

CHAPTER 1

Introductory

Sikhism is a revelatory religion. Its bedrock is the revelation that came to Guru Nanak and his nine successors, who conveyed it in simple and melodious verses to the suffering humanity. The Word of the Gurus became the bond between the Gurus and their Sikhs (Shish) or disciples. Guru Arjan, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs, who himself wrote a lot of *Bani*, realising the importance of the Guru's *Bani* or 'Sabad' (Word) and of preserving its authenticity, took the sagacious step of collecting the teachings of the Gurus and compiling the *Adi-Granth*, including in it the hymns of some of the Bhagats that were in accord with the Guru's concept of God, life and religion. The *Bani* of the predecessor Gurus was collected and scrutinised with care to ensure its authenticity. Bhai Gurdas, the foremost scholar of Sikhism and a trusted and devout Sikh, was associated with the project. He also scribed the *Granth* besides assisting in the work of collection, selection and scrutiny of the *Bani*. On its completion the *Adi-Granth* was installed in Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple), Amritsar, on Samat 1661 Bhadon Sudi Ekam (1604 A.D) Since then it has been the sole authentic source of the Gurus' Word, and the object of supreme veneration. A century later, in 1708 A.D., on ending the line of personal succession of Gurus, the tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh, apotheosized the *Granth* as the future and eternal Guru of the Sikhs, incorporating in it also the *Bani* of his martyred father, Guru Tegh Bahadur. Thus, Guru Granth

took the place of personal Gurus and continues to guide and inspire the Sikhs all over. Its position, status, and importance as a religious guide is supreme, excelling that of the scripture of any other religion. In fact, from the very start the status of the *Bani (Sabad)* was supreme.

Many hand-written copies of the Granth Sahib are in existence and at present its printed volumes are found in all *Gurudwaras* (Sikh Temples) and numerous Sikh homes. Translations in English, Urdu, and Hindi are also available. Considering the unique position The Guru Granth occupies in the Sikh religious system, the question of its authenticity assumes a fundamental importance. This raises the question of identifying unquestionably the original manuscript scribed by Bhai Gurdas under the direction and personal supervision of Guru Arjan Dev. Apart from many hand-written copies possessed by various persons and found in some *Gurudwaras* and institutions, the most important is the *Bir* recension at Kartarpur, near Jullundher, in the custody of Sodhi AmarJit Singh, a descendent of Dhirmal. This is taken to be the *Bir* prepared by the fifth Guru and has throughout history been the *Bir* or reference. An alleged copy of the original *Adi-Granth* is claimed to be the *Bir* of Bhaj Banno. It is, at present, in Gurdwara Bhai Banno at Kanpur. The *Damdami Bir*, the version that was apotheosized, was prepared under the direction and supervision of Guru Gobind Singh, incorporating the *Bani* of his revered father, Guru Tegh Bhadur, in the text of the original that was scribed by Bhai Gurdas. The present printed *Bir* is a faithful copy of it.

The historical tradition is consistent that the *Kartarpuri Bir* is the original *Bir* compiled by the fifth Guru. For the *Banno Bir* the claim is that, except for some extra material introduced in it, it is the first copy of the original *Bir* compiled by the fifth Guru. Our object in this essay is to consider all the pros and cons of these issues and arrive at a clear finding. An attempt will be made briefly to state, discuss,

and analyse all the available materials, facts, and views on the subject, and, after making a careful examination of these, express our assessment and record our conclusions.

2. The decision to compile the scripture of the Sikhs

The basic reason for the fifth Guru to compile the *Adi-Granth* was to give an authentic scripture, embodying the doctrines of the Sikh religion and the words of the Guru for the guidance of the Sikhs and the followers of the Gurus. In the Sikh religion the entire *Bani* conveys spiritual truths of a divine status. For, according to the Gurus, *Bani* is mystically revealed: (1) "O, Lalo, I express what the Lord conveys me to speak".¹ (2) "Nanak, says the words of Truth, he expresses only the Truth, it is time to convey the truth".² (3) "I have expressed only that you made me say".³ (4) "I have no voice of my own, all what I have said is His command"⁴ (5) Guru's words are divine nectar (Amrit), these quench all spiritual thirst."⁵ (6) "Consider the *Bani* of the Sat Guru the words of Truth. O, Sikh, it is the Lord who makes me convey them."⁶

As such, the *Bani* commands the highest sanctity, it being from the very fount of Truth and the guide and Guru of the Sikhs: (i) "The Word (Sabad) is the Guru, my consciousness is the follower of the immanent mystic force"⁷ (ii) "The True Guru is the Word (Sabad), and the Word is the True Guru; it leads to the path of God-realisation".⁸ (iii) "The *Bani* (word) is the Guru and the Guru is the *Bani*, all spiritual truths are enshrined in it."⁹ (iv) "The embodiment of the Guru are his words, their meaning is revealed in the company of saints."¹⁰ Hence the fundamental necessity of identifying and separating the revealed *Bani* from the unauthentic and the unrevealed.

There was an additional reason for expediting the preparation of an authentic scripture. Other schismatic sects like the *Minas* (headed by Meharvan s/o Prithi Chand,

elder brother of Guru Arjan) had prepared a Granth, and in it they had included some real and some spurious *Bani* attributed to the first four Gurus.¹¹ Besides these, other persons had also given currency to fake *Bani*. Hymns not written by the Gurus were passed or sung as the *Bani* of Gurus, thereby misguiding the Sikhs and the public. Meharvan S/o P.rithi Chand had created many hymns with the word \ Nanak in the last couplet of the Sabads, suggesting thereby that those were the *Bani* of the Gurus. Shamsheer Singh Ashok has collected many such verses in his book “Sodhi Meharvan”, e.g. (i) “Nanak is thy slave. Protect me my Lord.” (2) Without you there is none to protect me. I seek Thy shelter. Make Nanak, Thy slave, to remember Your name”.¹² The *rababis* had also started singing the fake *Bani*, exploiting thereby the name of Guru Nanak and supporting the claims of the *Minas* for the Guruship. News about this practice was conveyed to Guru Arjan. He spoke to Bhai Gurdas. saying that the *Minas* were thus confusing and exploiting the public by mixing their own verses with the *Bani* of the Gurus; and therefore, true *Bani* of the Gurus should be collected and authenticated.¹³ Even today we are aware that in the *Janamasakhis* many verses which are not of Guru Nanak and find no place in the Guru Granth, stand attributed to him. Therefore, this task of creating an authentic scripture was, though urgent and essential, made doubly complicated. For apart from the gigantic task of collecting the *Bani* from scattered sources, the work of sifting and scrutiny was equally delicate and difficult. In the entire Sikh history no person was more eminently suitable to assist the Guru in this work than Bhai Gurdas who, both because of his knowledge, experience and close association with the earlier Gurus, could know what and where was the *Bani* of the Gurus. Therefore, the preliminary work of collection and scrutiny was entrusted to Bhai Gurdas. The Guru himself approved its final inclusion. Saroop Das Bhalla records in *Mehma*

Parkash (1801 A.D.) the reply of Bhai Gurdas to a query in this regard: “Just as a devoted wife can recognise the speech of her lord, I too have the intuitive capacity to spot and identify the *Bani* of the Gurus.”¹⁴ The difficulty of the task can be gauged from the fact that even a person like Bhai Gurdas sometimes made slips in his preliminary selection and recording which is evident from the corrections got made by the Guru in all these cases. Obviously, the final approval, “*Sudh*”, was invariably given by the Guru himself and what was an error was directed to be rectified by its omission, obliteration, rewriting or otherwise (*‘Sudh Keeche’*). The task of collection from the multifarious sources was equally difficult. It is wrong to assume that the *Bani* of the different Gurus stood recorded at one place, or what stood collected at one place seemingly as the *Bani* of the Gurus, and of the Bhagats was authentic. In each case the *Bani* of the Gurus, collected from whatever source was, before its final inclusion, scrutinized by Bhai Gurdas and the Guru.

In order to remove any misunderstanding, it is necessary to mention that the *Bani* in the *Mohan Pothis* was only a part of the *Bani* of the Gurus and Bbagats. The *Mohan Pothis*, according to Teja Singh and Prem Singh Hoti Mardan, had only 524 pages. Each page had 13 lines and each line contained 13 letters in a very bold hand.¹⁵ Dr. Jodh Singh has by way of a sample given a photocopy of a page of a *Mohan Pothi* in his book “*Kartarpuri Bir De Darshan*”.¹⁶ The first *Pothi* contained *Bani* in 10 *Rags* only and the second had it in 4 *Rags* only. Second, the *Pothis* contained the *Bani* of Gurus Nanak, Angad and Amar Das and Bhagats Kabir, Namdev, Tarlochan, Sain, Ravidas and Jaidev. Third, that not all the *Bani* of the Gurus and Bhagats mentioned above is in these *Pothis*. Fourth, the words in these *Pothis* scarcely have the use of ‘*lags*’ and ‘*matras*’ and their deciphering could not be an easy task. Fifth, not all the *Bani* in these *Pothis* was included in the Guru Granth. All we wish to say is that

the capacity of Sahs Ram Ji to collect and record and sift the *Bani* of the Gurus and the Bhagats could not be better than that of Bhai Gurdas Ji and Guru Arjan Dev ji.

There is another matter which needs to be stated regarding the *Bani* of the Gurus and the Bhagats. It is clear from the earlier quotations that in the Sikh theology the *Bani* of the Gurus had the highest place, status and sanctity. Therefore, it is quite unthinkable that the Gurus only created and sung the *Bani*, but never cared to reduce it to writing or to preserve it, or pass it on to the successors. The acts and the circumstance indicate that the position was otherwise. The first Var of Bhai Gurdas clearly states that Guru Nanak during his tour in West Asia carried a book with him. Evidently, the book with him could be neither the Veda, nor the Gita, nor the Koran, it could be nothing else than a collection of his own hymns. And it is unimaginable that while appointing his successor he would not pass it on to him this most valuable part of the heritage, or that his successor would be less conscious or discreet in the matter and not repeat the process of recording the hymns and ensuring their preservation. The *Puratin Janamsakhi* records that at the time of appointing his successor Guru Nanak also gave Guru Angad the manuscript of his *Bani*.¹⁷ Dr. Sahib Singh and Harbhajan Singh have collected a mass of circumstantial evidence which clearly shows that the Gurus were not only knower of the *Bani* of the earlier Gurus, but they were also quite aware of *Bani* of some Bhagats.^{18,19,20,21}

This shows that while the Gurus were fully aware of the *Bani* of the other Gurus and were conscious of its sanctity and the need of its preservation, the same had not till then been authenticated in the form of a single scripture of the Sikhs and their religion. This lack of consolidation and authentication was being exploited by others, especially pretenders to Guruship. It was, therefore, Guru Arjan who once for all eliminated all ambiguity and compiled an

authentic scripture of the Sikhs containing the entire *Bani* of the Gurus. What we need to emphasize is that no part of the *Bani* of the Gurus was left out of the Guru Granth. In addition, synchronizing with the Sikh thesis selected *Bani* of Bhagats was also included in it. Hence, the basic objective of this compilation is a virtual edict by the fifth Guru that what is in the Guru Granth is the only authentic *Bani* of the Gurus and that any thing dissimilar to the *Bani* in the *Adi Granth* is either not of the Gurus or is not authentic. Accordingly, all doubts on this score were dispelled for all time to come. Both tradition and all historical writings of S. D. Bhalla, Sohan's *Gurbillas Chhevin Patshahi* and others indicate that the fifth Guru, Shri Guru Arjan Dev, compiled the *Adi-Granth* in the year, 1604 A.D. and that Bhai Gurdas was the scribe working under the day to day instructions and supervision of the Guru. Since the completion of the Granth Sahib (at that time called the *Pathi*, the book), embodying the spiritual message of .the Sikh Gurus, it has been given the highest veneration. It was installed as the sacred scripture of the Sikhs at the Harmandir Sahib Amritsar, on Bhadon Sudhi 1st Samat 1661.² The next question is which is the original *Adi-Granth* that was compiled by the fifth Guru.

3. The Custody

The tradition and historical writings are unanimous that from Amritsar the *Adi-Granth* was shifted to Kartarpur because the family of the sixth Guru moved to that place. Though the seventh and subsequent Gurus later shifted to Kiratpur, Patna Sahib and Anandpur Sahib, it is accepted that the original *Adi-Granth* remained with the family of Dhirmal, the great grandson of the Guru, and his descendents at Kartarpur. It is believed that as Dhirmal and his descendents ceased to be in the line of the Gurus, the *Adi-Granth* was at one time coercively taken away by the Sikhs from the family. But, at the instance of the ninth Guru,

who came to know of it, it was restored to that family. In the narration of the event of the return of the *Bir* to *Dhirmafias*, the story teller has introduced an element of a miracle by saying that the Sikhs placed the *Bir* in the bed of the river from where the *Dhirmafias* lifted it unharmed by moisture. The position will be explained later while dealing with criticism on the point. Again, tradition and historical writings are clear that during the time of the ninth and the tenth Gurus, the *Adi-Granth* was with the successors of Dhirmal. For, many copies of the *Adi-Granth* in which the *Bani* (hymns) of the ninth Guru has been recorded in the time of the ninth and the tenth Gurus show that those had been corrected with the *Granth* of the fifth Guru. For example, in the *Granth* at Dehradun, it has been recorded that certain hymns were not there in the *Granth* of the 5th Guru.²³ Further, the very fact that the 10th Guru, when he wanted to prepare at Anandpur the *Damdami Bir*, first approached the family of Dhirmal for lending the *Granth*, shows that the original *Adi-Granth*, wherever it might have been earlier, was, at that time, decidedly with that family.²⁴ Again, it has been stated that Baba Deep Singh spent many days at Kartarpur in order to authenticate a copy or copies of the *Adi-Granth* by comparison with the original *Adi-Granth* with that family.²⁵ It is, thus, not in doubt that all through that and the subsequent period, this *Adi-Granth* at Kartarpur remained the *Granth* of reference for confirming the authenticity of the *Bani* of the Gurus and the Bbagats. And, it remained in the custody of the Sodhis at Kartarpur.

After 1708 A.D., the demise of the 10th Guru at Nanded, the Sikhs passed through extremely difficult and unsettled times. In that period, the question of the change of the custody of the *Adi-Granth* could not arise. Considering the power and influence of Ranjit Singh and the respect that this original scripture commanded among the Sikhs, it was natural that he should have procured this *Granth* for himself

and kept it with him as a national treasure of the Sikhs. At the time of the British conquest of the Punjab, this *Bir* passed into the hands of the Indian Government. Thereafter, this *Bir* became the subject of a Civil Suit and for obvious reasons it was restored to the Sodhis of Kartarpur, descendants of Dhirmal. Therefore, its custody first with the Sodhis of Kartarpur, then with Ranjit Singh, and again with the Kartarpur family, is an important and basic piece of evidence. Because, the presence and recovery of a manuscript, document, or book from its natural and proper custody and environment is a relevant and weighty factor in showing its authenticity.

II

1. Claim of Originality undisputed

We are not aware of any other copy of the *Adi-Granth* on behalf of which any claim of originality has ever been made. Accordingly, the only *Bir* about which a claim of its being original has been made is the *Kartarpuri Bir*, and, this claim is undisputed. In India where there is an unfortunate tradition of making false claims about the location of sacred places, scriptures, documents, manuscripts, etc., the singular absence of any claim of originality for any other *Bir* is a very remarkable fact to show that the authenticity of the *Kartarpuri Bir* has never been in doubt.

2. Internal Evidence

We now proceed to state and consider the internal evidence exhibited by the *Kartarpuri Bir* about its originality. Here we might indicate the available material on the subject as also the method of writing the *Kartarpuri Bir* adopted by the scribe, evidently under the instructions of the author or the compiler. Not many persons have made a detailed

examination of the *Bir* and fewer still have made a detailed record of that examination. The only detailed records indicating its special features are the two books by Dr. Jodh Singh. The first, “*Pracheen Biran Bare*”, was written in response to the criticism of G.B. Singh about the *Kartarpuri Bir*. The second book, “*Kartarpuri Bir De Darshan*” is a very detailed and meticulous page by page description of the *Kartarpuri Bir*, with a brief commentary on its significant and important features. In fact, except for the second book, there is no authentic, much-less detailed, record of the particular features of the *Kartarpuri Bir*. Our examination is based on the evidence collected in this book (which has also been referred to by us) and a personal study and verification of all the special and salient features of the *Bir* by an examination of the original *Bir* at *Kartarpur*.

3 Method of Writing

The examination of the *Bir* reveals that the scribe followed a particular method while writing the Granth. The knowledge of this method is essential to understanding why in the original *Adi-Granth* certain unusual features and incongruities that stand rectified have occurred and why those could never occur in a Granth which had been copied from the original or another Granth. We are all aware that the *Bani* of the *Adi-Granth* has been classified *Rag* wise, and in each *Rag* the *Bani* has been recorded *Guru* wise, *Bhagat Bani* being at the end. A particular sequence in regard to *Sabads*, *Saloks*, *Ashtpadis*, *Chhants*, *Vars* has been observed. In *Bhagat Bani*, the *Bani* of *Kabirji* comes first, then of *Namdev Ji*, and thereafter of *Bhagat Ravi Dass* and others. In order to eliminate any chance of interpolation, the couplets, or verses (*padas*) have been numbered. In addition, the *Sabads*, *Saloks*, etc., of a particular *Guru* or *Rag* have also been numbered serially. Further, reference of these numbers of *Sabads* is given in the table of contents, along

with the quotation of the first words of each *Sabad*. Hence, there cannot be any chance of later interpolation without its becoming clearly apparent. This being the system laid down by the compiler, the scribe had to devise a method by which the task could be accomplished easily and speedily. It is also important to understand that while the *Bani* was being recorded in the Granth, the work of the collection of *Bani* of the first four Gurus and the Bhagats was also, for evident reasons of speed, going on simultaneously. Therefore, the scribe had to take care of two things, first, that an adequate number of pages or leaves was allotted to a particular *Rag*, and within a *Rag* to each Guru or Bhagat, so as to enable the scribe to write within the allotted space the *Bani* anticipated to be available. Secondly, the *Bani* under each *Rag* was being written simultaneously, and, while the *Bani* of one Guru, Bhagat, or author was being collected, it was also being sorted out and recorded separately at appropriate places under each *Rag* in accordance with the set system that had been devised. There being a single scribe for this gigantic task, some times this anticipation went wrong and many of the incongruities, as we shall see, are due to this faulty anticipation, or the late collection of the *Bani*, or the multi-fariousness of the assigned task.

Another fact is that the numbering of the leaves of the book had been done in advance. The paging of the *Kartarpuri Bir* shows two things. If the book is opened, the number of page stands given to the page on the left hand side, and the page facing us on the right hand side carries no number, i.e. if the number of the page on the left is 15, the page on the right is deemed to be a part of it. We might call, as Dr. Jodh Singh does, the page on the left to be 15/1 and on the right to be 15/2. Page number 16 is given on the back of page 15/2 and when leaf 15/2 is turned, page 16 or 16/1 would face us from the left side of the Granth. However, in the *Kartarpuri Bir*, the number given to the page on

the left is 15 and not 15/1. Secondly, after making a rough guess about the *Bani* likely to be available for each section or *Rag*, one or more clusters or bunches of eight leaves each, numbered in advance, were allotted for each *Rag* or section of the *Bani*. And, as and when the *Bani*, or part of it, of a particular *Rag*, section, Guru, or Bhagat was available, it was sorted out and copied out at the appropriate places in the concerned packets or sections, in a particular, or proper sequence. Though, as we have seen, the numbering of the pages had been given inside of a leaf, for the convenience of identifying the concerned packets (which had, evidently to be kept loose or unbound), without the need of opening them, the outside of the first leaf of the cluster or packet had been marked by the page number borne by its inside, i.e. a packet starting with page 33 on the inside of its first leaf would also bear number 33 on the outside of it, though in the bound book it would be the right-half page of page 32 or 32/2. All the same, the adoption of this method of marking was essential in readily picking up and identifying packets for the purpose of recording any *Sabad*, *Shalok* or *Var* in the assigned packet or packets at the appropriate place, or section. We shall see later that while the adoption of this method was convenient and necessary for the day to day working, it led to some mistakes. As indicated already, totals of *Padas*, *Sabads*, or *Shaloks* of each Guru or author, or the totals of the *Sabads* of each *Rag* are also serially given.

We shall hereafter record internal pieces of evidence into two parts: (i) those that are individually conclusive in their evidentiary value, and, (ii) those that are, coupled with other evidence, conclusive in showing the authenticity of the *Bir*.

4. Individually conclusive facts

1. G. B. Singh who suspected the originality of the

Kartarpuri Bir, though he had not seen it carefully, laid down three criteria for identifying the original *Bir*. Dr. Jodh Singh records that the *Kartarpuri Bir* shows all these criteria and, in fact, is the only hand-written *Bir*, which exhibits all three of them and fulfils the prescribed essential tests. The first criterion is that the original *Bir* should record the copying of *Japu* from the writing of the fourth Guru who had collected it. Second, in this *Bir* the dates of the demise of the first five Gurus only should be in the hand of the original scribe. Because, Bhai Gurdas, who wrote the original *Bir*, passed away during the time of the sixth Guru and, as such, his writing could not appear beyond the time of the sixth Guru. Three, on the Granth the words 'Sudh' or 'Sudh Keeche' ("It is correct", or "correct it") should be recorded in the hand of the fifth Guru who supervised and compiled the *Bir*.

The *Japu* of Guru Nanak was recorded by the fourth Guru. In all the handwritten *Birs* the practice was to record either the words "*Japu Nisan*", or "Copy of the Copy of the *Japu* recorded by Guru Ram Das". If the *Bir* was a third copy of the original *Bir* of the fifth Guru it would say 'Copy of the copy of the copy of the copy of the *Japu* recorded by Guru Ram Das.'" This has been invariable and in a way is a complete guide in identifying the original. As the fourth Guru was the person who collected and wrote the *Japu* and the fifth Guru was the first person to compile the *Adi-Granth* and copy the *Japu* therein, in the *Kartarpuri Bir* alone it is written "Copy of the *Japu* recorded in the hand of Guru Ram Dass". No other *Bir* records these words, for Bhai Gurdas was the first person to copy the *Japu* from the collection and writing of the fourth Guru. Secondly, in this *Bir* at page 45 dates of demise of the first four Gurus alone are with the same pen and ink and in the hand of the original scribe of the *Bir*. The date of demise of the fifth Guru is in the hand of the original scribe but with a visibly different pen

and shade of ink. No other *Bir* fulfils this test.. Thirdly, the words “*Sud*” or “*Sud Keeche*” appear at so many places in the *Bir*. These are supposed to be in the hand of the fifth Guru since these are in a different hand and not in the hand of the scribe of the *Bir*. These words appear in other hand- written *Birs* as well. But, for obvious reasons, those are in the same hand as of the scribe of the concerned *Bir*, showing that the *Bir* is a copy and not the original. For, it was only in the case of the original that the compiler and the scribe were two different persons, the fifth Guru and Bhai Gurdas respectively.

