

# **SOPHISTRY OF DR. W.H.** **McLEOD**

**A CRITIQUE OF HIS ARGUMENTS ABOUT SIKH HISTORY AND SIKH RELIGION**

**Amarjit S. Bal, Ph.D.**

## **SHORT STATEMENT ABOUT THE MANUSCRIPT / BOOK**

Dr. W.H. McLeod is a highly controversial author because of his extreme opinions expressed in his books on Sikh history and religion. The perspectives of his critics include psychoanalysis of his personality and rebuttals pointing out his misinterpretations and misrepresentations of Sikh history and religion.

In the present work we attempt to examine the reasoning, Dr. McLeod uses, to advance his arguments. We review the anatomy or the architecture of his reasoning. The objective of this critique is to uncover the truth; to expose fallacious reasoning; and to evaluate the validity and trustworthiness of Dr. McLeod's arguments.

We have characterized Dr. McLeod's arguments as sophistic. This accounts for the legitimacy of the title of this book.

As a sophist, DR. McLeod is adroit and specious in his reasoning. His reasoning, although clever, is frequently misleading. His arguments give the impression that he is stating the truth. However, the arguments turn out to be flawed when subjected to the laws of logic.

The method used to critique Dr. McLeod's arguments is dialectics. This method requires adherence to the laws of logic in order to distinguish truth from error. The ratiocination thus carried out has exposed numerous flaws in Dr. McLeod's arguments.

Dr. McLeod, his students and others who support his views on Sikh history and religion have circulated ideas that distort the truth about Sikh beliefs and Sikh community. The menace of distortions of truth has continued unabated for several decades. Evidently, this situation hurts the mission of those who would like to see Sikhism presented to the world in its true form.

Dr. McLeod rejects Guru Nanak's visit to Mecca. He rejects the tradition behind Panja Sahib. He rejects the context of Siddh Gust of Guru Nanak. He doubts that Guru Gobind Singh made the declaration at Nander (Hazoor Sahib) about Granth Sahib to be the eternal Guru of the Sikhs, after his death. He questions the truthfulness and integrity of such Sikhs as Bhai Bala, Bhai Gurdas, Bhai Mani Singh and many scholars of later times. He

rejects the fact that Guru Nanak is the founder of Sikh Religion. He characterizes the janam-sakhis (biographies) of Guru Nanak as wonder stories.

The dialectical analysis of Dr. McLeod's arguments challenges his extreme and untenable opinions. This analysis demonstrates specific flaws in them. We establish that his views on Sikh history and religion merely reflect his biases and speculations but lack in factual content.

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### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

After completion of the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Education at the University of California at Berkeley in 1970, Amarjit Singh Bal completed a year of post-doctoral fellowship at the same institution. For a year, he taught at the University of California at Berkeley and at the California State University at Hayward. His doctoral dissertation was a comparative study of the educational objectives of John Dewey and Mahatma Gandhi. Dr. Bal worked for the State of California as Educational Researcher and as Educational Administrator for about twenty six years. He retired in December 2000. He co-directed a pioneering research study, funded by the United States Department of Education to examine educational equity for Punjabi youth at a high school in Central California. He is

keenly interested in the advancement of Sikh Panth. This interest motivated him to critique Dr. W.H. McLeod's arguments about Sikh history and Sikh religion. His hope is that 'Sophistry of W.H. McLeod' would help in stopping misrepresentations of the faith and history of Sikhs as well as it would encourage scholars to disseminate authentic information about these two topics. In retirement, Dr. Bal does volunteer work as well as serve as a Director and Secretary of the San Joaquin County Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union.

Dr. Amarjit Singh Bal is an educator. He taught at the University of California and California State University. The majority of his professional work, as an education researcher and education administrator, has been with the State of California. Dr. Bal contracted with the United States Department of Education to do pioneering research and examine the education equity for Punjabi youth in a high school in central California. He is keenly interested in the advancement of Sikh Panth. This interest motivated him to critique Dr. W.H. McLeod's arguments about Sikh history and Sikh religion. His hope is that 'Sophistry of W.H. McLeod' would help in stopping misrepresentations of the faith and history of Sikhs as well as it would encourage scholars to disseminate authentic information about these two topics. In retirement, Dr. Bal does volunteer work. He serves as a Director and Secretary of the San Joaquin County Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union.

Amarjit Singh Bal holds a doctorate in Education from the University of California at Berkeley. He taught at the University of California and at California State University. The majority of his professional work, as an education researcher and education administrator, was with the State of California. He is keenly interested in the advancement of Sikh Panth. This prompted him to author 'Sophistry of Dr. W.H. McLeod'.

#### **KEYNOTE: BOOK MARKETING STATEMENT**

This book incisively uncovers the flaws in specious reasoning used by Dr. W.H. McLeod in his arguments about Sikh history and Sikh religion.

#### **KEYWORDS TO FIND THE BOOK IN A BOOKSTORE**

SOPHISTRY OF DR. W.H. MCLEOD (BY AMARJIT SINGH BAL, Ph.D.)

**IN HUMBLE SERVICE OF SIKH GURUS: GURU NANAK TO GURU  
GRANTH SAHIB**

## **DEDICATED TO TRUTH AND SAGACITY**

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

My goal in publishing this book is to serve the cause of truth about Guru Nanak's life and teachings. In this regard, I have endeavored to accomplish a fair and accurate analysis of the arguments I have critiqued. Any success that I have achieved towards my goal is due to the Grace and Guidance of the Guru. Where I have fallen short of my goal, it is because of the limits of my intelligence. I am most grateful to my Guru for enabling me to finish my work that I decided to undertake.

I am thankful to my wife Tejinder who always encourages me to pen down my thoughts on various subjects, and publish. This book, in large measure, is a result of that encouragement and the patience she showed towards my sustained work of reading, thinking and typing for about two years.

I am deeply appreciative of the love and respect given to me and my wife by our two sons, Gurman and Shami. The same is true for their wives, Devinder and Rommel. Our grandson Agamjot and granddaughter Noor continue to give us joy. In the context of these blessings, the manuscript progressed that much more easily. In September, 2005, Tejinder had an illness which caused a delay of several months in finishing the manuscript. By God's Grace she is now in good health.

I am thankful to my publishers, M/S Bhai Chatter Singh Jiwan Singh. I am greatly appreciative of the pains they have taken to shape my manuscript into a beautifully finished book.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Upon coming across Dr. W.H. McLeod's book 'Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion' many years ago, I formed an impression that his writing style was highly opinionated and his arguments did not quite fit the logical pattern. I also found his remarks offensive regarding Sikh History and Sikh Religion.

I first read sections of his book in the early 1970's. Since that time, I have seen serious rebuttals of Dr. McLeod's opinions by Sikh authors. Over the years, I also

became aware that his students and others in the academia were propagating his erroneous and misleading views about Sikh History and Sikh Religion with great fervor.

Dr. McLeod's intemperate and offensive remarks about Sikh History and Sikh Religion bothered me, especially because his numerous remarks were based on fallacious reasoning. In 2005, I decide to carefully analyze his arguments and lay bare the flaws in them. I selected his book 'Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion' for the critique. The method I chose to analyze his arguments is Dialectical Analysis whereby the quality of reasoning, Dr. McLeod employs in support of his arguments, has been tested.

As the analysis of Dr. McLeod's arguments in the above book progressed and I noticed the frequency of his defective reasoning, I decided to review his other books related to the subject matter at hand. Therefore, I reviewed his 'Discovering the Sikhs', 'Sikhs of the Khalsa', 'The Sikhs: History, Religion, and Society', 'Sikhism', and 'Textual Sources for the Study of Sikhism'. To my amazement, I found his arguments in these books just as flawed as I had observed in his 'Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion'. I decided to include several arguments from these five books to illustrate that Dr. McLeod is consistent in following the same pattern of flawed arguments in all of his six books.

In the critique that follows, we demonstrate the specific flaws in Dr. McLeod's arguments. Each of the argument has been assigned a suitable title to facilitate targeted use of the Table of Contents by the reader. For example, the argument in which Dr. McLeod discusses the constraint he exercises in making his arguments has been given the title of 'Injunction Regarding Arguments'. The assignment of titles to Dr. McLeod's arguments also serves to highlight the range of topics he argues in his books.

Ever since 1968, when Dr. W.H. McLeod (DM) first published his book, 'Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion', there has been a spate of reaction to his writings on Sikh Religion and Sikh History. Consequently, there are those writers who have taken his views as gospel truth. This camp includes his students who emulate their teacher in writing about Sikh Religion or Sikh History. Besides his students, the admirers of DM include prominent writers such as Khushwant Singh and Patwant Singh.

Khushwant Singh observes in his review of DM's work, "McLeod knows much more about Sikhism than anyone else in the world". In his book 'The Sikhs' on pages 259-261, Patwant Singh makes a moving and cogent plea for freedom of expression in defense of the writings, on Sikhism, of several of DM's students. Mr. Singh is right in so far as an author should be able to freely express the tenable views. The problem with Dr. McLeod and his students is that they advance illogical, unrestrained and offensive views. One wonders if Mr. Singh is familiar with the warning of DM to Sikhs which reads, "The janam-sakhis are, however,

filled with miracles and wonder-stories, and my claim is that those Sikhs who cling to these miracles and wonder-stories as if they were authenticated historical facts are merely holding back a tide that will eventually flood in upon them...The tide when it comes will not overwhelm them (Sikhism is much too resilient for that), but for these Sikhs it is certainly going to make life much less comfortable than it need be.” (Quoted from Dr. McLeod’s ‘Discovering the Sikhs’, on page 7). DM’s Advice to Sikhs is not limited to relinquishment of this aspect of their heritage. He would like to see certain of their other beliefs discomposed. As we would demonstrate in this critique, DM’s extreme views go far beyond characterizing the janam-sakhis as wonder-stories. He rejects the fact that Guru Nanak is the founder of Sikh religion. He rejects the fact that Guru Gobind Singh made the declaration towards the end of his life that Sikhs must regard Guru Granth Sahib as their Guru after his death.

The other camp includes those writers who are intellectually and emotionally opposed to DM’s opinions expressed in his various arguments. It should be acknowledged that many scholars in this camp have produced impressive rebuttals to DM’s views. However, their admonitions have produced negative emotions on the part of Dr. McLeod. He expresses these emotions in his book ‘Discovering the Sikhs’. Plato had wisely observed in his “Sophist” that the admonitory sort of instruction gives much trouble and does little good.

Both of the above camps, however, have paid little or no attention to the logic, to the mechanics of DM’s writing. He does not consistently adhere to the anatomy, the architecture of reason in developing his arguments. Also, often his use of the English language is licentious. Thus DM’s arguments are frequently flawed. The inherent flaws in his arguments have remained obscure, for his writings have not been subjected to the standards of logic. The present critique is an attempt to address this problem of continuing lack of logical analysis of DM’s arguments.

In our review of DM’s arguments, the driving motive is the desire to uncover the truth and to expose fallacious reasoning and prevarications. This review is neither driven by a blind faith in DM’s arguments nor is it driven by an outright repulsion and rejection of the entirety of his views. In this critique, we rigorously evaluate the validity and trustworthiness of DM’s opinions.

We have characterized DM’s arguments as sophistic and hence the legitimacy of the title of this book. He puts forward his arguments in the style of a sophist and thus we have labeled his various arguments as sophistry. Dr. McLeod’s pattern of reasoning to sustain his arguments manifestly conforms to that of a sophist

As a sophist, DM is adroit and specious in his reasoning. His reasoning, although clever, is quite often misleading. The reasoning, underlying his arguments, gives the appearance of truth but, when analyzed, turns out to be invalid. The fallacies in his arguments are found in abundance. The unsound mode of his arguing *appears* to demand our conviction. It *appears* to be decisive of the question in

hand. But, in fact, his reasoning frequently is neither credible nor clinching. It is not according to the laws of thought. For a thorough treatment of the definition of a sophist, we refer the reader to pages 557 to 579 in 'Great Books of the Western World, R. M. Hutchins, Editor in Chief, published by William Benton, 1952

Our critique of DM's arguments demonstrates his licentious use of the English language as well as glaring departures from sound logic. We demonstrate that his reasoning in the arguments he makes runs a gamut of flaws. The arguments we have reviewed do not contain the same flaws in each case. Each argument is flawed for differing reasons. Overall, the flaws in DM's arguments consist of ambiguities, self-contradictions, inconsistent statements, confusion and wrong conclusions. His reasoning is contrary to logical rules and he repeatedly commits logical fallacies.

One of the most serious flaws in DM's writings is that he applies the concept of probability to events of the past as if they are yet to happen. In predicting the likelihood of occurrence of a future event, one is justified in using personal judgment based on one's past experience, doubts, biases and speculations. Thus a person predicting the occurrence of a future event may choose a certain level of likelihood, from zero to one, that the event would occur. In contrast to events of the future, however, prediction and probability cannot be rationally applied to events of the past. One's judgment about the issue of occurrence of past events is limited to choosing between two possibilities i.e., either the event did happen (a probability of one, meaning a fact or certainty) or it did not happen (a probability of zero, a fact or certainty). Clearly, in this case one's speculations, biases or doubts are totally irrelevant in *rationally* choosing between occurrence and non-occurrence of the event. Only facts, not opinions, can be cited as evidence in choosing between occurrence and non-occurrence of a past event.

In his sophistic arguments, DM repeatedly violates the concepts of prediction and probability. He treats events of the past as if they are yet to happen. Thus he uses his biases, doubts and speculations to assign levels of skepticism, conversely the levels of certainty, to the events of Guru Nanak's life. He assigns various probabilities of occurrence to events of Guru Nanak's life when he argues about the validity of descriptions contained in the janam-sakhis and other narratives of the events of Guru's life. Hence he commits two major errors. First, he treats his personal biases, doubts and speculations as if they are proven facts; and secondly, he misapplies the concepts of prediction and probability to the events of Guru Nanak's life.

Our review demonstrates that DM applies the same style of sophistic reasoning to the teachings of Guru Nanak as he does to the biographies of Guru Nanak. Hence there are numerous flaws in his arguments regarding the teachings of Guru Nanak.

