

POETIC AND CREATIVE GENIUS GURU GOBIND SINGH

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Introduction

Guru Gobind Singh's mind was a towering Himalaya of supreme wisdom, from whose teeming caverns there flowed mighty rivers of songs and poetry, prayers and meditations, philosophic reflections and historical truths, in whose placid depth he set the reflected image of all the noblest aspiration of man and all the tragedy and grandeur of human drama. His imagination was a seraph which sounded all depths and measured all heights. It touched the intangible, it saw the invisible, it heard the inaudible, and it gave body and shape to the inconceivable. It gathered gems from all mines, gold from all sands, pearls from all seas and songs from all battles of *dharma*: righteousness, fought in the ancient history of India.

Guru Gobind Singh bequeathed to mankind a literary, historical and philosophic estate, which time cannot destroy. He breathed into the nostrils of the heavenly Muse the breath of new immortality. He sang of his vivid vision of God, rise and fall of civilizations, wars of *dharma*, heroes and prophets of the glorious past of India, the figurative gods and goddess of Hindu mythology and the lovers and martyrs of truth.

All the compositions of *Dasam Granth* except *Zafarnamah* were composed by Guru Gobind Singh between 1682 to 1701 A.D. In *Dasam Granth* purely religious and philosophic compositions have 878 verses. But the invocations and the epilogues to all the secular verses are important religious compositions and number about 500. So the philosophic verses number nearly 1378. If *Adi Guru Granth* can be hailed as "synthesis of scriptures". *Dasam Granth* can be equally hailed as synthesis of literature" from the mighty pen of poet-philosopher Guru Gobind Singh as is evident from the following range of poetry of *Dasam Granth*:

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ARRANGEMENT OF COMPOSITIONS

Philosophic Works:	<i>Japu Sahi</i>199 verses
Literature of Divine Wisdom	<i>Akal ustafi</i> (Incomplete).....271 verses
	<i>Gyan Prabodh</i> (Incomplete).....336 verses
	<i>Teti Sawaiye</i>33verses
	<i>Sabads:</i> (Devotional Lyrics)39 verses
	878 verses
Historical-Martial Literature:	<i>Chandi Charitar</i> (Ist Hindi version).....233 verses
Battles for Righteousness:	<i>Chandi di Var or</i> <i>Var Sri Bhagautijiki</i>55 verses
Dharma	BACHITRA NATAK <i>Kalji ki Ustat</i> Invocation.....101 verses <i>Apni Katha</i> (Incomplete).....370 verses <i>Chandi Charitar</i> (2 nd Hindi version).262 verses <i>Avatars of Vishnu:</i> The Story of Krsna, Rama Budha and others 4365 verses Mehdi.....11 verses <i>Avataras of Brahma</i> The Story of Valmiki <i>Vyasa, Kalidas etc</i>323 verses

	<i>Avataras of Rudra</i>	
	The Story of Dattatreya,	
	Paras Nath and	
	Macchinder Nath.....	856 verses
	<hr/>	
	Including 500 verses of	
	Religious Literature	6576
	<hr/>	
On Sex and Psychology	<i>TriyaCharitar (Pakhyan)</i>	
	(Hindi.....)	7555 verses
	<i>Hakayats (Persian).....</i>	757 verses
	<hr/>	
		8312
<hr/>		
Dictionary	<i>Sastar Nam Mala</i>	
	<i>Purana.....</i>	1318 verses
Epistle	<i>Zafarnamah</i>	
	(Letter of Victory to Aurangzeb).....	111 verses
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	TOTAL VERSES	17195
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Dasam Granth is the only scripture in the world literature in which a very vast range of poetic metres and *Ragas* have been used. Out of total number of about 150 metres used in the *Dasam Granth*, over one hundred meters have their origin in Sanskrit, Prakrit, Apabhramsa and old Hindi languages.

Besides this vast range of poetic metres, Guru Gobind Singh has also used the following *Ragas*: *Bilawal, Ramkali, Devgandhuri, Tilang Kafi, Kalyan and Sorath*.