It is also significant to note that while writing the dates of the demise of the first four Gurus, the day of the week is not mentioned. But in the case of the 5th Guru apart from the date, the day of the week too is mentioned though the scribe is the same. This shows clearly that the date of the demise of the 5th Guru was written by Bhai Gurdas on a later day, otherwise had all the five dates been written at one time, either the day would have been mentioned in all the cases or been absent from all the five entries. We noticed two additional particulars of this entry about the fifth Guru. The shade of ink, especially of the date of demise, is clearly different from that of the earlier four entries. Second, in the first four entries there is a line drawn between the end of each entry and the end of the page. No such line has been drawn in the case of the fifth entry, showing thereby that the time of its writing was different otherwise the practice of drawing the line would have been observed in this case as well.

2. Both the historical writings of Santokh Singh, Bhai Gurdas, *Gur Bilas Chhevin Patshahi*, etc.²⁶ and the tradition assert that the fifth Guru completed the *Adi-Granth* in Bhadon-Samat-1661. As it is, the *Kartarpuri Bir* is the only *Bir* which records that it was written in Bhadon 1661; “*Samat 1661 Miti Bhadon Vadi ekam pothi likh pouhnche*”.²⁷

There is no handwritten *Bir* the internal record of which claims the same to have been completed in Bhadon Samat 1661, or on an earlier date. In fact, this dated volume being the earliest, it is a good piece of evidence not only to show the authenticity of the *Kartarpuri Bir* but also to fix the date of the preparation of the *Bir* by the fifth Guru.

3. We have explained the method of allotment of clusters or bunches of papers for a *Rag* or a proposed section of the *Granth*. For the expeditious completion of the work the adoption of this method was natural and necessary, especially when the work of copying and collection of *Bani* from different sources was going on side by side. For obvious reasons, the prior allotment of pages for a section had to be very liberal, so as to ensure that the available *Bani* should not exceed the allotted space, nor thereby upset the entire system and sequence of *Rags* and sections. But, evidently, this liberal allotment of pages or leaves, based on anticipation of the *Bani* likely to be available or to occupy the allotted space, was, in practice, bound to lead to a large number of pages remaining blank, between different sections of the *Adi-Granth*. And, this is what has exactly happened in the case of the *Kartarpuri Bir*. Dr. Jodh Singh records, that the total marked leaves of the *Kartarpuri Granth* are 974, comprising 1948 pages. Of these pages 453 are entirely blank, hundreds of other pages are partly blank, and considering that a fully utilised page accommodates 24 lines, the total space available on these partly blank pages comes to another 133 full pages. Thus, of the total 1948 pages of this volume, the space of 586 of them remains unused.²⁸ It is evident that this state of affairs could arise only in the originally written *Adi-Granth*; it could never happen in an *Adi-Granth* which had been copied from the original. It is a fact that none of the writers like Jodh Singh, Harbhajan Singh and others who have seen numerous handwritten *Birs*, state that any of the old handwritten *Bir*

contains many blank pages or spaces. Obviously, in a copy the very question of hundreds of pages being left blank does not arise, especially when it is copied by a single scribe. Because, in such a case the copyist has the entire material ready and in proper sequence, before him for being copied out. The *Banno Bir* which is supposed to be a copy of it, has only 467 folios.²⁹ It is therefore, ridiculous to suggest that the *Kartarpuri Bir*, with 974 folios is a copy of a Granth which had material that could be accommodated in about 467 folios. Generally, all the old handwritten *Birs*, including the *Kartarpuri Bir*, are in one hand. Therefore, this internal evidence in the *Kartarpuri Bir* is both incontrovertible and singly conclusive to show its originality.

4. There are many *Sabads* or pieces of *Bani* which have been originally written twice, but later this duplication has either been erased by '*Hartal*' (a chemical used in those days to obliterate the writing), or scored out with the observation in the margin that the *Sabad* was a duplication. Here too the question of *Sabad* or the same *Bani* being written at two places in a copied *Bir* could never arise. Such a thing could happen only in the original in which case either the scribe himself i.e. Bhai Gurdas, or the compiler i.e. the fifth Guru, has on revision found the error and got the same removed by scoring out the duplicate *Sabad* or *Salok*. This duplication has happened at pages 96/2, 186/2, 483/1, 511/1, 550/2, 836/1, 943/2, etc.³⁰ One thing is even more conclusive about this volume being the original. At page 943/2 the *Sabad* has been scored out with the observation that the same stands copied at a subsequent page. In this case the error involved is not only a mistake of duplication but probably also of sequence. Therefore, the supervisor retained the *Sabad* where it had been copied later and fitted better in the scheme of the *Adi-Granth* and got it, cored out from the earlier place. Thus, these duplications too have a conclusive evidentiary value.

5. There is another set of corrected incongruities in the *Kartarpuri Bir*. At page 778/1 there is a marginal note that Salok No. 22 of *Maihla 1* is correct and should be read on that page after Salok No. 21 (*Nanak Amrit Ras Paid 1 "1"4"21*). It is also indicated at this page 778/1 that Sholak "*Maru Maihla 3 "Agam Agochar Ve-Parwaha"*" which is there on the page, should be read at page 788 and the Salok of *Maihla-1* which at page 799/2 should be read there (at P. 778). Further, at page 788 there is a corresponding note that the 23rd Solak of *Maihla 3 "Agam Agochar Ve-Parwaha"* which is at page 778 should be read there (at page 788). Further still, at page 799/2 *Maru Maihla 1*, the Salok of which the correct place is at page 778 after Salok No. 21 of *Maihla I*, stands hastily recorded therein the hand of the original scribe. Now, these inadvertent incongruities are such as could not be rectified except by cross-references, especially as Salok of *Maihla 3* is long and could not be accommodated in the margin at page 788, nor could *Maru Maihla 1* at page 799/2 be accommodated at page 778 and scored out at page 799/2. It is also important to note that in the *Tatkara* (contents of *Saloks* and *Sabads*) too the incongruity is perforce reflected but rectified. Because, at page 16/1 of the *Tatkara* (table of contents), the first lines of all the *Saloks* of *Maihla I* are written with their serial numbers 1 to 21. But against Salok No. 21 of *Maihla-1*, the first line of Salok '*Quadrat Karnehar Aparā*' of *Maihla-1* is vertically recorded in the margin. Its number is noted as No. 22 and page as 799.

Further, at this page 16/1 of the *Tatkara*, since in the text *Salok* of *Maihla-3 "Agam Agochar Veparwaha"* actually, but incongruously, starts at page 778 immediately after Salok No. 21 of *Maihla-1*, its reference number and the first line of the *Sabad* are recorded in the beginning of similar references of all the other *Saloks* of *Maihla-3*. But its number is correctly given as Salok No. 23 of *Maihla-3*. And at this very page 16/1 of the table of contents after the number

and the first line of Salok No. 22 of Maihla-3, the number and line is of Salok 24 of Maihla-3. This is so because in the actual text, Salok No. 23 of Maihla-3 comes between Salok 21 of Maihla-1 and Salok No. 1 of Maihla 3 at page 778 and not between Salok Nos. 22 and 24 of Maihla-3 at page 788.

Another important feature of this page 16/1 of the *Tatkara* is that the original Salok numberings of the first 23 Saloks of Maihla-3 on this page have been rubbed with Hartal, and, thereafter, these very 23 Saloks have been renumbered, the first one as 23 and the remaining 22 as numbers 1 to 22. This clearly shows that originally the incongruity in the recording or placement of Saloks 23 of Maihla 3 and Salok No. 22 of Maihla 1 that occurred in the text was actually reflected in the *Talkara* by the scribe. But, when the out-of-sequence placements of these Saloks were later detected at the time of supervision or otherwise, the incongruities in the text were rectified by giving cross-reference in the margins of the text at the appropriate pages, and, the errors in the *Talkara* were corrected by rubbing with Hartal the numbers of the first 23 Saloks of Maihla 3 and renumbering them as numbers 23 and 1 to 22 of Maihla 3, and, in the case of, Salok No. 22 of Maihla 1, by writing its page and number correctly in the margin of page 16/1 of the *Tatkara*.

We have detailed these connected sets of corrections in the text and the *Talkara* (table of contents) because these incongruities could happen only at the time of the original writing and never in the case of copying from the original completed and corrected text compiled by the fifth Guru. It is also important to mention that on examination no other Bir has revealed this set of incongruities at pages 778, 788 and 799 of the text and in the corresponding portions of the *Tatkara*. By itself this set of corrections is also singularly conclusive in proving the authenticity of the Kartarpuri Bir.

6. Here we shall record a number of other corrected

mistakes which in their character, implication, and importance are similar to the ones described under item (5) above.

(a) At page 804/2 it is recorded in the margin that instead of 21st Pauri, 22nd has been written. Correspondingly, on page 805/1 there is a note in the margin that the Pauri there should be sung and written as 21 st Pauri. This error of sequence could never occur in a copy. And in the original this incongruity of sequence in the writing of the scribe could be rectified by the compiler only in the manner it has actually been done.

(b) There are numerous instances where Sabads, Sa/oks and a part of the Rani have been written in the margin, evidently, because in each case the Bani appears to have been found or collected later on and in the matter of sequence its place was where it now appears in the margin. In some cases the Bani has been given the proper serial number and the numbers of the subsequent Rani renumbered. But, in some cases numbers following them have remained uncorrected and the Rani in the margin has been given the same number as to the Salok or Sabad after, which it has to be read. These incongruities are so large in number and the Bani has been written in the margin at so many places that all this could happen only in the original, because either of the late collection of the Bani or the scribe, Bhai Gurdas, having omitted to record it in its right sequence or place. For example, at pages 154/2, 252/1, 364/1, 374/2, 694/1, 945/1-2, 946/1, etc. additional Bani has been written in the margins. At pages 940/1, 940/2 etc., the Bani recorded in the margins has been given the same number as borne by one of the Sabads on the page. Again, on pages 251/1, 252/1, 265/2, 266/2, 399/2, 499/2, 689/2, 690/1, 842/1, etc., portions of the Bani have been written in the margin and a mark given at the relevant place on the page to show where the marginal portion should be read.

(c) Students of the Guru Granth are aware that after the end of each Sabad or Salok the totals of padas, the totals

of *Sabads* of each Guru, totals of *Sabads* of each *Rag*, etc., have been recorded. The number of *Mathia* is also invariably given in addition. But, in the *Kartarpuri Bir*, in scores of cases the *Maihla* number, totals etc. were missed originally but were written later in small letters either in between or above the lines or in the margin for example, this has happened at pages 154/2, 164/2, 174/1, 248/2, 257/1, 267/1, 269/1, 270/1, 270/2 399/1. 455/2, 802/2, etc. Apart from that, in quite a large number of cases, these totals have not been given or given incompletely. This incongruity and its rectification as mentioned above are very common. There is a very clear reason for this feature of the *Kartarpuri Bir*. As the job of the collection of *Bani* and its recording were being done simultaneously, the scribe was never sure whether more *Sabads* of the *Bani* of a Guru, requiring precedence of sequence over the *Sabads* or *Bani* already written, would or would not be available. As such, he had, as a necessary precaution and in order to avoid repeated scoring out and alterations of the totals to leave the work of totalling to a later date when the Granth would virtually be complete. Therefore, this task of recording the totals had to be done as one of the last jobs to be completed. Perforce, the totals had to be squeezed in between or above the lines in small sized figures or in the margins. But such a position too could never arise in a copied Granth where the numbering would be complete and form a part of the line itself. The scribe could never fail to copy or record them in appropriate lines, even if in the original the numberings had been missing or recorded in between or been above the lines. In the other handwritten *Birs* these incongruities do not occur. Even in the *Banno Bir* totals are given in the lines themselves. Hence this feature of the *Kartarpuri Bir*, especially the large number in which these incongruities of omissions appear, prove its authenticity and originality.

(d) There is another kind of discrepancies in serial-wise numbering. On a number of pages, the *Bani* or the *Sabad* has

been scored out or cancelled by the use of *Hartal*. But, the old serial numbering has remained uncorrected, e.g. this has happened at pages 186/2, 970/1. In some cases, the incongruity even stands reflected in the *Tatakara*, because as the numbering has remained uncorrected in the Granth, it could evidently not be corrected in the *Tatkara*, which records only the state of numbering or sequence in the Granth. For example, mention of Salok number 94/2 in the *Tatakara* at page 7 has been scored out, and the numbering of subsequent references stands uncorrected. A large number of cancellations and uncorrected numberings in this *Bir* prove its originality since such a state of affairs could never happen in a copy of the original.

(e) As noted already, within the *Bani* of a *Rag* or section, the sequence of *Sabads* or *Saloks* is Guruwise. After it, normally comes the *Bani* of Kabir ji, Namdev ji, Ravidas ji and then of other Bhagats. But, the sources of the *Bani* of Bhagat Kabir and other Bhagats being quite large and scattered, its collection and selection for incorporation in the Granth must have taken quite long, since the same involved in the case of each part a scrutiny and decision by the Guru himself. The result was that in many instances the *Bani* of Bhagat Kabir, appears in between, and that also not at one place, or after the recorded *Bani* of Bhagat Namdev. It might be argued that such an abnormal sequence being in the original, it would also be there in a copy of it; therefore, the *Kartarpuri Bir* cannot claim any originality on this account. But, it is significant that the *Bani* of Bhagat Kabir, which is not in proper sequence has, evidently, been written on different occasions. This is clear from the fact that though the writing of these hymns is by the same scribe, in each case the writing differs in the size and shape of letters and the shade of ink. Had the *Kartarpuri Bir* been a copy, these differences in the shades of ink and the size of the pens and letters that are there, could

not have occurred, even though the break in sequence would have been there, because of the corresponding break being present in the original. For example, at pages 842/2, 863/2, 871/1 though the scribe is the same, the shades of ink and size of writing are different even in the case of the *Bani* of the same Bhagat or Guru. Therefore, while variations in sequence can be explained, variations in pens, shades of ink, and the size of letters of the *Bani* of the same Bhagat cannot be explained in a continuous writing, except on the assumption that the *Kartarpuri Bir* is the original and these variations occurred because of the variant timings of collection, selection and recording of the *Bani* of a particular Bhagat. Besides, because of this non-continuous writing of *Bhagat Bani* the totals of the *Sabads* of a Bhagat have not been given as has been done at other places. In all other copied *Birs*, though the sequence of the *Sabads* of the Bhagats is the same as in the *Kartarpuri Bir*, the pen and the ink used for them are the same and not different. The fact is that in the *Kartarpuri Bir*, the *Bani* of Bhagat Kabir, and even some other *Bani*, when found and selected later on have not at many places been recorded in the normal serial sequence of the *Bir*. But, these hymns have been written wherever space was available and even in the margin or between the *Bani* of other Bhagats, e.g. at pages 885/2, 945/1.

(f) Another feature of the *Kartarpuri Bir* is the scores of pages where the original writing has been obliterated by *Hartal* and later at those very places *Bani* has been written. Sometimes the space accommodating a whole *Sabad* or hymn has been cleaned with *Hartal* and new *Bani* rewritten at the place, e.g. at pages 840/1, 870/2, 966/1, 966/2.

There is a marked peculiarity regarding page 966/2. In the case of *Salok Varon Maihla I* verses no. 14 to 20 have been rewritten after obliterating the earlier writing by the use of *Hartal*. But, actually the last about four lines of these verses have been written in very bold letters so as to ensure

that the last words end where verse no. 21 begins and no gap is left between the ending of verse no. 21 and the beginning of verse no. 21. This need for writing these verses in a bolder hand could not arise in a Granth that had been compiled from another completed Granth.

It is important to understand that had the *Kartarpuri Bir* been a copy of the original, such a large number of places having required the need of scoring out or rubbing *or* cleaning with *Hartal* could never have arisen.

(g) Another significant feature of the *Kartarpuri Bir* is that at numerous places the headings and words like 'Ek Onkar' or the 'Maihla', or name of the *Ragare* written, but below these headings there is no *Bani* or *Sabad* and the place is blank. This is there at pages 279/2, 297/2, 348/1, 418/2, 469/2, 528/1, 530/2, 607/2, 610/2, 617/1, 621/2. This writing of the headings like *Maihla*, *Rag*, etc. by the scribe clearly indicates that it was anticipated that the *Bani* of that Guru *or* Bhagat would be available for being written there, but actually it was either not available or not approved by the fifth Guru. In a mere copy of *Adi-Granth*, such a thing could never happen, because where the original has no *Bani*, the question of recording the heading of a *Sabad or Bani* could never arise. Such recording of headings only, without being followed by related *Bani*, is not present in any other handwritten *Bir*. It is also significant to mention that practically all these headings relate to the fifth Guru who was alive at that time, e.g. pages 248/1, 297/2, 348/1, 418/2, 469/2, 528/1, 530/2, 607/2, 610/2, 617/1 and 621/2. Presumably, Bhai Gurdas's anticipation was that more *Sabads* of the Guru were likely to be available under these *Rags*. This is also an important feature to suggest the originality of the *Kartarpuri Bir*. Because, in a copy that coincidence of all these extra or lone headings, involving wrong anticipation, relating only to the fifth or the living Guru, could not arise.

(h) A very significant point is that at page 963/1 of the *Kartarpuri Bir* the words “*Pran Sangli Maihla I*” appear in Persian script. This Urdu writing has an important implication. In the original manuscript this *Bani* is supposed to be in the Persian script. But, it is a part of the traditional knowledge that the fifth Guru did not include (as is a fact) the “*Pran Sangli*” in the *Adi-Granth* because it was not considered by him to be the words of Guru Nanak, the connected story also being false. The writing of the heading of this *Bani* in Persian script would show only one thing, namely, that the scribe, Bhai Gurdas, wrote the heading of the *Bani* in Urdu, but before copying it out sought the approval of the Guru which was evidently not given and the matter rested at that. This is supported by the fact that in no copied *Adi-Granth* the words “*Pran Sangli Maihla I*” appear in the Persian script. This fact strongly supports the authenticity of the *Kartarpuri Bir*. Since the writing being in Persian script, the scribe, unless asked otherwise, would naturally start copying it out in the same script. He did start with that assumption but as the composition was not approved, nothing was done further.

5. Other conclusive factors.

(a) We know that in the *Kartarpuri Bir* leaves, and not pages, are numbered and leaf number is given on the inside of the leaf when it is facing one from the left. Thus, the page on the right side, as we open the *Bir*, has the same number as the page on the left. In order to identify a loose packet or cluster, on the first outer page of it, the leaf number inside of it was given. This expedient has led to a number of errors even in the *Tatkara*. Because the *Bani* which is on the outside page of a packet has been given the leaf number on its inside, though in actual numbering and counting, as explained already, this page is considered to be the right hand part of the page on the left of it. For example, in the *Tatkara* pages 332/2, 340/2, 348/2, 420/2, 461/2, 810/2, 937/2, have

been wrongly numbered as 333, 341, 349, 421, 462, 811 and 938 respectively. These errors contrary to the numbering system adopted in the *Bir*, which have occurred in the *Tatkara* on that account could arise only in the original copy, because of the method adopted in copying the *Bani* into separate packets simultaneously. Otherwise in a copy of the completed *Adi-Granth* this could simply not happen.

(b) The originality of the *Kartarpuri Bir* is also established by the *Nishan* or mark of the fifth Guru. This mark in those days meant, according to the accepted practice and tradition, the writing of the *Mool Mantra* of the *Japuji* in the hand of the Guru, the fifth Guru in this case. This *Nishan* appears at page 29/1 of the *Bir*. As a mark of adoration the page has been profusely decorated. The presence of the *Nishan* of the fifth Guru is also noted in the *Tatkara*. This is further corroborated by the fact that at page 551/1 the *Sabad*, “*Darshan Ko Loche Sab Koi*” is in a handwriting different from that of the scribe. Dr. Jodh Singh who has observed the writing of this *Sabad* closely and made the comparison, feels that this *Sabad* had been written by the fifth Guru himself because the handwriting i.e. the shape of the letters and of the “*Lagmatras*”, is identical with the handwriting in which the *Nishan* of the fifth Guru at page 29/1 stands written.

(c) At many pages, like 499/1, 933/2 the *Bani* has been written in the middle of the page and the space both above and below the written pages is blank. This position could arise only in the original because in these cases very probably the scribe anticipated that more *Bani* would be available which would, in order to maintain proper sequence, need to be written at the blank spaces. But in actual fact that anticipation, for one reason or the other, did not materialise and the spaces remained blank. Evidently, this position too could not arise in the case of a copied *Granth*.

(d) Among all the handwritten *Birs*, this is the only

Bir that has a third *Tatkara* called '*Tatkara Tatkare*', (index of the table of contents). Other handwritten *Birs* have only two kinds of *Tatkaras* (tables of contents), one of the *Rags*, and the other of the *Sabads*, *Saloks*, *Astapadis*, etc., giving the first line of each *Bani*. This second table of contents which has the sequence observed in the text also gives the serial number of the *Saloks* or the *Bani* of each *Guru* as also the number of the page where the *Bani* of a particular *Guru* starts. But this third table of contents, which gives in eight lines only the list of 30 *Rags* called the '*Tatkara Tatkare*', is found only in the *Kartarpuri Bir* and forms its unique feature, suggesting its original character.

(e) At page 415/1 in the margin are written the words "The *Sabad* is right". This *Sabad* does not find mention in the *Tatkara*. But, this observation in the margin shows that for this *Bir*, there was a supervisor or editor, other than the scribe, who alone could record such an observation of approval regarding *Sabad* on the page. This observation shows the original character of the *Kartarpuri Bir*. Otherwise, if the *Bir* had been copied from another *Bir*, the question of such an observation by the scribe or some other person would not arise.

(f) In the *Tatkara* of *Sabads* only the references of *Sabads* 1 to 58 of *Ramkali Mahla 5* are given. But, on page 681/2 of the *Bir*, which starts with *Sabad* 59 of *Ramkali Mahla 5* and ends with *Sabad* 60 of *Ramkali Mahla 5*, these two additional *Sabads* are written. Both these *Sabads* are in a different hand from that of the scribe and their reference in the *Tatkara* of *Sabads* is missing. This means that these two *Sabads* were added or got added either by the editor or the compiler. Here again, the absence of the reference of these two *Sabads* in the *Tatkara* and their text being in a different hand than that of the original scribe suggest that this feature could probably be only in the original and not in a copy. Because

in the copy all the 1 to 60 Sabads would normally be in the same hand. The possibility of only two Sabads, the mention of which is not in the *Tatkara*, being in a different hand is far greater in the original than in a copy. Similarly, Ramkali *Mahla* 5 Chhand No. 21 has no reference in the *Tatkara*, but the Chhand is present at its proper place, though it is in a different hand. This too supports the earlier inference drawn in the case of Sabads 59 and 60. In both the cases, the *Bani* being of the fifth Guru, it is very likely that he created it after 1604 A. D. and got it added at the appropriate places in the *Adi Granth* later on. The position is similar in the case of *Basant Ki Var* composed by the fifth Guru. This *Var* is recorded on page 854/2 by the scribe in the middle of this page. Apart from the space above this page, the previous page is more than half vacant. But, there is no reference of this *Var* in the *Tatkara*, showing that the fifth Guru composed it and got it included after 1604 A. D. Hence, it could not find mention in the *Tatkara* that stood already completed. It is significant that in all other hand written *Birs*, including the *Banno Bir*, reference of it is present in the *Tatkara*. From this fact Mahan Singh also concludes that *Banno Bir* was not prepared at the time of the *Bir* of the fifth Guru, otherwise in the *Banno Bir*, there would have been no mention of *Basant ki Var* in the *Tatkara*.

