

# **Sanatan and Christian Missionary Influence on Sikhism and Sikh Response including study of Sikh Manuscripts 1642-2013.**

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Abstract: Ideological challenge is a normal phenomenon not uncommon in the history of religious thought. In fact, it may be desirable for better understanding of religious doctrines and gives the opportunity to the adherent to affirm their faith. This paper will present Manuscriptural evidence of Sanatani and Christian missionary efforts to change the message of Guru Granth between 1604 AD-2013AD thru Sikh manuscripts. It will present the evidence from Kartarpuri Bir (1604) and important manuscripts of Damdami version written between 1707-1801AD before the ascendancy to thrown of Maharaja Ranjit Singh as well as prior to the establishment of Singh Sabha in 1873 AD and formation of 1925 Sikh Gurudwara Act. Contrarily, it will also show evidence that most of the Guru Granth manuscripts used by Sanatani and Christian Missionary, written between 1642-1705AD belong to the Banno/Khari version.

This challenge is not new for Sikhs, it has been there since 1604 AD and is still going on. But the fact remains that the first canonization of Sikh scripture took place in the hands of Guru Arjan in 1604 AD and was known as Adi Granth, currently called Kartarpuri Bir. The final canonization of Sikh scripture called Damdami Recension, was dictated and edited by Guru Gobind Singh Ji in 1706 AD at Sabo Ki Talwandi. The 10<sup>th</sup> Guru Ji, not only added and fixed the Bani of 9th Guru in Ragas and Saloks at appropriate places of Adi Granth but also fixed So 'Purkh Jutt' which was not present in the Adi Granth; and also rejected and edited out additional 'So-called Bani' Faltu Bani that crept into in Pre-1706 manuscripts.

My paper will present evidence as to how Sikhs preserved Damdami Bir, sanctified by Guru Gobind Singh in 1708 AD thru authentic manuscripts prepared from time to time from 1604 till the 1925 Gurudwara Act and the formation of SGPC. Guru Gobind Singh had never been to Anandpur Sahib after 1706. He stayed for about nine months at Damdama Sahib, Talwandi Sabo, and from there he departed towards Deccan. Guru Gobind Singh's literary activities at Talwandi Sabo are well recorded in the Sikh sources. The final canonization took place at a spot now called, **Gurudwara Likhansar**, which is commemorated as a Sikh shrine.

Our study confirms that the Sikh scripture is a revelation and not written or changed under any historical influence as is misrepresented and misinterpreted by Sanatani and Christian Missionary oriented writings. Various eminent scholars of Sikh studies have given their candid opinion on the issue of final editing including, Dr. Ganda Singh, Principal Teja Singh, Dr. Piar Singh, Piara Singh Padam, Gurdit Singh, Principal Harbhajan Singh, Giani Harbhajan Singh Ludhiana, SGPC research scholar Randhir Singh, Dr. Tarlochan Singh Bedi, Prof. Anup Singh, Jaswinder Singh, Giani Garja Singh, Shamsheer Singh Ashok, G.B Singh, Bhai Gian Singh Nihang, Harnam Das, Bhagat Singh, Dhamsan Mahant Sahib Singh, Fauja Singh. However, most of them neither gave any detailed information nor showed any evidence from the authentic manuscripts in support of their arguments.

A large amount of data, collected with Digital technology, is now preserved at Panjabi University, Patiala and GNDU, Amritsar. Authentic knowledge about Kartarpuri, Banno and Damdami version now can be verified by scholars through these manuscripts. Our Study confirms that final dictation and editing was done by 10<sup>th</sup> Master with the help of scribe, Bhai Mani Singh, who is very well recognized and respected in Sikh scriptural tradition. It is well supported by evidence that the final entries in Damdami Birrs, prepared at Damdama Sahib/Sabo Talwandi in 1706 AD, were made and fixed by Guru Gobind Singh Ji during his stay at Sabo Talwandi. This has already been confirmed by Principal Teja Singh and Dr. Ganda Singh but their debate lacked the manuscriptural evidence as suggested by Principal Harbhajan Singh. But our review through a close examination of the evidence provided confirms Principal Teja Singh and Dr. Ganda Singh's opinion. It was the *Damdami* version of Sikh scripture that was finalized at Sabo Ki Talwandi upon which Guru Gobind Singh bestowed Guruship before his demise in Oct. 1708, at Nanded, Maharashtra.

