his grave to salute Sir Khem Singh Bedi, this sychophant. With the passage of time, it earned a degree of respectability which was not justified. Unless we recognise that, we cannot move ahead on correct lines. We must realise that Guru Hari Rai had ostracised his son Ram Rai for changing one word in *gurbani*, the Sikh scriptures. Here the *bani* compositions attributed to Guru Gobind Singh were subjected to wholesale editing, exclusions, inclusions, mutilations, and what not. It was not conceded that the *bani* of Guru Gobind Singh was sacrosanct and final, as was the case with the *gurbani* in Guru Granth Sahib. Sir Khem Singh Bedi/ Bhai Manna Singh took all sorts of liberties; even then what emerges in the so-called *Dasam Granth*, is not in consonance with the Sikh philosophy, as enunciated in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. Rather, being the product of novices and immature persons, it runs counter to the main ingredients enunciated by Guru Nanak, which seems to be the very objective, as we shall see.

The *Sodhak Committee* people immediately lost their identity and they became non-entities. The *Dasam Granth* published in 1900 was immediately placed in various Gurdwaras by Mahants, Nirmalas, Udasis, Nihangs, &c, under orders of the Britishers, and special customs were created for the shrines at Hazoor Sahib and Patna Sahib, and other Gurdwaras associated with these two shrines.

Side by side with the creation of *Dasam Granth*, it was propagated at a low level that there were three other Takhts of Sikhs, at Anandpur Sahib, Patna Sahib and Hazoor Sahib, all connected with Guru Gobind Singh, and managing a cluster of Gurdwaras in the neighbourhood. All this was designed to reduce the importance of Akal Takht, Amritsar, which had refused to

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• lack of their faculties in speaking for *Dasam Granth*, in its entirety, as work of Guru Gobind Singh.

19. Gurtej Singh n. 17. *opcit*

participate in compilation of a spurious *Dasam Granth*. We shall come to that shortly.

The decision of the Darbar Sahib management led by Arur Singh, Manager, to remove all idols from Darbar Sahib, Amritsar, and put an end to performance of Hindu rituals over there, was a progressive act, in accordance with the wishes of Tat Khalsa<sup>20</sup>.

It was the Tat Khalsa drive that forced the Sikhs to various acts, leading to the formation of Delhi Gurdwara Committee which preceded the formation of SGPC in 1920. The Gurdwara Reform Movement, 1920-25, leading to the enactment of Gurdwara Act was again a victory of Tat Khalsa ideals. But, alas, a last one. The Gurdwara Act, 1925, took no notice of *Dasam Granth*, manufactured 25 years earlier. The definition of a Sikh – one who believes in the Ten Gurus and *Guru Granth Sahib*, and had no other religion was quite explicit. This definition was repeated in Nanded Gurdwaras Act 1956 and Delhi Gurdwaras Act 1971. Any reference to the so-called Dasam Granth is missing in all these legislations. In short, one who believes in Dasam Granth, loses to be a Sikh in legal and religious, and moralistic terms. The Sikh leadership miserably failed to make an assessment of last five years 1920-25 in Punjab, as, firstly, it emerged splintered, thanks to machinations of the ruling British, led by Punjab Governor Hailey, and, secondly, it fell a victim to the guile and stratagems of M.K. Gandhi who had emerged as a deceptive pattern of Hinduism, deadly opposed to the Tat Khalsa doctrines.

The emergence of Chief Khalsa Diwan, 1902, and spread of its influence with Bhai Vir Singh as one of its leading lights, helped to cause a big damage to Sikhism. I am saying so, despite the fact that in earlier period he had played a very constructive role. His work, narrating history of the Sikh Gurus in three volumes was seen as a clever device by the Britishers to break the Khalsa from its philosophy, distinct from the one of Hinduism. The propagation of four Takhts was a case in point. Frankly, if there was need for another Takht, the *Dharamsaal* or Gurdwara at Kartarpur-on-Ravi could very well be the appropriate candidate, as according to Bhai Gurdas (Var 24, pauri 1) under auspices of Guru Nanak, a *Sach Khand*, (an institution for communion with God), had been established there. The other three places connected with the life of Guru Gobind Singh could be replicated with a lot of other places. It was neither here nor there. Why not Delhi or Agra or same places in Rajasthan? Sikhism was attached to the philosophy enunciated by Guru Nanak, who was the only one to have had a revelation, and it was his spirit that was permeating in his successors, including Guru Gobind Singh, who swore by Guru Nanak.<sup>21</sup> The production of spurious *Dasam Granth* was not designed to give any respectability to Guru Gobind Singh, but to subtract from it. One must understand this conspiracy.

20. Cf. fn. 54. chapter 4, ante

21. ਜਾਮੈ ਰੋਚ ਨ ਮਿਥਿਆ ਭਾਖੀ, ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਖੀ।

*I have not uttered an iota of falsehood; Guru Nanak who is like Parbrahm to me is a witness.*

One may point out to three other disservices rendered by Bhai Vir Singh in later period of his life. One, he unnecessarily, without any reliable evidence, in *Ashtgur Chamatkar*, circulated the story connected with the marriage of daughter of Satta and Balwand, authors of *Ramkali ki Var* (SGGS pp. 966-69) for writing that the sons of Guru Nanak, with malice in their hearts were in revolt, against Guru Nanak's passing on succession to Guru Angad. This story was a tit for tat by the powerful and munificent Bedi Babas (the successors of Baba Khem Singh Bedi) who had avidly advocated for Hinduisation of Sikhism and had been the main protagonist for promotion of the spurious *Dasam Granth*.

Two, people, now in search for mythical birthplace of Guru Gobind Singh in earlier lives, at first located Rawalsar in Himachal Pradesh and later around 1932 Hemkunt deep into the hills of then North Western Provinces, now Uttaranchal Pradesh. This place was certified in mid-1930's by Bhai Vir Singh, as true one. He, unnecessarily, was instrumental in popularizing a myth, and hurtling the Sikh community into a place deep into the Himalayas involving high expenses (involving travel by mule and other animals also), above all linking the Guru with Hindu mythology. For Sikhs it virtually amounted to emotional blackmail. No other such place for worship, earlier by Guru Nanak or any other Guru, is available. Only Guru Gobind Singh was linked to Hindu mythology, as by revealing the Khalsa in 1699, he was believed by people like M.K. Gandhi to have founded a new faith, which was distinct from Hinduism. M.K. Gandhi, for instance, twice, first in 1925 and again in 1941, had termed Guru Gobind Singh a misguided patriot, and hence a *persona non grata*. Subsequently, in 1984, Indira Gandhi after Operation Bluestar had termed every *amritdhari*, baptized, Sikh as a terrorist, a potential terrorist, or looking like one.

And, three, Bhai Vir Singh through the medium of his friend Sobha Singh artist (and later other artists also) popularized photographs and paintings of Sikh Gurus and martyrs etc. in various phases, different postures, popularizing them in various facets of life, a la Hinduism. This was despite the fact that no authentic photograph of Guru Nanak and his successors are available. This was a crude attempt to bring Gurus and heroes at par with Hindu gods and goddesses.<sup>22</sup>

Verily, Bhai Vir Singh Sahitya Sadan in New Delhi, right from the beginning serves as a centre for activity and control by Congressite Sikhs i.e. followers of Gandhi/Gangu Brahmin and lately McLeodian scholars. It truly represents the later part of Bhai Vir Singh's life, while the one at Amritsar represents the early part of it, devoted to *gurmat*, Sikh values.

By 1927 the *Sikh Rehat Maryada* (SRM) Committee had been assigned to sort out various *rehat*s prevalent with different sections of the Sikh society.