(g) At page 541 of the *Bir* the *Nishan* of the sixth Guru is present. Its presence is also mentioned in the *Tatkara*. In the circumstances of the case, this is a very significant and natural thing to do. During the time of the fifth Guru it had become abundantly clear that Guru Hargobind would succeed him. In fact, from the very start the sixth Guru was associated with the task of the collection of the *Bani* and preparation of the scripture.³¹ Some writers have even suggested that some of the Dhunnies were got recorded by the 6th Guru. They derive this inference from the fact that it is in the *Kartarpuri Bir* alone that we find that the Dhunnies of

some *Vars* are recorded in a different hand or in small letters in between or above the normal written lines. In other copies of the Granth, including the *Banno Bir*, these have been written in the lines and in the same manner as the *Bani* itself. It evidently suggests that in the *Kartarpuri Bir* the Dhunnies have been written on some later date, and presumably at the instance of the Sixth Guru. This is so at pages 399/1 and 897/2 where Dhunnies have been noted in small sized letters, in a different pen and ink or in between the lines. Thirdly, it appears to be a known fact that in the *Kartarpuri Bir* the *Nishans* of both the Gurus were present. That is why in order to give it a semblance of genuineness and to show that the same was prepared in the time of the 5th Guru that the *Nishans* of both the Gurus were pasted in the *Banno Bir*. Thus, the presence of the *Nishans* of both the Fifth and Sixth Gurus and the reference of the *Nishans* in the *Tatkara* is a unique feature of the *Kartarpuri Bir* which shows its originality. No other *Bir* has the *Nishans* of two Gurus mentioned in the *Tatkara*.

Conclusion

All this would lead to one clear conclusion, namely, that while the main corpus of the *Bani* and the *Tatkara* were prepared simultaneously and correctly, on revision, or because of late collection and selection, some *Sabads*, or parts of the *Bani*, were recorded later on and sometimes in a different hand. As far as possible, an attempt was made, if space was available, to record them at the places of their proper sequence and even in the margins of the appropriate pages. But mostly, for obvious reasons, these later writings failed to find mention in the *Tatkara* of the *Sabads*. Only if a *Sabad* was scored out on account of repetition or non-approval, the corresponding entry in the *Tatkara* was deleted or the *Sabads* were renumbered. Many a time, these *Saloks* written in the margin were given the same number as given to the ones on the relevant page.

It is important to understand that the errors in numbering, marginal writing of left-out *Saloks* or *Sabads*, differences in shades of ink and pens in adjacent *Sabads* Or hymns, the presence of double numbering and lack of the reference in the *Tatkara* of *Sabads* have mostly taken place in the *Bani* of *Bhagats*. Probably, this is also the reason that there is no *Sabadwise* reference to the *Bhagat Bani* in the *Tatkara*. Evidently, this is due to the comparative difficulty of collection and selection of the *Bhagat Bani* or other *Bani* from its variant and distant sources. The collective and connected appearance of scores of corrected incongruities or errors in the *Kartarpuri Bir* is quite explained by these being the problems of the original compilation of this monumental work. The task of merely copying out a completed work could neither involve such multifarious problems, scoring out, and rubbings with *Harta!*, nor create so numerous related and consequent omissions, or incongruities as have actually occurred in the case of the *Kartarpuri Bir*.

It has been vaguely suggested that because there are many incongruities in the *Kartarpuri Bir* it is just a rough draft and not the original *Bir*. For evident reasons the suggestion is senseless because neither in tradition nor in history there is any basis for such a guess. Nor is there any ground to suggest that the modern practice of making draft is traceable to the times of the fifth Guru. Had the *Kartarpuri Bir* been a draft, there was no point for the scribe to finally record the date of its completion, prepare the Three detailed *tatkaras* and have recorded therein the *Nishans* of the Gurus so as to authenticate it. Besides its preservation by the *Dhirmalias* and then by Maharaja Ranjit Singh precludes the possibility of its being just a draft. Nor does the presence or a few incongruities in the *Bir* lend support to the idea of its being a draft. For the last hundred of years the *Birs* have been compiled, compared, written and printed

with meticulous care. And yet when the Shromni Gurdwara Parbhandhak Committee sent its team to compare the latest corrected copy with the *Kartarpuri Bir*, T 33 errors or variations were discovered in the printed *Bir*. It is thus amazing that *Kartarpuri Bir* has so far corrected incongruities. Therefore, the suggestion of *Kartarpuri Bir* being a draft is not only groundless but also fanciful.

We have detailed above the various pieces and types of internal evidence, most of which are individually and incontrovertibly conclusive, in proving that the *Kartarpuri Bir* is the original *Adi-Granth* compiled by the fifth Guru in 1604 A. D. The other pieces of evidence, we have recorded are cumulatively, or coupled with the other evidence, equally conclusive in proving the authenticity of the *Kartarpuri Bir* as the original production of the Fifth Guru. No one who makes a serious and close page to page study. detailed scrutiny and examination of the materials available on the subject can fail to come to a clear conclusion about the undoubted authenticity of the *Kartarpuri Bir*.

III

Let us now proceed to examine the views of three persons, namely. Messers G. B. Singh, Mcleod and Pritam Singh who have expressed doubts about the authenticity of the *Kartarpuri Bir*. In 1944, G. B. Singh brought out his book "*Pracheen Biran*" wherein he criticised the authenticity of the *Adi-Granth* and the *Kartarpuri Bir*. The first part of his attack was very sinister; for he obliquely suggested that in the *Adi-Granth* certain writings which were not of the Gurus had been included and on the other hand certain *Bani* which was really of the Gurus had been omitted from it. This surmise of G. B. Singh was based chiefly on the *Mohan Pothies* which he had not even seen. The second part of his

contention was that the *Kartarpuri Bir* was not the original Granth compiled by the fifth Guru because it lacked a number of the features which the original *Adi-Granth* should have. Thirdly, he asserted that the *Kartarpuri Bir* was either a copy of the *Banno Bir* or a copy of its copy. Unfortunately, the contention of G. B. Singh, besides being entirely unfounded, were also couched in offensive language.³² The result was that in 1964, Dr. Jodh Singh, after a careful study of the *Kartarpuri Bir* published his book „ *Pracheen Biran Bare*”, which not only refuted completely the assertions of G. B. Singh but also thoroughly exposed the hollow, self- contradictory and false character of his statements and inferences.

We have already indicated and discussed the various features of the *Kartarpuri Bir* to show its authenticity; it would, therefore, be wasteful for us to repeat all the mis-statements of G. B. Singh and to detail the arguments and facts that show how baseless those are. However, we shall very broadly give the criticism of G. B. Singh and the reply of Jodh Singh on the three points mentioned above and consider some of the facts and views expressed by both of them in that regard. Dr. Jodh Singh brought out that while G. B. Singh had attacked the authenticity both of the *Adi-Granth* and the *Kartarpuri Bir*, he had neither examined the *Kartarpuri Bir* nor seen the *Mohan Pothies*.³³ As to the *Banno Bir*, G. B. Singh conceded that he had very little time to have a close look at it. He had tried to build his arguments on the basis of the written replies of the custodian of the *Banno Bir* conveyed to him at Lahore.³⁴ One can well imagine how unsound a person’s arguments and inferences about the three Granths can be when regarding two of them, which he had never seen, much less examined, he depends purely on hearsay, and regarding the third Granth, the *Banno Bir*, he relies upon the obviously biased claims of the custodian of the *Banno Bir* concerning the very facts which an

unprejudiced scholar is supposed to examine carefully.

On the first issue raised by G. B. Singh that some *Bani* of the Gurus is not in the *Adi-Granth* and some hymns included in the *Adi-Granth* are Lot of the Gurus, the reply of Jodh Singh is three fold. It is well known that in those days of the sixteenth century some spurious claims about the *Bani* were being made and the very object of the fifth Guru in compiling the *Adi-Granth* was to exclude writings that had been wrongly attributed to the Gurus, and to collect in one volume all the *Bani* of the Gurus. We have already indicated the spiritual status of the *Bani* and the highest esteem in which it is held. Hence the extreme importance of its purity and authenticity. Because according to the Sikh theology and doctrines, '*Sabad*' the revealed word, is the Guru, and in order to eliminate all misconceptions and mis-understandings about the *Bani* it was essential to compile an authentic version of it. Dr. Jodh Singh adds that for atleast three reasons the fifth Guru, who undertook the task, was evidently and eminently the best person to complete the scripture. First, he himself being a Guru, he could very well understand the spirit and the stand of the *Bani* and judge correctly what was or was not the word of the Gurus, or what was in the case of Bhagat *Bani*, otherwise fit to be included in the *Adi-Granth*. We all know that the Guru did not include the hymns of Shah Hussain, Bhagats Kanha, Pilo and others. Secondly, being so near in time, he was in a far better position, to tap the right sources and find out the authenticity of the available material than any person or scholar who is about four hundred years distant from the times of the first four Gurus. Thirdly, the fifth Guru had not only the availability of all sources and a superior capacity of discernment but he had also the benefit of the assistance and experiences of Sikhs who had been contemporaries, near contemporaries or associates of the earlier Gurus. As such, it would, indeed, be a pre-posterous

pretension on the part of any one like G B Singh today to claim that the task of identifying and collecting the Bani of the earlier Gurus done by the fifth Guru was not well done and the same could be performed far better by G B Singh or any other modern scholar without any particular spiritual training or status. Therefore Jodh Singh writes that one could well imagine how destructive and poisonous was the attempt of G B Singh to call the authenticity of the Bir and thereby to undo the work of the collection of the Bani done by the fifth and the tenth Gurus. G B Singh, he felt, was thereby trying to strike at the very roots of the Sikh faith in which the Guru Granth Sahib occupies a preeminently spiritual status both as a repository of the Shabad and as a guide of Guru.³⁵

G B Singh's criticism of the authenticity of the Kartarpuri Bir is based on two sets of arguments. First, that the Kartarpuri Bir had certain features which would show that it is a copy and not the original Granth, and, secondly, that it takes certain features which the original Granth is bound to possess. Since G B Singh's assertions and arguments were based on mere heresy and not on any examination of the Kartarpuri Bir, both his assertions were found to be incorrect and baseless. We have seen already that whereas the Kartarpuri Bir meets all the three tests that were indicated by G B Singh to prove the authenticity and originality of a Bir, no other Bir does not that.

As to the additional material, G B Singh alleges that the Kartarpuri Bir has the extra-bani of (i) Slok : Ji Dar Lakh Mohamda (2) Ratan Mala (3) Sakhi Raje Shiv-Nabh Ki, etc., since it is a copy of the Banno Bir. As this statement about the extra Bani in the Kartarpuri Bir, as we know, is incorrect, the conclusion of G B Singh is thus equally fallacious. Further, he states that the Bani of the 9th Guru had been recorded in the Kartarpuri Bir appropriately under different Rags. Therefore, he concludes that

the *Kartarpuri Bir* must have been prepared some time after Samat 1732, the year of the martyrdom of the 9th Guru. Here too both the statements and the conclusion of G.B. Singh are baseless, since we know that the *Bani* of the 9th Guru was never copied in the *Kartarpuri Bir*.³⁶

Few would say that Jodh Singh, an erudite scholar, known for his cool and level-headedness, was given to exaggeration. And yet in his book at dozens of places he calls the facts and statements of G.B. Singh to be untruthful, baseless and senseless. One has only to go through his book to realise how correct and appropriate is Jodh Singh's criticism of G.B. Singh. One wonders whether an honest scholar could make such deliberate misstatements. And, what is even more disgusting is that he would say one thing at one time and contradict himself at another place, because a contrary argument would suit his purpose better.

As a sample we shall state a few of the assertions and statements made by G.B. Singh and the observations of Jodh Singh regarding them. It is "a strange case that the author of the Book (*Pracheen Biran*), which is full of wrong statements and mistakes, should claim to have regard for truth and reason and consider himself to be too perfect to commit any mistake. Even though G. B. Singh had never seen the *Mohan Pothies*, he asserts that Saloks: *Jit dar Lakh Mohamda* and *Bai Atash Aab Ratan Mala*, were copied in the *Adi-Granth* from *Mohan Pothies*, being the *Bani* of Guru Nanak. He adds that the first Salok of Guru Nanak was not included in the *Adi-Granth* by Guru Arjun because of his fear of offending Muslims. The fact is that these Saloks are neither in *Mohan Pothies* nor in the *Kartarpuri Bir* prepared by the fifth Guru. On the one hand, G.B. Singh accuses the fifth Guru of excluding the Salok : *Jit Dar Lakh Mohamda* out of fear of offending Muslims and, on the other hand, he says that this extra *Bani* was included in some copies of the *Adi-Granth* after Samat 1732. Since this

Salok is not in the *Mohan Pothies*, it is on the face of it absurd to accuse the fifth Guru of fear, especially when there is nothing to suggest that the Salok was ever placed before Guru Arjun for inclusion in the *Adi-Granth* and that he refused to do so.”³⁷

In one chapter of his book, Jodh Singh describes the ‘farbrications’ indulged in by the author, G.B. Singh, regarding the *Adi-Granth*, and, in the second, he describes the ‘untruthful statements’ made by the author regarding the *Adi-Granth*.³⁸ Citing a number of wrong statements by the author, Jodh Singh writes: “Had G.B. Singh seen the *Kartarpuri Bir*, he would out of sheer shame have never made such baseless statements.”³⁹ G.B. Singh’s Sense of interpreting things is equally ridiculous. The words “*Pothi Likh Pauhche*”, indicating that the Granth was completed on that date’, he says, mean that Bhai Banno had reached Lahore on that date after copying the *Adi-Granth* on the way.⁴⁰ On the one hand G.B. Singh writes that the *Kartarpuri Bir* could not have been copied before Samat 1733, and, on the other hand, he states it was copied in Samat 1697.⁴¹ Many statements of G.B. Singh are so self-contradictory that Jodh Singh describes them to be “ridiculously absurd”. Further, G.B. Singh asserts that in the *Kartarpuri Bir* all dates of demise are in the same hand and that those were written in Samat 1717-18 by the 8th Guru. Hence the Granth was written not earlier than 1718, he concludes. We have already seen that this is a wrong statement and could be made only by a person like G.B. Singh who had never seen the *Kartarpuri Bir*. Yet, at many places in his book he never shirked from making numerous wrong assertions about its contents. It is in this context Dr. Jodh Singh cites the Persian proverb: “The liar has no memory” and the Punjabi proverb: “The Lies have no legs to stand firm.”⁴² In the *Kartarpuri Bir* the word *Pothi* is used to describe the *Adi-Granth* and not Guru Baba, but G.B. Singh

argues that as the Guru Granth became the Guru after the demise of the tenth Guru it shows that the *Kartarpuri Bir* was written after 1708 A. D. Regarding this Jodh Singh comments, “to make conjectures on the basis of misstatements is a sample of the kind of research done by the author (G.B Singh).”⁴³ G.B. Singh writes that in the *Kartarpuri Bir* the will of one Niranjana Rai, the great grandson of Dhirmal, stands recorded, and, considering the likely year of the death of Niranjana Rai, the *Kartarpuri Bir*, he suggests, was written not earlier than Samat 1780. Now, the fact is that on a blank page of the *Kartarpuri Bir* another greenish coloured paper stands pasted. Evidently, the will of Niranjana Rai had been written on a paper, in an ink, and in a handwriting different from the ones of the *Kartarpuri Bir*. It has nothing to do with the *Kartarpuri Bir* except that some one has later pasted the greenish paper containing the will on a blank page of the Granth. In this regard Jodh Singh observes that this is another ridiculous instance of the senseless fabrications made by G.B. Singh. Citing more such instances, Jodh Singh concludes that G.B. Singh on the basis of some wrong statements of Kahan Singh mentioned in a letter, coupled with some false facts introduced by him, has, without verifying them by a look at the *Kartarpuri Bir*, made assertions which he describes as his research. “In fact every literate person should be ashamed of the manner in which G.B. Singh has abused the word research.”⁴⁴

As to the *Banno Bir*, the reply of the custodian shows that 12 scribes worked in preparing the same. He also writes that some one had informed him that from *Rag Kanara* onwards the entire *Banno Bir* was in one hand. G.B Singh tries to brush aside this contradiction by saying that, may be, the leaves of *Banno Bir* got old and someone got them replaced and rewritten (actually the finding of the scholars, Harbhajan Singh. Harnam Dass, is that the entire *Banno Bir* is in one hand). On page 271 of his book, G.B.

Singh writes that the *Kartarpuri Bir* is a copy of some copy of the *Banno Bir*, that in the *Kartarpuri Bir* the entire Sabad of Bhagat Surd as had been copied but later had been rubbed off by *Hartal*, but by oversight one line of the Sabad which had been written in continuation of the Sabad of Bhagat Parma Nand Ji was left from being removed. This is entirely baseless since no *Hartal* has been used and only one line of Bhagat Surdas stands written, and this line is written quite separately. the same being not in continuation of any Sabad of Bhagat Parma Nand Ji. Since the *Kartarpuri Bir*, as we know, has none of the additional compositions that are there in the *Banno Bir*, the question of its being a copy of the *Banno Bir* does not really arise.⁴⁵

No one who reads the books of G.B. Singh and Jodh Singh can escape the conclusion that G. B. Singh has not written the book with any sense of integrity. and discrimination since he makes numerous baseless and senseless assertions without the least regard for truth. Jodh Singh, as mentioned above, has completely exploded the claim of research or scholarship made by G.B. Singh. Today, one can safely say that few persons with even nominal pretensions to scholarship are capable of making such wild and wrong statements as had been done by G.B. Singh.

Since the criticism of G.B. Singh was too unfounded to need any notice now, and since the same had been replied to by Jodh Singh in 1946, ordinarily we need not have mentioned it. But, Dr. Mcleod in 1975 and 1980 and Prof. Pritam Singh in 1981 have tried to exume the burried ghost of G.B. Singh. In a way they have kept him as a model in repeating some of his exploded theories and assertions which, on examination have been found to be baseless and untruthful. One thing both the scholars share in common with G.B. Singh is that none of them had examined the *Kartarpuri Bir* and Mcleod had not even a look at the *Banno Bir*.

Before we examine the merit of the criticism of Mcleod and Pritam Singh, we shall first consider the two questions about the differences between the *Banno Bir* and the *Kartarpuri Bir* and the story of how the *Banno Bir* came into existence as a copy of the original *Adi-Granth*, that was scribed by Bhai Gurdas.

1. Differences between the *Banno Bir* and the *Kartarpuri Bir*

According to the consistent tradition accepted by all concerned, there are certain writings and hymns present in the *Banno Bir* which are not present in the *Kartarpuri Bir*. These additional writings being unauthorised by the Guru, throughout the history and the tradition, the *Banno Bir* has been called the *Khari* or bitter *Bir*, meaning thereby that it is unauthenticated and not fit to be used for scriptural purposes. On this factual position there are no two opinions.

We shall now indicate the additional writing in the *Banno Bir*. The total leaves of the *Banno Bir* are 467. Between folios 464 and 467 the following writings appear.

(1) Salok: *Jit Dar Lakh Mohamda*, (2) *Ratan Mala*, and (3) *Haqiqat Raja Shivnabh Ki*.

These appear towards the end of this *Bir* on 4 to 5 pages, starting from 465-A and extending to 467-A with *Ragmala* on page 467-B. The *Ragmala* is the last composition both in the *Banno Bir* and the *Kartarpuri Bir*.⁴⁶ The last pages of the *Kartarpuri Bir* do not suggest, either because of the presence of blank spaces, or scoring out, or obliteration by *hortal*, or otherwise, that there was or could have been the least intention to write these hymns, or co, positions in the *Granth*.⁴⁷ The *Mundavani* is on page 973/1, pages 973/2 and 974/1 are blank, and on page 974/2 is the *ragmala*. As such, there could never have been the possibility, nor could it

ever have been contemplated, that these three writings requiring a space of over four pages could have been accommodated on the two blank pages 973/2 and 974/1. Both the tradition and the Banno family accept that these writings are unapproved and were not present in the Granth compiled by the Guru.

Now, we shall take up the three items which appear at the earlier pages of the *Banno Bir*. These are (1) A hymn of Bhagat Surdas (2) A hymn of Mira Bai and (3) a part hymn said to be of Guru Arjun Dev Ji. In the case of the eight lines of the hymn of Bhagat Surdas, only the first one verse is in the band of the scribe who wrote the *Banno Bir*; the remaining lines of the hymn are in a different hand, suggesting their subsequent addition.⁴⁸ But at page 885/2 of the *Kartarpuri Bir* there is only the first one verse of Bhagat Surdas and below it there is vacant space that could accommodate about four lines or even less. We have seen that there are numerous blank spaces in the *Kartarpuri Bir*. These really mean nothing and in fact suggest the authenticity of the *Kartarpuri Bir*. In this case, both in the *Kartarpuri Bir* and the *Banno Bir* originally there was only one verse of Bhagat Surdas. But, in the *Banno Bir* some other hand has later added the remaining verses of the Sabad of Bhagat Surdas. Hence the suggestion that the whole Sabad was in the *Banno Bir* but only one verse was copied in the *Kartarpuri Bir* has no basis. On the contrary the *Banno Bir* being admittedly a copy of the *Adi-Granth*, only one line was originally copied in it, obviously because in the *Kartarpuri Bir* there was only one verse. But later some other hand, other than of the original scribe, copied out the additional hymn in the *Banno Bir*. Therefore, the suggestion that the *Kartarpuri Bir* is a copy of the *Banno Bir* and the scribe of *Kartarpuri Bir* omitted to record the full hymn of Bhagat Surdas is factually baseless.

The hymn of Mira Bai appears at page 369/A in the

Banno Bir. In the *Kartarpuri Bir* at the last part of page 810/2, it stands scored out. We know that the scoring out of unapproved *Bani* is a common feature of the *Kartarpuri Bir* which suggests both that the Guru did not approve the concerned *Bani* and that the *Kartarpuri Bir* is the original *Bir*. Even otherwise as these hymns of Bhagat Surdas and Mira Bai involve no issues of ideology, the question of the scribe of *Kartarpuri Bir* having irregularly omitted them does not really arise. On the contrary, this is a distinct pointer to the originality of the *Kartarpuri Bir*, because the scribe of the *Kartarpuri Bir* was not merely a copyist but he was a person working under the distinct directions and authority of the Guru, who alone approved or disapproved what had to be recorded or retained. Hence the absence of the hymn of Mira Bai and Bhagat Surdas in the *Kartarpuri Bir* and the presence of only one verse of Bhagat Surdas lends support to the original character of the *Kartarpuri Bir* and not at all to the contrary suggestion of the originality of the *Banno Bir*.