My study will also refute assertions of McLeod's flag carriers written in their respective books about Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The study will also present Sikh concerns in reference to Dharma Academy of North America & Uberoi foundation supported by "Sikh panelists" as some professors holding Sikh Chairs at various North American Universities, supported by Sikh Funds, participated in a conference titled "DECOLONIZING INDIC STUDIES" DENVER, COLORADO October 8-10, 2010. September 30th to October 2nd, 2011. "IN OUR OWN

VOICES - DHARMA EDUCATION IN NORTH AMERICA", held at Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, CA. The "VISION" of the said conference was to, "Seeks to facilitate the emergence of innovative /creative theories, approaches, and methods to education /scholarship in Hindu, Jain, Buddhist and Sikh Dharma traditions". UBEROI foundation is supporting collaborations among the different institutions that are working towards the promotion of Dharma education. Plans are being seen for dharma education in North America thru Sikh chairs. UBEROI foundation annual report 2011 issued Grant to Michigan Sikh chair reads "In 2011 the University of Michigan will be celebrating 25 years of the setting up of a Sikh studies program designed to serve the student population and to further the knowledge of this minority dharmic tradition to the broader public". Click on <http://www.uberoireligiousstudies.org/reports.html>. Read also the mission and vision of Uberoi foundation for more information.

My study will also refute assertions of Anne Murphy, "The Materiality of the Past-History and Representation in Sikh Tradition" Murphy has built the entire thesis on material aspects of Sikh history, with an obvious objective of reducing Sikhism to a set of materials. The origin and foundation of Sikhism has been well documented and subjected to rigorous scrutiny ever since the British invasion of India. The intent to understand Sikhs and their religion continues to be largely political. In the late eighteenth century the British, when started their advance towards Northern India and Punjab, encountered Sikhs not as a religious body but a growing and surmountable political power, as noted in British writings. Westerners do realize that the basic source of Sikh political and religious strength is the Sikh scripture: Guru Granth Sahib. One wonders why an Assistant Professor of Sikh Studies turns a blind eye to the universally acknowledged doctrines of Sikh theology that form the basis of a very sound historical tradition of the Sikhs. The author has distorted, misinterpreted, and undermined the very foundations of Sikh faith and its institutions, with her spurious definition of Sikh identity, based on materials of the Sikh past. She has cast doubts and created undesirable controversies regarding the well-entrenched religious identity of the Sikhs. She has thrown all caution and academic integrity to the winds, when treating subjects like *Gurdwaras*, *Sikh Rahit Maryada*, *The Granth Sahib*, Five Kakaars of the Khalsa, and nature of Sikh identity. If the Sikh identity was not clearly defined in the pre-Colonial period, then can Murphy explain the following historical facts?

1. History of Guru Period (Sri Chand, Mohan, Prithi, and Ram Rai transgressed Sikh beliefs in early Sikh history and were isolated).
2. Martyrdom of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Gurus to uphold religious freedom. Martyrdom of 5<sup>th</sup> Guru Reported by private Letter of Father Jerome Xavier,S.J. dated September 25<sup>th</sup> 1606 from Lahore To the Jesuit provincial Superior Goa.
3. Testimony of Moshan Fani (Muslim Chronicle, 1645).
4. Execution of Banda and 740 Sikhs in Delhi in 1716. That has been corroborated by two contemporary eyewitnesses, John Surman and Edward Stephenson, in a report to Robert Hedges British Governor at Fort Williams (March 10, 1716).
5. First Sikh Ghalughara in 18<sup>th</sup> century when governor Yahiya Khan issued proclamation to kill all Sikhs.
6. Why were prices on Sikh heads fixed by Mughals?.
7. Misal Raj
8. History of Maharaha Ranjit Singh period (His government was known as Sarkar-i-Khalsa; he issued coins in the name of the Gurus and all his princes were addressed as Khalsa. He was made to appear at Akal Takhat and was granted Tankhah.) .

Additionally she has willfully chosen to neglect the eloquent historical testimony of Cunningham whose unbiased monumental work was produced in the pre-colonial period, without any pressures of the Commonwealth. Singh Sabha was not any reformist movement, which made any changes in Sikh doctrines or practice. It was just a revival movement. Dr. Anne murphy, Dr. Arvindpal Singh Mandair and Dr Harjot Oberoi must answer basic question: Did the Singh Sabha create and/or compile 'new scripture' or 'new practice'? For a meaningful interpretation of Singh Sabha it is mandatory to study the Sikh movements of the Colonial period in some depth, and that too in the light of the pre-colonial Sikh Movements and Sikh scripture. An impression formed on the basis of British records and centralized Commonwealth thought only is inadequate and misleading