The method used to critique DM's arguments is dialectics. This method adheres to the laws of logic, discriminates truth from error by means of logical argument, and

conforms to exact analysis. The following are the specific steps used in applying the dialectical method to the critique of DM's arguments:

We select an argument and quote it exactly as it appears in DM's particular book. Next, the argument is broken into its specific elements as these appear in the argument. This step is critical. It assists in exposing the illusion of a sound argument which DM creates when he dissembles his faulty reasoning. Then an inference is drawn from the elements, making sure that the original argument is strictly adhered to, in the inference. The inference is followed by bringing up the flaws in the argument. With the flaws in the argument thus established, the untrustworthiness of the argument is bared. Indeed how could an argument be trusted which suffers from one or more of the defects of ambiguity, inconsistency, self-contradiction and logical fallacy. The approach taken in critiquing DM's arguments is similar to the Socratic Method (or it may be regarded as an adaptation of the Socratic Method) of refutation which Plato ably describes in his 'Sophist'. Referring to those who employ this method, Plato writes:

*"They cross-examine a man's words, when he thinks that he is saying something and is really saying nothing, and easily convict him of inconsistencies in his opinions; these they then collect by the dialectical process, and placing them side by side, show that they contradict one another about the same things, in relation to the same things, and in the same respect. He, seeing this, is angry with himself, and grows gentle towards others, and thus is entirely delivered from great prejudices and harsh notions, in a way which is most amusing to the hearer, and produces the most lasting good effect on the person who is the subject of the operation. For as the physician considers that the body will receive no benefit from taking food until the internal obstacles have been removed, so the purifier of the soul is conscious that his patient will receive no benefit from the application of knowledge until he is **refuted**, and from refutation learns modesty; he must be purged of his prejudices and made to think that he knows only what he knows, and no more. For all these reasons, Theaetetus, we must admit that refutation is the greatest and chiefest of purifications..."*. Quoted from page 558 of 'Great Books of the Western World' by Robert Maynard Hutchins, Editor in Chief. Published in 1952 by the University of Chicago in arrangement with Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press.

The above dialectical method has been applied to all of the arguments that are selected for our critique. The number of arguments critiqued does not mean that we have exhausted the full range of defective arguments. However, it may be stated that the selected arguments are the more obvious ones that DM asserts.

DM, his students and others who support his views on Sikh History and Sikh Religion have circulated ideas, especially in the academia, that distort the truth about Sikhism. In the Western academia, there are certain individuals who have evidently glossed over the flaws of his arguments. From a sense of camaraderie with DM as a fellow-Westerner and fellow-scholar, they eulogize him without

critically assessing the validity of what he says. The menace of distortions of truth has continued unabated for several decades. Evidently, this situation hurts the mission of those who would like to see Sikhism presented to the world in its true form.

Here we give a flavor, to the reader, of DM's irrational incursions into the events of Guru Nanak's life. He rejects Guru's visit to Mecca; he rejects the tradition behind Panja Sahib; and he rejects the context of Siddh Gost. He doubts that Guru Gobind Singh made the declaration at Nander (Hazoor Sahib) about Granth Sahib to be the eternal Guru of the Sikhs, after his death. He casts doubt on the date of the founding of Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh. He writes, "The year 1699 is not *definitively established* as the date of foundation, but it is overwhelmingly accepted by Sikhs today". (Refer to his Book 5, page 51). DM has gone to the extent of questioning the integrity and truthfulness of such Sikhs as Bhai Bala, Bhai Gurdas, Bhai Mani Singh and many scholars of the later times. Out of a total of one hundred twenty four sakhis, DM reviews in his 'Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion', he accepts only four as valid. The rest are either rejected or treated with varying levels of skepticism.

Dr. McLeod makes arguments in which he misguidedly compares one Sikh Gurus with another Sikh Guru. He erroneously compares the compositions of Sikh Gurus with Bhagats. He compares Bhagats with Bhagats whose compositions are included in Guru Granth Sahib. He argues that Guru Nanak is not the founder of Sikh Religion but only a transformer of other, earlier men's ideas he received in inheritance. In this critique we have included several of his arguments pertaining to these topics to demonstrate the flaws in his reasoning.

It is our hope that the present critique of DM's ideas would assist the reader to weigh DM's arguments from a logical perspective. Some readers may find encouragement to undertake their own critiques of those of DM's books which we have analyzed only in a limited manner. As pointed out earlier, most of the arguments contained in this critique are from DM's book 'Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion'.

It should be pointed out that, in the present critique, we do not offer our own accounts of the events of Guru Nanak's life or our interpretations of his teachings unless it is necessary to elucidate the flaws in DM's arguments. We have restricted the present effort to bringing out the flaws in DM's arguments as these pertain to both of the topics. We demonstrate specific defects in the sophistry he uses to justify the vast litany of his assertions and doubts about Sikh History and Sikh Religion.

In conclusion, a question arises as to the worth of Dr. McLeod's writings on Sikh History and Sikh Religion. We would like to leave this judgment to the reader to make after he or she has an opportunity to read in this critique the flaws in Dr. McLeod's arguments.

Our answer to the question is that DM does make a concerted effort to poke holes into the validity of sakhis about Guru Nanak's life. But he succeeds only to offer the doubts that are based on arguments developed with flawed reasoning. Hence, DM fails to establish the invalidity of sakhis he reject or doubts. As to the worth of his writings about the teachings of Guru Nanak, we give him credit for his attempt to learn from the Guru. Here again though, he displays intellectual arrogance and his proclivity towards illogical arguments. And to his great loss, he declares that he is an unbeliever, an agnostic, if not an atheist. It is not surprising to know about DM's assertion about his disbelief in God. To reach this conclusion he probably used the same confused and illogical reasoning he has displayed in the arguments reviewed in this critique. His views about God and Sikhism would change dramatically should he clear up his pattern of thinking and reasoning.

It should be pointed out at the outset that the reader would find strong language used in describing the flaws in Dr. McLeod's arguments. This is not to give offense to him but to call the spade a spade. We have attempted to point out the lack of lucid and rational elements in the arguments we analyzed. The illogicalness of his arguments compelled us to use pertinent adjectives to properly tag the flaws in his arguments. We wish that he had chosen a different subject matter to demonstrate his skills in sophistry. The one he chose, 'Sikh history and Sikh religion', is too close to heart. The unfair and illogical treatment of the same could not be tolerated.

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Dr. Hew McLeod's arguments quoted in this critique are identified as follows: Book 1 refers to 'Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion'; Book 2 refers to 'Discovering the Sikhs', Book 3 refers to 'Sikhs of the Khalsa', Book 4 refers to 'The Sikhs: History, Religion, and Society', Book 5 refers to 'Sikhism' and Book 6 refers to 'Textual Sources for the Study of Sikhism'.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 1**

### **INJUNCTION REGARDING ARGUMENTS**

"For no one is the injunction to tread softly more relevant than for the historian whose study carries him into regions beyond his own society. Should his study extend to what other men hold sacred the injunction becomes a compelling necessity. For this reason the westerner who ventures upon a study of Sikh history must do so with caution and almost inevitably with a measure of trepidation. In such a field the risk of giving offence is only too obvious." Book 1, page vii.

#### **Assertions Contained in the Argument**

1. A non-native historian must be extremely careful in making judgments about what is held as sacred by the natives.
2. A Western historian must be cautious and fearful of not giving offence to the Sikhs.
3. The risk of offending the sensibilities of Sikhs about their history is very high in case a transgression is made violating the injunction.

#### **Inference Draw from the Argument**

According to DM it is incumbent that he exercises extreme caution in making judgments about Sikh history lest the sensibilities of Sikhs are offended by his comments.

### **Flaws in DM's Argument**

1. DM is unjust and intemperate in his comments about the events of Guru Nanak's life. He deliberately violates his own injunction of not giving offence to the Sikhs. The analysis of his various arguments on the following pages demonstrates the fact that DM has indeed stepped over the boundaries that he set for himself as an historian. He has blatantly attacked the facts of Sikh history. He has treated some of the most revered aspects of Sikh history with unabashed cynicism and ridicule. His arguments abound in untenable speculations and theories about the events of Guru Nanak's life.
2. The above argument cannot be viewed as a mere manner of speech and thus treated lightly. As we would observe later in this critique, he calls the traditions related to numerous Gurdwaras, the centers of Sikh pilgrimage and homage by millions of Sikhs around the world, as mere fictional accounts, wonder stories, that were originated and propagated by credulous Sikhs.
3. Not only DM is dishonest to his own conviction as an historian, he is also self-contradictory. The self-contradiction is apparent not only in the above opening paragraph of his book, but it also appears again and again throughout his writings. We establish the fact of his repeated self-contradictions in the following detailed analysis of his arguments.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 2**

### **SCOPE OF THE BOOK 'GURU NANAK AND THE SIKH RELIGION'**

"It should not be assumed that this book is intended to be, in any direct sense, a study of the faith of modern Sikhs. The book is a study of the man Guru Nanak. A reference to the Sikh religion has been added in the title because the adherents of that religion quite rightly regard Guru Nanak as a determinative formulator of the beliefs which have ever since constituted the primary basis of the Sikh religion. For this reason a study of Guru Nanak must inevitably involve a study of the Sikh religion in its primitive form." Book 1, page vii.

### **Assertions Contained in the Argument**

1. The book is not a study of the faith of modern Sikhs.
2. The book is a study of Guru Nanak.
3. The adherents of Sikh religion regard Guru Nanak as the positively conclusive formulator of the fundamental beliefs of Sikh religion.
4. A study of Guru Nanak is a study of the Sikh religion in its earliest form.

### **Inference Drawn from the Assertions**

According to DM, his book is a study of Guru Nanak. It is not a study of the religion of modern Sikhs. The modern Sikhs regard Guru Nanak as the formulator of the beliefs of their religion. DM's study of Guru Nanak is the study of Sikh religion in its earliest form.

### **Flaws in DM's Argument**

1. According to DM, the adherents of Sikh Religion, meaning modern Sikhs as well as Sikhs of earlier times, have regarded Guru Nanak as the formulator of fundamental beliefs of Sikh religion. Therefore, DM's study of Guru Nanak is indeed a study of the faith of modern Sikhs and the Sikhs of earlier times. However, the opening sentence of the above argument asserts that DM's book is not a study of the faith of modern Sikhs. Illogically and manifestly, DM belies what he affirms.
2. The ambiguity and self-contradiction in the above argument is an example of the fact of flawed arguments DM engages in. We shall see this fact further demonstrated as this critique progresses.
3. DM introduces a schismatic element into the faith of Sikhs. He advances the notion that Sikhism may be divided into two sub-faiths. There is the faith of *modern Sikhs* and there is the faith of *Sikhs of earlier time*, such as the faith of Sikhs of Guru Nanak's time. This is patently a wrong notion. The faith of Sikhs continues to be one faith, starting with the teachings of Guru Nanak and continuing in the teachings of the subsequent nine Gurus and the eternal Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Granth Sahib.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 3**

### **DOCTRINES OF GURU NANAK**

"The works attributed to Guru Nanak in the Adi Granth have been accepted as authentic and an effort has been made to gather into a systematic form the various beliefs which we find dispersed through his works. This can be done with relative ease, for it is clear that such a pattern was present in the mind of their author". Book1, page viii.

"For the purpose of our own understanding an integrated pattern can do much to clarify the nature of Guru Nanak's beliefs and accordingly the intention of this section is to seek such a pattern". Book 1, page 149.

### **Assertions Contained in the Argument**

1. There is no systematic pattern to Guru Nanak's doctrines in Guru Granth Sahib.
2. A systematic doctrinal pattern was present in Guru Nanak's mind.
3. Without the systematic pattern, Guru Nanak's doctrines remain obscure.

4. The clarity with which DM communicates the doctrines of Guru Nanak surpasses that of Guru Nanak's.
5. DM has formulated a systematic pattern to Guru Nanak's doctrines, thus removing the existing lack of such a pattern.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

DM claims that he is the first one to determine and fulfill the need for a systematic pattern for Guru Nanak's doctrines. This achievement by DM has removed the obscurity of Guru Nanak's doctrines. Neither Guru Nanak nor the subsequent Sikh Gurus accomplished this task. Over the centuries, Sikhs and others interested in Guru Nanak's doctrines also failed to develop such a pattern.

### **Flaws in DM's Argument**

1. DM's claim is mistaken and spurious. Guru Nanak's thought as expressed in his compositions and enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib is not obscure. Any perceived obscurity is the result of reader's own ignorance.
2. It is vainglorious for DM to claim that he is the first one to impart a systematic structure to the doctrines of Guru Nanak.
4. The Japji Sahib composition of Guru Nanak will ever defeat anyone's claim that a better systematic structure to Guru Nanak's theology is possible.
5. DM's claim that he is a better communicator than the Guru in communicating Guru's doctrines is absurd, melodramatic and manifestly megalomaniacal.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 4**

### **OBJECTIVES OF 'GURU NANAK AND THE SIKH RELIGION'**

"This study is intended to discharge a three-fold task. In the first place it seeks to apply rigorous historical methodology to the traditions concerning the life of Guru Nanak; secondly, it attempts to provide a systematic statement of his teachings; and thirdly, it endeavors to fuse the glimpses provided by the traditional biographies with the personality emerging from the teachings". Book 1, page vii.

"The sources which have been used for the first of these tasks are the hagiographic accounts called janam-sakhis. A cursory reading at once reveals the unreliable nature of these works as records of the actual life the Guru, but they constitute our only source of any importance and we are accordingly compelled to use them as best we can". Book 1, page vii.

### **Assertions Contained in the Argument**

1. Rigorous historical methodology is applied to the traditions concerning events of the life of Guru Nanak.
2. A systematic version of the theology of Guru Nanak is developed.

3. Numbers 1 & 2 above are combined.
4. Rigorous historical methodology is applied to the janam-sakhis of Guru Nanak.
5. A featherbrained, superficial reading of the janam-sakhis shows that the sakhis are unreliable.
6. The janam-sakhis, being the only source of information about Guru Nanak's life, must be used to the best extent possible.