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22. Discussion with Dr. Kuldip Singh, FRCS, Chandigarh and his writings in *Rozana Spokesman* and also brochure on Bhai Vir Singh and the modern literature.

The SRM Committee was a comprehensive body, representing a wide sector of the people, including representatives from Patna Sahib and Hazoor Sahib.

What were the *banis*, hymns, read out at the launch of Khalsa and its *rehat maryada* on Baisakhi, March 29, 1699?<sup>23</sup> Baptism had been served very widely in 1699 itself, and over time later, at first by Guru Gobind Singh and later by various people including Bhai Mani Singh, Baba Banda Singh Bahadur, Darbara Singh, Nawab Kapur Singh and a host of others, but surprisingly there is little in numerous *Rehatnamas* and works of history detailing the process. The first and perhaps the only entry comes in Kesar Singh Chhibbar's work, 1769, that only Japji and Anand Sahib (possibly first five and last stanzas) were read at the time of initiation of *amrit*, baptism by Guru Gobind Singh. This is later supported by Bhai Santokh Singh in his monumental work *Suraj Parkash*, spread over two decades. There is nothing to interdict these two narrations, as the so-called *Dasam Granth* had still to take shape, and there could be no motivation to falsify the account. So that was the truthful position of *Amrit sanchar* baptismal ceremony, over the period.

With *Dasam Granth* taking its shape around 1900, and SGPC's coming into being in 1925, and the British playing with various sections of the Sikhs to cause disunity and confusion, the constitution of SRM Committee was an attempt to throw a cat among the pigeons. To begin with, because of vociferous acrimony between a supporter and an opponent of *Dasam Granth*, there was no progress for several years. Eventually, both the protagonists were removed, and the residue directed to proceed ahead. It did without formally taking into consideration the existence of *Dasam Granth*, but the damage had been done. In order to reconcile the differences between various sections, a policy of give and take had to be adopted. This resulted in the number of *banis*, hymns, recited at *amrit sanchar* increased from two to mystic figure of five. Apart from *Japji* and *Anand Sahib* (full), three more *banis* were added, namely *Jap Sahib*, *Swayyas* (*Srawag Sudha Wale*) from *Akal Ustat* (21-30), and *Benti Chaupai*, only upto *Dusht Dokh to Leho Bachai* (save me from belligerent hostiles and tormentors), leaving aside hymns 402 to 405. Also, first canto from *Var Bhagauti* was adopted for *Ardas*, Sikh prayer.<sup>24</sup> That was the price that could be extracted from the SRM Committee which, however, in the document made no mention whatsoever of *Dasam Granth*. As a matter of fact, the SRM Committee should have struck for pure *gurmat* and refused to budge. This was adopted on October 12, 1936.

It is another matter that the followers of *Dasam Granth* continued to recite the whole of *Chaupai*, and follow their own *maryada*, which was against the spirit of compromise made by them. So came out to be the case

23. It may be seen that the Baisakhi of 1699 fell on March 29, and not March 30 as propagated by Dr. Ganda Singh and others.

24. It was not long that people forgot about the *Sikh Rehat Maryada*, or the people at Akal Takht showed a reluctance to enforce it strictly.

with various Sants/late Sant Babas, Deras, Taxals, shrines connected with Patna and Hazoor Sahib, and some others.

The worst part of it was that some scholars from various Taxals, hospices, were appointed as Chief/Head Granthi (later erroneously called Jathedars) of Akal Takht. Though the person concerned was told to follow the *rehat maryada* of Akal Takht which was quite different from that followed in their Taxal, the lackadaisical attitude remained. It meant the continued or added prominence to *Nirmalas* who excelled in giving *Vedantic* interpretation to the *bani* in *Guru Granth Sahib*. Also, it was quite common to have evening *katha* discourse from *Suraj Granth* of Bhai Santokh Singh who prominently ushered in Vedantical Brahminism into the Sikh lore, in the evenings in Gurdwaras, and special experts for such expositions were available, that the upcoming youth were fed a distorted picture of Sikhism and Sikh history. The SRMs final seal was placed in 1945 after some adjustment on Rigmala. Meanwhile, on April 5, 1942 Akal Takht put up a ban on doing *Akhand Path* (continued recitation) of *Dasam Granth*.

With the decolonization of the sub-continent in August 1947, Brahminism gained supreme position in residue India, with Muslims in North East and West getting Pakistan. The Sikhs were the worst sufferers in both men and material. After over nine centuries of slavery, Brahmins defined through M.K. Gandhi, a Bania, that "Hinduism is an ocean into which all rivers run. It can absorb Islam and Christianity and all other religions and only then can it become the ocean."<sup>25</sup> Secondly, after over nine centuries of slavery, Hindus under auspices of Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, a Brahmin, along with the Cabinet decided in December 1947 to rebuild at state cost the Som Nath Mandir, (demolished by Mahmud Ghazni in 1026 AD) and remove the mosque built at that site, without the due processes of law. It was demolition of Babri Mosque in 1992, a repeat performance that led to the introduction of bomb in the India's body politic. No Court in India, Supreme/High/lower ones issued any notice to any of the Hindus, nor did any government of whatever party that came into power in U.P. or Centre moved in the matter.

In the post-August 1947 era, Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, Home Minister in the Constituent Assembly denied point blank any promises made to the Sikhs during the freedom struggle, while Jawaharlal Nehru straightforwardly without a blink told Master Tara Singh that times have changed. The result was fabrication of a programme in Nehru era to uproot the Sikhs, tree and branch. It resulted eventually in Operation Bluestar, and anti-Sikh pogrom, both in 1984. Then followed the state terrorism. After a decade, there was a general tendency among the Sikh youth to discard their *keshas*. The downtrodden Sikhs, looked down by Jats in rural areas, were special victims of Dera culture, cutting them off from *Guru Granth Sahib* and taking them nearer to *Dasam Granth* in an effort to re-Hinduise them. The rural Jats and

25. Cf. fn. 26, Chapter 5 ante.

the religious hierarchy especially in Malwa, were no less responsible. The spread of *Deras* in multiple numbers in rural areas was state inspired. They got plenty of land even from people like Parkash Singh Badal, who was more nearer to forces responsible for Operation Blue Star, and looked the other way.

Meanwhile, the Akal Takht, then headed by Giani Sadhu Singh Bhaura, Head Priest (also called Jathedar), alongwith Giani Chet Singh and Giani Kirpal Singh who subsequently headed the Akal Takht, alongwith two more, issued a *hukamnamah* vide Dharam Prachar Committee's letter of August 4, 1973 that *Charitro Pakhiyan* (describing sexual exploits, and a creation of *Vam Margis* who excelled in it) was not a *bani* of Guru Gobind Singh, but a translation of old Hindu mythological stories, and the view holding it otherwise was incorrect.<sup>26</sup> Under the Presidentship of Bhai Ardaman Singh Bagrian, and at the invitation of Man Singh 'Mansarovar', two detailed discussions were held on October 6-7, 1973, and in March 1974, when over 40 scholars and prominent Sikhs had, after due deliberations, come to the following two conclusions:

1. The *parkash* of *Dasam Granth* be not performed in any Gurdwara alongwith the *parkash* of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*; and
2. We should separate *bani* written by Guru Gobind Singh Ji and that composed by poets from the *Dasam Granth*.<sup>27</sup>

What did the authorities at Akal Takht, or *Dharam Parchar Committee* of SGPC do in this case. They should have atleast called upon the publishers of *Dasam Granth* to cease publication of *Charitropakhya* from the text; that would have reduced the bulk of *Dasam Granth* by about 55 per cent of it. And they should have sent copies to the shrines at Patna and Hazur Sahib for taking necessary action accordingly, if not follow it up and ostracize some of the wrong doers. The failure of Dharam Prachar Committee and of Akal Takht was glaring, and reflected very badly on them as an institution.