Lastly, there are said to be some hymns of Ramkali *Mahla* 5 which are present only in the *Banno Bir* but are not there in the *Kartarpuri Bir*. Here too the position is virtually the same as in the case of the additional verses of Bhagat Surdas. In the *Kartarpuri Bir*, there are only two verses of Ramkali *Mahla* 5, in the middle of page 703/1. The hymns are in the same hand as of the scribe who had written the earlier part of the page, but the pen and ink used for writing these verses are different. Below this the remaining half page and subsequent four pages are blank. This clearly shows that at the time the scribe wrote these two verses, the earlier half page already stood written upon, and that the scribe intended to write, and actually wrote, only these two verses. Had the scribe intended to write more, he had full 41/2 page of vacant space available to do so. Secondly, it also shows that this page of the *Kartarpuri Bir*

including these two verses was not copied from another Granth or *Banno Bir*, because had this happened the pen and ink of the entire writing on the page would have been of one kind and not of two kinds as is actually the case i.e. use of one pen and ink for the earlier part of the page and use of a different pen and ink for these two verses.

The position of Ramkali *Mahla* 5 in *Banno Bir* is that only these two verses stand written there originally as in the *Kartarpuri Bir*. But, after that, twelve more verses were added to the first two. The proof of this later interpolation is two-fold. The size of these letters of 12 verses is comparatively small. Secondly, these 12 lines have been written in a space about 8 cms wide. The other 12 lines on this page, both above and below these additional lines, occupy about 50% more space than do these lines. Evidently, these 12 additional lines had to be squeezed in the available space of about 8 cms between the lines above and below the earlier writing on the page. Hence the comparatively small letters and closely-spaced writings.⁴⁹ It is, thus, very clear that both in the *Kartarpuri Bir* and the *Banno Bir*, originally only one line of Bhagat Surdas and two verses of Ramkali *Mahla* 5 were recorded; but in the *Banno Bir* more verses were interpolated on some later dates. In view of the facts as they are, it is baseless to suggest that the *Kartarpuri Bir* was copied from the *Banno Bir* and that the inconvenient verses were later deleted, or that the scribe while he wrote the first line of Bhagat Surdas and two verses of Ramkali *Mahla* 5, deliberately omitted to copy out the remaining verses of Bhagat Surdas and Ramkali *Mahla* 5, even though those were then present there before him in the *Banno Bir*. Facts belie the following observation of Dr. Mcleod. "There seemed to be only one possible reason for the appearance of these two fragments. The bulk of the hymn in each case must have been deleted, leaving a small remainder which was faithfully copied into the standard text."⁵⁰

2. The story of writing the Banno Bir

The traditional story of copying out the *Banno Bir* from the Granth of the 5th Guru is that the Guru entrusted to Bhai Banno the job of getting the Granth bound at Lahore, but, Bhai Banno on his way from Amritsar to Lahore, employed many copyists and copied the Granth into what now constitutes the *Banno Bir*. This is the version given by Giani Gian Singh.⁵¹ The story given by S.D. Bhalla in *Mehma Parkash* (1801 A.D.) is that Bhai Banno got permission to take it to his village Mangat, that he employed many persons to copy it; and halted at every half Kos. That while copying some words were wrongly written, and the Guru signed the Banno Granth on its return.⁵² Here it is necessary to point out that whereas Lahore is only 20 Kos from Amritsar, village Mangat (Distt. Gujrat, Pakistan) is still 100 Kos further ahead. Mangat being about 120 Kos from Amritsar, the journey would have taken about 8 months one way alone. *Gurbilas Chevin Patshahi* (1718 A.D.) records that the Guru asked Banno to have the *Bir* bound at Lahore, that Bhai Banno got permission to take the Granth to his village for one night, that on way from Amritsar to Mangat, and Mangat to Lahore he employed many copyists to copy the Granth by the distribution of clusters of leaves among the scribes, and halted at a distance of one Kos every day. It is added that an extra material, as described earlier, was introduced in the *Banno Bir*.⁵³ The Guru put his *Nishan* on it. This way the journey to Mangat and Lahore would have taken about 7 to 8 months. The fourth version given by Bhai Santokh Singh is that the completed Granth was taken to Mangat by Bhai Banno after taking permission for copying it and taking it to his village for one night, and that he halted at every 5 Kos on his journey. This way it should have taken Bhai Banno about 50 days to complete the journey.⁵⁴

Dr. Sahib Singh who has considered in great detail the subject of the Banno story in his book, "*Adi-Bir-Bare*" has

on very cogent grounds rejected all these stories to be unreliable and self-contradictory.⁵⁵ The first version is not tenable for a number of reasons. Sahib Singh believes that it is impossible to imagine that the developed town of Amritsar, which had been there for some decades, had, at that time, no facility for the simple work of binding a book. Secondly, the story is contradicted by the factual position of the *Banna Bir*. Apart from the impossibility of copying out a voluminous Granth in just 4-5 days, we find that the *Banna Bir* has been written generally by one hand or at the most by a few hands not exceeding two or three. Second, the copyist has done the job very well. Besides, the writing is such as to show that the copyist never wrote it in haste or under pressure of time.⁵⁶ Third, for evident reasons the work of copying could have been done conveniently only during the outward journey when the *Bir* was unbound and in bunches which could be distributed among different scribes. As it happened in the *Kartarpuri Bir*, such a process would obviously leave gaps or blank spaces between different sections, *Rags*, etc. But this is not the position in the *Banna Bir*. Fourth, it is difficult to imagine that Bhai Gurdas who did the entire writing of the Granth would not be entrusted with the task of binding the *Bir* or would not even be associated with it. The other stories of Bhai Banno, having taken the *Bir* to his village and having spent on way 50 days to seven months to copy it out are even less plausible than the first one. Normally, Bhai Banno would not take the *Bir* to his village without first having got it bound; and having done that his taking the *Bir* to his village and keeping it away from the Amritsar for one month to seven months, is not a mere circumvention, but a clear flouting of the orders of the Guru to keep it for only one night at village Mangat. Such defiance on the part of a devoted Sikh of the expressed wishes and directions of the fifth Guru is really unthinkable. And, evidently in the case of a bound *Bir* the work of

copying could not be done speedily. Here too, the character of writing as mentioned above goes against the story of copying from the original bound *Bir* on way to and from village Mangat. Fifth, it is impossible to believe, as asserted by the Banno family, that twelve copyists could be procured in those times of poor literacy to copy the Granth, written in Gurumukhi script either on way to and from or at village Mangat.

But, the greatest fact in destroying the credibility of the Mangat story is that it is unimaginable that after having prepared this monumental scripture of the Sikhs, the Guru should have entrusted it to Bhai Banno and then have remained unconcerned for one and half to sever. months about the safety or whereabouts of the scripture when the job of binding should normally have taken only a week or less; and that he should even not have deputed a person like Bhai Gurdas, or Bhai Budha to find out the cause of the serious delay during those disturbed days. According to *Gurbilas Parshahi* 6 the Guru was conscious of the insecure times and had actually cautioned Bhai Banno not to stay out for long. Nor believable that Bhai Banno should have taken such liberties with the directions of the Guru as to delay the job of binding or copying the scripture for months together and to keep the entire Sangat and the Guru in suspense and anxiety, and, further, to have introduced in the copy flagrantly in violation of the tradition and the very object of preparing an authentic *Bir*, unauthorized material, including the unbelievably repugnant story of Raja Shivnabh. The story is that Guru Nanak on his visit to Raja Shivnabh expressed the wish to eat the flesh of the only son of the raja; that the queen and the king killed their son to prepare a meal for the Guru who was very pleased, restored the son to life again, and disappeared.⁵⁷

Keeping in view the basic objective of the Guru, namely to authenticate the revealed *Bani* so as to avoid the least

scriptural or doctrinal deviations, the scrupulous concern in the entire Sikh tradition for the meticulous maintenance of the correctness of the *Bani*, and the case of Ram Rai who was punished for the slight misquoting of a verse, it is unthinkable that the Guru would allow the very first copy of the scripture to be materially altered and put his *Nishan* on it as a measure of approval without the comparison with the original *Bani*. Nor is it credible that any Sikh at the very first opportunity to handle it should dare to flout those objectives and concerns while copying the scripture. The very fact that the *Nishan* of the Gurus stands pasted on this *Bir* shows that it was never authenticated or presented to him for the purpose.

Another fact that rules out the very possibility of the Banno story and the absence of the *Bir* from Amritsar for any period of time, much less for many months is that Bhai Gurdas completed the writing of the text on Sam at 1661 Bhadon Wadi Ekam. Both according to *Gurubilas Chevin Patshahi* and Bhai Santokh Singh the completed *Bir* was installed at the Harmandar Sahib on Samat Bhadon Sudi Ekam 1661.⁵⁸ On a conservative estimate as believed by Sahib Singh and Harbhajan Singh, the completion of the *Tatkara*, after completion of the text on Bhadon Wadi Ekam, would have taken atleast about 10 to 12 days. The time distance between Bhadon Vadi Ekam and Bhadon Sudi Ekam being only about 14 days, the question of the *Bir* being taken out to Lahore or Mangat and copied before or after Bhadon Sudi Ekam Samat 1669 does not arise.⁵⁹ As to the date of installation, it is since then being celebrated as a Gurburb, and on that day of the year the Guru Granth is formally brought in a procession from Ramsar, where Bhai Gurdas wrote it, to Harmandir Sahib for installation there. As such, the entire Banno story becomes impossible, and self-contradictory and unbelievable. Dr. Sahib Singh has considered the point about the introduction of additional compositions in the

Banno and other such *Birs*. His inference is that the character of the stories, the language, and their identity with some of the language and stories in *Bhai Bala Janamsakhi* show that it is the *Hindalias* or *Nianjanis* who are responsible for these later interpolations, and that even the change of some last leaves in the *Banno Bir* where these compositions appear, also suggests that finding. Therefore, the entire Banno story, or the propriety of the recording of these additional compositions in the Banno Granth or even there authenticity is a myth that cannot stand any serious scrutiny.

We do not say that the *Bir* of the Guru was not copied, but the question is when this was done. It is a fact that from the very start the *Banno Bir* was called '*Khari*' or an unauthorized version, and not considered fit for scriptural use. It is also not understandable why a devout Sikh who had been entrusted with the scripture should do almost the sacrilegious task of introducing superfluous writings, and that also at a time when he had been asked to go to Lahore for getting bound the original *Bir*, Would Bhai Gurdas or Bhai Budha have ever done that? And where and how he got hold of the unauthorized *Bani* on his way to Lahore and why did he do it? All these are, indeed, unanswered, questions and any plausible answers to them clearly demolish the Banno stories. These not only destroy each other but are also self-contradictory and impossible. On the other hand, the likelihood is that finding that their act of having introduced unauthorized *Bani* was being frowned upon by the Sikhs, they floated quite inconsistent and impossible stories to give some credibility to the *Banno Bir*.

3. The date of the Banno Bir

The fundamental question is the date of the preparation of the *Banno Bir*. It appears that the Banno story, despite its internal contradictions, remained unquestioned. However, in the forties, G.B. Singh, Giani Gurdit Singh and Giani Mahan Singh found that the date of production of the

Banno Granth had been tempered with. Mahan Singh categorically questioned the theory of its production by writing his book "*Param Paviter Adi Bir Da Sankolno Kal*"⁶⁰. He stated therein that in the *Tatkara* of the *Banna Bir* the year of production written was Samat 1699 (or 1642 A.D.) and not Samat 1661 (1604 A.D.) as asserted in the Banno story, and that in order to give credence to the Banno story the figure 1699 had been altered into 1659 by overwriting and changing the figure 9 into 5, thereby making 1699 to look 1659. He adds that seen with a magnifying glass the figure '9' is clearly seen to have been changed into 5, because the figure 1699 stands written in an ink which has a visible touch of a reddish shade, but the overwriting is in a clear black ink without a trace of reddish shade as present in the original writing.⁶¹ This fact about overwriting and changing the original figure into 1659, which we find is undisputed, is also corroborated by Gurdit Singh. Mahan Singh clearly belies the Banno story and the claim that this *Bir* was prepared anywhere near 1604 A.D.⁶²⁻⁶³⁻⁶⁴ Further the team of scholars of the Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, sent to Kanpore, Principal Harbhajan Singh of the Sikh Missionary College, Amritsar, and Prof. Pritam Singh, who examined the *Bir* closely, state that in the *Tatkara* the date of its preparation as recorded is 1699 which stands changed into 1659, a year which no one says is the year of the production of the *Adi-Granth*. Mahan Singh also records that the so-called *Nishan* of the 6th Guru, mention of which is made in the *Tatkara*, has not been written on page 34 but the same pasted on it. Similarly, the so-called *Nishan* of the 5th Guru too is pasted on the relevant page and the reference of the presence of this *Nishan* finds no mention in the *Tatkara*.⁶⁵ This pasting of the *Nishans* of the Gurus clearly shows that, even if the *Nishans* were believed to be genuine, these can have no bearing on the date of the production of the *Bir*, since there is nothing to suggest that those

were recorded or obtained in relation to the *Banno Bir* or to authenticate the same, especially when the *Nishan* of the 5th Guru does not even find mention in the *Tatkara*. In fact, the absence of the mention of the *Nishan* of the fifth Guru clearly demolishes the Banno story which asserts that the 5th Guru put his *Nishan* on the *Banno Bir*. The *Nishan* of the 6th Guru does find mention in the *Tatkara*, but folios on both sides of this *Nishan* are missing, suggesting its subsequent introduction in the *Bir*. This *Nishan* can at best only suggest the period of the *Banno Bir* to be 1699, since the absence of the mention of the *Nishan* of the 5th Guru in the *Tatkara* clearly show's that the *Bir* could never have been written near 1604 or even in the period of the 5th Guru. As such, the year of writing of the *Banno Bir* is 1699 and the mention of the *Nishan* of only the 6th Guru in the *Tatkara* also confirms that. Rather, 1699 as the year of preparation of the *Banno Bir* is alone congruous with the mention of the *Nishan* of the 6th Guru in the *Tatkara*, Samat 1701 being the year of the demise of the sixth Guru. Giani Mahan Singh has given many reasons for believing that the year of production of the *Banno Bir* is Sam at 1699 and not 1661. He finds that the *Bir* is not written in any hurry. His examination also shows that the various totals of Sabads which in the *Kartarpuri Bir* are either not given, or are many times given above or between the lines, are correctly given in the *Banno Bir* and stand recorded in the lines themselves. Besides, the story of many copyists having copied out the Granth is not correct, because the *Banno Bir* has been written by only 2/3 persons according to Giani Mahan Singh,⁶⁶ one person according to the University scholars and not more than 5 persons according to Prof. Pritam Singh.⁶⁷

It is, thus, clear that the *Banno Bir* was written in Samat 1699 and the story of many or twelve scribes having written it in Samat 1661 is incorrect and untenable. The theory of *Banno Bir* being original, or even the first copy of the

original is without any factual or rational basis. The careful examination of the *Banno Bir* by Mahan Singh, by the team sent by the Amritsar University and by Prof. Pritam Singh and their reports, establish beyond doubt the year of writing of the *Banno Bir* to be 1699, 38 years after the writing of the *Bir* of the 5th Guru. Evidently, tangible material evidence cannot be brushed aside on the basis of repeated but absurdly self-contradictory hearsay. Further, the very attempt to alter the year 1699 to 1659 and to antedate the Granth so as to synchronize it with the Banno story, shows that the entire narration about the copying done during a visit to Lahore for having the original Granth bound there, is, as concluded by Sahib Singh, a myth, without any factual basis. In fact, in the face of the unambiguous internal evidence that (a) the Granth was completed in Samat 1699, (b) the *Tatkara* refers only to the *Nishan* of the 6th Guru and not to that of the 5th Guru, (c) the *Nishan* of the 6th Guru is pasted on the relevant folios supposed to be No. 34 with folios 31, 32, 35 and 36 to be missing, and (d) the presence of considerable extra material and compositions like the *Ratan Mala*, the very repulsive Sakhis of Raja Shivnabh Ki, Bani of Miran Bai, Bhagat Surdas, etc., it is impossible to assert that the *Banno Bir* was completed before 1642 A.D. or that it was copied from the Granth of the 5th Guru in 1604 A.D. or even near about that year. In fact, the presence of the extraneous material like Salok : *Jit Dar Lakh Mohamda*, *Ratan mala*⁶⁸, etc. shows that it is a Granth that militates against the very objective of the fifth Guru namely to prepare an authentic copy or the *Bani* of the Guru. Hence from the very start it is a Granth considered to be a bitter Bir, spurious, and unacceptable. On the other hand, the Banno people have always been floating self-contradictory myths to give respectability to the *Banno Bir*.

V

In the light of our knowledge of the *Banno Bir* we shall now examine the criticism of Dr. Mcleod and Prof. Pritam Singh and see how for the same is justified or ignorant. Following is the criticism of Dr. Mcleod about the authenticity of the *Kartarpuri Bir*. “Two of the basic points have already been noted. First, there is the universal agreement that the important differences distinguishing the Kartarpur manuscript from the Ban no version consist exclusively of material included in the latter which is not to be found in the former. Secondly, there is the testimony of those who have inspected the Kartarpur manuscript concerning the obliteration of portions of its text.”

“A third factor is the presence in the standard printed editions of two fragments, corresponding to two of the three additional Banno hymns. In Ramkali Rag there occurs a single couplet where there should apparently be a complete hymn. The remainder of the hymns in the same section indicate that the couplet must be either the first two lines of a chhant, or a Salok introducing a chhant. The second fragment corresponds to the Surd as hymn in Sarang Rag. In this instance the standard printed text contains only the first line. There seemed to be only one possible reason for the appearance of these two fragments. The bulk of the hymn in each case must have been deleted, leaving a small remainder which was faithfully copied into the standard printed text.”

“A fourth point seemed to clinch the issue. The Banno text of the missing portions indicated good reasons for later deletion, particularly in the case of the Ramkali hymn by Guru Arjun. This hymn describes the puberty rites conducted by Guru Arjun at the initiation of his son Hargobind. The rites follow a standard Hindu pattern and in the third stanza there is a reference to the manner in which the boy’s head

was shaved. This feature is in obvious contradiction to the later prohibition of hair-cutting. When the prohibition became mandatory, not merely for Jat Sikhs but also those of other castes, the reference in the hymn could only be regarded as intolerable.”

“Finally, there was ample evidence that others had already formed the same suspicions concerning the Kartarpur manuscript and were seeking alternative explanations. One writer has declared that the present Kartarpur manuscript is Banno version, adding that the original manuscript of the *Adi-Granth* must have been lost. Another has suggested that the present manuscript must be a first draft, subsequently amended by the Guru himself. Their evident uneasiness strengthened a hypothesis which already seemed firmly founded.”

“By this time the hypothesis will have become obvious. The conclusion which seemed to be emerging with increasing assurance was that the widely disseminated Banno version must represent the original text; and that the Kartarpur manuscript must be a shortened version of the same text. A few portions must have been deleted because they could not be reconciled with beliefs subsequently accepted by the Panth. This much appeared to be well established and another point could be added as a possibility. It seemed likely that the amendments had originally been made by omitting the problem passages from later manuscripts rather than by deleting them from the Kartarpur manuscript. These later manuscripts reflected the distinctive pattern of Khalsa belief. The omission of the problem passages together with the addition of compositions by Guru Tegh Bahadur constituted the Damdama version of the *Adi-Granth*. Later still, portions of the Kartarpur manuscript (the original manuscript written by Bhai Gurdas) were rather ineptly obliterated in order to bring the two versions into line.”⁶⁹

It appears Mcleod is unaware of the work of Sahib

Singh who disbelieves the Banno story and the statements of Gurdit Singh and Mahan Singh both of whom have recorded that the figure 5 in 1959 in the *Tatkara* of the *Banno Bir* has been written over figure 9 which was originally there. Presumably, Mcleod is ignorant of their views, for had he known of them, he would certainly have tried to verify the factual position by an examination of the *Banno Bir*. And this, evidently, he never did. Nor has he, it appears, examined the *Kartarpuri Bir*, except may be, for a few minutes. Whether or not Mcleod was aware of the views of Sahib Singh about the Banno story and of Mahan Singh about the over writings on the year of completion of *Banno Hir* is not our present concern. It is now well established that the *Banno Bir* was prepared not earlier than 1699 and the Banno story is a myth. As such, the very basis of the argument about the *Kartarpuri Bir* of 1604 A.D. being a copy of the *Banno Bir* of 1642 A.D. is knocked out. Mcleod's argument that the additional *Bani* of Surdas and Ramkali Mahla 5 that was present in the *Banno Bir*, had been copied in the *Kartarpuri Bir*, but deleted later on is equally baseless. For, we have seen that in both these cases the additional *Bani* in the *Banno Bir* is either an interpolation or a later writing; and these verses, which are not present in the *Kartarpuri Bir*, had neither been copied there nor deleted. Therefore, Mcleod's other argument that the *Kartarpuri Bir*, which according to him had been copied from the *Banno Bir*, contained the so called puberty hymn (additional 8 verses), but being incongruous with the later Khalsa belief was deleted, is also factually incorrect and fallacious. Every student of *Kartarpuri Bir* knows that it has the largest number of blank pages and deletions. These two facts are one of the strongest points in favour of its originality. Apart from the fact that the *Banno Bir* was prepared 38 years after the *Kartarpuri Bir*, it is ridiculous that a copyist given the task of copying the *Banno Bir* comprising 467 folios, or any *Bir* with such material as

can be accommodated on about 465 leaves, would copy it out on 974 folios. Mcleod knows, since he is aware of the work of Jodh Singh, and has even quoted it, that in the case of the puberty hymn and Bhagat Surdas's verses, there is no deletion in the *Kartarpuri Bir*. Yet, knowing all this, he has, on the one hand, tried to build the argument about deletion on the basis of the use of *Hartal* elsewhere, and, on the other hand, made the equally misleading argument of the deletion of the puberty hymn from the *Kartarpuri Bir* because of the later Khalsa beliefs, even though in the Dehradun Granth of Ram Rai it had clearly been recorded, long before the creation of the Khalsa in 1699 A.D., that the additional verses were not present in the Granth of the 5th Guru. Mcleod's chief reason for assuming prior date of production for the *Banno Bir* is the presence of additional material in it. Apart from the *Banno Bir* being a production of Samat 1699, the questionable hymns of Bhagat Surdas and the so called puberty hymn are a clear later interpolation even in the *Banno Bir* of 1642 A.D. Therefore the authenticity or priority of these interpolated hymns is disapproved; and Sahib Singh believes that these are motivated interpolations by *Handalias*.