### **Inference Drawn from the Assertions**

DM claims to have used rigorous historical methodology to discern facts from the janam-sakhis and to combine these with a systematic version of Guru Nanak's theology. He claims that his featherbrained, superficial reading shows that the janam-sakhis are unreliable. But he has used the janam-sakhis, anyway, to find facts about the life of Guru Nanak's life.

### **Flaws in DM's Argument**

1. DM is self-contradictory and is less than earnest in stating that he has applied a rigorous historical methodology to the analysis of janam-sakhis when he declares that he used cursory reading to reach his conclusion that the janam-sakhis are unreliable.
2. DM makes a false claim by stating that he has combined the truth about the teachings of Guru Nanak with the truth about the events of Guru's life. The fact is that he has merely combined his biases and interpretations in both of the cases.
3. DM has failed to grasp the symbolic significance of the various accounts in the janam-sakhis.
4. DM has failed to appreciate the stature of Guru Nanak. He views the Guru as an ordinary human being.
5. As a self-proclaimed atheist, DM has tried hard to sell his beliefs and attitudes towards God and the Gurus. This attempt is unscholarly and less than noble.
6. DM's (a self-proclaimed unbeliever) convictions are opposed to the convictions of believers. For believers, every thing is possible in the house of God and Gurus.
7. We shall demonstrate, that DM's 'rigorous historical method' is a degenerate version of skepticism, as the present critique progresses. His method is riddled with incongruent and confused assertions.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 5**

### **RAHIT OF THE KHALSA**

"For more than three centuries most Sikhs have regarded the Rahit as absolutely central to their faith. Guru Gobind Singh imparted the Rahit when he inaugurated the Khalsa order, and in the minds of most Sikhs it remains unchanged to this day".  
Book 3, page 1.

"Outsiders (those who do not speak Punjabi and Westerners) who are aware that the Sikhs have an immutable code normally know only that it requires allegiance to the five Ks and a vow not to smoke". Book 3, page 3.

"The Rahit lies at the very heart of the Khalsa and to be a Sikh of the Khalsa one must observe it, at least in a rudimentary sense". Book 3, page 4.

"Under the patronage of Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhal Committee( SGPC) their efforts were eventually crowned by the publication in 1950 of Sikh Rahit Marayada , the manual of the Rahit, which has ever since dominated the field". The SGPC and most modern scholars accept this view of the Rahit and in so doing affirm a traditional interpretation. *Sikhs of the Khalsa* (i.e., DM) fundamentally disagrees with this interpretation..." Book 3, page 6.

### **Assertions Contained in the Argument**

1. Most Sikhs regard the Rahit as immutable and absolutely central to their faith.
2. Non-Sikhs, especially the Westerners, know that the Sikhs have an immutable code, which enjoins the Sikhs to honor the five Ks and abide by a vow to not smoke.
3. The Rahit is crucially and fundamentally important to the Khalsa.
4. The Khalsa must obey the Rahit, in at least a *rudimentary, incomplete manner*.
5. The SGPC and most modern scholars accept a traditional interpretation of the Rahit.
6. DM opposes the traditional interpretation of the Rahit.

### **Inference Drawn from the Assertions**

DM asserts that most Sikhs believe that the Rahit is immutable and absolutely central to their faith. Non-Sikhs know that the Sikhs are required to honor the five Ks and make a vow to not smoke. The Rahit is fundamentally important to the Khalsa and it must be obeyed. However, the Rahit may be obeyed in an incomplete manner. DM rejects the traditional interpretation of the Rahit, which is accepted by most modern scholars and by the SGPC.

### **Flaws in DM's Argument**

1. According to DM, he stands against the belief and practice of millions of Sikhs. He counters the interpretation of Rahit, which is held as valid by most Sikhs, most modern scholars and the SGPC. The question is: If he is right in his contention, what solid ground does he stand to assert his position? Of course, he wants us to acknowledge that he is unsurpassed in his logic, sound reasoning and rigorous methodology. However, we are unable to grant him this superiority. As our analysis of his numerous arguments shows, DM is far from being an exacting and sound logician. We have found his reasoning flawed on the basis of principles of

logic. Therefore DM's attempt, to persuade us to join him in opposition to the belief of millions of lay people and numerous scholars, is futile.

2. According to DM, the Rahit is of fundamental importance to the Khalsa. It must be obeyed. Then he adds that the Rahit must be obeyed in at least in its incomplete form. Clearly, DM sees no contradiction in the two assertions. First he says it is mandatory for the Khalsa to fully comply with the Rahit. Then he adds that partial or incomplete compliance is a must.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 6**

### **FOUNDER OF SIKHISM**

"In a strict sense there can be no such thing as a perceptible beginning to Sikh history, for like all religious systems Sikhism has antecedents which defy ultimate scrutiny. This should not, however, suggest that the Sikh people are necessarily mistaken in tracing their beginnings as a religious community to Guru Nanak. In another sense it is entirely permissible to claim that Sikh history begins with Guru Nanak. He did indeed receive an inheritance and its influence is abundantly evident in all his works, but it would be altogether mistaken to regard him as a mere mediator of other men's ideas. In his hands the inheritance was transformed".  
Book 1, page 1.

#### **Assertions Contained in the argument**

1. It cannot be stated unequivocally that Sikh history started with Guru Nanak.
2. No other religious community can claim that its history started with a certain preceptor or a prophet.
3. All religions have doctrinal elements that are inherited from earlier religious faiths.
4. Sikh people are not mistaken in considering Guru Nanak as the founder of Sikh religion.
5. The founding of Sikh religion by Guru Nanak can be justified only if the founding by Guru Nanak is defined in a particular way.
6. The founding of Sikh religion is defined accurately only if the definition includes the fact that Guru Nanak received a set of religious doctrines from the past, from earlier religious faiths.
7. Guru Nanak transformed the doctrines he received from the past. He gave the doctrines a new meaning.
8. As a transformer of religious doctrines of the past, Guru Nanak is correctly regarded as the founder of Sikh religion.

#### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, it is the unique act of transforming the religious doctrines of earlier religious faiths that entitles Guru Nanak to be named as the founder of Sikh

religion. The doctrines of all religious faiths possess elements from the past. Thus, according to DM, Prophet Mohammed, Prophet Christ, Mahatma Buddha cannot respectively be called the founders of Islam, Christianity and Buddhism.

### **Flaws in DM's Argument**

1. DM is a self-proclaimed atheist. He evidently does not believe in the belief of those who regard God as the reality. To the atheist DM, the believers of various monotheistic religious faiths must appear as imagining that there is God. And evidently also, he does not believe in the teachings of those who regard God as the center of their teachings. Given the above facts, it is illogical and absurd for DM to be making judgments about the faith of believers, including the belief of Sikhs that Guru Nanak is the founder of their religion.
2. DM equates the meaning of a founder with the meaning of a transformer. His definition of "founder" of a religion is wrong for the following reasons:
  - a. Webster's Dictionary defines a founder as an originator, a creator but not as a transformer. A transformer is defined as one who alters, mutates or metamorphoses.
  - b. Scholars as well as the laity distinguish between a founder and a transformer. The two words cannot be used interchangeably. A founder is not a transformer and a transformer is not a founder.
  - c. The flaw in treating words with disparate meanings as if they are synonyms renders DM's argument as chaotic and meaningless. It is meaningless for DM to suggest that Guru Nanak *founded* the Sikh religion by *transforming* the doctrines he inherited from earlier religious faiths.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 7**

### **GURU GOBIND SINGH'S EDICT ABOUT GURU GRANTH SAHIB**

"Tradition records that Guru Gobind Singh, immediately before his death, declared that with his departure the line of personal Gurus would end and that thenceforth the function and authority of the Guru would vest in the scripture (the Adi Granth) and in the corporate community (the Panth, or Khalsa). The tradition that this came as a dying declaration from the tenth Guru himself must be regarded with some doubt, but the distinctive doctrine of the Guru which it expresses certainly evolved in some manner and has been a concept of fundamental importance in subsequent Sikh history." Book 1, page 2.

"Shortly before he died in 1708 Guru Gobind Singh decreed that at his death the line of personal Gurus should terminate. The Guru would thereafter be mystically present within the sacred scripture and the corporate community". Book 4, page 44.

### **Assertions Contained in the argument**

1. It is doubtful that Guru Gobind Singh, immediately before his death, vested the authority of Guru in Guru Granth Sahib and the Panth.
2. The above doctrine is definitely of Guru Gobind Singh.
3. The doctrine evolved over time.
4. The doctrine that the authority of Guru is vested in Guru Granth Sahib and the Panth is of fundamental importance in subsequent Sikh history.
5. Guru Gobind Singh *himself* vested the function and authority of the Guru in the sacred scripture and in the corporate community.
6. After Guru Gobind Singh, the Guru is “mystically” present within the sacred scripture and the corporate community.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, the Sikhs present at the time of the death of Guru Gobind Singh and the Sikh community in general was not enjoined by the Guru himself to acknowledge Guru Granth Sahib as the Guru after his departure. The doctrine is definitely of Guru Gobind Singh but it evolved over time. The doctrine has been of fundamental importance to later Sikh history. In his book ‘Sikhism’, of a later publication date than Book 1, DM affirms that Guru Gobind Singh himself vested the function and authority of the Guru in the sacred scripture and in the corporate community. The Guru, according to DM, is “mystically” present within the sacred scripture and the corporate community.

### **Flaws in DM's Argument**

1. DM makes an illogical assertion by stating that the referenced doctrines is definitely of Guru Gobind Singh but he did not himself enjoin the Sikhs to acknowledge the authority of Guru Granth Sahib at the time of his death. For this illogical assertion DM provides us no reason or evidence.
2. The established tradition, since the appointment of Bhai Lehna Ji as Guru Angad by Guru Nanak, meant that each Guru appointed his successor before his death. The tradition was followed by each of the nine Gurus, from Guru Nanak to Guru Teg Bahadur. Following the established tradition, Guru Gobind Singh himself passed on the authority and function of Guru to Guru Granth Sahib and the Panth. The introduction of doubt, by DM about Guru Gobind Singh's personal declaration about the Guru after him, is ill-conceived and ludicrously cynical.
3. In his book of a later publication date than Book 1, DM reverses and contradicts his earlier assertion wherein he doubts that Guru Gobind Singh declared that Guru Granth Sahib shall be the Guru of Sikhs after his death.
4. DM fails to acknowledge in his later book that he switched (In case it is a fact that he did) from a position of doubt to belief in Guru Gobind Singh's declaration that Guru Granth Sahib shall be the Guru after him.

5. DM has failed to comprehend the edict of Guru Gobind Singh to his Sikhs. The Guru is not 'mystically' present in Guru Granth Sahib. Rather, Guru Granth Sahib is the Guru of the Sikhs. And Guru is not 'mystically' present in the corporate community, the Sikh Panth. Rather, Guru Granth Sahib provides the doctrinal guidance to the Sikhs in directing the affairs of the Panth. In other words, Guru Gobind Singh vested the doctrinal authority, as it was enunciated and faithfully followed by all Sikh Gurus, in Guru Granth Sahib. The Sikh Panth was to seek doctrinal guidance from Guru Granth Sahib in formulating and implementing the decisions that concerned the Panth. Guru Gobind Singh gave these two directives to the Sikhs to continue the function and authority of the Guru.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 8**

### **STATURE OF GURU NANAK**

"The present study takes us back to the very beginning of this period in the history of Panjab and the history of religions. It concerns Guru Nanak, the acknowledged founder of the Sikh religion and incomparably the greatest of the Gurus in the shaping of that religion". Book 1, page 3.

#### **Assertions Contained in the argument**

1. DM claims that his study takes the reader to the beginning of a certain unspecified period in the history of Punjab.
2. DM claims that his study takes the reader to the beginning of a certain unspecified period in the history of religions.
3. DM's study concerns Guru Nanak.
4. Guru Nanak is the acknowledged founder of the Sikh religion.
5. Guru Nanak is the greatest of Sikh Gurus.

#### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

(DM's first two assertions are nonsensical and cannot be inferred from). He maintains that Guru Nanak is the acknowledged founder of the Sikh religion and the greatest of Sikh Gurus.

#### **Flaws in DM's Argument**

1. The first two assertions of DM do not make any sense as to what he is trying to communicate.
2. DM remarks that Guru Nanak is the acknowledged founder of Sikh religion. He misleads us by calling Guru Nanak as the "acknowledged founder" of Sikh

religion. From his argument # 6, it is clear that he does not acknowledge Guru Nanak as the founder of Sikh religion.

3. DM sets up a malapropos comparison by ascribing the levels of greatness to the Sikh Gurus. The Sikhs and others, who understand and appreciate the absolute consistency in the message of Sikh Gurus, do not indulge in such a comparison. DM's comparison of Sikh Gurus is merely an expression of self-aggrandizement on his part.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 9**

### **THE 'OBSCURE' ONE-HUNDRED YEARS OF SIKH HISTORY**

"The period of almost one hundred years which intervenes between the death of Guru Gobind Singh and the emergence of (Maharaja) Ranjit Singh is an obscure one. The broad outline of Sikh military and political activity is known and has been recorded many times, but surprisingly little is known about the religious development of the period, and much remains to be done in terms of analysis of the military and political activity". Book 1, page 2.

#### **Assertions Contained in the Argument**

1. A period of one hundred years of Sikh history is an obscure one.
2. This period begins with the death of Guru Gobind Singh and lasts till Maharaja Ranjit Singh emerged as the leader of Sikhs.
3. The authors of Sikh history of the above period provide us with only a broad outline of Sikh history and political activity.
4. The broad outline has been recorded over and over again by various historians.
5. This broad outline gives us only scanty information about the religious development during the period of one hundred years.
6. A void continued to exist, as late as the publication of DM's book in 1968, regarding the analysis of military and political activity of the Sikhs during the referenced period of one hundred years.

#### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, the authors of Sikh history covering a period of one hundred years, between the death of Guru Gobind Singh and the ascendancy of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, have provided us with scanty information about the Sikh religious development of this period. As of the year 1968, a significant void exists regarding the analysis of military and political activity of the Sikhs during the same period.