Unfortunately, the voluminous composition of Guru Gobind Singh were lost in the sack of Anandpur and the battle of Chamkaur in 1705 A.D., Bhai Mani Singh, a contemporary Apostle of Guru Gobind Singh, spent many years to trace and collect whatever could be salvaged or whatever had been preserved by the Sikhs, who had retained the copies of some of the

compositions. In this way the first recensions of the *Dasam Granth* was compiled sometime in 1734 A.D., four years before he was martyred. A second recension of the *Dasam Granth* was prepared by Baba Dip Singh, the chief of *Sahid Misal* at Damdama Sahib. Some of the prominent sikhs such as Baba Binod Singh, Baba Gurbaksh Singh and Bhai Sukha Singh, an officiant at Takhat Patna Sahib, prepared their own copies from the copy originally prepared by Bhai Mani Singh. Several other recensions and copies were prepared, not without some textual variations, and such variations are also to be found in the recensions of *Adi Guru Granth*.

Six years after the compilation of the recension of the *Dasam Granth* a dispute arose among the scholars as to whether such philosophic writings as *Japu Sahib* and *Akal Ustafi* should remain side by side with secular writings, or whether they should be kept in separate volumes. Such scholars maintained that it was not proper to discuss writings like *Triya Charitra* in the Gurdwaras. No one, of course, doubted that the works were compositions of Guru Gobind Singh. The matter was decided in a strange way.¹ Bhai Mehtab Singh and Bhai Sukha Singh declared that if they succeeded in killing Massa Ranghar, who was using the Holy Shrine of Harimandir Sahib (Golden Temple) as a pleasure house, the volume of *Dasam Granth* should remain intact. If, however, they died in the attempt, the books of the *Dasam Granth* should be separated. Fortune most strangely favoured keeping the *Dasam Granth* in one volume.

In 1895 A.D. the Singh Sabha movement leaders found that copies of the *Dasam Granth* began to differ in the spelling of words. As the copyist knew only Punjabi and not Hindi and Persian, they made many mistakes in writing these languages. The work was entrusted to Gurmat Granth Parcharak Sabha. Thirty two copies of the *Dasam Granth* were collected from different places and brought to the Akal Takhat, where a group of eminent scholars studied the text from these recensions between July 5, 1895 to February 17, 1896/Savan 8, 1952 Bk to Phagan 5, 1952 Bk. Among the scholars who participated in these deliberations were: Bhai Manna Singh Hakim, Bhai Narain Singh, Bhai Thakar Singh, Bhai Sant Singh (son of Giani Gian Singh), Bhai Bishan Singh, Sant Gopal Das Udasi, Mahant Amir Singh et al. Opinions were invited from a wider circle by correspondence and a complete report on the deliberations was published on October 14, 1897/Kartik 1, 1954 Bk, resulting in publications of current recension of the *Dasam Granth*. It was first published by Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar, in October 1902. But unfortunately they left the proof reading to the printers M/s Gulab Singh and Sons, resulting in

countless errors which even change the meaning of the original. Either the scholars who prepared this text or the publishers have made two grievous errors:

(i) On the title page they have written *Sri Guru Granth Sahib Dasam Patshahi*, which is a distortion of the name *Dasam Patashaika Granth*, which is the title of Baba Binod Singh collections and other old recensions of the *Dasam Granth* which means the same as *Dasam Granth*: the work of the Tenth Guru. Since this *Granth* was not installed as a Guru, so it is wrong to call it *Guru Granth*. But it is a canonized scripture.

(ii) The first verse of *Teti Sawaiye: Jagat Jot Japainis basar*, has been omitted.

But it is to be noted that all the eminent scholars of the Singh Sabha movement and also present day scholars and all the *jathedars* of Akal Takhat from Bhai Mani Singh to the present day, considered the whole of *Dasam Granth* as the work of Guru Gobind Singh.