By the time some seniors from Kendri Sri Guru Singh Sabha, headed by Hukam Singh former Speaker and Governor were members of the Governing body at Hazur Sahib. They took up the issue of the importance given to *Dasam Granth* at Hazur Sahib including the removal of *Charitro Pakhiyan* as ordained by Akal Takht. They met with abuse. The Chief Priest went even violent and said that their main income was from *Path*, recitations, organized for *Dasam Granth*, and but for that they would starve. So lucre, not the ideology, constituted the fulcrum. That is, not to underplay the role of G.S. Tohra, President, SGPC, who continued on the committee for a very

26. The word used is *Fatwa* (edict) of Jathedars, cf. letter no. 366723/4 dated August 4, 1973, issued by Gurbax Singh, Assistant Secretary, Dharam Prachar Committee, SGPC. See also Dr. Kirpal Singh, compiler, *Panthak Mate* (ਪੰਥਕ ਮਤੇ), Chandigarh, 2002.

27. I had extremely good relations with Man Singh Ji of *Mansarovar* Weekly, and had attended these conference as an observer.

long time, and saw no contradictions. The person from Kendri Sri Guru Singh Sabha was soon removed from the executive of Hazur Sahib.

Before proceeding further it will be of interest to go into various narcissistic doctrines that constitute the fulcrum of proceedings at Hazur Sahib, and make it unacceptable to Sikh ideals and highly violative of and offensive to Sikh concepts.

1. Sanatanistic rituals like ringing bells, blowing horns, lighting up fires etc.
2. *Karah Parshad* is pierced not by sword but by arrow.
3. Sacrifice of a goat within the precincts of Gurdwara on a number of occasions, apply its blood to arms/armaments kept inside the shrine; distribute its meat as *Prasad* among the devotees for cooking at their homes. (Will the followers of Bhai Randhir Singh accept such meat as *Prasad*?)
4. Crushing of *Chandan* (in a peculiar manner) and its application on the forehead of listeners to *Asa di Var* (in the morning).
5. Application of crushed hemp thrice daily to Guru Granth Sahib.
6. Mentioning of some specific spurious names like Hem Kunt etc, and non-recitation of *dohra*: By Order of God Almighty the Panth was started: All Sikhs are ordained to accept Granth as the Guru.
7. Opening up of *Dasam Granth* alongwith the ceremonial opening of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*; organizing of *katha* and *paths* of Dasam Granth.
8. Headpriest has to be a *Brahmchari* (celibate) i.e. non-married. So has to be the person who brings a vessel full of water from Godavri. This is offensive to Guru Nanak's concept giving highest place to a house-holder.
9. Differentiation in service of baptism between men and women.
10. Placing of Brahminical rituals like *kumbh*, *jot*, *naryal* at *Akhand Path*.
11. Recitation of an extended *Rehras*.
12. Recitation of *Akhand Path* alongwith *kirtan*, *rehras*, etc.
13. Installation of photographs of Guru Gobind Singh inside the temple, also in *angeetha* Sahib (place of last rites of Guru Gobind Singh).
14. Specific washing of Takht a day before Divali with water from Godavri; display of armaments in the open for cleaning etc.<sup>28</sup>

Guru Gobind Singh had said that when one adopts the rites of a *bipran*,

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28. Cf. Nirwair Singh Arshi, "Sri Hazur Sahib dian Abhul Yadan da ras te rahas", (ਸ੍ਰੀ ਹਜ਼ੂਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀਆਂ ਅਭੁਲ ਯਾਦਾਂ ਦਾ ਰਸ ਤੇ ਰਹੱਸ) in *Sada Virsa Sada Gaurav*, Ludhiana, August 2008, pp. 17-20. He was founder editor of the monthly magazine *Sachkhand Patra* published by Hazur Sahib foundation, from 1974 to 1986.

non-conformer, he will not look into one's affairs. It is obvious that Hazur Sahib is not the place where one can find the spirit of Guru Nanak or that of Guru Gobind Singh finding an expression. Any Sikh who visits Hazur Sahib can do so as a tourist or a place of historical importance, but not as a place of Sikh religious worship, for the Guru has been completely disowned from there.

There were all round failures marking five years of Badal's reign, 1997-2002. This only helped to wipe out the myth of Sikhs seizing power and doing justice to the victims. It was in this atmosphere, even before the third centenary of Khalsa in 1999, the people at Hazoor Sahib started talking of the third centenary of *Gurta-Gaddi Diwas*, grant of Guruship to Granth Sahib by Guru Gobind Singh at Hazur Sahib. It was pointed out to them they were talking prematurely, as some other centenaries were to take place before that, especially the tri-centenary of Khalsa in 1999 and 4<sup>th</sup> century of Guru Arjan Dev's martyrdom in 2004. It helped to slow down the publicity only a bit and that too only for 1999 event. But the aim of authorities at Hazoor Sahib was collection of huge funds that the opportunity offered. This also adversely affected the financial situation of the shrine at Patna Sahib.

This made Head Priest (Jathedar) Patna Sahib, Iqbal Singh to, inter alia, go over to California and contact Didar Singh Bains, the peach King of the area. He narrated him the pitiable situation of Patna Sahib. Didar Singh Bains gave him an authority to sell off his agricultural lands on Jalandhar-Hoshiarpur Road for the purpose. Iqbal Singh earned about Rs. 95 Lakhs from the transaction, but deposited the amount in his own name and not that of the Gurdwara.<sup>29</sup> He also disclosed that people attributed to him three marriages without divorcing his earlier wives, and falsely accused him of having extra-marital affairs. Such accusations came from his current and earlier wives as well. Actually, he was running in competition with Salman Rushdie who is known to have four or five marriages, divorcing his earlier wives one after the other. But none of his present or earlier wives have accused him of extramarital relations. But Iqbal Singh claims himself to be irremovable Jathedar of Takht Patna Sahib and derives inspiration from reciting *Charitro Pakhyan*, the stories of sexual exploits. Does he derive sustenance from reciting *Vam Margi* literature? Only, he can tell.<sup>30</sup>

As the 21<sup>st</sup> century dawned, the Hazur Sahib authorities redoubled their efforts at fund collection. They had no other apparent objectives.<sup>31</sup>

The third centenary of *gurta gaddi*, grant of Guruship to *Granth Sahib*,

29. *Spokesman*, September 13, 2007.

30. Cf. *India Awareness* New Delhi, May 2008, pp. 29-30.

31. When I visited Hazur Sahib on eve of Dussehra of 2002, management's drive for funds, for sake of funds, was obvious. So had been their *manmat*.

It had been falsely circulated now for atleast a century that Guru Gobind Singh expected a visit by his Sikh till his 50<sup>th</sup> year, without telling the people that Guru Nanak-Guru Gobind Singh had been driven out of Hazur Sahib because of self willed (ਮਨਮਤ) propositions of Pujaris/management, I told the people from Bombay, managing security for the Dussehra rush, to

was seized as the event of the century. It was given its due importance in 2003 by a Committee consisting of Laddoo Singh Mahajan, Chairman, Gurdwara Hazur Sahib, the District Collector and Municipal Commissioner both of whom were in continuous consultation with the local M.L.A. and then Minister (presently Chief Minister) in Maharashtra, Ashok Chavan. Chavan seized of the event for wider purposes of re-development of entire Abchalnagar.