#### **Flaw in DM's Argument**

DM's argument can only be interpreted as an affront to authors of Sikh history rather than a valid critique of the histories authored by them.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 10**

### **SOURCE MATERIAL FOR ‘GURU NANAK AND THE SIKH RELIGION’**

“Our sources for the life of Guru Nanak are, as we shall see, generally unreliable, but it is possible to set out with some assurance a brief outline of his life. He was born in 1469 and grew up in his father's village of Talvandi. At some point in early manhood he moved to the town of Sultanpur where he probably secured employment in the service of Daulat Khan Lodi. From Sultanpur he began a period of travels within India and perhaps beyond India. At the conclusion of this period he settled in the village of Kartarpur on the right bank of the Ravi River, and it was there that he died, probably in the year 1539”. Book 1, page 5.

#### **Assertions Contained in the Argument**

1. The source material available to DM is unreliable to study the life of Guru Nanak.
2. Only a brief outline of Guru Nanak's life can be prepared.
3. This brief outline too lacks full assurance about its authenticity.
4. The outline is as follows: Guru Nanak was born in 1469 A.D. He grew up in his father's village of Talvandi. At an unspecified date he moved to Sultanpur. There, it is probable, that Guru Nanak secured employment with Daulat Khan Lodi. From Sultanpur, Guru Nanak began a period of travels within India. It is uncertain that he traveled beyond India. At the conclusion of his travels, Guru Nanak settled in the village of Kartarpur. He died at Kartarpur, probably in 1539 AD.

#### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

DM claims that the source material, such as the janam-sakhis of Guru Nanak, is unreliable to construct a history of his life. The meager outline, extracted from the sources, too lacks certainty. It cannot be ascertained when Guru Nanak moved to Sultanpur; whether he secured employment with Daulat Khan Lodi; whether he traveled beyond India; and what year he died at Kartarpur.

#### **Flaws in DM's Argument**

1. DM regards his intellect and knowledge superior to Sikh saints, Sikh scholars and the biographers of Guru Nanak. A little later in our analysis of his arguments, we shall see that DM repudiates the biographical versions of such Sikh luminaries as Bhai Balla, Bhai Mani Singh, Bhai Gurdas and other Sikhs of earlier and modern periods. DM is megalomaniacal. Our analysis of his arguments thus far and the subsequent analysis clearly demonstrate that his intellect and knowledge are not superior to those he berates in a vainglorious

manner. His arguments are flawed and are of the nature of sophistry. His arguments may appear persuasive on the surface but they are flawed when subjected to dialectical examination.

2. DM shrouds the events of Guru Nanak's life in doubts. He makes unrestricted use of doubt words. In the above argument, he has used "some assurance", "perhaps", "probable" to describe the life of Guru Nanak. As shall be seen during the course of our analysis of his arguments, DM uses numerous other doubt-words pertaining to the life of Guru Nanak. In fact he has created a theory of doubt and applied it to the study of Guru Nanak's life. We shall, however, demonstrate that his theory of doubt is also flawed. (The reader is referred to sophistic arguments # 17 & 32).

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 11**

### **THEOLOGY OF GURU NANAK**

“The teachings of Guru Nanak are dispersed throughout his numerous works, but from these dispersed elements it is possible to reconstruct a coherent theology”.  
Book 1, page 5.

#### **Assertions Contained in the Argument**

1. Guru Nanak's teachings are scattered in his various compositions.
2. The teachings lack a coherent theology.
3. DM claims that he is able to develop a coherent theology of Guru Nanak by organizing his various teachings.
4. By implication, DM claims that no one else, prior to him, attempted to reconstruct Guru Nanak's theology.

#### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

DM claims that Guru Nanak's theology is promulgated in an incoherent manner. He considers himself to be the first to develop a coherent theology out of the teachings of Guru Nanak.

#### **Flaw in DM's Argument**

It is DM's own ignorance that causes him to not comprehend and recognize a coherent structure of doctrines in Guru Nanak's compositions. The Japji, a composition of Guru Nanak, consolidates Guru Nanak's doctrines in a most cogent, systematic and comprehensive manner. Other compositions of Guru Nanak are equally superb in elucidating, enunciating and communicating the doctrines to those who have the capacity and humility to learn from the Guru.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 12**

## **GOD'S OFFER OF SALVATION TO MAN**

"To the offer of salvation man is called to respond by a life of meditation on the divine self-revelation and of conformity to it. If man responds he progressively grows into the likeness of God and ultimately into an ineffable union with the Timeless One. If he refuses he follows the path of spiritual death and remains firmly bound to the wheel of transmigration". Book 1, page 6.

### **Assertions Contained in the argument**

1. God makes an offer of salvation to man
2. God asks man to meditate on what God reveals about Himself.
3. God asks man to fall in line with what God reveals about Himself.
4. The man, who meditates and falls in line with what God reveals about Himself, becomes like God and is eventually united with Him.
5. The man, who *refuses* God's offer of salvation and the proposed technique to achieve it, dies spiritually and the cycle of transmigration continues for him.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, it is within the power of man to accept or reject God's offer of salvation. It is also within the power of man to value or consider useless God's offer of the technique to achieve salvation and union with God.

### **Flaw in DM's Argument**

DM misrepresents Guru Nanak's teaching. We know of no religion that sets man above God. DM portrays man as dictating to God and God accepting man's rude rejection of His offer of eternal peace and union with Him. DM's viewpoint finds acceptance in no religious system, including Sikhism. Contrary to DM's view, God is above man. God is not subservient to man's whims. God does not approach man beseeching him to accept His choicest gift to man. It is man who beseeches God to redeem him.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 13**

### **BIOGRAPHY OF GURU NANAK**

"We are here engaged in a quest for the historical (Guru) Nanak, for there is a (Guru) Nanak of both legend and faith as well as (Guru) Nanak of history". Book 1, page 6.

"In many places, and indeed in practically all that we find in the traditional biographies, the search must yield disappointing results, but it is a search which should nevertheless be made". Book 1, page 6

### **Assertions Contained in the Argument**

1. DM's book is about describing the events of life of historical Guru Nanak.
2. DM distinguishes between historical Guru Nanak and Guru Nanak of legend and faith.
3. The historical descriptions of events of Guru Nanak's life are almost totally in discord with the faith-based description of the events of Guru Nanak's life.
4. The janam-sakhi accounts of the events of Guru Nanak's life are almost totally worthless in informing DM to construct the historical descriptions of the events of the life of Guru Nanak.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, the janam-sakhi descriptions of the events of Guru Nanak's life are worthless for the purpose of his quest to construct a history of the events of the life of Guru Nanak.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM is extremely biased against hagiography, the biography of saints. Illogically, he equates hagiography with fiction.
2. With no faith in the existence of God (DM is a self-proclaimed atheist) and thereby no faith in the attributes of God, DM belongs in the category of most unsuitable commentators of hagiography. It is absurd for an atheist DM to claim that his conclusions converge on truth about the events of Guru Nanak's life.
3. Contrary to DM's view, domains of the subject matter of a hagiographer and an historian are *not mutually exclusive*. Much of the subject matter is common to both. The subject matter that is different pertains to the Great Miracle Maker, the Creator, God. The hagiographer believes in the existence of God. An historian of the type of DM does not.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 14**

### **SEQUENCE TO THE EVENTS OF GURU NANAK'S LIFE**

"The janam-sakhis are hagiographic accounts of the life of Guru Nanak, each consisting of a series of separate incidents, or chapters, entitled sakhis or gosts. Although these incidents are normally linked in a chronological sequence the order is frequently erratic and in a few cases it is totally absent". Book 1, page 8.

### **Assertions Contained in the Argument**

1. The sakhis or gosts contained in the janam-sakhis are hagiographic accounts of the life of Guru Nanak.
2. The sakhis are normally linked in a chronological sequence.

3. The order in which the sakhis are linked is frequently erratic.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, the sakhis contained in the janam-sakhis are *normally* linked in chronological sequence. However, the order or sequence is *frequently* erratic.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. If the meaning of "normally" and "frequently" is taken to mean "usually", according to Webster's Dictionary, then DM clearly contradicts himself. He characterizes the sakhis in janam-sakhis of Guru Nanak as following a chronologically correct pattern as well as an erratic pattern.
2. In case DM uses the words "normally" and "frequently" signifying disparate meanings, then he is deviating from the Standard English and has evidently invented his own meanings for the two words. But he does not tell us what the meanings are.
3. DM's use of the words "normally" and "frequently" is confusing as to what he attempts to communicate to the reader.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 15**

### **DR. MCLEOD'S SOURCES OF INFORMATION BESIDES JANAM-SAKHIS**

"Reference to Guru Nanak may be found in other works, but none of these carry us beyond the janam-sakhis. The Dabistan, which of all non-Sikh works containing references to Guru Nanak lies nearest to his time, is no nearer than the older janam-sakhis and it is clear that Mohsin Fani relied largely upon Sikh informants". Book 1, page 9.

"Independent traditions concerning the life of Guru Nanak did, of course, emerge, but there is no indication that any of them possessed more than the remotest of connexions with historical fact". Book 1, page 9.

### **Assertion contained in the Argument**

1. All works on the life of Guru Nanak are coterminous with janam-sakhis.
2. None of the works provides information additional to the janam-sakhis.
3. Mohsin Fani, the author of Dabistan, developed his material about the life of Guru Nanak on the basis of information he received from the Sikhs of seventeenth century.
4. Mohsin Fani records legends (fictional accounts) about the life of Guru Nanak.

5. All independent traditions, containing material developed independently of the janam-sakhis and other extant accounts of the life of Guru Nanak, contain fictions and not historical material.

### **Inference Drawn from the Assertions**

According to DM, all works that deal with the life of Guru Nanak, whether these relied on the janam-sakhis or were developed independently, contain fictional, imaginary accounts of Guru Nanak's life. In these works, historical facts are non-existent. Sikh and non-Sikh biographers recount stories that are fictional.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM portrays his intellect and integrity superior to all biographers of Guru Nanak. He claims that all others who wrote about the events of Guru Nanak's life believed in and reported the fictional accounts. In contrast, he claims that he is the one who is after the facts about the events of Guru Nanak's life. This self-aggrandizement does nothing to dispel the factual impression that his arguments are flawed in such profusion that it is hard to understand what he says.
2. DM makes an absurd assertion in the disparagement of Sikh people, and Sikh and non-Sikh biographers of Guru Nanak. He depicts them as a credulous lot enamoured with receiving, manufacturing and transmitting falsehood about Guru Nanak's life.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 16**

### **VALUE OF THE SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT GURU'S LIFE**

"(The) independent traditions are almost totally valueless as sources of authentic information and accordingly we are bound to depend on the intensely interesting but largely unreliable janam-sakhis for practically all of our information concerning the events of the Guru's life". Book 1, page 10.

### **Assertions Contained in the Argument**

1. The independent traditions that contain reverential accounts of Guru Nanak's life are valueless.
2. These traditions offer no factual information about Guru Nanak's life.
3. DM is dependent on the unreliable, undependable janam-sakhis because the independent traditions offer no assistance to him to develop his biography of Guru Nanak.

### **Inference Drawn from the Assertions**

In developing his biography of Guru Nanak, DM claims that he gets no assistance from any other source except the unreliable janam-sakhis. Therefore he relies on the unreliable content of janam-sakhis.

### **Flaw in the Argument**

DM is manifestly self-contradictory by arguing that he relies on the unreliable content of the janam-sakhis to develop his biography of Guru Nanak. It is illogical for DM to assert that he relies on what he says cannot be relied upon.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 17**

### **DR. MCLEOD'S THEORY OF SAKHI-BUILDING**

"The precise manner in which the janam-sakhis developed is not known for certain, but it is possible to reconstruct a likely pattern. The beginnings would be the remembered facts about the Guru which would have circulated orally among the first generation of his followers. With the passage of time these facts would inevitably be embellished by reverent imaginations and practically all of them would undergo gradual change". Book 1, page 10.

"In addition to these remembered facts and their embellishments, stories (sakhis) would have gathered around certain references in his works". Book 1, page 11.

"All such works will reflect, to some extent, the context in which they evolved, a context which will include not only current beliefs and attitudes but also current needs". Book 1, page 12.

"The next step would be to group a number of these sakhis into some sort of chronological pattern and to give the pattern a measure of stability by committing the selected sakhis to writing. Such a selection would still be open to alteration, but to a lesser extent than was inevitably the case while the sakhis were still circulating orally. A selection once recorded would be copied, the copy would be copied, and so a tradition would be established, though still subject to modification by drawing on the oral stock, or perhaps on a different written tradition". Book 1, page 13.

### **Assertions Contained in the Argument**

1. The content of the janam-sakhis in their present form is different from the content when the sakhis were first formulated.
2. The content changed over time.
3. DM does not know exactly how the content changed.
4. DM offers his theory of how the content changed over time.

The elements of DM's theory are as follows:

- In the beginning, during the lifetime of first generation of Guru Nanak's followers, the facts about Guru Nanak's life circulated orally.
- Thereafter, the facts were added to, imaginatively, on the basis of adoration of Guru Nanak's followers.
- The original formats of sakhis thus changed over time.
- As the facts underwent change, Guru Nanak's followers connected the content of changed facts with his compositions.
- His followers, to fit and harmonize the content of his compositions with the events of his life, altered the prevalent stories about Guru Nanak's life.
- The content of the sakhis was also influenced by the existing beliefs, attitudes and needs of the Sikh community at the time when certain versions of the sakhis were taking shape.
- Authors of janam-sakhis created chronological patterns for various sakhis.
- The sakhis were then committed to writing.
- The alterations in the content of sakhis continued to occur even after the written versions of the sakhis were created.
- The recorded sakhis were copied.
- The duplicated copies were re-duplicated.
- The sakhis thus completed still continued to be altered.
- Eventually the transformation bore little or no resemblance to the original facts about the life of Guru Nanak.
- The developmental steps noted above are the elements of DM's theory of sakhi formation.