Contemporary Evidence

Bhai Mani Singh, the contemporary apostle of Guru Gobind Singh, who prepared the first recension of the *Dasam Granth*, has himself reported the purpose of composing *Yudhmai Bani* and *Triya Charitar*, in his composition *Sikhan di Bhagatmala*.² Fortunately, we have oldest manuscript copies of this important historical document at Sikh Reference Library MS. No. 7398³, Central Public Library, Patiala, MS.No.2827⁴, Punjab State Archives, Patiala MS.No. 688. Professor Dharam Chand Bhatish presented his M.Phil Dissertation entitled *Bhai Mani Singh Rachit Sikhan di Bhagat mala da Sampadan ate Alochanatmik Adhyan*, and it was approved by his Guide, Dr. Surinder Singh Kohli on May 15, 1978. It was published in November 1979 by Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana with a Foreword by Rattan Singh Jaggi. Since this very *Sakhi* demolished the thesis of Dr. Jaggi, the book was badly mauled with malafide intention by pasting paper on the contents (*Visa Suchi*) page as well as deleting pages 254-287 and pasting the printed page 254. Such intellectual dishonesty on the part of writers to push up their malicious and motivated thesis is unheard in the field of historical research.

Bhai Desa Singh, son of Bhai Mani Singh, another contemporary of Guru Gobind Singh, also confirms the authenticity of all compositions of the *Dasam Granth* in his *Rehitnama* (Code of Conduct). "Listen Desa Singh to what I say: First, I composed *Japu* then *Akal Ustafi*. Consider these compositions to be like *Vedas*: Book of Divine Wisdom. Then I composed *Bachitar Natak*, in which I described the history of Sodhi family. Then I composed *Chandi Charitar* in various

types of poetic forms. Then I wrote *Gyan Prabodh*, the recitation of which inspires a person to reach the highest spiritual state. I composed the history of twenty-four *avatars* of Visnu and Siva like Dattatreya. Then I composed *Sabad Hazare and Triya Charitra*. I have also written much on the *Rehit* of the Khala: *Teti Sawaiye*.”⁵

In spite of this contemporary evidence some of the writers in their zeal to push up their half-backed thesis that *Dasam Granth* was not written by Guru Gobind Singh have given sweeping statements: (i) the history of *Dasam Granth* is non-existent, (ii) Bhai Mani Singh did not compile *Dasam Granth*, (iii) Since the contemporary or near contemporary Sikh literature like *Sri Guru Sobha*, *Parchian Sewa Das*, Koer Singh’s *Gurbilas Patsahi Dasvin*, does not mention *Dasam Granth* or any like literature of the Guru period, hence *Dasam Granth* cannot be regarded as the composition of Guru Gobind Singh.⁶ These sweeping statements are misleading lies. Kesar Singh Chhiber, a near contemporary author profusely quotes from *Bachitar Natak*, in his *Bansavalinama Dasan Patshahian Ka*.⁷ Koer Singh, a student of Bhai Mani Singh, also based his *Gurbilas Patshahi Dasvin* on *Bachitar Natak*, and sometime quotes *Bachitar Natak*,⁸ and also gives details of compilation of *Krishan Avatar*.⁹ In fact the authors of *Mehima Prakash*, *Suraj Prakash*, *Panth Prakash*, *Prachin Panth Prakash* and even Guru Gobind Singh’s court poet Kavi Sainapati have based their accounts of life of Guru Gobind Singh upto 1698 A.D. on *Bachitar Natak*. The author of *Parchian Sewa Das*, the so-called contemporary record, primary source of Sikh history, with episodes based on events allegedly witnessed by the author”¹⁰ gives the name of Zorawar Singh, the third son of Guru Gobind Singh as Ranjit Singh¹¹.

Similar historical mistakes have been committed by even court poet, Kavi Sainapati. He too has confused the names of the sons of Guru Gobind Singh and the place of their martyrdom. He calls Sahibzada Ajit Singh as Jit Singh¹² and also Ranjit Singh,¹³ and has placed the martyrdom of the second son of Guru Gobind Singh, Jujhar Singh at Sirhind instead of Chamkaur. Similarly, as a contemporary he is silent about the selection of Five Elected Ones (*Panj Piaras*) and their baptism with *Khande di Pahul* (Baptism of Double-Edged Sword) on March 29, 1699. And if the logic and methodology of these writers is applied then selection of *Panj Piaras* is not a historical event. We have no contemporary or near contemporary record to reconstruct the biographies of Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjan, Guru Hari Rai, Guru Hari Krishan and Guru Tegh Bahadur except *Mehima Prakash*, *Suraj Prakash*, *Panth Prakash*, which according to these writers are not dependable documents, which reminds