Here it is also pertinent to state that Mcleod's suggestion that the so called Ramkali hymn was deleted from the *Kartarpuri Bir* because of later Khalsa beliefs displays, his ignorance both of the history of the Sikhs and of the *Dhirmalias*. The latter became a splinter group and they went to the extent of making a murderous assault on the ninth Guru. They never recognized him or the tenth Master as a Guru. As such, there was no love lost between the Khalsa, a creation of the tenth Guru whom the Moghuls wanted to destroy, and the *Dhirmalias* who were pro-Establishment; Therefore, there is not the remotest possibility that the *Dhirmalias* would ever tamper with the *Bir* in their possession in order to oblige the Khalsa, and bring it in accord with the '*Rehat*' or symbols prescribed by the tenth

Guru. Rather, their avowed hostility towards the Khalsa would prompt them to high-light the hymn if it had ever existed in that *Bir*. On the other hand, the Banno people formed a part of the main stream of the Sikhs, and if any Sikh would have been interested in a deletion, they might have done that in their *Bir*. But, nothing of the sort happened in that *Bir*. Mcleod's conjecture about the deletion of the so called puberty hymn because of the Khalsa belief is, thus, not only impossible, but is also controverted even by the very facts and circumstances of the situation as it existed then.

Besides, we find that. Principal Harbhajan Singh who has made a detailed survey of the hand written *Birs*, in the Sikh reference library, Golden Temple, Amritsar (since destroyed in the Blue Star Operation) and some other *Birs* writes that in the numerous old hand-written *Birs* he examined, this additional *Bani* was nowhere there. He gives detail of it in his book: "*Gurbani Sampadan Nirne*".

A statement of some of them is as follows:

1. *Bir No. 97 in the Sikh Reference Library*

It was produced in Samat 1739 (1682 A.D.) some two decades before the creation of the Khalsa, and bears the *Nishan* of the ninth Guru. It has no additional *Bani* as is contained in the *Banno Bir*.

2. *Pindi Lala (Gujrat) Wali Bir*

It was produced in Samat 1732 (1675 A.D.). It bears the *Nishan* of ninth Guru, but, unlike the *Banno Bir*, it contains no additional *Bani*.

3. *Bir No. 14 in the Sikh Reference Library*

It was completed in Samat 1748 (1691 A.D.). It contains no additional *Bani* as is present in the *Banno Bir*.

4. *Bir written by Pakhar Mal Dhillon*

Grandson of Chaudhry Langaha Dhillon, a known devout Sikh of the fifth Guru. It was written, in Samat 1745 (1688 A.D.). Unlike the *Banno Bir*, it contains no additional *Bani*.

5. This Bir was written in Samat 1792 (1735 A.D.)

It contains no additional *Bani* and there is a note besides the two lines of Ramkali Mahla 5 Sabad "*Ranjhujnara gao Sakhi*". That "this Sabad is not in the *Adi-Granth*, only two verses are authentic, the rest is removed".⁷¹

VI

In his paper read at Berkley in 1976, Mcleod's final observation was: "The tradition may well be accurate and no sensible person would dispute it unless he had good reason for doing so. To date no good reason has been advanced and the received text remains in-violate".⁷² All the same he cannot help clouding the issue by raising two considerations or doubts. "One is the obscurity which envelops a significant period of the text's actual history. The other is the presence within the manuscript of numerous deletions."⁷³ On the issue of deletions we have already found that these large number of deletions are a good proof of its originality especially when in no other *Bir* there are deletions in such a large number and when at most of those places *Bani* has been re-written by the same scribe showing thereby that the writing rubbed of was not correct or approved by the Guru. Mcleod's method both in his lecture at Cambridge and his paper at Berkley has been, like the way of a biased journalist, first to impress on the reader the fact about the existence of deletions and thereby create a broad suspicion against the genuineness of the *Bir* and then to narrate the story of the presence of the puberty hymn in the *Banno Bir* and its absence in the *Kartarpuri Bir*, knowing full well that there is no deletion in the case either of the puberty hymn or the hymn of Bhagat Surdas. Actually, it is now established that not only the *Banno Bir* was prepared in Samat 1699, but the puberty hymn itself was clearly a later interpolation

even in the *Banno Bir* of 1699. These being the facts, to relate the question of deletion with the absence of puberty hymn in the *Kartarpuri Bir* is evidently an attempt to mislead and prejudice the lay reader into linking in his mind the omission of the puberty hymn with the event of deletion, thereby making him to believe that though the so called awkward hymn was present in the *Banno Bir* its absence in the *Kartarpuri Bir* has been secured by the fishy method of deletion. The facts speak out for themselves and are otherwise. We know that neither are the deletions in the *Kartarpuri Bir* a fishy matter, nor was the puberty hymn originally present even in the *Banno Bir* of 1699, nor was the *Banna Bir* prepared earlier than Samat 1699 to enable anyone to copy it (a Granth of 464 folios into a Granth of 974 folios) during the time of the fifth Guru or even 35 years later.

Both Mcleod and Loehlin have been lamenting their frustration at not being able to serve academic interests because they were not allowed access to the *Kartarpuri Bir*.⁷⁴ Mcleod even went to the extent of recording that non availability of *Kartarpuri Bir* to them suggests that there was something to conceal therein.⁷⁵ But one wonders why the acute academic keenness of these scholars never led them to see the *Banno Bir* even though the same was all these years available for the examination of any serious scholar. Had they cared to see they would have found out that the year of its production was Samat 1699 and that it had practically been written by one scribe and that the story of 12 scribes having copied it out on way to Lahore was not tenable. Again we may ask how is it that these scholars remained entirely ignorant of the work of Mahan Singh who wrote in 1952 that the *Banno Bir* was written in Samat 1699 and the year of its production had been altered into an earlier date, or the writings of G. B. Singh and Gurdit Singh all of whom had recorded that the year of its production stood tampered with, or the work of Sahib Singh that the Banno story of the

Granth having been copied on way to Mangat or Lahore was a myth. This failure to see the *Banno Bir* and even ignorance about the existing literature on the issue is especially inexplicable when both these scholars have made the bold suggestion that the *Kartarpuri Bir* is a copy of the *Banno Bir*⁷⁶ or should we follow the logic of Mcleod and say that their reluctance to see the *Banno Bir* or to study anything about it is due to the fact that if the truth about the *Banno Bir*, as recorded by earlier scholars like Mahan Singh, were told, the theory of the *Kartarpuri Bir* being a copy of *Banno Bir* would fall like a house of cards. In view of the above, it is clear that the suggestion about the *Kartarpuri Bir* being non-authentic or its being a copy of the *Banno Bir* is both baseless and untenable.

On the second issue about the custody of the *Kartarpuri Bir* the doubts of Mcleod are equally without any basis. Here too the position had been made clear by Mahan Singh. The historical writings show that Bidhi Chand and other Sikhs were very well aware of the great value of the *Bir*. They held it in the highest esteem. Actually, this was the real reason that Bidhi Chand and others, despite the wishes of the Guru, initially failed to return the *Bir* to the *Dhirmalias* towards whom they were hostile for their having attacked the ninth Guru to kill him. Therefore, for understandable reasons, when again directed by the Guru to return the *Bir*, they were reluctant to meet the *Dhirmalias* face to face. And all they did was that they kept the *Bir* safely at a place, and sent a message to the *Dirmalias* to pick it up; and this they did.⁷⁷ Old Indian writers of religious history, we are aware, are fond of introducing miracles in the narration of simple events or facts. Very probably the story of miracle has been introduced to attract offerings for the miracle-working *Bir*. Evidently, the miracle story appears unreliable. First, the Gurus never resorted to the use of miracles, it being against the Sikh thesis. Secondly,

it is a fact that the leaves of the *Kartarpuri Bir* show no sign what-so-ever of damage by water or dampness.⁷⁸ The story of concealment in the river bed is, thus, factually controverted. Thirdly, it is really un-thinkable that the Sikhs, who were aware of the supreme value of the *Kartarpuri Bir* and who on that account, were earlier, even after the express desire of the Guru, reluctant to return the same to the *Dirmalias*. would suddenly become so disrespectful, callous and inconsiderate towards the *Bir* as to bury it in the river bed and thereby incur both the wrath of the Guru and also the risk of the loss of the invaluable Granth by water or wetness, especially when they all considered the volume to be both the repository of the Sabad and irreplaceable. But, the truth is that as they did not want to meet the enemies of the Guru, they placed the Granth at a safe place, sent a message to *Dirmalias* who were only too anxious to pick it up. Further, there is little doubt that when the 10th Guru wanted at Anandpur Sahib to prepare the *Damdami* version it was to the *Dhirmalias* that he sent the message for loan of this *Bir* of the fifth Guru.⁷⁹ So, what-ever be the facts of the earlier part of the story, at the time of the tenth Guru, the original authentic *Bir* was certainly with the *Dhirmalias*. After that the *Bir* always remained in safe hands. Had the *Bir* been lost it is impossible to imagine that Ranjit Singh who had waged a war for obtaining a horse, would not be aware of it and recover this venerable treasure or that he would be satisfied with a spurious version of the original *Bir*. Another objection of Mcleod about the two verses of the Chhant of Guru Arjun in Ramkali Rag is as to “why it was recorded in a section of the *Adi-Granth* devoted to longer Chhant form.”⁸⁰ The objection displays a clear ignorance of the scheme of the Granth according to which the Chhant should have been only where it is. The Chhant has three features. It is to be sung in Ramkali Rag, it is

by the fifth Guru, and it is a Chhant. As such, it could only find a place in the section for Ramkali Rag in the subsection for the Chhants, and, further in the subsection in which Guru Arjun's Chhants had been recorded whether those were short or long. There is no other place in the *Adi-Granth* where Guru Arjun's Chhants under Ramkali Rag are recorded. Hence the Chhant hymns in question could only be where these are, and could not be recorded elsewhere, without violating the scheme of the *Adi-Granth*.

Here it is not our purpose to ascertain whether Mcleod made his observations out of sheer ignorance of the available facts and materials, or of his anxiety to suppress known but awkward facts, or of his conscious or unconscious bias because of his years of working and association with the Christian Missionary Centre, Batala. But, in either case, it does little credit to his credibility as a scholar, especially because, even after quoting Jodh Singh he writes: "From this report it is clear that the issue should still be regarded as open."⁸¹ In view of the above, we conclude that Mcleod's criticism is factually incorrect, untenable, and, in parts, even misleading.

VII

We, now, come to the criticism of Prof. Pritam Singh. In his paper⁸² he has, on the one hand, tried to attack the authenticity of the *Kartarpuri Bir* and, on the other hand, tried to give a fresh lease of life to the Banno story and the *Banno Bir* having been written in the time of the 5th Guru. He states that in the present *Banno Bir* the year of completion recorded in the *Tatkara* has been changed from 1699. From all the available internal evidence, he concludes that the present *Banno Bir* at Kanpur was completed in 1699 and not earlier.⁸³ But, quite inexplicably and on the

basis of no evidence whatsoever, he suggests that though the present *Banno Bir* was without doubt prepared in 1699 yet it must have been the copy of the real *Banno Bir* (B1 as he calls it) which would have been copied somewhere near 1604 A.D. from the *Bir* of the Guru.⁸⁴ This argument of Pritam Singh reminds us of the story of the Wolf and the Lamb in which the Wolf with his determined intention to kill and eat the lamb first charges the lamb for having muddied the water a year earlier, and when confronted with the fact that 'the lamb had not been even born then, promptly retorts that in that case it must have been his father who did it and he must pay for it. Prof. Pritam Singh finds that the legendary *Banno Bir* is a Granth compiled in 1699, but he has in his paper raised the phantom of there being a real *Banno Bir* of the year 1604 or near about, even though neither tradition, nor any historical writing, nor the custodians of the *Banno Bir* have ever suggested, much less asserted, that the original *Banno Bir* was lost and the present one is a fake copy of it. The history of the *Banno Bir* shows that from the very start its custodians have tried to advance the legend that it is an authentic first copy of the Granth of the 5th Guru, though from the very start it could not be denied that this *Bir* was neither an authorised version, nor was its *Bani* authenticated because of non-scriptural additions in it. According to Prof. Pritam Singh, the real *Banno Bir* was the one of which G.B. Singh had done the examination and written in 1944 that though the year of its production read as 1659, actually, this was an over-writing upon what his vision deciphered 1648 beneath it. Pritam Singh accepts the finding of G.B. Singh and makes it the basis of his description of the real *Banno Bir* (B1 as he calls it).⁸⁵ The findings of G.B. Singh is without any meaning. For, if the original date were 1648 it evidently suited the *Banno* story and there was really no necessity of tampering with it and

changing it to 1659. Apart from that, Pritam Singh is also aware that G.B. Singh's examination of the *Banno Bir*, according to his own admission, was just casual, and superficial Sahib Singh writes that it is quite likely that he did not have even a close look at the *Banno Bir*.⁸⁶ For, he expressed his views chiefly on the written replies sent to him by the custodians of the *Banno Bir*. Evidently, the words of the custodians of the *Bir*, who have tampered with the recorded year of production and interpolated the *Nishans* of the Gurus in the Granth in order to give it authenticity, can hardly be accepted as reliable by any disinterested scholar. So far G. B. Singh is concerned we have seen already that, a sober person like Jodh Singh has found his facts, views and statements to be untruthful, senseless and baseless. Therefore, Pritam Singh's statement that the *Bir* G.B. Singh saw, and wrote about, in 1944 with its year of production tampered with was the original *Banno Bir* and the same has since disappeared is without any basis. Had the real *Banno Bir* been lost between 1944 and 1950 or so, not only the custodians of the *Bir* but the whole of the Sikh world would have been aware of it; but, nothing of the sort has ever happened. The truth is that what G. B. Singh saw in the forties was the *Banno Bir* with the over written year of production as 1659. G. B. Singh made an absurd guess that the year of production beneath it was probably 1648. The same *Bir* with the over-written year 1659 was seen by Giani Gurdit Singh in the forties or early fifties. His guess was that the figure beneath 1659 was the figure 169 which the scribe had wrongly written instead of 1659 and which, on discovering his own error, he later converted into 1659 by changing 9 of 169 to 5 and adding another 9 to it.⁸⁷ Again, it is this very *Banno Bir* with over-written 1659 that was examined by Mahan Singh who on the basis of the shade of the ink concluded that both G. B. Singh and Giani Gurdit Singh were wrong because it was only the 9 of 1699 which

stood converted to 5 in a black shade of ink and the figure below was neither 1648, nor 169, but, it was 1699, the same having the kind of reddish shade of ink as the rest of the writing and figures on the page. In 1969 or near about Harnam Dass also saw this *Banno Bir* with this over-written figure 1659. His guess was that though the present figure 1659 was no doubt there over-written, the figure below was really 1669 and not any other.⁸⁸ Both the team of the University scholars and Pritam Singh who went with a purpose closely to examine the *Bir* have concluded that the original year was 1699 but the present over-written figure is 1659. Principal Harbhajan Singh, Sikh Missionary College, Amritsar, also went in 1978 with the specific object of examining *Bir* and found that the year of production was Samat 1699 which had been altered to 1659 by over-writing. Further, he found that the *Bir* was well written and copied by one hand. The conclusion, thus, is plain that the Granth G.B. Singh, Gurdit Singh, Mahan Singh, Harnam Dass, the University team, Harbhajan Singh and Pritam Singh saw is the same as has the over-written year 1659. But, whereas the conclusion of Mahan Singh, the University scholars Harbhajan Singh and Pritam Singh on physical examination is unanimous that the figure under 1659 was 1699, the eyes of G.B. Singh, Gurdit Singh and Harnam Dass read it to be 1648, 169 and 1669 respectively. And now defying all physical perceptions, Pritam Singh sees behind this *Banno Bir*, the illusion of an old *Banno Bir* of the time of the fifth Guru. This phantom has been raised by him on the basis of the perfunctory finding of G.B. Singh that he saw in 1944 a *Banno Bir* with 1648 as the year of its production, little realising that what G.B. Singh saw in 1944 or so is the same *Bir* with the over-written year 1659 as he saw in 1981 or so.

Apart from other facts reported by Pritam Singh himself, one fact alone is enough to demolish his inference of there being a *Banno Bir* (Bl) which is not available now.

In his paper he records that in the original *Banno Bir* (B1) G.B. Singh saw in the forties “The death-dates of the first five Gurus are written in one hand. Each date from the sixth Guru to the tenth is given in a different hand.”⁸⁸ Further, Pritam Singh finds the records that the position of the death-dates on the Kanpur *Banno Bir* (B2) is as follows: “The first five dates relating to the first five Gurus, are in one hand. The date of the Sixth Guru is by a different hand, who drew a closing line below his writing. The dates of the Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Gurus form one block and are written in a different hand. This block is separated from the next block by another dividing bar running horizontally across the page. A later hand has recorded Guru Gobind Singh’s death-date. The conclusion is that the first block of five dates was written by some scribe at a time when Guru Arjan was no longer alive and was succeeded by his son, Guru Hargobind.”⁸⁹ The above proves that what G.B. Singh saw in the forties and what Pritam Singh saw in 1981, is the same *Banno Bir*, the observed position of the death dates on the two occasions being exactly the same. Evidently, when G.B. Singh saw the *Banno Bir* in the forties (and what Pritam Singh now calls the original *Banno Bir* or B1) it had the death-dates of the first five Gurus written at one time, showing thereby conclusively that the *Bir* (81) was prepared after the death of the fifth Guru and not during his time. This also synchronizes with the absence of the mention of the *Nishan* of the fifth Guru in the *Tatkara* of the *Banno Bir* (B1), showing its preparation in Samat 1699, and not earlier during the time of the fifth Guru as claimed in the Banno story. The inference is plain and inevitable that the Banno story of a *Banno Bir* copied in the time of the fifth Guru is a myth, and that Pritam Singh’s suggestion of a real *Banno Bir* of 1604 or so is another myth of the same variety. In fact, his own observations controvert his suggestions, because had

the *Banno Bir* he saw been a copy all the death-dates would have been in one hand and shade.

In short, the conclusion of Pritam Singh about an original *Banno Bir* of 1648 or some other year is without any basis and no sound reasoning, much less facts, can sustain it. In the face of the examination of Giani Mahan Singh, the University scholars, Harbhajan Singh and his own, to have resort to far-fetched and groundless assumptions is like building on sand, especially when he makes G. B. Singh's superficial examination to be the basis of the real *Banno Bir*. or BI as he calls it.

It was only in the present century that critical scholarship started the scrutiny of the Banno story and the *Bir*. And, as we have stated, it is this scrutiny that has led to the various findings mentioned earlier. In fact, the Banno family have, in support of their story even produced a book called *Banno Parkash* which, like the *Bhagatmala*, is a narration of various miracles attributed to Bhai Banno and how the ; present *Banno Bir* was copied by him. Shamsheer Singh, the Research Scholar of the Shiromni Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, who had examined the *Banno Bir* has categorically rejected the claims of its authenticity advanced by the members of the Banno family in support of their story.

A very vague suggestion has been made by Pritam Singh that, whereas no time had been indicated, it was suggested to him that once the gilded cover of the *Bir* had been stolen but the *Bir* was left behind intact. Pritam Singh's suggestion, based on the above unconfirmed story for the first time given to him since 1642, is that this story is false but the real *Banno Bir* was lost but recreated in the form of the present *Bir*.⁹⁰ Let us examine this suggestion. No one has ever suggested that the present *Banno Bir* is a copy of the old *Banno Bir* and that the same was lost or stolen. There is not the least inkling in this regard, nor is there any tradition, nor any supportive oral or written statement. Even the

suggestion, for the first time recorded by Pritam Singh, is that the family had heard that once the gilded cover of the *Bir* had been stolen and not the *Bir*. In other words, even Pritam Singh does not accept the version of the loss of the cover only, and, on his own, has tried to prop up the story that the *Bir* was actually lost and a new *Banno Bir* was created. Secondly, can any rational man accept a part suggestion of the custodians who go to the length of inventing a false (as even believed by Pritam Singh), story of theft of the cover only, of creating a spurious *Bir* to substitute it for the original copy, of forging by alteration or over-writing the date of its production, and then also of creating new *Nishans* of the Gurus and pasting them on the *Bir*. If it were assumed that the Banno family some how lost the original, (though there is not the faintest suggestion in this regard, and, on the contrary, known facts state that its custody has been safe throughout the Sikh and the British periods) and created a new *Banno Bir*, then where was the need of tampering with the figure 1699, and who prevented them from writing in the *Bir* the year of production as 1661 or 1659 instead of 1699. Secondly, what stopped the forger of the *Bir* from writing in the *Tatkara* that the *Nishan* on the folio at page 34 was of the 5th Guru and not of the 6th Guru. Thirdly, if the original *Bir* was lost, where from did the forger obtain the *Nishans* of the 5th and 6th Gurus that would also have been lost with original *Bir*. Fourthly, if the original *Banno Bir* was lost, wherefrom was this *Bir* copied? And as such it could not longer be designated as the *Banno Bir*, it being a copy of some other Granth. Fifthly, one fact is patent that in the present *Banno Bir*, the additional eight lines of the alleged *Ramkali Mahla 5*, on the basis of which Mcleod builds his entire case against the authenticity of the *Kartarpuri Bir*, are a clear interpolation meaning thereby that the Granth or the alleged original *Banno Bir* from which this present *Banno Bir*, was copied distinctly did not contain these

additional eight lines otherwise the very need of this interpolation made later than B.K. 1699 would not have arisen. In fact, Pritam Singh's argument about the loss of the real *Banno Bir* is self contradictory. On the one hand he cites the features of BI from the examination of G.B. Singh made as recently as in the midforties. On the other hand, he builds his argument about the suggested loss of the cover only of which its present custodians have even no clear recollection or inkling. It is unthinkable that the real *Banno Bir* should have disappeared after midforties, but neither the custodians of the *Bir* nor the Sikh world should have been aware of it. The very fact that the custodians of the *Bir* have tried to change the year of production from 1699 to 1659, and the fact that *Tatkara* of the *Bir* refers to the *Nishan* of the 6th Guru and not to that of the fifth Guru, clearly, show that the *Bir* is without doubt the original *Banno Bir*, but that the stories woven round the year and the circumstances of its production are unreliable and are obviously meant to camouflage its reality. It might be questioned as to why the year of production of the *Banno Bir* was changed to 1659 when no historian has ever asserted that the 5th Guru completed the *Adi-Granth* in that year. The reason for it is obvious. 1659 is the only year which with the least effort at alteration could be changed from 1699 to 1659 as it is a year close to the year of the production of the *Adi-Granth* and the very minor alteration involved as such stood the least chance of detection.