### **Inference Drawn from the Assertions**

DM offers a theory of sakhi formation about Guru Nanak's life. He bases his theory on three assumptions:

1. Not too long after the death of Guru Nanak, his followers engaged in reverential imaginations and changed the facts of his life to fit with their reverence for the Guru.
2. The followers were not content till they knit the embellished stories of Guru Nanak's life with the content of his compositions.
3. The storytellers of Guru Nanak's life incorporated material in their stories that was the outcome of their beliefs, attitudes and needs.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

DM's assumptions that underlie his theory of sakhi formation are defective for the following reasons:

1. DM debases the reverential feelings of Guru Nanak's devotees. The fact is that through his teachings and practical examples, Guru Nanak taught truth about life, world, universe, saintliness and God to his followers. He abhorred false beliefs. Truth is the subject matter that Guru Nanak taught. He taught

his followers to revere truth. For DM to allege that Guru's followers engaged in creating and perpetuating falsehood about their Guru soon after his death is preposterous.

2. In his second assumption, DM makes another baseless allegation, worse than his first one. He alleges that the devotees of Guru Nanak fancied falsehood so much that they forged counterfeit stories about Guru Nanak's life to provide settings for his compositions.
3. According to DM, the devotees of Guru Nanak fabricated sakhis about the events of Guru Nanak and dispensed these sakhis to Sikhs. DM depicts the Sikh masses as a gullible lot. DM paints authors of janam-sakhis and the Sikh community as participants in a scheme of creating a panorama of falsehood. In doing this, however, DM exposes his sham pretensions of being an unbiased scholar of early Sikh history.
4. DM's theory about sakhi formation exposes his intellectual intemperance. Indeed his inability to moderate his views in obedience to reason is highly pronounced.
5. DM claims that distortions of facts in hagiographic accounts are not limited to the Sikh community. He extends his theory to cover all hagiographic accounts of saints and prophets. Says he, "Such stories are a compelling need in the popular piety of all religions..." (Quoted from book 1, page 13). As a self-proclaimed atheist, he has no business in making such wild remarks about the faithful.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 18**

### **DR. MCLEOD'S AXIOM**

"The differences in the Puratan and Miharban accounts indicate that there must have been an evolution over a period of time..." Book 1, page 12.

"The influence of popular belief in this particular case illustrates a fundamental axiom which applies to such works as the janam-sakhis". Book1, page 12.

### **Assertions Contained in the Argument**

1. The Puratan and Miharban janam-sakhis differ in their accounts. The latter incorporates imaginary material. It was added after the material for the Puratan janam-sakhis was composed.
2. DM offers an axiom, which explains the formation of hagiographic works such as janam-sakhis.
3. DM's axiom explains how popular belief builds the hagiographic accounts by adding fiction to fiction.

### **Inference Drawn from the Assertions**

DM advances an axiom, a statement of self-evident truth, according to which the historical facts are eclipsed by the imaginations of masses. The resulting narrations are legends, either totally devoid of historical facts or the facts are inextricably buried in the legends.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. The axiom is an invention of DM's imagination. What he calls a statement of self-evident truth is in reality his biased opinion against the hagiographic accounts including the biographies of Guru Nanak.
2. DM fails to inform the reader which book of logic or empiricism he consulted to formulate and justify his axiom.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 19**

### **PURATAN AND MIHARBAN JANAM-SAKHIS**

"Ever since the days of Macauliffe, author of the six-volume work entitled The Sikh Religion, it has been the Puratan tradition which has been accorded the greatest measure of reliability and which has been used as the basis of all the better biographies. There is now reason to believe that this opinion should be revised and that the Miharban Janam-sakhi, hitherto dismissed as sectarian polemic, should be regarded as at least equal in reliability to the puratan tradition. This description is, however, a relative one. It should not be taken to imply anything resembling consistent reliability". Book 1, page 14.

### **Assertions Contained in the Argument**

1. The Puratan Janam-sakhis of Guru Nanak has been considered as most reliable.
2. The biographies of Guru Nanak that are better than others are based on the Puratan tradition.
3. DM exalts the Miharban tradition to the level of reliability possessed by the Puratan tradition.
4. The exaltation does not **mean** that there is consistent reliability.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

DM exalts the Miharban janam-sakhi to the level of reliability possessed by the Puratan janam-sakhi. Then he asserts that his exaltation of the Miharban janam-sakhi does not mean that there is a consistent reliability.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM fails to inform us why he believes that the two janam-sakhis, the Puratan and Miharban, are equally reliable.

2. DM's asserts that there is no *consistent reliability*. This is an ambiguous and illogical statement. It makes no sense as to what DM means by it.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 20**

### **ORIGIN OF PURATAN JANAM-SAKHI**

"The term Puratan Janam-sakhi, or Ancient Janam-sakhi, is open to some misunderstanding as it has been used in two different senses. Strictly speaking it designates no single known work, but rather a small group of janam-sakhis which are clearly from a common source which has never been found. It is, however, generally used with reference to the composite work which was compiled by Bhai Vir Singh and first published in 1926". Book 1, pages 15-16.

#### **Assertions Contained in the Argument**

1. According to DM, the term Puratan Janam-sakhis does not specify a single work.
2. The term specifies a group of Janam-sakhis.
3. The above group of Janam-sakhis is *assuredly* derived from the same source.
4. The source, however, has never been found.

#### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, the strict meaning of the term Puratan Janam-sakhi refers to a group of Janam-sakhis which is, undoubtedly, derived from the same source. The common source, however, has never been found.

#### **Flaw in the Argument**

DM is convinced that the group of Janam-sakhis, called Puratan Janam-sakhis, owes its origin to the same source. But he is also convinced that the common source of the Puratan Janam-sakhis has never been found. The assertion of DM, that the Puratan Janam-sakhis owe their origin to a common source, is manifestly speculative, for he never laid his eyes on the alleged common source. He, however, advances his speculation as indubitable. Illogically, he equates the speculative with the definitive.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 21**

### **COLEBROOK AND HAFIZABAD JANAM-SAKHIS**

"For the most part the two versions (Colebrook / Valait-vali Janam-sakhi and Hafizabad / Macauliffe-vali Janam-sakhi) are very close, with only occasional

words and phrases differing, but there are a few significant differences”. Book No. 1, page 17.

### **Assertions Contained in the Argument**

1. The accounts of events in Guru Nanak’s life as given in the Colebrook / Valait-vali Janam-sakhi and the Hafizabad / Macauliffe-vali Janam-sakhi are very close.
2. The closeness of the two versions is so thorough that only occasional words and phrases differ between the two.
3. The two versions, however, contain a few *significant* differences.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, the Colebrook / Valait-vali and the Hafizabad / Macauliffe-vali Janam-sakhis are almost identical barring a few words and phrases. However, DM asserts that the two Janam-sakhis do differ significantly on certain points.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM advances an opinion to claim in one sentence that an extreme likeness of two biographies, (Colebrook / Valait-vali and Hafizabad / Macauliffe-vali Janam-sakhis) also means that there are certain extreme differences between the two Janam-sakhis. He makes the assertion about extreme likeness and extreme differences in the same sentence. His two assertions are mutually exclusive. The two Janam-sakhis cannot at once be extremely alike and extremely different. He advances a fallacious argument.
2. If DM contends that his argument means that, barring a few significant differences, the two Janam-sakhis are virtually identical, then the structure of the argument is evidently ambiguous and confusing.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 22**

### **COLEBROOK AND HAFIZABAD MANUSCRIPT DATES**

“Neither the Colebrook nor the Hafizabad Janam-sakhi bears an explicit date, but a reference in the Colebrook manuscript clearly points to A.D. 1635 as the date of the original composition”. Book 1, page 17.

### **Assertions Made in the argument**

1. The date of original composition of The Colebrook Janam-sakhi is not known.
2. The date of original composition of the Hafizabad Janam-sakhi is also not known.

3. The Colebrook Janam-sakhi was, without doubt, originally composed in 1635 A.D.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, the Colebrook and Hafizabad Janam-sakhis do not provide the dates when each of the Janam-sakhis was composed. However, based on a reference in the Colebrook manuscript, this Janam-sakhi was definitely composed in 1635 A.D.

### **Flaw in the Argument**

DM first asserts that the dates of composition of the Colebrook and Hafizabad Janam-sakhis are, without doubt, unknown. Later in the same sentence, he asserts that the Colebrook Janam-sakhi was, without doubt, composed in 1635 A.D. Evidently, DM both affirms and rejects his own assertion, committing yet another logical fallacy.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 23**

### **SEVA DAS AS THE AUTHOR OF PURATAN JANAM-SAKHI**

“This original Puratan janam-sakhi has never been found. Macauliffe and Kahn Singh have attributed it to a certain Seva Das, but there is no reference to such a person in the janam-sakhi which Macauliffe published and it is clear from a comment which he makes that the information was not based upon anything he had himself seen”. Book 1, page 17

Macauliffe’s comment is as follows: ‘The late Sir Atar Singh, Chief of Bhadaur, gave the author this information.’ Book 1, page 17. Foot note 2.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. The original Puratan janam-sakhi has never been found.
2. Macauliffe and Kahn Singh believe that the author of the Puratan janam-sakhi is Seva Das.
3. Macauliffe’s janam-sakhi makes no reference to Seva Das.
4. Macauliffe’s view, that the author of the original janam-sakhi is Seva Das, is based on hearsay.

5. Macauliffe states that the late Sir Avtar Singh, Chief of Bhadaur, gave him the information that Seva Das was the author of original, Puratan janam-sakhi.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

Three men of integrity and credibility, namely, Max Arthur Macauliffe, Bhai Kahn Singh of Nabha and Sir Avtar Singh, all believe that the author of the original puritan janam-sakhi is Seva Das. This is refuted by DM.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM's rejection of the unanimous view of the three men of integrity and credibility is not incontrovertible.
2. DM's authority to comment on the authenticity of the authorship of Puratan janam-sakhi is not higher than the named three scholars. There exists no basis whatsoever to contend that DM's integrity and credibility is superior to the named three scholars.
3. DM offers us no logical basis for his refutation of Seva Das being the author of original Puratan janam-sakhi.
4. Contrary to the self-contradiction of DM, Macauliffe does make a reference to Seva Das, as author of the original Puratan janam-sakhi, in his (Macauliffe's) janam-sakhi.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 24**

### **REPUTATION OF MIHARBAN**

“It is true that certain features of the janam-sakhi (Miharban's Pothi Sach-Khand) could give offence, but such features are by no means as conspicuous as the janam-sakhi reputation would suggest.” Book 1, page 20.

“The tone, far from being one of denigration, is manifestly one of enthusiastic homage and places this janam-sakhi firmly within the same hagiographic category as the other janam-sakhis”. Book 1, page 20.

“The Minas were schismatic, not heretics, and although they certainly bore enmity towards Guru Arjan and his successors there was no evident reason why they should have sought to malign Guru Nanak”. Book 1, page 20.

“Following the death of Prithi Chand the leadership of the (Mina) sect passed to his son Miharban (1581-1640). The Minas were subsequently execrated by Guru Gobind Singh and declared by him to be one of the five groups with whom orthodox Sikhs were to have no dealings.” Book 1, pages 18-19, footnote 4.

The janam-sakhi called Gyan Ratanavali, authored by Bhai Mani Singh, “had no taint of heresy attached to it” unlike the Miharban janam-sakhi. Book 1, pages 24-25

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. Miharban’s janam-sakhi of Guru Nanak contains views that are offensive to Sikhs.
2. The offensive content should not have maligned the Miharban janam-sakhi to the extent it did.
3. Miharban does not malign but clearly honors Guru Nanak in his janam-sakhi.
4. The Minas, the sect of Miharban, were divisive but their conduct did not reflect doctrines that were in opposition to Guru Nanak’s.
5. Miharban definitely bore enmity towards Guru Arjan and the Gurus after him.
6. Miharban was the leader of Mina sect after the death of his father, Prithi Chand.
7. Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru of Sikhs, enjoined the Sikhs to have no dealings with members of the Mina sect.
8. In contrast to Gyan Ratanawali, the janam-sakhi by Bhai Mani Singh, Miharban janam-sakhi contains heretical material in opposition to the doctrines of Guru Nanak.

### **Inference Drawn From the Argument**

According to DM, Guru Gobind Singh ordered the Sikhs to have no dealings with members of the Mina sect. Miharban, leader of the Mina sect, entered comments in his janam-sakhi that were derogatory to Guru Arjan and hence offensive to the Sikhs. Miharban caused divisiveness in the Sikh community. Miharban bore enmity towards Guru Arjan, the fifth Guru of Sikhs. Having acknowledged the above facts, DM is at a loss to understand why Miharban’s janam-sakhi invokes dishonor in the minds of Sikhs.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. In self-contradiction, DM fails to appreciate the reasons why Miharban suffers the ignominy of being offensive to the Sikhs in spite of the fact that DM himself acknowledges several compelling reasons for the disrepute.
2. DM presents yet another example of self-contradiction. First he claims that Miharban was Schismatic and not heretic. Then he claims the existence of heretical content in Miharban janam-sakhi.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 25**

## **BHAI SANTOKH SINGH'S GURU NANAK PRAKAS**

“An important work based upon the Bala tradition is Santokh Singh’s Guru Nanak Prakas, commonly called the Nanak Prakas. This is a much later account of the life of Guru Nanak, having been completed in 1823, but like its principal source it has acquired considerable importance as a result of its great popularity and consequent influence. Relying as it does upon an untrustworthy source the Nanak Prakas is itself unreliable and warrants mention only because its influence has been so extensive”. Book 1, page 24.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. Bhai Santokh Singh’s work, Guru Nanak Prakas, is an important work.
2. The work is based on (Bhai) Bala janam-sakhi.
3. The work is of a much later date in comparison to other janam-sakhis of Guru Nanak.
4. The work enjoys great popularity and influence.
5. Both Bhai Bala janam-sakhi and Bhai Santokh Singh janam-sakhi are untrustworthy.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, the janam-sakhis by Bhai Bala and Bhai Santokh Singh merit his mention only because both are very popular and influential. However, he regards both of them as unreliable accounts of Guru Nanak’s life.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. In a footnote on the same page where the above argument occurs, DM notes that Dr. Bhai Vir Singh edited the biographical works of Bhai Santokh Singh in thirteen volumes. The late Bhai Vir Singh is regarded, by Sikhs and Non-Sikhs, as one of the most trustworthy scholars of Sikh religion and history. Bhai Vir Singh would not have engaged himself in the editing effort of this magnitude had he thought that the named biographical work was unreliable. DM trivializes the monumental and scholarly work of Late Dr. Bhai Vir Singh and the work of Bhai Santokh Singh.
2. His views are offensive to those who hold the named authors in high esteem for their integrity and learning.
3. DM’s comments are unscholarly, extreme and untenable.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO.26**

### **AUTHOR OF GYAN RATANAVALI**

“Three reasons point to this conclusion (that Bhai Mani Singh is not the author of the extant version of the Gyan Ratanavali). In the first place, there are several

references to (Bhai) Mani Singh in the third person which clearly implies that the writer of the Gyan-Ratanavali is another person. In the prologue and at various points in the narrative the author makes references which suggest that he is intended to be understood as one who was present while (Bhai) Mani Singh was relating the account. Secondly, there is the comparative modernity of the Gyan-ratanavali's language. This cannot be blamed on the printers who lithographed the work in 1891 and 1907 as the manuscript copies possess the same characteristic. Thirdly, there is manifest lack of homogeneity in the work. Parts of the janam-sakhi are consistent and follow a relatively logical sequence, but there are groups of sakhis and a number of individual ones which disrupt the basic pattern and which have obviously been drawn from extraneous sources. Some of this later material appears to be the result of simple interpolation, but most of it has been properly integrated into the janam-sakhi". Book 1, page 26.