It was as a result of joint efforts that the development of entire town of Nanded was approved. Initially it involved an expenditure of Rs. 2814 Crores – Rs. 2081 Crore for Nanded redevelopment and Rs. 733 Cr. for 1. Gurtagaddi Celebrations, 2.City Infrastructure development, and 3. Other concomitant expenses. The importance of the occasion was explained at first by the Committee to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh who happened to visit Hazur Sahib. Later, Buta Singh, then Chairman of Hazur Sahib Board in 2004-05 explained it to a group of Ministers to the Union Government Smt. Ambika Soni, Minister for Urban Development and Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission who were actively involved. As a result of efforts by Buta Singh, Punjab Government, SGPC,<sup>32</sup> and DSGMC (who contributed Rs. 50 Lakhs) too were actively involved in the matter to give a wider perspective to the celebrations. Maharashtra Government too jumped in and as a result, the Sachkhand Board had over Rs. 1350 Crores at its disposal.<sup>33</sup>

Because of involvement of huge funds, Dr. Parvinder Singh Pasricha, Director General Police, Maharashtra, and a Sikh, who still had a year to his retirement, was inducted as Chairman, Administrative Board, Takht Hazur Sahib in November 2005. No one was bothered, how a non-baptised Sikh could hold such a high post at Hazoor Sahib Takht. After his retirement he was given the status of a Minister to be more effective, officially.<sup>34</sup> At his instance, the services of Devinderpal (D.P.) Singh, a banker extraordinary, were requisitioned from Punjab & Sind Bank in May 2006 to look after and manage the huge funds as Superintendent, Gurdwara Sachkhand Board. They

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• tell the management as to what was *gurmat*, Guru's wish, and what not. They said, they had spoken to the management umpteen times, but they don't listen.

32. Both Punjab Government and SGPC got constructed rest houses/guest houses.

33. Talks over telephone with Laddoo Singh Mahajan, Nanded, and S. Buta Singh, now Chairman, Scheduled Castes Commission New Delhi, see also, Daljeet Kaur Matharoo, *Sachkhand Pattar*, Nanded, January 2009, pp. 2-5, and March 2009, pp. 2-5.

34. I had a chance meeting with him in 2006 (at a seminar organized by DSGMC on Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev, and found, firstly, that because of his colouring his beard he was not fit to be President even of a mofussil Gurdwara much less a Takht, secondly, I found he had only a preliminary knowledge of Sikhism and Sikh Gurus. His statement to the press in late 2008 that Guru Gobind Singh had gone to Deccan to seek Maratha support against Aurangzeb (died February 2007) was typical of man's ignorance or innocence of history. Then look at his "Mussing" in *Sachkhand Patra*, Nanded, March 2009, p. 3. He cannot recall the order in which the 5-Piars (Beloved ones) offered themselves to Guru Gobind Singh on Baisakhi of 1699.

were ably assisted by Jasbir Singh Dhama who moved for nine long months with the yatra and supervised the fund collections.

Meanwhile, ambitious plans were chartered to redraw and reconstruct in a major way the fourteen historic Gurdwaras at Hazur Sahib, and link them with a wide road. That needed a big architectural plan, virtually amounting to a town and country plan, involving reconstruction of existing dwelling units. For instance firstly, existing dwelling unit of 120 Sq. yards were promised a unit of 200 sq. yards, and secondly, the units were to be reconstructed first so that there could be no dislocation.

Apart from construction of about 300 houses for Sikh families being displaced, there was, over a period, a general headless move for destruction of all artifacts relating to the era of Ranjit Singh and after. There was little of earlier vintage to be destroyed. The construction done during Ranjit Singh's times was over 170 years old, and needed to be kept as of heritage vintage. It was of little value to the administration of Pasricha.

Then there was a well built structure, less than a decade old, built for non-resident Indians: they had paid for it and apparently approved of it. There were moves for a stay order, but before that could come about, bull dozers were employed at night to reduce the area to a rubble.

The whole complex had been redesigned for reconstruction over a period of 26-27 months to October 2008, and was as follows:

- \* 70 kms of access roads;
- \* 8 bridges on Asna, Godavari;
- \* 2 railway under-bridges;
- \* 6 kms movement network, including pedestrian lanes;
- \* 1.5 km of Godavari river front;
- \* development of Gurdwara precincts;
- \* Rehabilitation of dislocated families;
- \* Modern airport with Boeing standard runway;
- \* New railway station at Maltekri.

The last two projects fell under the Nanded Development schemes.<sup>35</sup> Many of the projects remained incomplete. This needed temporary accommodation for about (10 lakh) people which the Board expected, at a distance, to which we shall come later.

The start of about 9 months long *Yatra*, causing a travel of 30,000 kms, in 21 states covering 252 cities and towns, besides the villages in the rural areas on the way, started with a *Simran Divas*, day of meditation, on November 15, 2007. This started at 16.30 hours for recitation of *mul mantra*, the basic precept of *Guru Granth Sahib* or of Sikhism, for 15 minutes. For this occasion, a special selection was made of Bhai Chamanjit Singh Lal.

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35. Reprehensibly, despite all the efforts at fund collection, the Gurdwara Board did not have that much funds to start with the projects. The local administration advanced some funds to it, to start the works.

In the words of Giani Tarlochan Singh, Jathedar of Kesgarh Sahib, Chamanjit Singh Lal was a Hindu who performed *kirtan* very well. When advised, he kept *Keshas* and also had baptism.<sup>36</sup> He did not mention that Chamanjit Singh Lal was an infiltrator to destroy Sikhism from within. For instance, he mentioned of a particular Sant Baba, but never of Guru Nanak or his mission. More about him later.

More damaging was selection of such a person this time, when the whole Sikh world was glued to TV to see the occasion marking the beginning of yearlong celebrations. Can Pasricha or someone else tell? Also present on the occasion were leading luminaries including the so-called Jathedar of Akal Takht, Joginder Singh Vedanti, who excels in calling himself the leading Sikh in the community. The first thing Hazur Sahib people did to him was to make him take off his pyjamas, and make him bare legged.

Starting *mul mantra*, Chamanjit Singh Lal should have stuck up at *Prasad* or *gurprasad*, which is repeated ad nauseum in Guru Granth Sahib. But he decided to move with the next couplet ending at *hosi bhi sach*. This caused umbrage with the Sikh world. Nowhere such *mul mantra* is repeated anywhere else in Sri Guru Granth Sahib. This may have been the invention of Sant Babas, Taksals, Deras etc. out to destroy Sikhism. Even Joginder Singh Vedanti may be having the background of a Dera, but here in his new avatar, he was the principal functionary for Tat Khalsa. He should have moved forward and stopped Chamanjit Singh Lal's recitation, repeated at least 5 times, over TV, at *Prasad*. Here, he saw the belief of millions of Sikhs being broken smithereens at the alter of his pusillanimity/convenience. And if he lacked courage, as obviously he did, he should have at least walked out of the Gurdwara to show his disagreement. But according to RSS, he is a paid agent, and an agent straightaway pawns his conscience.<sup>37</sup>

Now comes, what Nanded's journal *Sachkhand* tells us, 'the hit song' or 'a new Sikh anthem' jointly conceived by Jasbir Singh Dhami and Daler (Singh) Mehndi, and sung by the latter. It was Dhami, who managed money as part of Yatra. The yatra was continuously visited by Dr. P.S. Pasricha who kept an eye on the goings on, remained incognito, but Daler Mehndi whose photograph with trimmed beard appeared on cassettes sold to the

36. A photograph of his residence, published in mid-December 2007 showed a room with *Parkash* of *Guru Granth Sahib*. In the corner was placed a replica of Darbar Sahib, awarded to him sometime earlier, and on top of it was a statue of *Ganesh*. For him *Guru Granth Sahib* and *Ganesh* went side by side. Website for annual conference of RSS, 2007; *Spokesman*, December 16, 2007, January 3, 2008.