We have found that the both Mcleod and G.B. Singh have suggestively used the *Banno Bir* as a lever to shake the authenticity of the *Kartarpuri Bir*. So far as Mcleod is concerned, he has tried to remain blissfully quiet or ignorant about the factual position of the *Banno Bir* and has like G.B. Singh blindly used the same as a weapon to attack the authenticity of the *Kartarpuri Bir*, little realising that the weapon he was wielding had only a phantom existence. But,

Pritam Singh when faced with the actual *Banno Bir* could not fail to realise that it was a Granth written in 1699. But, he, instead of accepting the natural inference, as had been done by Mahan Singh who concluded that the Banno story was unreliable and that the date of the *Banno Bir*, in view of the absence of the mention of the *Nishan* of the 5th Guru in the *Tatkara*, was really 1,699, and that the custodians of the *Bir* who could go to the length of spinning a yarn, and altering the date of completion of the *Bir* could hardly be depended upon to supply any credible information, went to the extreme of raising the illusion of another *Banno Bir* of which the Kanpur *Banno Bir* is a copy. The suggestion of Pritam Singh is patently impossible. There is no basis whatsoever for the story of the loss of *Banno Bir*. And in the circumstances of the case it appears a suggestive wrong statement to tend to convert the, story of the loss of the cover of the *Bir* into the loss of the *Bir* itself. If the suggestion of Pritam Singh that the real *Banno Bir* was lost and the Banno family has concealed that fact, were assumed for the sake of argument, then the present *Bir* would be a copy of some other Granth and not the so called original *Banno Bir* since the same was lost and could not be available for being copied out. Another allied question would be whether it is a true copy or a false copy. If it is a true copy the original too was produced in 1699; and if it is a false copy who prevented the copyist from writing the date of production as 1661 instead of 1699, and why did the copyist allow the mention of the *Nishan* of the 6th Guru to be in the *Tatkara* when his purpose would have been served far better by a reference to it as the *Nishan* of the 5th Guru, especially when he had extraneously introduced it by pasting the *Nishans*. Pritam Singh's suggestion is, thus, apart from having no factual basis, very irrational and self-Contradictory.

However, in line with his suggestion of another *Banno Bir*. Pritam Singh has raised another phantom as well.

Mcleod, as we have seen, created the bubble of the *Kartarpuri Bir* (with folios 975 in number) being a copy of the *Banno Bir* (which has only 467 folios). That bubble stands pricked when the year of production of the *Banno Bir* was found to be 1699. But, having realised that, Pritam Singh has raised another soap bubble by saying that the *Kartarpuri Bir* is a copy of another real *Bir* of the 5th Guru.⁹¹ If every hand written *Bir* of the *Adi-Granth* including the *Banno Bir* could be copied in about 467 folios, even when it also contained additional *Bani*, why should the scribe of the *Kartarpuri Bir* have used 974 folios, if it is a copy, is, indeed, inexplicable, if not ridiculous. Pritam Singh further gives no reason for his suspicion about the originality of the *Kartarpuri Bir*. He says that certain leads in the examination of the *Bir* by Jodh Singh suggest that inference about which he is quite categorical as he is also about there being another *Banno Bir* of the year 1604 A.D. or so.

One common feature of all the two critics of the *Kartarpuri Bir* is that none of them examined the *Kartarpuri Bir* (except may be for a few minutes) or the works of Jodh Singh and others so as to reject them critically. Mcleod, it seems had not seen even the *Banno Bir*. Had he done that his conclusions could not have been so wildly conjectural and slipshod.

VII

Conclusion

We have considered the issue of the authenticity of the, *Adi-Granth*, and after examining both the evidence in favour of its authenticity and the criticism of this view, come to the conclusion that there is not the least doubt that the *Kartarpuri Bir* is incontrovertibly the *Bir* written by Bhai Gurdas.

An objection raised by Mcleod is that in order to remove scholarly doubts access to the *Kartarpuri Bir* would

need to be allowed and “the alternative may well be a growing conviction that there is something to bide”. The *Kartarpuri Bir* is private property and we do not hold any brief for its custodians. True, the Sodhis of Kartarpur while they do not permit access to every person, who claims to be scholar, yet, by all standards, their policy to allow access to the *Kartarpuri Bir* has been very liberal. In fact, during the current century there has been an extremely profuse exposure of the *Kartarpuri Bir* before genuine scholars and theologians. In the twenties Master Ishher Singh of the Sikh Vidyala, Tarn Taran, sent a team of scholars who made a most detailed page by page and line by line study in order to prepare a standard version of the *Adi-Granth*. Second is an equally major attempt of the Shiromini Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee to prepare a meticulously accurate version of the *Kartarpuri Bir*. This team consisting of two scholars, namely, Giani Piara Singh Sukhi and Sant Harbhajan Singh Nirmla worked from day to day for six months at Kartarpur. In addition other scholars also visited Kartarpur so as to supervise the work of the team. Leaf by leaf comparison of an unbound *Bir* of the Guru Granth was made with the *Kartarpuri Bir*. Every variation in the unbound *Bir* was corrected in accordance with the *Kartarpuri Bir*. Thereafter, calligraphists prepared another faultless copy of the Granth. This having been done, printing blocks of this new version were made. A committee of scholars was again appointed to verify and approve the corrected version. Actually, about 733 variations, major or minor, were found in the old printed version and these were all corrected. Finally, faultlessly accurate version of the *Kartarpuri Bir* was approved and printed through the Punjabi Press, Hall Bazar, Amritsar. These versions have been printed a number of times and these printed copies of the *Kartarpuri Bir* are there for every scholar to see and study. Dr. Jodh Singh’s note recorded after the publication of

Mcleod's lecture, states that this printed version today tallies completely with the *Kartarpuri Bir*. (This report received with the courtesy of Prof. Harbans Singh forms appendix A).⁹² Apart from that, many times groups of scholars, individual scholars, both foreign and Indian, have been allowed access to the *Kartarpuri Bir*. Many reports of the committees of scholars who examined the *Kartarpuri Bir* for general and specific purposes are available. Jodh Singh's '*Kartarpuri Bir De Darshan*' is a detailed page by page record of the *Kartarpuri Bir* giving an account of every feature on each page, including variation in words, spellings, lagmatras; use of *hartal*, blank spaces, size of margins, obliterations by use of *hartal*, over-writing on *hartal*, scoring-out, writing in-between lines, above the lines and in the margins, variations in the size of letters, hand writing, ink, etc. etc. Among individual records of examination these notes by Jodh Singh (recorded by Giani Mahan Singh) are the most detailed and give a scrupulously accurate picture of the *Kartarpuri Bir*. In this background it would be both unfair and incorrect to blame the custodians of the *Bir* that they have barred scholarly study by or exposure to the genuine scholars. The difficulty is that wild conjectures of some scholars like G.B. Singh have raised the suspicions of the custodians of the *Bir*. Similarly, wild conjectural and tendentious writings of Mcleod have placed all scholars at a discount. It is difficult to deny that the conduct of the scholars has a practical bearing on their receptivity among private religious circles. Nor can it be seriously asserted that the conduct of scholars like Trump, G.B. Singh and Mcleod has in any way enhanced the credit of the academic world among the general Sikh Public. At present, the *Kartarpuri Bir* is the property of the Dhir Mal family, and no one is to blame if the custodians want to be sure of the bonafides of a scholar before allowing him access to it for a study of the *Kartarpuri Bir*. Their exercise of such discretion is natural, understandable and un-objectionable.

On the main issue we have come to the conclusion that all the surmises of G.B. Singh regarding the *Kartarpuri Bir* are baseless. G.B. Singh was neither a simple nor a gullible person who might have been misled into errors. But, his was a determined attempt at distorting and misrepresenting things. For, we have seen that whenever he was confronted with hard or inconvenient facts controverting his earlier stand, he would, in order to support his version, have no hesitation in making a U turn and contradict his earlier theory by inventing new explanations, howsoever ridiculous those be. All this makes one point clear, namely, that his entire stand was aimed at what Jodh Singh calls cutting at the very root of the Sikh faith. We are aware that no other prophet took the care to define his spiritual thesis and doctrines and authenticate the scripture: Guru Arjun is unique in having done that and this was done in a manner that created a tradition for having the highest regard for the meticulous maintenance of the purity and the authenticity of the *Bani* or the revealed Sabad. We refer to (a) the story of the rejection of the *Bani* of Shah Hussain, Bhagats Kanha, Pilo, Mira Bai, and others; (b) the story of punishing and disowning Ram Rai, far misquoting the *Bani*; and (c) the story of the tenth Guru frowning on a Sikh who inadvertently made a very small change in quoting a couplet of the *Bani* by saying '*Kay Jane*' instead of '*Kai Jane*'.⁹³ What we wish to convey is that the G.B. Singh's attempt was neither ignorant nor misguided, but it was clearly a work aimed at attacking the strongest pillar of the Sikh faith. And this attempt could be any thing but unintentional. One thing would explain it. The work of G B. Singh created a shock among the Sikhs and a sober person like Jodh Singh protested at this motivated attack to demolish the very foundation of the Sikh faith by preaching, what Jodh Singh calls, a poisonous principle. But, where as the Sikhs like Jodh Singh and the Sikh academic world were outraged at

this attempt, one Harnam Dass was very happy at the publication. He calls it a good work of research by which he was greatly influenced, impressed, and thereby encouraged. He writes that he was emboldened to pursue the kind of research made by G.B. Singh. The cat is out of bag when Harnam Dass writes that Britishers, like Macauliffe, had their own axe to grind and they wanted to create differences between Hindus and Sikhs by preaching that there were two separate communities and faiths.⁹⁴ We have seen that G.B. Singh's views are neither based on correct facts nor on good sense. Evidently, a scholar who is neither willing to examine closely the available material about which he was writing, nor was inclined to stick to known facts, nor exhibited any regard for truth or reason, and makes baseless attacks on the foundations of a religion, could be motivated only by consideration, that were neither academic, nor moral. The very fact that his views have been found to be perverse and poisonous by a person like Jodh Singh, and in contrast have been welcomed by persons like Harnam Dass, who are not willing to accept even the independent identity of the Sikh religion, makes very clear the destructive direction of the work of G.B. Singh. The work of Jodh Singh exposed not only the crude attempt of G.B. Singh but gave a *coup de grace* to his views. It is not an accident that in 1975 we find that McLeod has tried to suggest or repeat the very assertions made by G.B. Singh, namely, that there is no authentic *Adi-Granth*, the *Kartarpuri Bir* is not the *Adi-Granth* got written by the fifth Guru and that the *Kartarpuri Bir* is a copy of the *Banno Bir*, or a copy of its copy; and that the additional hymns found in the *Banno Bir* had been copied in the *Kartarpuri Bir* but were later deleted by *hartal*. All we wish to state is that the thesis propounded and the method used by McLeod were similar to those of G.B. Singh, since, without an attempt at verification, incorrect suggestions were made about known facts regarding

the *Kartarpuri and the Banno Birs*, neither of which nor their related works he ever cared to examine closely. Mcleod had long association with the Christian Missionary Centre in Punjab and his bias is quite natural and understandable, but no one ever thought that a scholar would try to use the kind of weapon employed by him. As a scholar, Mcleod had expressed certain views including his Jat theory regarding militancy in the Sikh religion. His views were contradicted by Jagjit Singh in his book, *'The Sikh Revolution'* both on the issue of caste in the Sikh religion, and the appearance of Sikh militancy. In 1984 Mcleod at the instance of the University of Manchester prepared a textual source book for the Sikh religion. It is strange to find that Mcleod has completely made a black-out of standard or scholarly works on the Sikh religion and history, like (1) All five works of Dr. H.R. Gupta on the Sikh history and the Sikh Gurus; Gupta has devoted about 60 years of research on Sikh History, (2) The works of Dr. A.C. Bannerji, Professor of Sikh studies at Jadavpur University; Bannerji has devoted about forty years on Sikh History; (3) 'The Sikh Philosophy' by Dr. Sher Singh; (4) 'The Sikh Ethics' by Dr. Avtar Singh, professor of philosophy, Punjabi University, Patiala; (5) Dr. Indu Bhushan Bannerji's 'Evolution of the Khalsa'; (6) J.D. Cunnigham's 'History of the Sikhs'; (7) Duncan-Greenles's 'Gospel of Guru Granth' (8) Dorothy Field 'Religion of the Sikhs', etc., etc. including the work of Jagjit Singh. Here it is amusing to record one fact to show that Dr. Mcleod is fully aware of the work of Prof. Jagjit Singh.⁹⁵ For, when in recent years he met the Director of the Guru Nanak foundation, Delhi, he expressed high esteem for the work of Jagjit Singh on the two subjects mentioned above. And, yet, when he prepared his source book in 1984, he excluded Jagjit Singh's work of 1981, because presumably, that opposed and contradicted his views, but included the work

of Dr. W.O. Cole, published in 1984 as it supported his Jat theory. This contrasted incongruity of conduct between word and deed is, to say the least, un-understandable.

All we wish to suggest is that because many standard works controverted many of the views of Mcleod or expressed different or contrary ideas, he has chosen to exclude them from the list of source material compiled by him for students of world religions. One wonders whether in the interests of academic discussion and development such things are ever done and whether such black-out of standard works serves the growth of free discussion and expression on academic issues in non-totalitarian countries.

Prof. Pritam Singh is the third person in the line of G.B. Singh who doubts the authenticity of the *Kartarpuri Bir* without ever having seen it. During discussion he seems to tow the line of G.B. Singh in suggesting that perhaps the Guru Granth does not contain all the authentic *Bani* of 'the Gurus' and that the genuine *Bani* of the Gurus is in the *Mohan Pothies*. It was after the publication of Mcleod's 'Evolution of the Sikh Community' that Prof. Jagjit Singh, Principal Harbhajan Singh and others requested Prof. Pritam Singh, Head Deptt. of Sikh studies, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, to send a team of scholars to Kanpur to examine the *Banno Bir* so as to find out how far the views of Mcleod were correct. He did send the team of scholars in 1977 to study the *Banno Bir* at Kanpur. They reported, as was also found by Pritam Singh himself later on that the *Banno Bir* was prepared in 1699, 38 years after the completion of the *Adi-Granth*. (A copy of a note by a member of the team is appendix B). This report of the University team was neither published, nor discussed, nor placed before scholars for criticism even though it controverted the Banno story of the *Bir* being a copy prepared in 1604 A.D. In fact the present head of that Department writes that the report is not traceable and has not been

available since 1981. If it had been published it would have demolished the theory of G.B. Singh and Mcleod that the *Kartarpuri Bir* is a copy of the *Banno Bir* and is not the original Granth. Instead, in 1979 Prof. Pritam Singh voiced a complaint that the free expression of views by scholars like G.B. Singh and Mcleod was being thwarted by unthinking, narrow-minded, and stick-wielding persons.⁹⁶ As to who were those crude critics he did not quite specify. In 1981 Pritam Singh himself examined the *Banno Bir* at Kanpur. He could not, for obvious reasons, come to a conclusion different from the report of the University scholars. But his conclusion too exposed the superficial character of the views of G.B. Singh and Mcleod. However, he tried to pump a new life in the Banno myth by saying that the present *Banno Dir* is a copy of the real *Banno Bir*, of Samat 1661, though of the very material existence of it, there is not a ghost of evidence.

All we wish to stress is that G.B. Singh, Mcleod and Pritam Singh belong to a group of scholars some of whom seem to have exhibited a common belief in repeating, without examining the available writings or materials, the three incorrect suggestions that (a) Guru Granth is not the authentic version of all the *Bani* of the Gurus; (b) *Kartarpuri Bir* is not the *Adi-Granth* prepared by the fifth Guru; and (c) *Kartarpuri Bir* is a copy or a copy of the copy of *Banno Bir* which is the first true copy of the *Adi-Granth*. These suggestions appear to give currency to what Jodh Singh calls the poisonous principle of causing confusion by casting doubt on the very authenticity of the scripture of the Sikhs that forms the fundamental pillar of their faith. One wonders whether this is being done as a matter of design. For, before making the sinister move neither G.B. Singh nor Mcleod had made any serious examination of either the *Kartarpuri Bir*, or the *Mohan Pothies*, or the *Banno Bir*. And, when Pritam Singh was confronted with the report of

his University scholars that *Banno Bir* was a Granth written thirty-eight years after the *Kartarpuri Bir*, he has raised the ghost of another B 1 which no one has ever seen, much less examined. In short, whatever be the objective of this move, in effect it will just cloud the issues and tend to destroy the work of the fifth Guru, who with his singular fore-sight and vision once for all authenticated the scripture so that persons like G.B. Singh do not create any confusion. In fact, the attack of Pritam Singh on the critics of G.B. Singh and Mcleod was perhaps only an act to raise an academic smoke screen since as a wide awake scholar he could not be quite unconscious of the role the Mcleod group was playing. For this is what even an outsider like Dr. Noel King of the university of California writes about the books of Dr. Mcleod. "Whatever Dr. Mcleod intended many readers will ask his books the wrong questions and get the wrong answers. The books to an uninitiated reader seem to reiterate the notion that a great amount of Sikh belief appears to be based on uncritical religiosity. The reader seeking the well-springs of what Sikhism is will not be assisted. The only successful opponent to thousands of years of passing conquerors must have something that 'makes him tick'. Nowhere in these books is there an attempt to tell us what it is."⁹⁷ And now finding that not many persons have welcomed their moves or come forward to support unfounded suggestions, Prof. Pritam Singh is exhorting foreign scholars to join the demolition squad by saying: "If the Sikhs fail to do their duty towards Guru Arjan's monumental work, there is no reason why the wide awake international scholarship should not take the work into its own hands."⁹⁸

Our analysis and examination of the available materials on the subject and the statements of various authors leads us to the conclusion that the *Kartarpuri Bir* is the authentic Adi-Granth prepared by the fifth Guru and, that the views

of the three authors or critics are without any basis either factual or rational. In fact, it is important to note that there is no claim of originality made for any *Bir* other than the *Kartarpuri Bir*.

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APPENDIX A

Dr. W. H. Mcleod has made certain observations in the chapter, entitled 'The Sikh Scriptures, of his book *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, which are misleading and contrary to facts. The author has seen my book *Sri Kartarpuri Bir De Darshan*. But if he had read it carefully, he would not have made the remarks and suggestions that he has. It is, for instance, fantastic to suggest, as the author has done, that "the widely disseminated Banno version must represent the original text." and that "a few portions must have been deleted because they could not be reconciled with beliefs subsequently accepted by the Panth." The author seems to insinuate that poltions from the "original" version which were not acceptable to "modern" Sikh thought were deleted. Who did this, how and when has not been explained. From the position assigned to *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* in the Sikh system, this just could not have happened. And it did not. The first lithographed edition of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* appeared in the 1870's and it is identical with the subsequent printed editions. That lithographed edition appeared much before the Singh Sabha reform movenent had established itself. Secondly, the *Kartarpuri Bir*, which was installed in the Harimandir (Golden Temple) by Guru Arjan, was not available for being copied. Copies were generally made of the *Banno Bir* which was freely available. There was an additional reason why this version gained the vogue. The Sikhs were reluctant to start the beginners, who were likely to make errors, on the accepted *bir*. They

were trained in the reading on the *khari bir*; i.e. Banno's before starting on the authorized *bir*.

As for the *Ranjhunghanra* hymn, the heading was inscribed by Bhai Gurdas in the Kartarpur volume but the rest of the text was omitted and the space left vacant as it was rejected by Guru Arjan. This is exactly what happened in the case of the composition called *Pran Sangli*. The heading was again written in Ramkali Ranjhunghanra and there is strong possibility that the Shabad was rejected as spurious, with only two lines remaining there. The question of deletion does not arise, because there is no deletion or obliteration in the Kartarpur manuscript. Sant Inder Singh Chakravarti, of the Namdhari Sect, which does not believe in the Guruship of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* and is still carrying on with the tradition of personal Gurus, has been quoted by the author. But Sant Inder Singh had no first hand knowledge of the *Kartarpuri Bir* and has nowhere stated that he saw or studied that manuscript.

The hymn of Mira Bai was inscribed in the Kartarpuri volume but it was crossed out. As for Surdas, only one line is there. There is neither any crossing out nor deletion. These two Bhagats remained, up to the last, devotees of the incarnation of Vishnu. They were not Bhagats of the Nirgun tradition for which reason Guru Arjan rejected their compositions.

The tradition of Akhand Path is universally accepted by the Panth and is not as recent as the author seems to suggest.

It is also wrong to say that the Sikh cremation ceremony is performed in the presence of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*.

The printed version is the authorized version accepted by all Sikhs. There may be some printing errors, but it is wrong to say that "the quest for a definitive authorized version is still not quite over."

When I studied the Kartarpuri manuscript, there was no litigation of any kind about it.

Mira Bai's hymn, as already stated, was written but crossed which fact has not been mentioned by the author. I have stated the reason why; because she never became a Bhagat of the Nirgun tradition.

The assumption that Guru Arjan composed the Ramkali Shabad and subsequently deleted it is altogether incorrect.

I wish to mention one more point. When I had the chance of studying the Kartarpur manuscript, I compared it with the current printed version. I found absolutely no difference between the two texts, except that the *Kartarpuri Bir*, having been compiled by the Fifth Guru, Guru Arjan, did not contain the hymns of the Ninth Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur.

Sd/-

(BHAJI JODH SINGH)

APPENDIX B

In Gurdwara Bhai Banno, Jawahar Nagar, Kanpur, there was a most significant copy of *Guru Granth Sahib* popularly known as "Bhai Banno Wali Bir." Besides the *Bir*, there were four *Hukumnamas* and the *Nishans* of Guru Hargobind and Guru Har Rai. There was a painting said to be of Bhai Banno and Guru Arjan Dev. We were fortunate enough in having the opportunity to see the *Bir* and also other significant things. Though we were not allowed to take any photograph of the *Bir*, but were allowed to take notes of it for a short time. We were also accorded permission to take photographs of the *Hukumnamas*, *Nishans* and paintings.

The *Bir* of Bhai Banno has some significant points which are given below:

(a) The writing of the *Bir* revealed that it was written

by one hand except that of Bani of Guru Tegh Bahadur and not by different hands as it was believed. It was quite visible by the style of “Ekonkar” written at the start of every *rag*.

(b) On folio 368, at bottom of the left page where the *Bani* of Bhagat Ravidass in *Rag Maru* ended, there was a shabad by Mira ‘mn hmwr0 bWIDE’. It was believed that the same was available in the *Kartarpuri Bir*. Similarly on folio 465 there was slok of Mahlla I, that started as “ij q dr l K mnhdw l K bhmy ibSn mhS” and on folio 466 slok of Mahlla I was given that started as “bwie AwqS Awb Kwkiedw j ql bxsI aniq pY dY pMj t0fw drb pWku Kidwie [“ This bani of Guru Nanak was new one and was not available anywhere.

(c) The total folios of the *bir* were 468. In the end, the sequence of the bani was as under:

BkqmwI w
 hklkq rwh
 mhwmwI w qy
 isAwhI dI ivDI

(d) The *Bir* of Banno had bani of Guru Tegh Bahadur also, but a careful observation revealed that it was not only written by different hand but was also of much later period. In this connection following points were remarkable:

1. The bani of Guru Tegh Bahadur in rag Gauri was written at the bottom of folio 141 and on the top of folio 142. It seemed that someone has inserted the *bani* in the space, later on.
2. Similarly on folio 192 (on right page) three Shabads of Guru Tegh Bahadur in rag Gauri were latter entered “ibrQw khY kan isau mn kl]”
3. On folio 210 (left side) after Dev Gandhari rag of Mahlla 5, some shabads of Guru Tegh Bahadur in the same rag were written.
4. On folio 227 (a) (b) the four shabads of Guru Tegh Bahadur in rag sorath were inserted before *the starting of sorath rag*. That clearly ended that it was

done only for the utilization of space at a later period.