"At the end of the (extant version) of the janam-sakhi (which DM believes is not the work of Bhai Mani Singh) there is an epilogue in which it is stated that the completed work was taken to Guru Gobind Singh for his imprimatur. The Guru, it is said, duly signed it and commended it as a means of acquiring knowledge of Sikh belief. This is the Gyan-ratanavali's own account of its origin. The claim is that (Bhai) Mani Singh took Var 1 as his basis, that he supplemented it with sakhis he had heard related at the court of Guru Gobind Singh, and that he presented the completed work to the Guru for his approval. Guru Gobind Singh was Guru from 1675 until 1708. If the janam-sakhi's own claim is to be accepted its date of composition must lie within the intervening period. The claim is difficult to test as the version of the Gyan Ratanavali which we now possess is certainly not the work of (Bhai) Mani Singh". Book 1, page 25

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. The date of compilation of the extant version of Gyan Ratanavali is difficult to test.
2. The extant version of Gyan Ratanavali is not the work of Bhai Mani Singh.
3. In the extant version of Gyan Ratanavali, Bhai Mani Singh is referred in the third person.
4. The language of the extant version of Gyan Ratanavali is modern.
5. The organization of extant version of Gyan Ratanavali clearly shows that its content has been derived from more than one source.
6. The author of Gyan Ratanavali was present while Bhai Mani Singh related the account, i.e., the events of the life of Guru Nanak.
7. It is noted in the Gyan Ratanavali that Bhai Mani Singh presented the janam-sakhi to Guru Gobind Singh for his approval. Guru Gobind Singh approved the janam-sakhi.
8. It is not possible for DM to ascertain the claim of Gyan Ratanavali that the date of its composition falls in the period between 1675 and 1708, the period when Guru Gobind Singh was the Guru of the Sikhs.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, Bhai Mani Singh is not the author of the extant version of Gyan Ratanavali because: The real author makes references to Bhai Mani Singh in the third person; the language used is modern; the content has been derived from multiple sources by the writer, including what the writer heard from Bhai Mani Singh. The date of composition of Gyan Ratanavali cannot be ascertained. DM maintains that he is certain that Gyan Ratanavali was not composed during the period when Guru Gobind Singh was the Guru of the Sikhs.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM alleges that the extant version of Gyan Ratanavali is not the work of Bhai Mani Singh. Yet, in self-contradiction, DM advances his conviction that the “writer”, the scribe, of extant version of Gyan Ratanavali recorded what he heard as Bhai Mani Singh related the account.
2. DM acknowledges that Bhai Mani Singh was a contemporary of Guru Gobind Singh. The scribe of extant version of Gyan Ratanawal was evidently a contemporary of Bhai Mani Singh, from whom he heard the account of janam-sakhi. Since Bhai Mani Singh was a contemporary of Guru Gobind Singh, the date of authorship of Gyan Ratanavali must be during the period of time when Guru Gobind Singh was the Guru of the Sikh, i.e., the date must fall somewhere between 1675 and 1708. Thus DM nullifies his own assertion about the date of compilation of Gyan Ratanavali. What we have here is a clear example of self-contradiction and self-refutation on the part of DM.
3. The sophistry of DM in the above argument regarding the authorship and date of its composition fails to convince us that the author of Gyan-ratanavali is an individual other than Bhai Mani Singh.
4. DM fails to understand the difference between a scribe and an author.
5. DM evidently accepts that the author of Gyan-ratanavali was a real scholar in undertaking a scholarly activity. Consider the following assertions of DM:
  - a. The scribe of Gyan Ratanavali recorded what he heard from Bhai Mani Singh as the latter related the events of Guru Nanak’s life.
  - b. The author of Gyan Ratanavali researched the other extant material about Guru Nanak’s life and made selections there from, as appropriate.
  - c. The author combined the material, what Bhai Mani Singh himself knew, with other material from his research.
  - d. He then edited and integrated the combined material into a janam-sakhi of Guru Nanak.
  - e. He titled the prepared janam-sakhi as Gyan Ratanavali of Bhai Mani Singh.
  - f. The janam-sakhi thus prepared was presented to Guru Gobind Singh.

- g. Guru Gobind Singh accepted the janam-sakhi as the work of Bhai Mani Singh and approved its content.

The above activities establish the fact that the author of Gyan-ratanavali undertook a noteworthy scholarly activity. The epilogue of his work confirms that Gyan-ratanavali was presented to Guru Gobind Singh by Bhai Mani Singh himself. Therefore, there is nothing missing in ascertaining that the scholar is indeed none other than Bhai Mani Singh. However, DM alleges that Gyan-ratanavali is not the work of Bhai Mani Singh. This arbitrary contention is irrational and is an illustration of self-mockery on the part of DM.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 27**

### **WORTH OF VARIOUS JANAM-SAKHIS**

“As we have already indicated, the janam-sakhis of the Bala tradition are particularly unreliable, and the relatively late Gyan-ratanavali offers little which is not available in earlier janam-sakhi sources. Accordingly, these two sources may be summarily excluded and the discussion confined to Bhai Gurdas’s Var 1 and the janam-sakhis of Miharban and Puratan traditions. The Bala janam-sakhis and the Gyan-ratanavali will not, of course, be totally excluded from the analysis of the events of Guru Nanak’s life, for notwithstanding their limitations they do have a contribution to make”. Book 1, pages 28-29.

#### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. The janam-sakhis of Bhai Bala tradition are unreliable.
2. The biographical material in Gyan Ratanavali is only repetition of the same information contained in the earlier janam-sakhis.
3. The above two sources are “*summarily*” excluded from DM’s discussion of janam-sakhis.
4. DM confines his discussion of the janam-sakhi to Bhai Gurdas’s Var 1, Miharban janam-sakhi and the Puratan traditions.
5. DM does not “*totally*” exclude the Bhai Bala janam-sakhi and the Gyan Ratanavali from his discussion of the janam-sakhi.

#### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

DM “*summarily*” excludes the Bhai Bala janam-sakhi and the Gyan Ratanavali but does not “*totally*” exclude these two from his analysis of the events of Guru Nanak’s life. According to DM, the first is unreliable and the latter is redundant for DM’s purpose. He, however, uses both in his discussion of the accounts of Guru Nanak’s life.

#### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. The word excludes means to eliminate, to omit, to reject. However, by attaching two different adverbs to the word excluded, DM asserts, for us to believe, that he changes the meaning of the word 'excluded'. Contrary to his assertion, 'summarily excluded' has the same meaning as 'totally excluded'.
2. While he clearly excludes both, it is illogical for DM to assert that he does not totally exclude but includes, to a degree, both Bhai Bala janam-sakhi and Gyan Ratanavali in his discussion.
3. DM's line of reasoning is illogical. It also violates the standard usage of the English language.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 28**

### **BHAI GURDAS'S VARS**

“The account of Guru Nanak’s life given in Bhai Gurdas’s Var 1, and supplemented in Var 11, is a very brief one, but within the limited range which it covers this account has generally been accepted as the most reliable available. There are three reasons for this reputation. The first and basic one is the indisputable fact that the author was a Sikh of impeccable orthodoxy who had close associations with the more prominent of his Sikh contemporaries. These would have included not only Guru Arjan and Guru Hargobind, but also older disciples whose memories might have extended back to the time of Guru Nanak himself. Secondly, there is the coherence of the travel itinerary which may be deduced from the first Var. Thirdly, there is the belief that there is less of the miraculous in this account, and accordingly less that warrants a measure of skepticism”. Book 1, page 29.

#### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. Bhai Gurdas’s Var 1 and Var 11 are very brief in describing the events of Guru Nanak’s life.
2. Bhai Gurdas’s Vars have been accepted as the most reliable descriptions of the events of Guru Nanak’s life.
3. Bhai Gurdas was dedicated to the teachings of Sikh Gurus.
4. Bhai Gurdas was a contemporary of Guru Arjan, Guru Hargobind and Baba Buddha Ji.
5. Bhai Gurdas’s itinerary of Guru Nanak’s travels is coherent.
6. Bhai Gurdas’s Vars give the impression to DM that these contain comparatively little that DM calls miraculous and hence unacceptable to him.
7. The brevity of Vars create an illusion for DM that these contain little of the miraculous

#### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, Bhai Gurdas's account of Guru Nanak's life is very brief but it is most reliable. Bhai Gurdas was a contemporary of Guru Arjan, Guru Hargobind and Baba Buddha. He was a devout and distinguished Sikh. The impression that Bhai Gurdas's account contains little of the miraculous is really an illusion for DM.

### **Flaw in the Argument**

DM acknowledges that Bhai Gurdas had a deep understanding of the teachings of Sikh Gurus and he was closely associated with two Sikh Gurus. He was a distinguished Sikh. Having acknowledged the uniquely distinguished credentials of Bhai Gurdas, DM claims that Bhai Gurdas accepted and transmitted, by his writings, the fictitious, miraculous accounts of Guru Nanak's life. DM's reasoning is gravely flawed on the following grounds:

- a. As an author of integrity, as a Sikh who had a deep understanding of the teachings of Sikh Gurus, as a close associate of Sikh Gurus, Bhai Gurdas was committed to transmitting the truth about Guru Nanak's life. To allege, as DM does, is false and blasphemous.
- b. Bhai Gurdas was a contemporary and a close associate of Guru Arjan, Guru Hargobind and Baba Buddha Ji. The three, without doubt, knew about the events of Guru Nanak's life. Moreover, they also knew about the contents of Bhai Gurdas's compositions. Should they have viewed Bhai Gurdas's views as fictitious, Bhai Gurdas, without doubt, would have removed the same from his writings.
- c. DM is arrogant and cynical in the extreme. He is deluded in asserting his views as superior to those of Bhai Gurdas.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 29**

### **RELIABILITY OF BHAI GURDAS'S ACCOUNT OF GURU'S LIFE**

"We may attach a greater degree of trust to Bhai Gurdas's account than to those of the Puratan and Miharban janam-sakhis, but it cannot be unqualified trust. We must, moreover, conclude that even if the two Vars are the most reliable they are also the least satisfactory. The chief reason for this is the brevity of the account which they provide". Book 1, page 29.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. Bhai Gurdas's account of Guru Nanak's life is more trustworthy than that of the Puratan and Miharban janam-sakhis.
2. Bhai Gurdas's account is not fully trustworthy.
3. Bhai Gurdas's account is the least adequate because of its brevity.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

Bhai Gurdas's account is inadequate. in comparison to the Puratan and Miharban janam-sakhis. It is more trustworthy than the Puratan and Miharban janam-sakhis. But Bhai Gurdas's account of Guru Nanak's life is not fully trustworthy.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. The word trust, according to the Webster's Dictionary, means assured reliance on another's integrity, veracity. It means an absolute lack of doubt. Therefore there cannot be degrees of trust, unlike degrees of doubt. From DM's viewpoint, however, there is unqualified trust, there is qualified trust and there is greater degree of trust as illustrated in the above argument.
2. DM regards all three accounts of the life of Guru Nanak as untrustworthy and unsatisfactory. He alleges that all three include fictitious materials. As we shall see in the examination of later part of his book, he accepts only four sakhis as valid out of one hundred twenty seven sakhis he includes in his book. This fact he does not acknowledge in the above argument. The reader is thus misled to believe that DM must have based his comparison about relative trustworthiness and satisfactoriness of the cited accounts on a large number of sakhis he accepts as valid.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 30**

### **BHAI BALA'S JANAM-SAKHI**

“There can be no doubt that the Bala janam-sakhi as it has survived in manuscript form is a Hindali version of the life of Guru Nanak. This is not evident from the printed editions, for the publishers have purged almost all the references which expressed or seem to imply Hindali enmity towards Guru Nanak, but the manuscript versions have whole sakhis and a number of briefer references which were clearly intended to exalt Baba Hindal (and consequently the sect bearing his name) and to denigrate Guru Nanak at the expense of (Bhagat) Kabir and Hindal”.  
Book 1, page 23.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. The manuscript version of the Bala janam-sakhi is the Hindali version of the life of Guru Nanak. It contains material hostile to Guru Nanak.
2. The published versions of the above manuscript do not contain the hostile material.
3. The manuscript version exalts Baba Hindal and denigrates Guru Nanak.
4. The exaltation of Baba Hindal and denigration of Guru Nanak were “at the expense of Kabir and Hindal”.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, the manuscript version of Bala janam-sakhi is the Hindali version and it denigrates Guru Nanak while exalting Baba Hindal.

### **Flaw in the Argument**

In the above argument, DM makes a concluding remark, "...the manuscript versions have whole sakhis and a number of briefer references which were clearly intended to exalt Baba Hindal ...and to denigrate Guru Nanak at the *expense* of Kabir and Hindal". When one contrasts this assertion with those made in the earlier part of his argument, one must conclude that DM's reasoning makes no sense whatsoever.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 31**

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF MIHARBAN JANAM-SAKHI**

"This would mean that the Puratan version was a more primitive one, nearer to the time when memory still played a significant part, and was consequently more reliable". Book 1, page 30.