37. I may mention here that at Harare Information Ministers Conference, in June 1987, the Zimbabwe TV authorities recorded an interview of India's Minister for Information and Broadcasting. Mr. A.K. Panja. I, then a senior officer in External Affairs being a representative with the delegation, pounced upon TV authorities that if this interview was telecast, India's relation, inter alia, with Zimbabwe, would plummet to new low. We seized the TV Casette, and made them re-record the interview.

The Akal Takht Jathedar, having miserably failed, should have resigned or he should have been sacked. But the SGPC, now for quite some time, is headed by nin-com-poops.

people, is well known. It was a prime song during the yatra, but to call it anthem, much less a national anthem of the Sikhs, would be a travesty of truth. Firstly, it was like a bubble which appeared at a place on eve of the yatra and burst out with the yatra's leaving that place. It had a very temporary effect, as a bubble appears on water and bursts out, leaving the surface as it was before. Secondly, it was misleading in making a claim *guru de naal*, (with the Guru). Which Guru? It never made an appeal of *Sabad* as the Guru. Even the people at Hazur Sahib were sanguine in their affirmation that Guru Gobind Singh had passed on succession only to *Granth Sahib*, making it *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, and no other book/granth. How could those who open up copies of a couple of *Dasam Granth* every morning in the Gurdwara, claim themselves to be with *Guru Granth Sahib*, the only inheritor of status of Guru? To claim that they were following tradition of last 170 year or so, is neither here nor there. If Hazoor Sahib came under wrongful occupation, introducing despicable contrivances, is it incumbent on one to follow those and not discard them? It was more appropriately, in the words of Dr. Jasbir Singh Ahluwalia, Vice Chancellor, Guru Granth Sahib University, ਗੁਰੂ ਤੋਂ ਬੇਮੁਖ ਚਾਲ – disoriented step from that of the Guru.

During the entire journey of 3000 kms. through the length and breadth of India (minus north-east and deep south), they never mentioned of *Sabad* as the Guru, did not provide with religious literature, *gutkas*, cassettes/videos of Gurbani free (at least to those who made a big contribution), or at a reasonable price, link the populace with *Sabad*. Instead, the people were sold low level filmi songs sung by Daler Mehndi to make him earn some money from sale of his cassettes. Throughout, the Yatra was conceived as a money making machine. Sale of silver coins for Rs. 550 or Rs. 1100, and that too without a receipt, was a case in point. It was after Baisakhi in Punjab that Daler Mehndi admitted publicly that he was wrong in trimming his beard. He also added Singh to his name, to sell his cassettes. Now, the Yatra is over. What has been impact on him now? Nothing.

An account of Yatra Vehicle's entry and a day's stay at Tatanagar (Jharkhand) on December 30, 2007, makes a grim reading. The personnel constituting the group in the vehicle gave the impression of being 'Brahminical Sikhs', with fingertip of *chandan* at their forehead, they looked like a group of booty collectors and plunderers. The youth who boisterously welcomed the vehicle and made a beeline to have a look at the handwritten *Bir*, and old musty weapons, consisted of questionable characters. The *sevadars/granthis* in the vehicle were seen encouraging the people to worship 'weapons', and also write down their earthly wishes for fulfillment for a consideration.<sup>38</sup>

The group collected about Rs. 24 to 25 lakhs from well to do, sold

38. In the words of Dalip Singh Kashmiri this yatra was a big attempt to break the people from *Gurbani*, *Guru Sabad*, and *Guru Granth Sahib*, and to link them with armaments?

silver coins worth Rs. 150 for a handsome Rs. 1100 each without a receipt, and had an offering of Rs. 65,000 in the *Golak*. There were a number of papers in the press appealing to the people to awake, and put an end to this onslaught of *Brahminism*.<sup>39</sup>

The Yatra adopted a zig-zag route to encompass within its route all possible towns and had bagfuls of collection. It entered Chandigarh on March 1, and amidst a great deal of fanfare, Anandpur Sahib at Hola Mohalla, Amritsar on Baisakhi, amidst a huge collection of money. It entered Delhi on May 22, 2007, after visiting almost the whole of northern India, through Haryana. It had full participation of SGPC in Punjab and of DSGMC on arrival in Delhi. Meanwhile, there were news in the press attributing to Dr. Pasricha an objective to collect Rs. 20,000 crores through this Yatra. There was also another report that the Yatra had by then collected over Rs. 200 Crores, and it already was midway through. This made me to speak to Jasbir Singh Dhama in Delhi on Yatra's day of entry, early in the morning in Delhi. He was aware of what had appeared in Punjab press, but doubted the statement attributed to Dr. Pasricha. He rebutted the news about their having already collected over Rs. 200 Crores. He said, that they had so far collected only Rs. 5 Crores. At that, I asked him, how could that be, as they had already spent (in my estimation) Rs. 10 crores on petrol/diesel, salary/allowances of staff members, cost of huge advertisements, including over at least two TV channels. No reply, and end of phone call. I mentioned this to a couple of people during my morning walk early next day. One said, I must concede that there is large scale misappropriation of funds both in SGPC, and DSGMC, besides other Gurdwaras, and why I wanted to see an exception in case of Hazur Sahib? Another said that the misappropriation of the funds, which was obviously disproportionate to the ones in press report(s), needed a closer questioning of all the personnel manning the Yatra, and it needed a high level enquiry. Yet, another said, the snake has passed on, and one has nothing but to go on beating the line. All wanted me to forget it, as a bad dream.

Meanwhile, contradictory signals continued to come about the fate of pristine Sikhism. A website showed that during the annual conference of RSS in 2007, there was conferring of honours on Giani Joginder Singh Vedanti, Jathedar Akal Takht, Giani Tarlochan Singh, (according to him his presence was by chance and not planned), Jathedar Kesgarh Sahib, and Gurbachan Singh, Head Priest of Darbar Sahib, which they accepted heartily. It was at this get together that Jathedar Tarlochan Singh made his remarks about the Hindu character of Chamanjit Singh Lal. It is obvious our Jathedars/Head Priests accepted the invitation most willingly and that may have been a regular feature. At least, that can be said for Vedanti and Gurbachan Singh: one may tend to accept the alibi of Jathedar Kesgarh Sahib of his chance presence. Was that because of herd mentality, and was that

39. *India Awareness*, New Delhi, February 2008 pp. 35-38.

for the first time. I leave it to Giani Tarlochan Singh. What for? Were there some specific instructions to be passed on to their well wishers? It was obvious that because of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Centenary of *gurta gadi* divas, there was going to be immense pressure on Hazur Sahib to fall in line atleast with the *Sikh Rehat Maryada*, and not be a spoiler. This was a grand event that could yield excellent results from the viewpoint of pristine Sikhism. The RSS strategy, of course, could be to maintain status quo. The RSS instructions that were passed on to these Jathedar/Headgranthi were spelled out by a McLeodian scholar, Gurinder Singh Mann, of Leicester, London, U.K. in these words: “Next time somebody raises a question on the Sri *Dasam Granth*, tell them there is no debate.”<sup>40</sup> Verily, Gurinder Singh Mann mentions that people like him are termed agents of RSS.