Thomas Carlyle had rightly observed about historical heroes and hero worship. Sikh history too is without doubt the essence of innumerable biographies of numberless martyrs, saint-soldiers and scholars who appeared on the national & international scene again and again whenever the community faced critical situations, whether in the field of politics, religion-or plain social or cultural fields. Sikhs started migrating to North America as early as 1890. They initially went through a struggle of existence, identity and faced difficulties in spreading the authentic message of Sikhism and its history. Now, Sikhism has become the world's fifth largest religion. Sikh studies are currently going on worldwide and there is a need to encourage the sharing of the authentic message of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib, not only to help those who are unwittingly unfortunate for having missed the message themselves, but also to dissuade those who misrepresent and misinterpret Sikhism by ideological and political blinkers along with Sanatani and missionary paradigms. Sikhs in North America have been blessed by Guru Granth Sahib. Sikh pioneers in North America in 1907-1918 fought nationalistic revolutionary movement for Indian freedom with inspiration from Guru Granth having belief in freedom of all people and equality of mankind. But Efforts of the pioneers, their inspiration and their struggle is academically suppressed and is being misinterpreted and misrepresented by present Indian historians of Gadar Movement. Sikhs in North America must deal with this challenge ongoing since 1642 AD because if not dealt with, it will:

- 1.) Will produce tremendous socio-psychological changes in the understanding of Sikh religion for the future generations; especially those born outside of India;
- 2.) Western world will have a lop-sided view of Sikhism;
- 3.) Erode doctrinal base of Sikhism as enshrined in Aad Sri Guru Granth Sahib;
- 4.) It will downplay with the economic and political problems of the Sikhs in Punjab; and
- 5.) It will reflect a failure of Sikh custodians and academicians to fulfill their moral duties.

Sikh community in North America funded the Sikh chairs with following views in mind

- Sikh chairs will have a positive impact on North American scholarship about Sikhism.
- Will present authentic view of Sikh history and religion
- Will present Sikhism as an independent religion with separate Doctrinal identity as envisioned in Guru Granth sahib.
- Promotion of concept of Khalsa and Rehat Maryada as unique and integral parts of Sikhism.

- Community accepted no strings

Sikh religion and its independent identity cannot be studied with DANAM,s(Dharma Academy of North America) background and its mission. The numinous experience is the core and base of Sikh religion and its ingredients i.e. religiously sensitive mind in relation to his/her apprehension of himself/herself and universe around him/her. The ultimate reality is not comprehensible through the sensory motor perceptions and speculations. Sikhism is a religion of Naam (neumina), which is asserted through all hymns of Sikh scripture through revealed statements, literary similes and allusions. Naam is God, and God is Naam, and the practice of religion revolves around the Naam. Both the surveys of Maxwebster and Schwitzer bring out that all Indian religions are life-negating and suggest withdrawal from life. This is quite true of Buddhism, Jainism, Vaishnavism, Vedanta and even the Sant Tradition. But Sikhism, as the hymns and lives of the Gurus express and demonstrate very clearly, has a world-view of life-affirmation, since in the Sikh ideology there is an inalienable combination between the spiritual life and the empirical life of man. For, whatever is within the domain of God, is also within the sphere of operation of the Godman. In short, Sikhism is a whole-life religion with a world-view entirely opposed to that of other Indian religions. Vedas and Upanishads are without doubt the scriptures of all Hindu systems. But Sikhism completely denies their authority, and Guru Nanak even calls some of their injunctions to be wrong. The Sikh Gurus were so clear and particular about the independent and separate identity of their religious system and the complete originality and newness of its character, that they took very significant stage which no other religious leader in the world had done. They specifically compiled and authenticated the Sikh Scripture. Secondly, since the time of its compilation in 1604 A.D., it is the complete repository of and the final authority on the Sikh ideology and its doctrines. Since the Gurus called it revealed Bani.The creation and sanction of Guru Granth as the sole scripture of the Sikhs reveals that the Gurus were very clear and conscious of its independent and separate character, and wanted their ideology to remain as such without chance of any addition, alteration, or any departure from its authenticity or contents. Karma without Dharma is fake and meaningless. Dharma is a state of pour consciousness that sustains, upholds, protects and brings all mankind together, binds us in a wonderful and divine cord of love that is what Sikh religion means.

For any nation to survive, it must protect its scripture and identity. Sikhs moved to the west a century ago and their religion has been established as one of the World's major religions. In order to continue presenting the authenticity of Sikh religion, Community Sikh scholars must deal with the academic challenges.

For any community ideological challenge is a normal phenomenon not uncommon in the history of religious thought. In fact it may be desirable for better understanding of religious doctrines and gives the opportunity to affirm faith. But, no religion can survive in this global age of information unless it is supported by strong academic scholarship.