4. The sloks and other bani of Mahlla 9 were written at the end of the bir (in 6 folios) and were without folio number and in different hand. All the bani of Guru Tegh Bahadur in one hand.
 5. There is no mention of the bani of Guru Tegh Bhadur in 'Tatkara'.
- (e) There were some significant points to note in the Tatkara of the bir.
- (i) "j qI j q smwny kw cirqr" folio 33, seemed to be later imertion as the same was in different hand.
 - (ii) The *Bir* was originally written in 1st of Asa, Sambati 1699 B.K. as was clearly written in tatkara; sBq 1699 AsU vdl ekm pQI il KI phcy [The hand was the same in which the total granth except that of Guru Tegh Bahadur was written.
 - (iii) In the *tatkara* it was stated that on folio 34 there was a *Nishan* of *Mahlla* 6, i.e. of Guru Hargobind. But the hand of the *Nishan* seemed to be those given on the book;, "Hukumnama" under the *Nishan* of Guru Arjan Dev. There was one more *Nishan* at folio 369 seemed to be of Guru Har Rai. The author decorated border of both the *Nishans* were similar.
 - (iv) After Jap (u) in *tatkara*, it was written that grU rwmDws j lau ky nkl nkl ["
- (f) The beginning ten folios were blank, then was written "vwr kw j ml w" and there under:
- 1 vwr A w s w k l m l h w 1
 - 1 vwr m l h w r k l m h l w 1
 - 1 vwr m w J k l m h l w 1
 - 1 vwr s l h l k l m h l w 3
 - 1 vwr g l j r l k l m h l w 3

1 vwr rwmklI kl mhl w 4
 1 vwr swrly kl mhl w 4
 1 vwr sR rwg kl mhl w 4
 1 vwr kwnVy kl mhl w 4
 1 vwr gaWl kl mhl w 4
 1 vwr vfhM kl vwr mhl w 4
 1 vfhM kl vwr mhl w 4
 1 srT kl vwr mhl w 4
 1 ibl wvl kl vwr mhl w 4

Then there were three blank folios before the tatkara.

(g) The bani of Bhagats were from folio 442 to 468 folio.

(h) One folio was blank after tatkara and then started the date of demise of nine Gurus. On the next folio is the *Nishan* of Guru Hargobind.

Besides the *Bir*, there were four hukumnamas preserved in the Gurdwara. Two out of them were written by Guru Tegh Bahadur and were published in "Hukumnama". These two were addressed to Bhai Ugarsain and Bhai Lal Chand, rest of Hukumnamas were also addressed to Bhai Ugarsain and Bhai Lal Chand, but there was no name probably of Bhai Banno. The writings of the hukumnamas were not deciphered then because a whitish transparent paper were pasted on it. However, the photographs of these hukumnamas and the *Nishans* as well as painting were taken.

Shri Kalyan Singh Bhatia, General Secretary, Gurdwara Bhai Banno, Jawahar Nagar., Kanpur was in possession of a manuscript entitled "Bhai Banno Prakash". Though, at that time the original manuscript was at Amritsar, but some copied portions of it was with him. This was not only a source on the life of Bhai Banno but other significant topic like the foundation of Amritsar and compilation of Guru Granth Sahib were also discussed. It was written by some Jawahar Singh in the second half of nineteenth century.

The work was in the tradition of Bhai Mani Singh and bore some similarity with Gurbilas Parkash Chhevin, though the poetry of it was comparatively of inferior type.

S. Harmander Singh residing at D.3 Tibbia college, New Delhi-5 is one of the descendents of Bhai Banno and he has worked in detail on the *Bir* of Bhai Banno. He had taken detailed notes about the *Bir*. If deemed proper, he may be addressed on the subject. It is felt that a book of Bhai Banno's *Bir* can be prepared on the analogy of "*Kartarpuri Bir De Darshan.*"

CHAPTER II

THE INTEGRATED LOGIC AND UNITY OF SIKH DOCTRINES

1. Sikhism a Revelation

It is fundamental to Sikhism that it is a revelatory religion. It means two things. First, that there is a level of Reality higher than the empirical Reality we experience with our normal senses. Second, that this Higher Reality reveals itself to man and enlightens him. These are not just rational assumptions. This is what Guru Nanak and other Gurus have categorically stressed and repeated. “O, Lalo, I say what the Lord Commands me to convey.”¹ In other words, God is both Transcendent and Immanent and man can be in tune with His Immanence. Therefore, in order to understand Sikhism these fundamentals have to be kept in mind.

2. Nature of God

The second point is what is the nature of God, or the revelation to the Guru. For the Guru God is Love. “Friends ask me what is the mark of the Lord. He is all Love, rest He is ineffable.”² The entire structure of Sikhism and its theology are based on this fundamental experience of the Guru. In Sikhism, thus, religion means living a life of love. For Guru Nanak says, “If you want to play the game of love, come to me with your head on your palm.”³ Guru Gobind Singh also declares, “Let all heed the truth I proclaim: Only those who love attain to God.”⁴ In no other Higher Religion, except Christianity, God has been characterised as love. Stace has collected a mass of data

about the nature of the mystic experience of the saints and supermen of all the different religions of the world. According to them the fundamental features of the Reality or God experienced by them are blessedness, peace, holiness, paradoxicality, and ineffability.”⁵ William James too describes the religious experience of saints to be ineffable, paradoxical, passive and noetic.⁶ Love is nowhere mentioned to be a part of the basic religious experience. In most of the Indian religions, Reality has been called Truth, Consciousness and Bliss (Sat, Chit’, Anad). In none of them the Reality has been described as basically love. Failure to grasp this fundamental difference has led to many a misrepresentations and misunderstanding about Sikhism.

Broadly speaking, the difference between the basic experience of love in the case of Sikhism, and of bliss and tranquility in the case of most other religions, especially Indian religions, leads to the entire contrast in the methodologies and goals of the two categories of systems. Hence, whereas Sikhism is life-affirming, other systems suggest total or partial withdrawal from life.

Now, love has four essential facets. It is dynamic, cohesive, directive, and the mother of all virtues and values. Guru Nanak therefore calls God the Ocean of virtues. It is in this background that we shall draw the logic of the fundamental Sikh doctrines and the integrated unity of their structure.

3. The world is real

The first logical inference of the fundamental of God is Love, is that the world is real. For, “when God was by Himself there was no love or devotion.”⁷ Because for the expression of God’s love a real and meaningful world is essential. It cannot be called a place of misery, entanglement, or suffering, nor can it be Mithya or an illusion as in many other religious systems that recommended withdrawal from the world. The Gurus say, “True is He, true is His

creation.”⁸ “True are Thy worlds and Thy universes, True are the forms Thou createst.”⁹ “God created the world and permeated it with His light.”¹⁰

4. God interested in the World

Following from the first inference is God’s deep interest in the world. For, “God is eyes to the blind, milk to the child, and riches to the poor.”¹¹ “It is the innermost nature of God to help the erring.”¹² “God rewards the smallest effort to be divine.” The Gurus call God “The Enlightener”, “Teacher or Guru.”

5. The practice of virtues is the way to God

Love being the fundamental attribute of God, the practice of virtues and the ideal of living an altruistic life becomes the third inference of the religious experience of the Gurus. “God created the world of life and planted Naam therein, making it the place for righteous activity.”¹³ “Good, righteousness, virtues and the giving up of vice are the way to realize the essence of God.”¹⁴ “Love, contentment, truth, humility and virtues enable the seed of Naam (God) to sprout.”¹⁵ “With self control and discipline we forsake vice, and see the miracle of man becoming God.”¹⁶ Thus, for the Gurus the practice of virtues is the spiritual path to God.

6. Man’s spiritual assessment depends on his deeds in this World

Since altruism is the sole path to God, man’s deeds alone become the index of his spiritual growth. Evidently, this is the fourth corollary of the fundamental of God is love. “With God only the deeds one does in this world count.”¹⁷ “True living is living God in life.”¹⁸ “God showers His grace where the lowly are cared for.”¹⁹ “It is by our deeds that we become near or away from God.”²⁰ “Truth and continence are true deeds, not fasting and rituals.” How basic is this principle of Sikhism is evident from the Guru’s dictum “Every thing is lower than Truth, but higher still is truthful living or conduct.”²¹ Accordingly, in

Sikhism every other religious practice is preparatory, the only spiritual index of man's progress being his deeds in this world: For it is "by service in this world that one gets bon our in His Court,"²²

It is in the above context that Sikhism does not recommend a monastic or an ascetic life. Because altruistic deeds can be performed only in the social life and never by withdrawal from it, or by a life given to monastism, ascetism, or meditation alone. The contract with systems like Vaisnavism, Nathism, Sufism and Budhism which recommend Sanyasa or monastism, thus, becomes evident. In Budhism good deeds can lead to a better birth, but never to Nirvana.²³ In Sikhism deeds are the sole measure of one's spiritual development.

7. Acceptance of Householder's responsibilities

Having rejected monastism and ascetism, the acceptance of social and householder's responsibilities becomes a natural corollary of the fundamental of God is Love. It is significant to note that Guru Nanak and other Gurus have sanctified man-woman relationship by profusely using it as the metaphor for the expression of their devotion to God. That the Gurus were consciously making a major departure from the then existing religious tradition is evident from the fact that all the Gurus, excepting Guru Harkrishan, who died at an early age, accepted the responsibilities of a married life. "The spiritual path can be trodden not by mere words and talk but by actually treating all men alike and as one's equals. Yoga does not lie in living in cremation grounds, doing one-pointed meditation, or roaming all over places, or visiting places of pilgrimage, but in remaining balanced and God-centred while conducting the affairs of the world."²⁴ "One gets not to God by despising the world."²⁵ "One becomes liberated even while laughing and playing."²⁶ "The God-centred lives truthfully while a householder ."²⁷

In the Bhakati systems of Nathism, Vaisnavism and

Hinduism the householder's life is clearly spurned. The Nath is under a vow not to marry.²⁸ Yajna-Valkya, and Chandogya and Mundaka Upanisads all recommend Sanyasa and Brahmacharya for Brahm realisation.²⁹ As against it, in Sikhism while any one could become a Sikh, an ascetic or a recluse was not welcome. The Siki prays for "millions of hands to serve God."³⁰

8. Equality of Women

As a corollary to the fifth inference about the sanctity of the householder's life, follows the principle of equality of man and woman. Guru Nanak says, "Why call women impure when without women there would be none."³¹ Not only he gave equality to women, but later the Guru appointed women to head some diocese.³² Keeping into view the position of women in all the religions of the world in that period of time, nothing could be more revolutionary than this feature of Guru Nanak's religion. Ignorant persons have tried to link Nathism and Vaisnavism and the Sant tradition with Sikhism. In practically all the old religions women is considered an impediment in the religious path. The Nath is not only under a vow to remain celibate, but he does not sit and eat even with Nath women.³³ Ramanuj, the Chief exponent of Vaisnavism, considered women and Sudras to be sin-born and refused to admit a woman as a Vaisnava.³⁴ The same was the position of Sankaradeva, a liberal Vaisnava saint of the fourteenth century. He wrote, "Of all the terrible aspirations of the world women's is the ugliest. A slight side glance of her's captivates even the hearts of celebrated sages. Her sight destroys prayer, penance and meditation. Knowing this, the wise keep away from the company of women,"³⁵ And Bhagat Kabir too is so critical of the role of women that Dr. Schomer finds a misogynist bias in his hymns.³⁶ This total departure by Guru Nanak from the religious tradition of his times could only be as the result of his spiritual experience that God is

love. Because in the religious environment of the times woman was looked down upon as a potential temptress.

9. The brotherhood of man

The brotherhood of man is a natural corollary of the Guru's experience of God is Love. Since in all the Hindu systems the hierarchical caste ideology was a scripturally accepted doctrine, the question of the equality of men could not arise. But Guru Nanak, after his revelation started his mission with the words, "There is no Hindu nor Musalman", meaning thereby that he saw only man without distinction of caste, class or creed. And his life long companion during his tours was a low-caste Muslim. As against it, in Vaisnavism of Ramanuja the principle of pollution was so basic and important that a Vaisnava not only cooked his own food, but threw it away altogether if while cooking or eating it another person cast a glance on it.³⁷ The Guru said the spiritual path could be trodden not by mere words and talk, but by actually treating all men alike and as one's equal.

10. Work is a religious duty

Once the principle of assessment on the basis of deeds and the responsibilities of a householder are accepted, work becomes a part of man's religious duty. The Guru says, "The person incapable of earning his living gets his ears split (i.e. turns a Nath Yogi) and becomes a mendicant. He calls himself a Guru or a saint. Do not look up to him, nor touch his feet. He knows the way who earns his living and shares his earnings with others."³⁸ The Guru deprecates the Yogi who gives up the world and then is not ashamed of begging at the doors of householders.³⁹

11. Sharing of wealth

From the principle of brotherhood of man follows naturally and essentially the idea of sharing one's income with one's fellow beings. The Guru says, "God's bounty belongs to all. but men grab it for themselves."⁴⁰ "Man

gathers riches by making others miserable.”⁴¹ “Riches cannot be gathered without sin but these do not keep company after death.”⁴² And it was Guru Nanak who introduced the practice of ‘Langar’ and ‘Pangat’ i.e. eating the same food while sitting together. Fair distribution of wealth among men is the inevitable inference from the basic experience of God is Love. The ideas of the brotherhood of man, the acceptance of householder’s and social responsibilities, the consequent necessity of work and of the fair distribution of wealth and human production are so logically connected that these cannot be dislinked or accepted partly.

12. Participation in all walks of life

Once the love of man becomes the fundamental principle of religious life, the involvement of the spiritual person in all walks of life becomes inescapable. In fact, total responsibility towards all beings is only the other side of the Coin of Love. In whatever field there is encroachment on human interests, reaction and response from the spiritual person becomes a religious duty. Otherwise the idea of the brotherhood of man becomes meaningless. It is in this context that we should understand the bold and loud criticism of Guru Nanak of the evil practices and institutions of his day. No inhuman practice remained unexposed. He criticised the tyranny and barbarity of the invaders and the oppression and brutality of the rulers, the corruption and cruelty of the administration and the officials, the degrading inhumanity of the caste ideology and the underlying idea of pollution, the naked greed and rank hypocrisy of the Brahmins and Muslim Mullahs, the rapacity of the rich in amassing wealth the idleness of Yogis and mendicants, and other wrong practices. There was hardly any evil aspect of life that escaped his criticism. All this criticism meant only one thing, namely, that there was a right or religious way of doing things that were being misconducted and that no walk of life was taboo for the religious man. In whatever field of

life there is aggression or injustice, the religious man cannot remain neutral; he must react and do so in a righteous way. For, once the householder's life was considered to be the medium of the religious growth of man, it became natural for him to accept total moral participation and total responsibility in all fields of life. The traditional barriers created between the so called socio-political segments and religious segments of life were deemed artificial, and were once for all broken for the religious man. For, wherever man suffers, the religious man must go to his succour. Such was the religious experience or perception of Guru Nanak. And it was he who laid down the firm foundation of such a religious thesis and system. Here it is necessary to understand one important point. Social or political evils can be fought and remedied only by a cohesive society, accepting social responsibilities and right goals. Those cannot be removed just by individuals or by mere preaching. In short, Guru Nanak's aim was not individual salvation, but the socio-spiritual salvation of man and society, and such a gigantic task could not be completed in one life. A whole society had to be organised that had internally to remove the disintegrating disease of the caste ideology, and externally to fight the political oppression. The task was colossal. It could not be accomplished in one generation. But, it was Guru Nanak who while he laid the foundations both of the system and the society, also initiated the method of appointing a successor so that in due time the society could become fully organised and mature enough to complete the socio-political tasks set before it. The Gurus had first to organise a new society intensely motivated with new values, with a keen sense of brotherhood, inspired to struggle and sacrifice, and deeply committed to achieving new goals. It is in this light that the role of different Gurus has to be viewed. It is important to understand that after Islam "the idea that specifically designated organised bands of men

might play a creative part in the political world, destroying the established order and reconstructing society according to the Word of God.”⁴³ was first initiated by Guru Nanak in the history of the world. In the West it appeared in the 16th century with the rise of Calvinism and later Puritanism that brought about the English Revolution.

13. Use of force sanctioned

Another logical corollary of the fundamental of love and participation in all walks of life, including the socio-political field, is a clear rejection of the doctrine of Ahimsa by Guru Nanak. The Vaisnavas, the Naths and Bhagat Kabir are all strongly pro-Ahimsic. Bhagat Kabir says that the goat eats grass and is skinned. what will happen to those who eat its meat.⁴⁴ Meat eating and use of force are barred in all Indian systems that recommend Ahimsa. But it was again Guru Nanak who emphatically discarded Ahimsa, thereby sanctioning the use of force in aid of righteous causes. In fact, the Gurus consider meat eating purely as a dietary matter irrelevant to spiritual growth. Only that food is to be avoided as disturbs the mental and bodily balance. He says, “Men discriminate not and quarrel over meat eating, they do not know what is flesh and what is non-flesh, or in what lies sin and what is not sin.”⁴⁵ In a whole hymn he exposes the cant of non-meat-eating and the allied doctrine of Ahimsa. Evidently, a religious system that accepts socio- political responsibility must spurn the doctrine of Ahimsa, otherwise it cannot rectify or resist any wrong or injustice. In Babar Vani Guru Nanak deplores the brutality of the invaders and the un-preparedness of the local rulers. He even goes to the extent of complaining to God, as the guardian of man, in allowing the weak to be oppressed by the strong. In doing so, he was not just blowing hot, nor was he suggesting anyone to perform a miracle. He was infact clearly laying one of the basic principles of his religion whereunder he not only sanctioned the use of force for righteous

causes, but also prescribed that it was both the duty and the responsibility of the religious man and the society he was creating to resist aggression and brutality.⁴⁶ It was this society which was later developed by the other Gurus. And it was the Sikh society of the time of Guru Arjan that Dr. Gupta calls a state within a state. And it was the sixth Guru who despite the contrary advice of even the most respectable Sikhs like Bhai Buddha, created an armed force and the institution of Akal Takhat the socio-political centre of the Sikhs with a distinct flag for purpose. And again, it was Guru Hargobind who in reply to a question by Sant Ram Dass of Maharashtra explained that Guru Nanak had given up mammon and not the world, and that his sword was for the protection of the weak and destruction of the tyrant.⁴⁷ The important point we need to stress is that a religious system that proceeds with the basic experience of God as Love must, as a compulsive consequence, also accept the total responsibilities of relieving all kinds of sufferings of man and, for that end, even enter the political field, and have resort to the use of force. We shall further amplify this issue about the necessity of the use of force while drawing our conclusion.

Conclusion

From the above discussion a number of conclusions follow. The first is that there is a basic Reality different from the empirical reality of cause and effect we are aware of, and that it operates in history. The second is that it is perceived by a person of higher consciousness and, thus, supplies him with authentic knowledge and direction. The third is that the Sikh Gurus perceive that Reality to be basically Love. This perception about God is Love is entirely different from the religious experience of other Indian religions in which the logic of that experience prescribes the goal of either merger in the Reality or a passive and blissful link with it as an end in itself. But, in the case of the Sikh Gurus,

the logic of God is Love leads them towards an entirely different or the opposite direction of life-affirmation and acceptance of total social responsibility. The fifth conclusion is that the eleven corollaries of this basic experience of love follow as one step from the other and are interlinked and integrated as a complete whole. For, if God is love, the world is real, the way to God is through virtuous deeds. And the goal is to establish the brotherhood of man, through the acceptance of all kinds of social responsibilities in all spheres of life, including that of work and production, and through the sharing of one's earnings and God's wealth.

Here it might be objected that in drawing a demarcation between the religious experience of God as communicated by the Sikh Gurus and that of the saints and mystics of other religions we have unnecessarily made a distinction without a difference. For further clarification we shall record the views of two outstanding persons, one in the field of intellect and the other in the field of religion.

Aldous Huxley in his letter to Humphry Osmond writes, "The Indians say, the thought and the thinker and the thing thought about are one and then of the way in which this unowned experience becomes something belonging to me; then no me any more and a kind of sat chit ananda, at one moment without karuna or charity (how odd that the Yedantists say nothing about Love)... I had an inkling of both kinds of nirvana-the loveless being, consciousness, bliss, and the one with love and, above all, sense that one can never love enough."⁴⁸

Again, during his visionary experience of the 'Pure light' he speaks to his wife Laura.

"LAURA: If you can immobilize it ? What do you mean? ALDOUS: You can immobilize it, but it isn't the real thing, you can remain for eternity in this thing at the exclusion of love and work.

LAURA: But that thing should be love and work.

ALDOUS (with emphasis) : Exactly! I mean this is why it is wrong.

As I was saying, this illustrates that you mustn't make ice cubes out of a Flowing River. You may succeed in making ice cubes... this is the greatest ice cube in the world. But you can probably go on for — oh, you can't go on forever-but for enormous eons-for what appears (this word is greatly emphasized) to be eternity, being in light.

In his later years Aldous put more and more emphasis on the danger of being addicted to meditation only, to knowledge only, to wisdom only-without love. Just now he had experienced the temptation to an addiction of an even higher order: the addiction of being in the light and staying there. "How, I can if I want to," he had said. Staying in this ecstatic consciousness and cutting oneself off from participation and commitment to the rest of the world -this is perfectly expressed today, in powerful slang, in the phrase "dropping out."

ALDOUS (continuing): It completely denies the facts: it is morally wrong; and finally, of course, absolutely catastrophic. "Absolutely catastrophic." Those two words are said with the most earnest and profound conviction. The voice is not raised, but each letter is as sculptured on a shining block of Carrara marble-and remains sculptured on the soul of anyone who hears it. It is a definitive statement: one cannot isolate oneself from one's fellows and environment, for there is no private salvation; one might "get stuck" even in the Pure Light instead of infusing it in "Love and Work", which is the direct solution for everyone's life, right here and now. Love and Work-if I should put in a nutshell the essence of Aldous's life. I could not find a more precise way of saying it."⁴⁹

In the above passages Huxley makes the distinction between the two kinds of contrasted religious experiences very clear. One he calls 'private salvation' and compares it

to freezing into an 'ice-cube' the 'Flowing River' of love, Such a path he believes to be catastrophic. In contrast, he commends the life of 'love and work' as the true life. Bergson too has called the first kind of religious experience to be 'half-way' mysticism; and the experience of love to be true religious experience.⁵⁰

Decades earlier Baba Wasakha Singh, a noted Sikh mystic, who joined the Ghaddar Rebellion of India against the British and was sentenced to transportation for life, emphasized the same thing about the Sikh mysticism which he believes involves the love and service of man to the exclusion of meditation alone or staying in the pure light of Bliss.