The dithering in Akal Takht’s attitude towards the so-called *Dasam Granth* is to be seen in that light. Firstly in their *hukamnamah*, clarification of January 8, 2007, they had earlier denied the opening of *Dasam Granth* alongwith prakash of *Guru Granth Sahib* at a function at Dayapura Bhai. This *hukamnamah* of denial was signed by Joginder Singh Vedanti, Iqbal Singh, Tarlochan Singh, Balwant Singh Nandgarh and Gurbachan Singh, four jathedars and one *headgranthi*, and set the tone for the debate.<sup>41</sup>

Secondly in early January 2008, there was another facet as well. Jathedar Balwant Singh Nandgarh of Damdama Sahib started hauling up members of SGPC indulging in organizing *Akhand Path* (continued reciting of Granth Sahib for about 48 hours), at *samadhs* (mausoleums of dead persons) prohibited by Sikhism.

Thirdly, Prof. Darshan Singh, former Jathedar Akal Takht at the celebrations marking the birth centenary of Guru Gobind Singh at Damdama Sahib in January 2008 started a campaign against singing of certain compositions, falsely attributed to Guru Gobind Singh. These at best were melodies of *kachi bani*, spurious hymns, which were against the philosophy of Guru Nanak. That was the touchstone to judge. He carried this campaign to Hazur Sahib in another few days, and raised the questions for Kulwant Singh, Headpriest of the shrine to answer. Was there any other Granth in existence when Guru Gobind Singh conferred guruship on *Granth Sahib* ? Did Guru Gobind Singh authorise any one to compile any other *granth* or book to contradict *Sabad Guru*? Only those who did not accept *Sabad Guru* were raising ifs and buts at the choice made by Guru Gobind Singh. The whole issue amounted to showing disrespect to Guru Gobind Singh.

Prof. Darshan Singh carried on his campaign making Gurdwara Bangla Sahib, New Delhi, as his centre, addressing the people on the theme: *ika*

40. G.S. Mann, “Dasam Granth – There is no debate: The magazine approach to Guru Gobind Singh’s writings dissected.”, *Sant Sipahi, Jalandhar*, January 2008, p. 47.

41. Cf. *Sant Sipahi, Jalandhar*, February 2008, p. 5 Compare this with what happened in November 2007 and October 2008, at Hazoor Sahib and post 2008 celebrations era when formation of a committee on Dasam Granth was set off on one pretext or the other.

*bani, ik gur, iko sabad vichar* - highlighting the Unitarian concept, or Oneness of hymns, one Guru, and philosophy revolving around *Sabad*, Word. This was telecast live over TV and had a much wider impact on the populace in India and abroad. Besides, the concept was carried on by media all around. The grant of Akali Phula Singh award to Prof. Darshan Singh in Canada in April pointed to wider ramifications.

This came as a rude shock to Hindus, of RSS and Gandhian/Gangu Brahmin vintage, and also *Keshadhari* Sikhs who were serving as surrogates of one or the other party. The ire in Delhi fell on President DSGMC, Paramjit Singh Sarna who was required to show his earnestness as a camp follower. This caused a set back to Prof. Darshan Singh and upping up of antenna of his opponent Chamanjit Singh Lal. The latter made a couple of appearances, over the time, on invitations for kirtan at Bangla Sahib Gurdwara. Not only that, the invitation to Sri Sri Ravi Shankar to Gurdwara Bangla Sahib where his followers indulged in hooliganism, and taking of Rajan and Sajan, two Misra brothers by the back door to the dias of Gurdwara Rakab Ganj's Lakhi Shah Vanjara Hall (so that they don't bow their head to Guru Granth Sahib) where they sang Raag Basant, only in context of knowledge imparted to them by a 'Namdhari Satguru', is to be seen in that light. Rag Basant is found in Guru Granth Sahib and is sung from times immemorial. How should such stupid people be considered experts of that Raag without knowing its dimensions? Even a member of DSGMC present on stage, Inderjit Singh Monty, objected to that a couple of times, and sought to provide a correction.<sup>42</sup> One can take an ass to a pool of water, but cannot make it drink. It only indicated that the objective was to bow Sarna's head to dust in meeting non-conforming, Hindu, objectives.

The visit of yatra to Delhi on May 22, 2008, treated with a high profile by the DSGMC and Paramjit Singh Sarna only helped to instil in him a feeling of estrangement. The Yatra vehicle moved for five days, invited a cavalcade of people moving in various bazaars, alongwith Delhi's normal day-traffic, causing a stampede. The police authorities, despite earnest pleas, refused permission for Yatra's visit to West Delhi, because of capacity of roads and a fanfare of people. This was exploited by SAD(Badal) supporters. During 5 days stay the Yatra's collection of about Rs. 5 crores, including the offerings in the boxes, was not bad, but Dr. P.S. Pasricha, who visited Delhi during the period and also talked to police people, was not satisfied. Somebody told me that they were promised a minimum collection of Rs. 2 crores, if they visited Gurdwara Pahariwala, Greater Kailash I. Consequently, after paying a couple of days visit to neighbouring Ghaziabad and Noida, the yatra, at dead of night drove without any fanfare, to Gurdwara Greater Kailash I on May 30, for a days visit.<sup>43</sup> Again the next night it drove

42. *India Awareness*, New Delhi, April 2008, pp. 22, 35.

43. A lady offered an offering of Rs. 1 lakh, in two bundles of notes of Rs.500 each. She was told to split up the bundles and push the notes in the crevices of the Cash Collection Box or *Golak*. •

at dead of night to a Gurdwara in Fateh Nagar area, West Delhi. A Delhi journal aptly questioned “Jagriti Yatra or Golak Yatra”. Sarna by the time had paid them up Rs. 50 Lakhs, against the promise of Rs. 1 crore. He let it remain at that, and said that DSGMC itself would go in for a guest house for Delhiites.

By this time the Jagriti Yatra had traversed major part of India with its mission, that became clear to the people by and by, from Nanded to Bombay to Calcutta to Amritsar to Delhi on its further southwards journey. The people because of alacrity of press and TV channels had by now fully ingrained that Yatra was more a collection spree than impart in them some piety and devotion. Pasricha, still expecting a crowd of 12 lakh people at Nanded in October for the occasion started appealing to them to let them know whether they were coming by air, rail, road transport, buses, trucks, trollys, motor bikes, horses, ponies, bullock-carts, cycles, or by foot. The SGPC which had earlier booked five trains from Amritsar to Nanded cancelled all of them because of lacks of response.

SGPC’s Sikh Haryana Mission mentions of an impressive activity by holding a series of religious *samagams*/conferences, and peripatetic tours with mass participation running through villages and towns covering various parts of Haryana during June-September, 2008. They apprised the people therein of Sikh divinity, religion and philosophy, on the principles of one *bani*, one *guru* and one *Sabad* (Word), and its interpretation. But there was no such activity anywhere in Punjab.<sup>44</sup> This absence makes one feel that Haryana activity was more aimed at the move to have a separate Haryana Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, rather than 3<sup>rd</sup> Centenary of grant of Guruship to Granth Sahib. These were mere incidental, but a highly welcome activity giving an appropriate signal to the people. It does not convey a slackness anyway amongst the people in Punjab in their local, historic or other, Gurdwaras.

Parkash Singh Badal, Chief Minister, Punjab, announced that a sum of Rs. 200 crores would be spent for beautification of Anandpur Sahib and Talwandi Sabo as part of 3<sup>rd</sup> centenary celebrations. Foundation stone of Guru Granth World University was laid at Fateh Garh Sahib by the Chief Minister on September 1, 2008 , as part of the celebrations.

U.S. President Barrack Obama and Illinois Governor Blagojevich, Chicago Mayor Richard Daley, and Palastine Mayor, Rita Mullinw proclaimed October 20 as Guru Granth Sahib Day, and greeted the Sikh community for the occasion.