**“Sikh religion an original distinct and revealed religion”**

For Academic position on ‘Sikhism as an Independent Religion’ Please click on

a. Harnam Singh Shan, “Sikhism original distinct and revealed religion”

Click on Pages 24-59

[http://www.globalsikhstudies.net/pdf/Fundamental\\_Issues\\_in%20SikhStudies.pdf](http://www.globalsikhstudies.net/pdf/Fundamental_Issues_in%20SikhStudies.pdf)

b. Daljeet Singh, “Sikhism: its identity” click on pages 12-32

<http://www.globalsikhstudies.net/pdf/invasion%20of%20relious.pdf>

c. Daljeet Singh, “Sikh ideology” click on pages 8-137

<http://www.globalsikhstudies.net/pdf/sd.pdf>

<http://www.globalsikhstudies.net/pdf/essentials.pdf>5. Daljeet Singh “Guru Nanak the Prophet of a Unique Ideology” click on pages 179-198 <http://www.globalsikhstudies.net/pdf/essentials.pdf>

d. Daljeet Singh “Sikhism, Vasnavism, Vedanta and Nathism-AComparision” click on pages 62-80 <http://www.globalsikhstudies.net/pdf/essentials.pdf>

e. Methodology of interpretation.our opinion on issues in Sikh studies pages 11-22

<http://www.globalsikhstudies.net/pdf/essentials.pdf>

Sikh community understands the philosophy of Sikhism and need no more theoretical explanations. Sikh Studies chair holders must address:

1. Genuine propagation of Sikhism in north America and attempt for a better understanding of Sikhs in north America Pluralistic and multicultural environment.

2. Must attempt for **initiation, maintenance and promotional instruction and research at undergraduate and graduate levels in Sikhism (uniqueness, doctrines and religious practices).**

3. Must address Political problem of Sikhs, especially the Minority suppression in India.

4. Must raise awareness about Amendment of Article 25 (2) (b) (II) in Indian constitution **to state that Sikhism is unique/independent religion and not a part of Hindu religion. Recommendations by the commission ten years ago must be adopted.** Accordingly, on 23 February 2000, the President of India appointed Justice Shri M.N. Venkatachaliah, former Chief Justice of India as the Chairperson of the Commission and the following persons as the other Members of the Commission: Justice 1. Shri B.P. Jeevan Reddy, Chairman, Law Commission of India; 2. Justice Shri R.S. Sarkaria, former Judge, Supreme Court of India; 3. Justice Shri Kottapalli Punayya, former Judge, Andhra Pradesh High Court; 4. Shri P.A. Sangma, former Speaker, Lok Sabha; and Member of Parliament; 5. Shri Soli J. Sorabjee, Attorney General for India; 6. Shri K. Parasaran, Senior Advocate and former Attorney General for India; 7. Dr. Subhash C. Kashyap, former Secretary General, Lok Sabha; 8. Shri C.R. Irani, Chief Editor and Managing Director, *The Statesman*; 9. Dr. Abid Hussain, former Ambassador of India in the USA; 10. Smt. Sumitra G. Kulkarni, former Member of Parliament, (Rajya Sabha). Click on to read Report of the National Commission Review to the Working of the Constitution set up vide Government Resolution dated 22 February, 2000. <http://www.lawmin.nic.in/ncrwc/finalreport.htm>

5. Must raise awareness about Freedom and Glow of independence to Sikhs in northern India as promised to Sikhs prior to 1947 by Indian congress.

6. Must promote and do more research on History of Sikh Pioneers of North America:

Highlighting correct position of Sikh pioneers in North America who initiated Sikh *Gadhar*

(1907 – 1918): a revolutionary movement for Indian independence inspired by their core belief in Guru Granth which guided them to fight for freedom of India and equality of mankind.

7. Must raise awareness that the Sikh religion is the only major religion of the world which has its recorded revelation available in the form of Kartarpuri Bir 1604 compiled by 5<sup>th</sup> Guru and Damdami Bir finally rewritten edited and standardized at DAMDAMA SAHIB/SABO TALWANDI 1706 AD By 10<sup>th</sup> Guru Ji. Many Sanatani and Missionary organizations are very envious of Sikh treasury and are making attempts to confuse it.

The Sikh community encourages all Sikh Chair holders, and people from all walks of life to seek the true word of Guru Granth Sahib for preserving Sikhism. Be a Sikh – who is a protector of the suppressed, the voice of equality, and strives for the religious freedom and social justice for all.