me of a hymn of Bhagat Kabir: “*apina dehi churu bhari pani tihi nidehi jih ganga ani*: They themselves cannot offer even a handful of water, but slander those who brought the Ganges.”¹⁴ If we accept the puerile judgements of these writers in respect of these important sources of Sikh history, the history of Guru period from Guru Angad to Guru Tegh Bahadur with the exception of Guru Hargobind is turned into mythology, although these writers take the shelter of these very historical records in their writings. But here, simply to push up their inane thesis that *Dasam Granth* was not composed by Guru Gobind Singh, they have discarded these sources as not dependable evidence. Such type of intellectual dishonesty and duplicity of these writers is being given below briefly:

1. Prof. Harinder Singh Mehboob devoted 49 pages in his book *Sahije Rachio Khalsa* with nasty languages to prove that *Bachitar Natak* is not the composition of Guru Gobind Singh and is historically incorrect,¹⁵ but in his recently published *Ilahi Nadar de Painde* he has condemned Dr Fauja Singh and Dr Ganda Singh for ignoring the authentic contemporary historical work *Bachitar Natak*.¹⁶
2. Principal Harbhajan Singh spat his venom against *Dasam Granth* in his booklet *Dasam Granth Bare Chonve Lekh*,¹⁷ but in his book *Gurmat Vikhian* he has quoted from *Dasam Granth* and even a verse, which is only recorded in Sangrur manuscript.
3. Bhai Ashok Singh Bagrian, another associate of this group is publicly condemning *Dasam Granth*, but in his book *Reminiscences of Bhai Ardaman Singh Bagrian*, he has quoted *Dasam Granth*.
4. Dr. Kirpal Singh, another associate of this group lent his name for a cheap pamphlet *Gurmat de jharokhe Vichon Avatarvad* to spearhead the hate campaign against *Dasam Granth*, but in 1999 he has filed an affidavit in Punjab and Haryana High Court in a case filed by Dr M.S. Rahi, Advocate, confirming on oath that *Bachitar Natak* “is the most authentic work of Guru Gobind Singh.”
5. Prof. Gurtej Singh is virtually spear-heading the hate campaign against *Dasam Granth*, and in one of his write-up has opined that letter of Bhai Mani Singh to Mata Sundari about the compilation of *Dasam Granth* is spurious,¹⁸ but on the 53rd Birthday celebrations of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale at Fatehgarh Sahib on February 12, 2000 he heavily depended upon this very letter to explain history to the audience during his lecture,¹⁹ He has also quoted *Dasam Granth* in his book *Sikhism: An Occumenical Religion*.

6. Prof. Darshan Singh, another associate of this group, during a so called Round Table Conference at Chandigarh on May 11 2000 tried to mislead the public by giving press statement that *Dasam Granth* was compiled 150 years after the death of Guru Gobind Singh, whereas its compilation was started by Bhai Mani Singh only 6 years after the death of Guru Gobind Singh. Readers were laughing at the ignorance of the former *Jathedar* of Sri Akal Takhat Sahib, who without even knowing the dates of its compilation was posing as an expert on *Dasam Granth*.

7. Dr. Gurnam Kaur wrote “*Ab Var Durga ki Likhyate*” in her own edited journal *Nanak Prakash Patrika*,²⁰ and declaring it to be the composition of Guru Gobind Singh, but in her write-up *Dasam Granth* for Chandigarh group she controverts her own article without quoting a single historical record to substantiate her hypothesis, though she complains that Kavi Santokh Singh, Giani Gian Singh and Bhai Kahan Singh have not given the source of their information.²¹