"These points would seem to indicate that of the three oldest sources the Miharban janam-sakhi is the most important". Book 1, page 32.

"Even with these qualifications the arguments in favour of the Miharban version still seem to indicate that of the three oldest sources it is the most satisfactory". Book 1, page 33.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. The Puratan version of Guru Nanak's life is the oldest of janam-sakhis.
2. Being the oldest, the Puratan version is closest to the time of Guru Nanak.
3. The Puratan version is more reliable than the Miharban janam-sakhi and Bhai Gurdas's Vars.
4. The Miharban's version is the most important.
5. The Miharban version is the most satisfactory of the three oldest versions.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, the three oldest versions of Guru Nanak's life, i.e., the Puratan janam-sakhi, Bhai Gurdas's Vars and the Miharban janam-sakhi, the Miharban janam-sakhi is the most important and most satisfactory. However, the Puratan janam-sakhi is more reliable than the Miharban janam-sakhi.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. In DM's judgment, as illustrated in the above assertions and inference drawn there from, trustworthiness of the Puratan janam-sakhi is comparatively a lesser merit than what DM considers to be most satisfactory and most important in the Miharban janam-sakhi. It is illogical for DM to assert that the Miharban's janam-sakhi is most important in spite of the fact that DM labels it as less reliable than the Puratan janam-sakhi.
2. DM makes a syntactical error in assigning the word "more" to reliable. Reliable, according to the Webster's Dictionary, means trustworthy. Logically speaking, and according to the standard usage of the English language, there is no such thing as more reliable or less reliable.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 32**

### **DR. MCLEOD'S THEORY OF SAKHI-BUILDING (Read along with argument # 17)**

"The precise manner in which the janam-sakhis developed is not known, but it is possible to reconstruct a likely pattern. The beginnings would be the remembered facts about the Guru which would have circulated orally among the first generation of his followers. With the passage of time these facts would inevitably be embellished by reverent imaginations and practically all of them would undergo gradual change". Book 1, page 10.

"It would be remembered, for example, that the Guru had spent many years traveling outside the Punjab. Some of the places he had visited might well be known, but it is unlikely that there would be any reliable knowledge of his complete itinerary. There would doubtless be many gaps in the account and these would soon be filled with the names of places which such a traveler might be expected to visit". Book 1, page 10.

"In addition to these remembered facts and their embellishments, stories would have gathered around certain references in his works. It seems clear that this must have happened in the case of Var Ramakali, sloks 2-7 of pauri 12. In these six sloks, as they appear in the Adi Granth (Sahib), Guru Nanak speaks successively as Isar, Gorakh, Gopichand, Charpat, Bharathari, and finally himself. The sloks were evidently intended for yogis of the Nath sect and this would explain the names used. Subsequently these names must have suggested that Guru Nanak had actually met these renowned figures and as a result there would have developed the story of his discourse with the Siddhs on Mount Sumeru which we find in stanzas 28-31 of Bhai Gurdas's Var 1, sakhi 50 of the Puratan janam-sakhi, and gost 117 of the Miharban janam-sakhi". Book 1, page 11.

“The contemporary needs of the community can also be regarded as the source of the most prominent of all janam-sakhi characteristics, namely the wonder story”. Book 1, page 13.

“In this way remembered facts, devout imaginations, suggestive references in Guru Nanak’s works, contemporary beliefs and needs, and the mutations which inevitably result from oral repetition must have combined to create a stock of sakhis or isolated incidents concerning the life of Guru Nanak. The next step would be to group a number of these sakhis into some sort of chronological pattern and to give the pattern a measure of stability by committing the selected sakhis to writing. Such a selection would still be open to alteration, but to a lesser extent than was inevitably the case while the sakhis were still circulating orally. A selection once recorded would be copied, the copy would be copied, and so a tradition would be established, though still subject to modification by drawing on the oral stock, or perhaps on a different written tradition”. Book 1, page 13.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. The first generation of Guru Nanak’s followers maintained an oral record of the facts of his life.
2. Starting with the second generation of Guru Nanak’s followers, oral history was changed by his followers’ imaginations that were commensurate with the reverence the followers had for Guru Nanak.
3. The places, when these were visited and which individuals Guru Nanak met there, were all changed by the imaginations of Guru’s followers.
4. The new history of Guru Nanak’s life, partly composed of original facts and partly created by the imaginations of his followers, was then connected with Guru Nanak’s compositions
5. The above process created the initial legends about Guru Nanak’s life.
6. Later, fictional places and fictional individuals were added to the initial legends to give the initial legends the status of established legends.
7. The legends, as these further evolved over time, were incorporated with the beliefs, attitudes and needs of the followers of Guru Nanak.
8. The sakhis were grouped in chronological order to create a written version of Guru Nanak’s biography.
9. The written versions were copied and recopied.
10. Modifications to the content of biographies still occurred as influenced by the prevailing viewpoints in the Sikh community at different periods of time.
11. The sakhis, the stories, thus formulated about Guru Nanak’s life have little or no resemblance to the oral history known to the first generation of followers of Guru Nanak.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

The eleven steps noted above describe DM's **theory of sakhi-building** (sakhi formation) about Guru Nanak's life.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM's theory of sakhi-building about Guru Nanak's life is without merit. He reasons from a false premise, for he portrays the Sikh communities, after the first generation of followers of Guru Nanak, as credulous people. His portrayal evidently extends to the Gurus, authors, scholars, saints and general masses of the Sikh community. The Guru period (in human form), starting with Guru Nanak in 1469 A.D. and ending with Guru Gobind Singh in 1708 A.D., lasted for 239 years. The sequential steps in DM's sakhi-building are coterminous with this long period. DM wants us to believe that the Sikh Gurus remained oblivious to or they condoned the process of inclusion of fictional material to the facts of Guru Nanak's biography. DM's assumption, that the Sikhs were a credulous, gullible community after the first generation of the followers of Guru Nanak, is an irrational, false and offensive assumption.
2. DM presses mental gymnastics and absurd imaginings into service to build his theory of sakhi-formation.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 33**

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF JANAM-SAKHIS**

“The janam-sakhis must be regarded as examples of hagiography and any inclination to treat them as biographies will distort both our understanding of Guru Nanak and our appreciation of the true value of the janam-sakhis themselves. It is a value which includes the provision of strictly limited source material for the life of Guru Nanak, but which is by no means limited to this function. It consists rather in the testimony which the janam-sakhis give to the impact and continuing influence of the Guru's personality, and even more in the evidence they offer of Sikh belief and understanding at particular points in the community history”.  
Book 1, page 33.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. The janam-sakhis are examples of hagiography. They are not biographies of Guru Nanak's life.
2. The value of hagiographies about Guru Nanak's life is three-fold. Firstly, they provide strictly limited source material for the life of Guru Nanak. Secondly, they shed light on the impact and continuing influence of Guru

Nanak's personality. Thirdly, they describe Sikh belief and understanding at particular points in Sikh community's history.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, the hagiographic accounts of Guru Nanak's life offer extremely limited source material for his biography. The exaggerated and fictional accounts of Guru Nanak's life provide evidence of the reverence Guru Nanak generated in his followers. These accounts also speak to the history of Sikh community regarding its beliefs and understandings. (We refer the reader to the theory of sakhi-building that DM describes in his Sophistic Argument No. 32).

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM considers hagiography as the opposite of biography by his own assertion in the above argument. Yet he goes on to extract biographical material from the hagiographic accounts of Guru Nanak. He evidently contradicts what he asserts to be a valid point.
2. According to the Webster's Dictionary, hagiography is the biography of saints. In the present case, it is the biography of the Guru. DM creates his own meaning of the word hagiography in opposition to the standard usage of the word. He equates the meaning of hagiography with the fictional account of the life of a saint or in the present case that of the Guru.
3. DM appears to make complementary comments about the Sikh community, when in fact he is insincere, derogatory and deceptive in his comments towards the Sikh community. This becomes clear when his comments in the above argument are evaluated in light of his theory of sakhi-building which we have discussed in his Sophistic Argument No.32.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 34**

### **GURU NANAK AS FOUNDER OF THE SIKH RELIGION (Read with Sophistic Argument No. 6)**

"It (DM's study) concerns Guru Nanak, the acknowledged founder of the Sikh religion and incomparably the greatest of the Gurus in the shaping of that religion". Book 1, page 3.

"He (Guru Nanak) did receive an inheritance and its influence is abundantly evident in all his works, but it would be altogether mistaken to regard him as a mere mediator of other men's ideas. In his hands the inheritance was transformed". Book 1, page 1.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. Guru Nanak is the acknowledged founder of the Sikh religion.

2. Guru Nanak is the greatest of the Gurus in shaping the Sikh religion.
3. Guru Nanak inherited his religious views from other men.
4. Guru Nanak transformed his religious inheritance.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, Guru Nanak is the founder of Sikh religion and its greatest Guru. He transformed the religious views he inherited from other men.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM calls Guru Nanak as the founder of Sikh religion. In other words, the Sikh religion originated with him. DM maintains that Guru Nanak was the transformer of inheritance he received. DM uses “founder” and “transformer” as if the two words are synonyms. Both his logic and the usage of the English language are flawed.
2. DM calls Guru Nanak the greatest of Sikh Gurus. His view is in conflict with the belief of Sikhs. The Sikhs regard all Sikh Gurus as the manifestation of the same “Jot”, the same light or same spirit.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 35**

### **VALIDITY OF DATES RELATED TO GURU NANAK’S LIFE**

“The only dates of significance which are mentioned (in the Puratan janam-sakhi) are those of his birth and death, and (by obvious implication) that of his marriage which would have been in A.D. 1481 or 1482. Two which may be added are those of the accession of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi in 1517 and Babur’s sack of Saidpur in 1520. This at once involves a contradiction, as Guru Nanak is said to have returned to Talvandi twelve years after the journey began, and the journey is said to have begun after the occasion of Guru Nanak’s meeting with Ibrahim Lodi in Delhi in 1517. One of the dates must be rejected forthwith and of the two incidents the one which has the greater claim to probability is obviously the Saidpur visit. The Delhi sakhi can have no claims whatsoever and accordingly the 1517 date may be summarily eliminated”. Book 1, page 65.

“We may conclude from the janam-sakhis that Guru Nanak was probably in the Punjab during 1520, and from the Babarvani verses that he was almost certainly there in 1526”. Book 1, page 138.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. The Puratan janam-sakhis mention only five significant dates about Guru Nanak's life. The dates are: Date of birth, date of marriage, date of death, accession of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi in 1517 and Babur's sack of Saidpur in 1520.
2. According to the Puratan janam-sakhis, Guru Nanak returned to Talvandi (Punjab) in 1529, twelve years after he met Ibrahim Lodi in 1517, the year when his journey began.
3. According to the Puratan janam-sakhi, Guru Nanak was present in Saidpur (Punjab) in 1520.
4. The Puratan janam-sakhi shows Guru Nanak to be in Saidpur (Punjab) in 1520 while according to the same source, he is shown to be traveling outside of Punjab from 1517 to 1529.
5. It is *comparatively more probable* that Guru Nanak was in Saidpur (Punjab) in 1520 than the view that he was in Delhi in 1517.
6. Guru Nanak's visit to Delhi in 1517 is *impossible*.
7. Guru Nanak was in Punjab in 1526. However, it is probable that he was there in 1520.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, Sultan Ibrahim Lodi ascended the throne in Delhi in 1517. He maintains that it is *more probable* that Guru Nanak was present in Saidpur in 1520 than the view that he was in Delhi in 1517. Then, DM asserts that Guru Nanak was *definitely not* present in Delhi during Sultan Ibrahim Lodi's inauguration in 1517.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM contradicts himself in the above argument. He makes two claims that are mutually exclusive. First, DM claims that Guru Nanak was *probably* present in Delhi in 1517, and then he claims that it is *impossible* that Guru Nanak was there in 1517. He traps himself in his own reasoning. In order to extricate himself from the self-created trap, he arbitrarily sides with one of the conflicting positions he creates by his faulty reasoning. He "summarily" eliminates the visit of Guru Nanak to Delhi in 1517.
2. He bases the certitude of his assertion, about the impossibility of Guru Nanak's visit to Delhi in 1517, on his *probable* assertion that Guru Nanak was present in Saidpur in 1520. This is illogical because to draw a *doubt-free* conclusion from a *doubtful* premise is untenable and absurd.
3. DM makes contradictory statements. First, he asserts that Guru Nanak was *outside of Punjab*, traveling from 1517 to 1529. Then he states that Guru Nanak was *probably* in *Saidpur (Punjab)* in 1520.
4. DM's writing is licentious in the use of English language. Also, he does not adhere to sound logic in expressing his views.

## SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 36

### DR. MCLEOD'S THEORY OF SKEPTICISM

“These four sakhis are all set in the context of the Guru’s early life in Talvandi. None of them can be dismissed as absolutely impossible...”. Book 1, page 83.

“The combination of legendary content, vague geography, and omission from the older collections renders the whole story most improbable. It is remotely possible that some fragment of truth may underlie the tradition, but if so it is unidentifiable”. Book 1, pages 84-85.

“This claim may well be true, but it is most unlikely that the original context was an incident involving Guru Nanak”. Book 1, page 85.

“This means that if Guru Nanak travelled through Banaras he may perhaps have met Kabir (Sahib). It is, however, pure conjecture, chronologically possible, but completely devoid of evidence. As such it must be classified as highly improbable”. Book 1, page 86.

“The story itself must be dismissed, in spite of modern efforts to rationalize it, but there remains the question of whether there may in fact have been a carpenter in Saidpur around whom this and other lesser legends have gathered. The answer must be that it is extremely unlikely”. Book 1, page 86.

“The Vaisakh tradition may be regarded as probable, but not as definitely established”. Book 1, page 97.

“The story of Salas Rai, the jeweler of Bisambarpur who was converted by Guru Nanak, is one which might well be classified with the categorically rejected”. Book 1, page 84.