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• My wife offered them, inter alia, 5 copies of Hindi version of this book alongwith a letter addressed to Jasbir Singh (Dhami). The Granthis/Sewadars said that their job was firstly, to collect money and not any thing else. Secondly, they don’t know who this Jasbir Singh (Dhami) is (?).

44. Cf. *Gurmat Parkash* monthly magazine of SGPC Amritsar, for August-October, 2008, also before and after issues.

An event that occurred in the evening of October 28, needs to be recalled. Giani Harinder Singh, *Kathakar*, had been talking publicly during his discourses that the show at Hazur Sahib was not just a private one for Dr. Pasricha, but it should become a panthic one. The inference was obvious that Hazur Sahib should accept a broader participation. A rumour about Harinder Singh's talk about Hazur Sahib as a mausoleum was deliberately set afloat to stop his *katha* performances, Giani Iqbal Singh of Patna threateningly advanced with his group towards Harinder Singh that if it were so, his mausoleum would also be made inside the complex. Before things could take an ugly turn, policemen on duty in the Gurdwara complex threw a protective shield over Harinder Singh and quietened the agitated group.

A Golden Palanquin made by Kar Seva Jatha of Baba Jagtar Singh of Tarn Taran was installed at Hazur Sahib on October 30, 2008.<sup>45</sup> Similarly, a bejeweled Kalgi was presented by descendents of late Harbhajan Singh Yogi. Both these acts misrepresented the zeal of devotees. Similarly misplaced was the concern for horses or their dung.<sup>46</sup>

A Sikh is attached to *Sabad* or *Gur-Sabad*, and is not attached to gold, jewels, horses or dung. A handwritten *Bir* available at Hazur Sahib had nothing to do with Guru Gobind Singh. Of the armaments, some are attributed to Guru Gobind Singh, others to Sikhs, some of them of later era, and some to Maharaja Ranjit Singh who despite being punished at Akal Takht for Moran affair, was a known womanizer, including Muslim women. Showing weapons of such a person, gives Hazur Sahib no credit, especially now when they have destroyed all buildings of his era: these had atleast heritage value.<sup>47</sup>

Of primary importance was the *Gurta Gaddi Divas* celebrated on October 30, according to Brahminical Calendar. Pasricha and his ilk had expected a get together of 10 to 12 lakh people gathering<sup>48</sup> They had installed quadrangular and appropriate tents, suitable for a family, for about 5 lakhs of them. Hardly 40,000, in any case not more than 50,000, i.e. 4 to 5 percent of expected people reached Hazur Sahib.<sup>49</sup> This included 10,000 security persons for the occasion. Those, who were placed in the tented accommodation, protested at the levy of lodging charges. Keeping in view

45. Similar *Palki* had been sent to Nanakana Sahib, Pakistan. The Pakistanis, in the words of their Prime Minister, found that it contained only 1.5 kg. of gold and not the declared 10.4 kgs. Hazur Sahib people have yet to know?

46. A Sikh is meant to ride a horse, and not vice versa. If a horse is killed, a rider takes a new one, but if a rider is killed, the horse is taken over by some one else.

47. Cf. Madanjit Kaur. "Significant Development of Sikh Community", *Abstracts of Sikh Studies*, Chandigarh, April-June 2009 pp. 61-85.

48. Madanjit Kaur in her usual overenthusiasm mentions a figure of 'nearly 25 lakhs' people from around the world reaching Nanded. Wherefrom she gets this exorbitant figure one does not know. Even Pasricha nowhere mentions of it. See, *ibid.*, p. 72.

49. As early as February 2008, an expected figure of 12 Lakhs visitors was mentioned, *Tribune*, February 11, 2008.

the poor incomings, these were written off. The accommodation at a distance of 5 to 10 kms from the Gurdwara was quite inconvenient, despite the provision of free buses. Bulk of accommodation in Hazur Sahib Gurdwara complex was not yet ready for use.

Mention may be made of supremely rich langars (Common Kitchens), and sumptuous fare provided to the people by Sant Babas from Punjab and other parts of the Sikh world. The kitchen set up by Baba Nidhan Singh Dera, now for a long time at Nanded, continued its work. Special mention needs to be made of Baba Kashmir Singh Bhuriwale, who engaged 300 *halwais* to cook dainty food items in pure ghee, specially brought from Panjab. Then there was Baba Mohinder Singh of Birmingham, who is close to McLeod. Numerous types of sweets, Italian, Chinese and English dainty items, besides the Punjabi and Mughlai fare was served in plenty. Since the number of guests was very small, Sant Babas inveigled the residents of Nanded not to cook food but to partake it in the *langar*. The residents, keeping in view the munificence, invited their relatives, friends, acquaintances, and others to visit them, simply to taste various type of food items available for nothing. They had no obligation to visit even the Hazur Sahib shrine, where the attendance continued to be thin.

The arrival of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on October 30, 2008, constituted the main event. A special pandal outside the Gurdwara which could accommodate forty to fifty thousand people was erected. P.S. Sarna from Delhi accompanied the PM, and occupied a place on the podium. So was the case with SGPC, Akal Takht, and Darbar Sahib dignitaries. All of them occupied their positions at the rostrum, besides the Punjab Chief Minister, Parkash Singh Badal. The attendance was poor, hardly 10,000 people. Prime Minister's security operators removed all the SGPC, Akal Takht and Darbar Sahib people, besides P.S. Sarna from the dias, and made them sit amongst the congregation. This caused them embarrassment with red faces, as all this was being shown live over T.V.

The Prime Minister spoke to the point, and pointed out that Guru Gobind Singh had conferred Guruship on *Granth Sahib* only, and they were gathering that day to celebrate the 3<sup>rd</sup> Centenary of that event. He also mentioned of the Airport and other widespread development events concerning Nanded. All those present from Hazur Sahib were in full agreement with whatever he said. They, however, in height of stupidity, didn't realize that the opening of another book, *Dasam Granth* was contrary to manifestation of Guru's command rendered at the time, that *Guru Granth Sahib* was manifestation of Guru's spirit, and it was ordained for all the Sikhs to mentally accept that fact. After Prime Minister had finished, the function was over. No one else including those from Punjab were permitted to have any say. This caused a great dismay amongst them, as it punctured their ego.

Gone was SGPC/Akal Takht's expectation that Pasricha would announce Hazur Sahib's acceptance of Sikh Rehat Maryada.<sup>50</sup>

President and the entire staff of SGPC, as also Akal Takht Jathedar and the religious hierarchy took a decision to move out of Hazur Sahib at this insult. But soon, probably because of a RSS phone call, Jathedar Akal Takht Giani Gurbachan Singh separated himself from the group and stayed back. All the rest left immediately in disgust.

The visit of President Pratibha Devi Singh Patil on November 3, 2007, to Hazur Sahib was a tame affair, and that of Sonia Gandhi on November 7 was just a stock taking one, to contain damage to Congress vis-à-vis BJP in the forthcoming Parliamentary elections. Things were quite in hand.

Guru Gobind Singh after passing on *Gurgaddi* to *Guru Granth Sahib* had passed away the following day, but now the *parlokgaman* of the 10<sup>th</sup> Guru was fixed on November 5. The affair at Hazur Sahib was throughout a tame affair and ended with a whimper.