It is regretted these writers have shown scant regard for historical research and methodology. The narrative of this group of writers is written with irresponsible abandon with a journalistic approach, employing the same methodology which was used by Dr. Pashaura Singh in his thesis *The Text and Meaning of Adi Granth*, Dr. Piar Singh in his book *Gatha Sri Adi Granth* to challenge the authenticity of the present recension of *Adi Guru Granth Sahib*, by Dr W.H. McLeod in his books to distort the Sikh history, religion and culture. The authors have based their narratives more on ifs and buts, and have picked up holes in the historical documents in the same manners as Karam Singh historian picked up holes in the narratives of Bhai Gurdas to prove that Bhai Bala is non-existent, since he has not been mentioned by Bhai Gurdas in his *Var 11*. Bhai Gurdas has not mentioned the martyrdom of Guru Arjan and compilation of *Adi Guru Granth*. But no historian has dared to say that Guru Arjan was not martyred and *Adi Guru Granth* was not compiled by Guru Arjan with Bhai Gurdas as co-compiler. Such puerile judgements on the part of these writers leaves gnawing doubt that there is a deliberate attempt on the part of these writers to mislead the Sikh *Panth* about the authenticity of the *Dasam Granth* and if detailed analysis is done, then the origin of such writings and their association may be traced to the condemned scholars of the Sikh community.

References

1. To belittle the martyrdom of Bhai Mani Singh, some unscrupulous persons invented the story that he was cursed by the Sikhs for dividing the *Adi Guru Granth* into parts, author wise. It was Bhai Mani Singh who prepared the final version of *Adi Guru Granth* as dictated by Guru Gobind Singh. Bhai Mani Singh would never have dared to undo it. The fact that Bhai Mani Singh was in favour of having even *Dasam Granth* in one volume refutes this ingenious theory.
2. Bhai Mani Singh, *Sikhan di Bhagatmala*, Sakhi. 128.
3. This manuscript was prepared by a Sikh devotee and presented to Baba Kaladhari in 1738 A.D., one year after the death of Bhai Mani Singh. The manuscript was destroyed during Operation Blue Star (June 1984).
4. The manuscript in Central Public Library is dated 1827 A.D.
5. *Rehitnama Bhai Desa Singh*, 32.
6. (i) Daljeet Singh “Dasam Granth: Its History” *Abstracts of Sikh Studies*, July 1994. *The Sikh Review*, August 1994.
(ii) Jagjit Singh, “Fictional Identity of Dasam Granth,” *The Sikh Reviews*, August 1994, *Abstract of Sikh Studies*, July 1994, *Dasam Granth: Real Issues*.
(iii) Gurtej Singh, “Two View on Dasam Granth: An Appreciation of Astha’s and Jaggi’s Approach,” *Fundamental Issues in Sikh Studies*. In 1967 Prof. Gurtej Singh considered “the writings of Guru Gobind Singh one of the basic source of his favourite historian Rattan Singh Bhangu’s *Prachin Panth Prakash*.
The Khalsa Over 300 Years, p.32
- (iv) Principal Harbhajan Singh. *Spokesman*, Chandigarh, *Dasam Granth Lekh*, Chandigarh.
- (v) *Avtar vadte Dasam Granth*, a pamphlet published by a group of 24 like minded persons.
- (vi) Harinder Singh Mehboob, *Sahije Rachio Khalsa*.
7. Kesar Singh Chibber, *Bansavalinama Dasan Patshahian Ka*, Charaun 14: 263-69
8. Koer Singh, *Gurbilas Patshahi Dasvin*, Chapter 6: 165
9. *Ibid.*, Chapter, 6:2.
10. Kharak Singh Gurtej Singh (Trs.) *Episodes From the Lives of the Gurdix*, pp.1.8,
11. *Ibid.*, Sakhi, 28, p.60.
12. *Adhyaya*.8: 18, (315), *Adhyaya*, 12: 32, 40, (501,509)

13. *Adhyaya* 8: 31,36,(328,333) *Adhyaya* 12: 28,30,31,37,39,43,44,49(497,499,500,506,508,512-13,518).
14. *Adi Guru Granth*, Kabir, *Raga Gauri Cheti*,p. 332.
15. Harinder singh Mehboob, *Sahije Rachio Khalsa*,700-49.
16. Harinder Singh Mehboob, *Ilahi Nadar de Parinde*, p. 18.
17. All these misleading and many articles were published in the *Spokesman* Chandigarh.
18. Two Views on Dasam Granth. “An Appreciation of Ashta’s Jaggi Approach.” *Fundamental Issues in Sikh Studies*, p. 183.
19. The video tape of the functions is with the author.
20. *Nanak Prakash Patrika*, December 1999, pp. 25-36.
21. *Sikh Studies Quarterly*, vol. iii No. 1, pp. 8-14.