He stated, "It is a great achievement to have the mystic experience of God, cannot describe the intensity of bliss one finds in that state. But the Gurus' mysticism goes ahead and higher than that. While being in tune with God, one has to do good in the world and undertake the Eervice of the man. It is a higher stage than the one of mystic bliss. This is the stage of Gurus' Sikhism. You know how difficult it is for an ordinacry person to give up the worldly pleasures and possessions and follow the path of God. It is even more difficult for the mystic to come out of the state of his intense and tranquill bliss in order to serve man. But that is the Will of God. It is the highest mystic stage to serve the poor and the downtrodden and yet remain in union with Him." "The mystic bliss is so intense that a moment's disconnection with it would be like death to me but the higher stage than that is not to remain enthralled in it, but, side by side, to work consistently for the well-being of suffering humanity." "A Sikh's first duty is to work for the welfare of man and to react to injustice and wrong wherever it is and whatever be the cost." "What kind of devotion (Bhakti) is that in which one remains engrossed in one's meditations and the poor suffer all around us? This is not Bhakti. A Guru's Sikh must work and serve the Poor."⁵¹

Centuries earlier a Muslim saint said the same thing of Prophet Mohammad, “Mohammad of Arabia ascended the highest heaven and returned, I swear by God that if I had reached that point I should never have returned,” Dr. Iqbal also feels that there is a danger of absorption in the mystic bliss that is there prior to the final mystic experience which is really creative and involves the mystic’s return.⁵²

This close coincidence among the views of the Sikh Gurus, a Sikh mystic, a Muslim saint, and intellectuals like Huxley, Bergson and Mohammad Iqbal is not just incidental. These perceptions, ideas, and religious doctrines represent an entirely different class of religious system. Hence our emphasis that any interpretation of the Sikh religion or the Sikh history that ignores the fundamental and radical contribution of the Sikh thesis is just spurious and naive. It is also important to stress that in the case of religious systems like Hinduism, Buddhism, and even Christianity where the basic doctrines were recorded, interpreted, and reinterpreted, and even transformed, centuries after their original authors left the scene of history, growth, development or evolution of such religious systems as the result of environmental factors or challenges is understandable, But in the case of Sikhism its thesis and doctrines stand completely and unalterably defined and authenticated by the Guru himself. Therefore, the methodology devised to interpret evolutionary religious systems is inapplicable to Sikhism. It would, therefore, be wise for scholars drawn from such old traditions to avoid the pitfalls of their training or methodology, This word of caution appears essential because many a scholar has failed to rise above the. Conditioning done by their own training or tradition.

In the above context there are three other points which need some further *amplification*. The first point is that the chief principles of Guru Nanak’s religious system were entirely opposed to those of the then prevailing religious

systems in the country and abroad. As against the world being a place of suffering and Mithya (illusory), for the Gurus it was a real and meaningful place, a place for spiritual growth. For, by despising the world one got not to God. At one stroke, the Guru discarded ascetism and monastism that were also a feature of Sufism and Catholic Christianity. Instead of ritualism, meditational, and Yogic practices, the way to God was purely through performing righteous deeds and the service of man. Instead of remaining a part of the hierarchical caste society both Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh organised a new society completely dissociating itself from the old system and the caste ideology. And, as Jagjit Singh has explained in his book, *The Sikh Revolution*, it was the only way to escape, to a large extent, the degrading *stranglehold* of the caste system. Further, apart from sanctifying the householder's life, the equality of man and woman was recognised. This was something entirely opposed practically to all the religious systems of the world in which celibacy was recommended, or woman was considered an impediment in the religious path, or given a secondary place in the conduct of religious life and institutions. Lastly, in contrast with every other religious system, excepting Islam, the Gurus positively sanctioned entry into the political field and the judicious use of force in order to help the weak and the oppressed and resist and defeat the tyrant. It is also significant to note that whereas Indian Sufism was the principal representative and a living growth of the religious life of Islam, it never considered it its religious duty to condemn, much less to oppose, the oppression practised by the Islamic rulers. In those times it was left to the Sikh Gurus to do so as a religious duty. As explained already, all these radical and revolutionary changes in the religious life of man were due entirely to the basic difference between the religious perceptions of the two categories of religious systems, For the

Sikh Gurus God was Love. For the other group God or Reality was Sut Chit Anand or Blissful and Tranquil. One kind of perception leads to dynamic activity in the world, the other kind leads to peace and passivity and virtual withdrawal from the world.

The second point that needs stress is that God not only reveals itself to men but also operates in history'. It would just be naive for anyone to say that all these revolutionary changes brought about by the Gurus were just incidental or a reflection of the environmental forces. Most of the radical changes the Gurus brought about in the religious life of man were so new and entirely opposed to the earlier traditions that those could neither occur accidentally all at once, nor be a projection of the various historical forces operating in those times. In fact, those forces and allied religious traditions had existed for centuries on end without any perceptible change, or synthesis. Hence the inevitable conclusion, as enunciated by the Gurus, is that God not only reveals Himself, but he also enlightens, guides and operates in history, in a purposeful way. The conclusion is plain that it is only on the above premises and the stated experience of the Gurus that we can explain and understand the Sikh thesis and Sikh history. Another important point that supports and endorses the authenticity of the above statement is that it was Guru Nanak who not only laid down in his *Bani* the new basic principles but also initiated and actually laid the foundations of the system and society that was subsequently continued and developed by the later Gurus in order to meet the historical challenges. According to Guru Nanak, God supplies authentic knowledge and every interpretation of history that does not take this into account is 'Pseudo-history'. Collingwood in his book 'Idea of History', says, "The discovery of a relation is at once the discovery of my thought as reaching God and of God's thought as reaching me, and indistinguishable from this, the

performance of an act of mine by which I establish a relation with God and an act of God's by which he establishes a relation with me. To fancy that religion lives either below or above the limits of reflective thought is fatally to misconceive either the nature of religion or the nature of reflective thought. It would be nearer the truth to say that in religion the life of reflection is concentrated in its intensest form, and that the special problems of theoretical and practical life all take their special forms by segregation out of the body of the religious consciousness, and retain their vitality only so far as they preserve their connexion with it and with each other in it."⁵³ The historian's point of view is not incompatible with the belief that God has revealed Himself to man for the purpose of helping man to gain spiritual salvation. That would be unattainable by man's unaided efforts; but the historian will be suspicious *a priori*, of any presentation of this thesis that goes on to assert that a *Unique* and *Final* revelation has been given by God. To *my* people in *my* time in *my* satellite of *my* sun in *my* galaxy. In this self-centred application of the Thesis that God reveals Himself to His creatures, the historian will copy the Devil's chosen hoof.⁵⁴

The third important issue that needs clarification is the use of force for a religious cause especially because pacifism of Ahimsa has been prescribed by all religious systems excepting Islam. On that account there is some understandable confusion among writers on religion. It was Guru Nanak who started how the ways sustenance and processes of life involve the transformation and use of flesh. He explains that life is present in every grain of food and even in the firewood and the cow-dung which the Brahmin uses as a measure of purification and of avoiding pollution of food.⁵⁵

The Guru exposes the fallacy that life, much less a moral deed, is possible without the use of force. For the Guru immorality lies not in the use of force, which is inevitable

for all living, but in the purpose for which force is used. As is evident from his criticism, Guru Nanak from the very start wanted a change in socio-moral practices and institutions. The doctrine of Ahimsa was a serious hurdle in demolishing them, or the status quo. Therefore, as the prophet of a new religion with his basic perception of God as Love he categorically made it plain that in the execution of the religious ideal of the service and love of man all arbitrary prejudices against meat-eating or the use of force were wrong and meaningless. And it is, all religious systems that advocate pacifism are either ascetic, monastic, or suggest withdrawal from the world. Bhagat Kabir also advocates Ahimsa, for him the world is a trap laid by Kaal or Niranjana. His attitude towards woman is the same as that of ascetic or monastic religions. While referring to all the Bhakti systems of India before Guru Nanak, Niharranjan Ray says that those had completely surrendered themselves to the socio-political establishment of the day.⁵⁶ The point for emphasis is that no religious system with the love of man as his goal can accept or suggest the limitation of Ahimsa for bringing about changes in the socio-religious field. Pacifism is inevitably linked with religious systems that have a world-view of life negation and remain unconcerned with socio-political wrongs that involve the sufferings of man. Ahimsa is an ascetic tool, being an integral part of the ascetic methodology.

It may be argued that great pacifists like Mahatma Gandhi successfully employed non-violence as the means of bringing about socio-political changes. But, it is now well known that when the Mahatma had to face a major challenge of his life, he found himself helpless. The Mahatma being the greatest exponent of non-violence in modern times, when the Second World War broke out, the pacifists of the world looked upto him for a lead. But the Mahatma could furnish or suggest no non-violent or effective remedy. Ahimsa could

be of little help to him in stopping the holocaust. The situation became so frustrating for the Mahatma that he even thought of committing suicide so that if he could do nothing to stop the destruction, he would at least not live to see the misery caused by it.⁵⁷ The two occasions when he had to discard Ahimsa as a tool are quite well known, namely, when he agreed to the Congress accepting the responsibility of the war effort, and, again, when in 1947, he had no objection to the entry of Indian forces in Kashmir for its defence. Another great pacifist too had to take a contrasted stand when faced with a crucial issue. During the First World War Bertrand Russel opposed the idea of war and violence to the point of being arrested in pursuance of his pacifist beliefs. But later, after the Second World War, Russel himself suggested an attack against Soviet Russia before it became a major Atomic power and a threat or menace to the entire world.⁵⁸

For the Guru reason and force are two tools available to man for moral work and progress in the socio-political field. For, without the use of both these means it is impossible to bring about any social change. In fact, a high sense of reason or discrimination is the chief faculty that distinguishes man from other animals. We have seen that the Gurus clearly indicate reason to be a good instrument of religious progress. "By the use of discrimination of intellect one serves God. By discrimination one is honoured. By intellect and study one understands things,"⁵⁹ "It is the sense of discrimination that makes one charitable. This is the right way, rest is all wrong."⁶⁰ "Man, is blessed with the light of reason and discrimination,"⁶¹ "One in fear of God and discriminating between good and bad, appear sweet to God."⁶² Yet, in man's history, or civilisation human reason or intellect has also been used as the greatest instrument of oppression and destruction. Atomic arsenals are the production of the acutest intellects among men. Human

rationality has been called a convenient and clever cloak to cover man's bestiality. Does it imply that we should altogether discard reason as a useful tool for religious progress. We have already noted what is the answer given by the Gurus on this point. The fact is that both reason and force are neutral tools that can be used' both for good and evil, for construction and destruction.

The Gurus unambiguously accept the use of both of them as the means of religious functioning and progress. In doing so, they made major departure from the earlier Bhakti and religious traditions. But, this clear break with the past was the direct result of the religious perception and thesis that God is Love, and their new religious methodology and goals, and consequent social involvement and objectives. As the instruments and the servants of God in pursuance of their love of man, they had to carry out the Attributive Will of God in helping the weak and destroying the oppressor. Their spiritual system, therefore, involved the use of all the available tools, including reason and force, for the purposeful progress of man and his organising consciousness. In Sikhism there is no dichotomy or conflict between revelation and reason. The latter is considered an essential tool of the former. According to the Guru, the malady is not the use of reason and force, which can both be used and abused, but the egoistic consciousness of man, which is narrow and inadequate in its perception, and partial in its outlook and functioning, because it stands alienated from the Basic Reality. Therefore, the right way is the development of a higher consciousness in order to become a whole man or superman with a sense of kinship and total responsibility towards all beings. The higher the consciousness, the truer its perception and the greater its capacity for organisation and functioning in order to execute God's mission. Man's greatest problems today are poverty, disease and wars.' Undoubtedly, these need the greatest organisational effort

in the socio-political field. The diagnosis of the Gurus is that the egoistic man has neither the perception, nor the vision, nor even the organisational, moral and spiritual capacity to solve the problems of man. It is the religious man with a higher consciousness, who alone can fulfil God's mission of creating the Kingdom of God on earth. The Guru indicates the path of progress or evolution: "God created first Himself, then Haumen, third Maya and fourth state of poise and bliss."⁶³ At the second and third stages, man's development is only partial. The aim is the achievement of the fourth stage. In Sikhism, the development of union with God is not an end in itself. The goal is the development of a higher consciousness so as to discharge the total responsibilities devolving on man in order to create a world of harmony and happiness. The Gurus say that human problems cannot be solved at the third stage of man's development. These can be dealt with adequately at the fourth stage of man when he is not alienated from Reality and its objectives. And, this development of a higher consciousness is for a religious purpose. That purpose or mission is epitomised in the lives of the Gurus. The enrichment of the life in the world, in accordance with God's love of man has been the mission of the Gurus, as it has to be of every God-conscious or religious man. In such a righteous world alone can the problems of poverty, misery, disease, war and conflict be solved. In whatever field God's Will works the superman is there to assist it in an altruistic manner. Therefore, no segment of life is taboo for the God-conscious or religious man, since nothing is beyond the sphere of God's Will. In fact the tragedy has been "The secularisation of the Western Civilisation in the seventeenth century, so far from producing a stable way of life, raised the question; what is going to fill the temporary spiritual vacuum that this deconsecration of western life has created in western souls? Alternative attempts to fill this vacuum have

constituted the unstable spiritual history of the western World during the last 250 years.”⁶⁴ “This transfer of allegiance from the western christian Church to parochial Western secular state was given a positive form borrowed from the Greeco-Roman civilisation by the Renaissance.”

“On this political plane the Renaissance revised the Greeco-Roman worship of parochial states as goddesses.” “This unavowed worship of parochial states was by far the most prevalent religion in the Western World in A.D. 1956.”⁶⁵

Here it may be argued that in Christianity too God is Love, but pacifism is an important Christian virtue. With an apology extended in advance, we should like to make a few comments. These may be ignored if considered irrelevant or misplaced.

The Bible was compiled over 300 years after the crucifixion of Christ. No one asserts that the views expressed therein are the principles authenticated by Christ himself. Though faithfully expressed these are the product of the rational understanding of the early Christians, howsoever devoted or honest they may be. The existential situation was that except for the very short period of Christ’s ministry, the Christian society remained for hundreds of years a solitary group of devotees struggling for its self preservation against the hostile environment of the state on the one hand, and of the parent society of the Jews on the other hand. It was only after Christianity became a state religion that Christians freely accepted military service under the state. The history of all religions in India and abroad is that solitary religious groups not pursuing socio-religious objectives in the political field almost invariably aim at the ideal of personal piety and salvation, tending to own ascetism and monastism as the means of achieving that goal. Even Sufism while accepting Prophet Mohammad and Islam, turned to the method of *Khankahs* and the aim of personal union with God as an end in itself without any socio-political

concerns. True, Protestantism was a very great reform that rid Christianity of many ills, and the system of indulgences. But, at best it was a man-made reform which suffered from two evident drawbacks. The Church started playing second fiddle to the national states, the Luther's attitude against the peasants gave religious sanction and a lease of life to feudalism in the West. Similarly, while the Christian Churches did commendable work in the field of education and health in the colonies of the Western nations, they never raised a voice against oppression and exploitation by the colonial rulers. As against all this, it is very significant to find that one of the greatest social reform in human history, namely, the abolition of slavery in America was done under the influence of Puritans who not only believed in aiming at socio-political objectives, but also sanctioned the use of force for achieving those ends and who had earlier supported the English Revolution.

In the present decades poverty and war are the greatest problems of man. And again it is the existential situation that has forced the Christian Church in Latin America and Africa not only to aim at socio-political objectives, but also to give sanction to the use of force for a righteous cause. Deep class differences, extreme richness of the ruling few on the one hand, and poverty of the large majority on the other hand, is a fact of life in most Latin American states. Ninety percent of the people being Catholic Christians, the poor find that the very rich who oppress them during the six days of the week, occupy front benches in the Church on Sunday. The contradiction became so naked in its ugliness that no sensitive Christian could assert that Christ and Christianity had any relevance for the very large majority of the suffering poor Christians whom the Church could bring no succour nor give a meaningful lead. It is in the above context that has arisen the Liberation Theology, and priests have openly joined on the side of the struggling poor.

The situation is similar in Africa except that there the contradiction has been sharpened largely by the racial factor. So long as the ruling class was Christian and the suffering majority in colonies were non-Christian, the Church flourished without any qualms of conscience. But, when the oppressors and the oppressed are both Christians the Church could no longer maintain its complacent neutrality, the contradiction being too glaring to be ignored. Hence the rise of Liberation Theology in those countries. What this section of the Church has rationally realised in the 20th century, the Sikh Gurus preached and practised 500 years earlier. All we wish to emphasise is that a religious system where God is Love must enter every field of life where men are oppressed and relieve their sufferings by all available tools given to man, including the judicious use of force. Otherwise the experience of God is Love, and religion become meaningless and look hypocritical to the downtrodden and the suffering. Who can assert today that the divorce of religion from politics or the secularisation of life has been a blessing? "After having been undeservedly idolized for a quarter of a millennium as the good genius of mankind he has now suddenly found himself undeservedly excreated as an evil genius who has released from his bottle a jinn that may perhaps destroy human life on earth. This arbitrary change in the technician's onward fortunes is a several ordeal, but his loss of popularity has not hit him so hard as his loss of confidence in himself. Till 1945 he believed without a doubt that the results of his work were wholly beneficial. Since 1945 he has begun to wonder whether his professional success may not have been a social and a moral disaster."⁶⁶ According to the Sikh world view the separation of religion from politics has been an unmixed evil involving a schism in the soul of man and his alienation from Reality. For it means the loss of the only condition in which man can feel at peace with himself and the world around him. We cannot indeed, be in

harmony with the world without being in harmony with God, nor is withdrawal from the world an answer. The path of love is the answer both to be in harmony with the world and in tune with Him, who is all love.

It is in the above context that we understand the integrated logic and unity of the Sikh thesis and the lives of the Sikh Gurus whose basic religious experience was that God is Love. We close this essay with the words of Guru Gobind Singh about the unity of the Sikh doctrine:

“The holy Nanak was revered as Angad,
 Angad was recognized as Amardas, And Amardas
 became Ramdas,
 The pious saw this, but not the fools, Who thought
 them all distinct;
 But some rare person recognized that they were all one.
 They who understood this obtained perfection
 Without understanding perfection cannot be obtained.

“67

REFERENCES

- 1 Guru Granth Sahib, p. 722
- 2 *ibid*, p. 459
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**Essays
on
Authenticity of Kartarpuri Bir
And
The Integrated Logic And
Unity of Sikhism**

**DALJEET SINGH
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PREFACE

I am extremely grateful to Dr. Bhagat Singh, Vice-Chancellor, Punjabi University, Patiala and Dr. Balkar Singh, Head, Department of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala, for their very kindly having invited me to deliver the Guru Tegh Bahadur Memorial lectures and I conferred on me the privilege of initiating the series.

In the background of the objectives and activities of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Studies Department, I thought it would be quite appropriate to start the series with two essays, the first, on "*The authenticity of the Kartarpuri Bir*" the *Adi Granth* (the Sikh Scripture) compiled by Sri Guru Arjan Dev ji, the fifth Guru and scribed by Bhai Gurdas, and the second on the subject of "The Unity And Integrity of Sikhism" i.e. the Sikh doctrines embodied in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib. At the same time it is also true that the choice of the subjects have been made because of their basic importance.

Among the scriptures of the world the *Ad; Granth* is unique in having been authenticated by the fifth Master himself. After the meticulous work of Dr. Jodh Singh incorporating a page by page study of the *Kartarpuri Bir* in his book "*Kartarpuri Bir De Darshan*", one thought that the authenticity of the *Kartarpuri Bir* stood completely established. But, some subsequent oblique statements, though far from thorough or scientific, do need to be examined to show their reliability or lack of it.

In the preparation of the first essay it was a pre-requisite

that the *Kartarpuri Bir* should have been examined. I therefore take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to Sodhi Amarjit Singh, the present custodian of the *Bir*, who allowed me full and unrestricted facilities to study the *Bir* and verify twice all the salient features of the *Bir* and the points on which the various conclusions in the first essay are based. I am grateful to my old colleague and friend S. Kuldip Singh Virk, formerly Chairman Punjab Public Service Commission Patiala, who organized the study and helped me in the examination at Kartarpur. My thanks are also due to the manager of the estate and the two *granthis* who assisted me during the course of the study.

I am particularly grateful to S. Gurdev Singh formerly Judge Punjab And Haryana High Court, who has very carefully and patiently gone through the draft of the first essay and scrutinized its rationale. Very valuable suggestions made by him have been incorporated in it.

I am also indebted to S. Jagjit Singh and S. Harbhajan Singh, formerly Principal Shahid Sikh Missionary College, Amritsar, for their learned suggestions in the revision of the essay on the *Kartarpuri Bir*.

Our examination and study of the *Bir* itself reveals how misplaced and shallow are the various recorded views expressing doubts about its authenticity. The *Kartarpuri Bir* has scores of features such as simply could not be present, not even one of them in a copy.

It gives me pleasure to express my thanks to my young friend, Dr. Avtar Singh, Head, Department of Philosophy, Punjabi University, Patiala, with whom I discussed the subject of the second essay before structuring it.

The study of the Sri Guru Granth Shaib reveals that the Sikh world view and doctrines are so revolutionary that many of the Indian or foreign scholars conditioned by their own training or tradition find it difficult to comprehend the full scope and direction of the Sikh thesis and

its essentials. In laying down their religious doctrines the Gurus made a radical departure from Indian tradition by rejecting ascetism, ahimsa and celibacy and by accepting the reality of the world, life affirmation, social and house-holder's responsibilities, social participation and direction, the equality of men and the sanctity and primacy of moral and godly life. These doctrines were entirely new, for no trace of these had been present in the Indian religious back-ground which besides recommending celibacy was by and large ascetic, otherworldly, ahimsic and socially heirarchical. The activities, methodology, and the goals of the Sikh Gurus are different from those of the other Indian religious leaders because their ideology is different and their ideology is different because their perceptions about God or the basic reality are different. The second essay, therefore, seeks to bring out the logical and integrated structure and unity of the Sikh religion and its doctrines.

Daljeet Singh

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July 1987

FOREWORD

This book is an attempt to throw new light on the authenticity of Sikh scripture, i.e. Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The author, S. Daljeet Singh, delivered Guru Tegh Bahadur commemorative lectures for the year 1987 in the University and in one of these lectures he established the authenticity of hand-written *Bir* presently preserved at Kartarpur, District Jullundur (Punjab).

Among the revelatory religions of the world, Sikhism has a unique place. This is so because the *Kartarpuri Bir* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib was authenticated by the fifth master, Guru Arjan Dev Ji himself. But certain doubts regarding this established fact have been wilfully created by some scholars. This University has already published a book "*Kartarpuri Bir De Darshan*" written by Dr. Bhai Jodh Singh, the founder Vice-Chancellor of the Punjabi University Patiala. Despite this the controversy regarding the authenticity of *Kartarpuri Bir* persists. This has motivated the learned Sikh scholar, S. Daljeet Singh, to settle the controversy once for all. He has been able to do it very ably by adducing arguments based on the internal evidence from the original copy of *Kartarpuri Bir*. The present volume seeks to dispel many erroneous notions and misconceptions about *Kartarpuri Bir* and the doctrine of the Sikhs.

The second lecture deals with the doctrinal aspect of the Sikhs. The uniqueness of the Sikh thought is discussed in detail in this lecture entitled "The Integrated Logic And Unity of Sikhism", with the result that this small book has

covered the scriptural and doctrinal aspects of the Sikh religion. I believe that these well-argued essays will prove very useful to the scholars interested in Sikhism.

Bhagat Singh

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