Dr. P.S. Pasricha was brought in mainly to manage huge funds and implemented the numerous construction projects. During his over nine months of Yatra era, he had managed the extremely large funds accruing during the period in his own light, and also indulged in large scale demolitions of old and new works, creating multiplex problems. By the time of the main function, large chunks of works remained incomplete. Apart from huge collections from all over India, he started getting big quantum of funds from abroad, all in a transparent manner.<sup>51</sup> Though over eight months have elapsed since the termination of tercentenary celebrations, the details of total accruals and expenses, which should have been disclosed on monthly basis, have not been made public. The Board hopes to get more funds from abroad. All this makes it a self-perpetuating and a topsy turvy affair, lacking transparency.

The Jathedar Akal Takht, now that the affair at Hazur Sahib was over, fixed a date to take up the issue of historicity of *Dasam Granth*, but soon came forward with an alibi that because of marriage of the son of Jathedar, Kesgarh Sahib, the matter was being delayed. Soon that came to pass by and still no results. The instructions issued by RSS as conveyed by Gurinder Singh Mann are explicit: "Next time some body raises a question on the *Sri Dasam Granth*, tell them there is no debate."

50. It had been agreed that Badal would offer Dr. P.S. Pasricha membership of Rajya Sabha and his assistant, Jasbir Singh Dhama membership of SGPC in place of the one from Maharashtra who would resign. The Maharashtra Government got wind of the understanding that was to be adopted by *5-Piaras* and disciplined them. Service of a notice for refund of Rs. 61 Crores advanced by Maharashtra Government, for a project, upon Dr. P.S. Pasricha, Chairman Administrative Board, is to be seen in that light.

51. Incompletion of works and incoming of huge donations viz Rs. 1.08 crores from Sant Singh Chhatwal, New York, Rs. 1 crore each from Avtar Singh Khalra and Kartar Singh Khalra from U.K., Rs. 50,000 by J.S. Kandhari, from Chandigarh, and another Rs. 50,000 from two members of Arora family, Monty and Haravtar Singh, Chandigarh only showed that large amounts could still be coming in. *Sachkhand Patar*, Nanded, September 2008.

Significantly, Joginder Singh Vedanti at a press conference on January 6, 2009 at Kesgrah Sahib virtually disavowed *Dasam Granth* but this type of wisdom dawned upon him much after the event. He was now in favour of setting up a Committee to look into its contents. Six months have passed, but he has not passed on the wisdom to his *Kurram* (ਕੁੜਮ) now leading Akal Takht.

I had the opportunity to meet Prof. Darshan Singh in Delhi on February 1, 2009. He had just come from Punjab and in few hours was to be on his flight to Toronto, Canada. I asked him that we had hoped to listen to his *kirtan* in the evening at Gurdwara Bangla Sahib, after the evening services, when as usual the theme could be *ika bani, ik gur, iko sabd vichar* – unitarian character of hymns, Godhood, and thought process. He kept mum. A person who had also come to see him off, told me outside the house that it was because of political considerations. Obviously, Paramjit Singh Sarna could not afford to displease his political bosses as he, just after the rebuff at Hazur Sahib, had extended further invitation to Bhai Chaman Singh Lal for a *kirtan* performance. Such was the chemistry of Sikh leadership whether aligned to Congress or BJP. The difference was one of degree not of kind.

If the English were the people who manufactured *Dasam Padshah ka Granth* in early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and Sir Khem Singh Bedi the *Dasam Granth* by end of the century, now the RSS are the people who in Hindu India have taken over. After *Dasam Granth* met a set back to achieve its objectives at 3<sup>rd</sup> centenary functions, a new *avatar* of the work, a huge volume containing *Sri Guru Granth Sahib and Dasam Granth* in one volume has been prepared in May 2009. On seeing it, the Akal Takht Jathedar said that it could be work of the last century, but the year of publication betrayed the contours. Besides the contents of paper also tells one simply by sight that it is a recent work. Jathedars have shuddered in their *pyjamas* against proceeding any further. Why? Because, of late for the last several decades the head priests of Akal Takht or Darbar Sahib at Amritsar have been out to deceive our Guru. ਪਾਪ ਕਮਾਂਵਦਿਆ ਤੇਰਾ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਬੋਲੀ ਰਾਮ. We have adopted resolutions banning holding of *akhandpath of Dasam Granth*, declaring *Charitro Pakhyan* not to be a production of Guru Gobind Singh, or even saying that we will not be present where a copy of *Dasam Granth* is opened up in our presence, much less opening up of *Dasam Granth* along with ceremonial opening of *Guru Granth Sahib*, but have desisted from doing anything more in the matter.

We lack *aql* (ਅਕਲ) intelligence. If people at Akal Takht had intelligence and used it, they would have enforced their decision not to do Akhand Path of *Dasam Granth* or have ostracized atleast Gurdwaras at Patna Sahib and Hazur Sahib. Again, when we decided that *Charitro Pakhyan* was not a work of Guru Gobind Singh, the people of Akal Takht should have atleast got it excluded from *Dasam Granth* or punished those who publish

it, and also those who keep such copies of *Dasam Granth*. Yet again, we or people at Akal Takht should have withdrawn from Hazur Sahib right on November 15, 2007, before the start of *Yatra*, so much so that it would have a rock bottom effect and should have spared the people the shame they faced on October 30, 2008.

In short, a legal study which has come to my notice late in my life makes it clear that once a Sikh believes in *Dasam Granth*, he comes to have belief in another faith – other than that of Guru Nanak-Guru Gobind Singh. As such, irrespective of the fact whether one is an ordinary Sikh, or is a headpriest or so called Jathedar, he loses to be Sikh of Guru Nanak-Guru Gobind Singh.<sup>52</sup> It is incumbent upon us to liberate our Gurdwaras from the hands of non-believers. Whether one believes in statues, *devi-devtas*, or multiple gods, or other book(s), makes no difference. Earlier Massa Rangar despoiled Darbar Sahib complex, later Indira Gandhi did so, and now these Head Priests/Jathedars are at it. What is the difference? All fall in the same category, with a small difference.

You cannot ask such a person to appoint a committee/commission to look into contents of *Dasam Granth*, and separate the *banis* attributed to Guru Gobind Singh and which are in tune with the teachings of *Guru Granth Sahib* from others. Already their performance has been dismal.

As of May 2009, a Gurdwara in Helsinki, Finland, named Gurdwara Sarab Sangat Sahib, has moved ahead and removed the word *Bhagauti* from *Ardas*, and substituted it by *Akal Purakh*. That is not inappropriate, but it would be better to substitute it by words Ik-Onkar (ੴ) and proceed ahead. I have already mentioned that during 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Sikhs in the diaspora will take over from the Sikhs in India who will greatly dwindle. The Finnish Sikhs have shown the way.

Guru Gobind Singh had explicitly stated, ‘So long Khalsa keeps its distinct character, that long it shall have from me all its refulgence; when it ingrains the rituals of non-conforming elements (*bipran*), I shall not look into its welfare.’

It is quite obvious that all these shrines at Hazur Sahib, Patna Sahib, and other places which open up *Dasam Granth* along with a ceremonial opening (*parkash*) of *Guru Granth Sahib*, have lost the grace of presence therein of Guru Nanak – Guru Gobind Singh. These are as alien to Khalsa as are the shrines at Badri Nath, Kedar Nath, Amar Nath, Som Nath or, for that, Jawalamukhi or Mata’s shrines. All these Hindu shrines would also like to have a *prakash* of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* along with statues to engulf Sikhism within their grasp. That is what is being done at Hazur Sahib, Patna Sahib &c, without the Sikhs realizing what these are upto. They should discard these shrines straightaway, and return to Guru Nanak’s path of *Ik Onkar*, One Infinite God, as be all and end all of human philosophy.

52. Kashmir Singh, “Sri Guru Granth Sahib and Dasam Granth in Legal Literature,” at internet.