“We have here five categories which we may designate the established, the probable, the possible, the improbable, and the impossible. Into these five we must strive to fit the manifold traditions concerning the life of Guru Nanak”. Book 1, page 68.

#### Assertions Made in the Argument

1. As illustrated in the above statements, DM categories the sakhis about Guru Nanak’s life as absolutely *impossible*, *most improbable*, *most unlikely*, *highly improbable*, *extremely unlikely*, *not definitely established* and *categorically rejected*
2. DM declares, on page 68 of his book, that he must *strive to fit the manifold traditions concerning the life of Guru Nanak* into five categories, namely, *the established*, *the probable*, *the possible*, *the improbable*, and *the impossible*.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

DM first *commits* himself to fit the sakhis about Guru Nanak's life into five categories. As he proceeds to comment on the sakhis, he greatly expands his categories.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM manifestly deviates from his decision to fit the sakhis about Guru Nanak's life into five categories. He adds numerous categories to his original five. Only a few have been illustrated in the above argument.
2. Many of DM's categories are meaningless. The categories such as "absolutely impossible" or "not definitely established" demonstrate his proclivity towards the licentious use of English language.
3. Implied in the use of numerous categories into which he fits the various sakhis, is DM's claim that he is able to assign the levels of his doubt or the levels of his certitude with mathematical exactness. Thus, *definitely established*, from his viewpoint, would mean a certainty level of more than one hundred per cent and a doubt level of less than a zero. And *not definitely established* would mean a certainty level which is shy of the percentage of certainty that is contained in *definitely established*. Conversely, the *categorically rejected* would mean a doubt level of more than one hundred percent and a certainty level of less than a zero. DM's formalization of his skepticism, as we see demonstrated in the above examples, is devoid of meaning. The inherent absurdity of his skepticism is *definitely established*.
4. The variety of doubt-categories DM uses to label sakhis cannot be taken lightly and explained away as just a little liberal use of the English language. On the contrary, he is dead serious. He claims that he has sought to be exact in his assessment of the sakhis. He says, "The strict, at times ruthless, approach is as much required in a quest for historical Nanak as it has been required in the quest for historical Jesus". Book 1, page 68.
5. In the above argument, DM has created a Theory of Skepticism to complement his Theory of Sakhi-Formation. The latter has been critiqued under arguments # 17 & 32. Both of his theories are lacking in objective quality, and are without any merit whatsoever. The theories only serve to satisfy his personal speculations and biases.
6. DM refuses to accept the validity of certain sakhis not on the basis of preponderance of facts but only on the basis of his prolific, personal speculations and doubts. This is whimsical and not scholarly. There is a saying in the Punjabi popular lore: *Man harami hujtan dher*. Roughly translated it means: There are always plenty of excuses if a man does not want to believe or do something.

## SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 37

### STORY OF SALAS RAI

“The story of Salas Rai, the jeweler of Bisambarpur who was converted by Guru Nanak, is one which might well be classified with the categorically rejected”. Book 1, page 84.

“The combination of legendary content, vague geography, and omission from the older collections renders the whole story (about Salas Rai) most improbable. It is remotely possible that some fragment of truth may underlie the tradition, but if so it is unidentifiable”. Book 1, page 85.

#### Assertions Made in the Argument

1. DM categorically rejects the story (sakhi) about Salas Rai.
2. DM classifies the Salas Rai sakhi as most improbable.

#### Inference Drawn from the Argument

DM rejects, categorically, the sakhi about Salas Rai. He, however, categorizes the sakhi as most improbable.

#### Flaw in the Argument

DM violates the scheme of his own model of skepticism. He categorizes the sakhi about Salas Rai as both *categorically rejected* and *most improbable*. We refer the reader to DM’s Argument No. 36 above to understand how he specifies his *strict and ruthless* doubt-levels pertaining to the sakhis about Guru Nanak’s life, in his model of skepticism.

## SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 38

### DR. MCLEOD’S BRIEF ACCOUNT OF GURU NANAK’S LIFE

“In this brief account we have everything of any importance which can be *affirmed* concerning the events of Guru Nanak’s life”. Book 1, page 146.

#### Assertions Made in the Argument

1. On page 146 of his book and within the space of less than the page, DM recounts certain events of the life of Guru Nanak. He claims that the events, which he refers to on this page, are the only ones that he can *affirm* or assert as valid.

2. The following are the events which DM *affirms* on page 146:
  - a. The *probable* date of birth of Guru Nanak is April 1469.
  - b. The *probable* name of Guru Nanak's sister is (Mata) Nanaki.
  - c. Daulat Khan Lodi was *probably* the employer of Guru Nanak.
  - d. The travels of Guru Nanak included *probably* within India and perhaps beyond India.
  - e. It is *probable* that Guru Nanak visited important centers of Hindu and Muslim pilgrimage.
  - f. Guru Nanak's travels *probably* ended in or around 1520.
  - g. In A.D. 1520, Guru Nanak *probably* witnessed Babur's attack of Saidpur.
  - h. Guru Nanak *probably* visited Pak Pattan and Multan.
  - i. Guru Nanak *probably* died in 1939.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

In the space of less than a page, DM recounts the events of Guru Nanak's life. As indicated above, DM classifies all of these events as *probable*.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM's thinking and writing denotes a confused and arrogant individual. His arrogance and confusion are best illustrated in the above argument even though, in the earlier review of his arguments, we have pointed out numerous other instances of arrogance and confusion within his writing. In the above argument, he wants us to believe that the acknowledged janam-sakhis of Guru Nanak and later scholarly commentaries on them, over the centuries, are wrong and his views are the most tenable.
2. As is evident on page 146, DM categorizes the events of Guru Nanak's life as *probable* and yet he labels the same events as *affirmed*. According to the Webster Dictionary, affirmed means asserted as valid. But DM advances his view as if the affirmed means probable. Evidently, either DM is confused or licentious with the use of English language or perhaps he is both confused and licentious.
3. If DM claims that he means that the probable events, as stated by him on page 146, are affirmed or asserted as valid, then he advances another illogical viewpoint. The use of the word probable, according to the convention of English language, smacks of a certain degree of doubt about the validity of the statement made. Hence probable cannot be valid, or beyond doubt.
4. The assignment of degrees of certainty or degrees of doubt must pertain to events of the future. In speculating or predicting what may happen in the future, one may express the outcome as any number of possibilities, such as certain, almost certain, a fifty-fifty percent chance of happening or not happening, less likely to happen than happening, impossible to happen etc. It is logical to say that the probability of occurrence of future events may be viewed along a continuum of likelihood from zero to one hundred

percent. Events of the past can only be viewed as having happened or to have not happened. Mistakenly, DM treats events of the past as if they are yet to happen. He wrongly and illogically assigns various probabilities to the events of Guru Nanak's life.

5. The use of the word probable by DM in designating the events of Guru Nanak's life, in fact, merely reflects the ambiguities and doubts that inhere in DM's own mind. His use of the word probable has no bearing whatsoever on the validity of the sakhis he has commented upon. It is absurd for him to claim that his argument is the standard or the touchstone by which the validity of events of Guru Nanak's life must be assessed.

### **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 39**

#### **DR. MCLEOD'S VIEW OF "POSSIBLE SAKHIS"**

"They (Possible Sakhis) are sakhis which offer only limited opportunities for the application of our criteria, and which accordingly cannot be either affirmed or denied, even in terms of probability or improbability". Book 1, page 87.

#### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. The sakhis, which are categorized as *possible sakhis* by DM, cannot be properly evaluated by DM's criteria to establish authenticity.
2. The *possible sakhis* cannot be probably affirmed or probably denied. Similarly these sakhis cannot be improbably affirmed or improbably denied.

#### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, Possible Sakhis cannot be doubtfully affirmed or doubtfully denied, because these sakhis cannot be properly evaluated by DM's criteria of evaluation.

#### **Flaw in the Argument**

The words *affirmed* and *denied* are both the antithesis of the word *doubted*. Both words signify absence of doubt. It is illogical and absurd to categorize, as does DM, an event as doubtfully affirmed or doubtfully denied.

### **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 40**

#### **SIDDH GOSHT OF GURU NANAK**

"When Bhai Gurdas and all of the janam-sakhis unite in testifying to a particular claim we shall need compelling arguments in order to dismiss it". Book 1, page 120.

“The manner in which this legendary basis is developed varies in the different versions, but in all cases the development shares the nature of the basis. Miharban relates discourses which surpass in length anything he offers elsewhere. Bhai Gurdas sets out a denunciation of the degeneracy of life on the plains below and concludes with the miracle of lake of jewels. The Puratan janam-sakhis relate the story of the jewels and also a miraculous departure from the mountain. The Bala version produces in this and other associated sakhis its most sustained flight of Puranic fancy”. Book 1, page 121.

“In the sloks from Var Ramakali Guru Nanak speaks successively as Isar, Gorakh, Gopichand, Charapat, Bharathari, and finally as himself. A discourse with yogis was obviously implied, and the names used by Guru Nanak seemed to indicate that these yogis were none other than the famous Gorakhnath and other celebrated Siddhs. Around this nucleus there gathered details drawn from Puranic and Nath mythology, and the result was the legend of the Mount Sumeru discourse as we find it in Bhai Gurdas and the janam-sakhis”. Book 1, page 121.

“Gorakhnath was of course a Nath, not a Siddh. This is an illustration of the common confusion of Naths and Siddhs”. Book 1, page 121, footnote 5.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. Bhai Gurdas and all of the janam-sakhis confirm Guru Nanak’s visit to Mount Sumer and his discourse there with the Siddhs.
2. DM has compelling arguments to reject Guru Nanak’s visit to Mount Sumer.
3. All accounts of Guru Nanak’s visit to Mount summer, though these vary in details, have a legendary, fictional basis.
4. The fictional content of the sakhi is inspired by the Puranic and Nath mythology.
5. All accounts of Guru Nanak’s visit to Mount Sumer use Guru Nanak’s composition, Var Ramakali, as an anchor for the inventions of their versions.
6. Guru Nanak confused the Naths with Siddhs.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, all accounts of Guru Nanak’s visit to Mount Sumer are fictional and their spring source is Guru Nanak’s composition, Var Ramakali. The sakhis of Guru Nanak’s visit to Mount Sumer contain a fictional place, a fictional discourse with fictional individuals. DM alleges that Guru Nanak did not know the difference between a Nath and a Siddh.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM claims that the writers of events of Guru Nanak's life are driven by the motive to create fictions. He alleges that they do so even with the compositions of Guru Nanak. Implied in DM's claim is that the Sikh community is credulous enough to accept the fictions. The above contentions of DM do not speak to the truth. His charges are without any merit whatsoever. The truth is that DM is sardonic towards Bhai Gurdas and biographers of Guru Nanak. He is disdainful of the Sikh community. His intellect is subdued by his emotions and prejudice.
2. The above argument stunningly illustrates the megalomaniacal proclivity of DM. He holds his knowledge of Naths and Yogis superior to Guru Nanak.
3. DM's sophistry does not rise to the level of credibility whereby Bhai Gurdas's account of Mount Sumer can be set aside in favor of the account of DM.
4. DM exhibits himself as a perverse cynic repeatedly in his book in which the above argument occurs. In the words of H.L. Mencken, quoted in Roget's Super Thesaurus, a cynic is "a man who, when he smells flowers, looks around for a coffin". We believe that this description of a cynic applies to DM.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 41**

### **GURU NANAK'S VISIT TO MECCA**

"This (discourse of Guru Nanak at Mecca as recorded by Bhai Gurdas) certainly accords with the convictions which we find expressed in the works of Guru Nanak and it is possible that the tradition has descended from an authentic origin, though not one that took place in Mecca". Book 1, page 122.

"Bhai Gurdas, the Puratan janam-sakhis, the B40 manuscript, and the Gyan-ratanavali all record that Guru Nanak, after arriving in Mecca, went to sleep with his feet pointing towards a miharab or, in the case of the Puratan version, towards Mecca". Book 1, page 123.

"We may acknowledge a visit to Mecca as a possibility, but it must be regarded as an exceedingly remote one". Book 1, page 125.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. The discourse of Guru Nanak, that Bhai Gurdas has recorded, did not take place in Mecca.
2. Bhai Gurdas states that the discourse did take place in Mecca.
3. All janam-sakhis agree with Bhai Gurdas that Guru Nanak visited Mecca.

4. The visit of Guru Nanak to Mecca is an exceedingly remote possibility.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

DM challenges the integrity and truthfulness of Bhai Gurdas who states that Guru Nanak visited Mecca.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM, in his usual manner, spins a web of doubts about Guru Nanak's visit to Mecca. And he expects us to believe him. He fails to convince us that the doubts he weaves are not the figment of his own imagination.
2. DM's claim, that the possibility of a visit to Mecca is exceedingly remote, is absurd. He has only two options to choose from: Either to accept or reject the visit to Mecca. To assign probabilities to past events is illogical.
3. DM is egotistical and presumptuous in the extreme in expecting that we would give more credence to his views than the views of Bhai Gurdas.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 42**

### **GURU NANAK'S VISIT TO BAGHDAD**

“The part of line 2 which I (Dr. V.L. Ménage) cannot understand is the passage where earlier translators have read Baba Nanak fakir or, more grammatically, Baba Nanak-I fakir (either six or seven syllables); and in the photograph the first letters certainly appear to be babananak and the next word, though not at all clear, might indeed be fakir”. Book 1, page 131.

“I regret that I (Dr. V.L. Ménage) am unable to suggest the correct reading, but Baba Nanak seems me to be excluded”. Book 1, page 132.

“The janam-sakhi traditions offer insufficient evidence and the support hitherto claimed on the basis of the inscription must be withdrawn. Although there remains a possibility that Guru Nanak visited Baghdad we are now compelled to regard it as an unsubstantiated possibility. The tradition may be classified with the possible sakhis, for Baghdad was certainly not beyond the range of a traveler from India and access to the city would not have been refused as in the case of Mecca. The weakness of the evidence indicates, however, a remote possibility, not a strong one”. Book 1, page 132.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. Dr. V.L. Ménage, a Reader in Turkish at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, could not understand a certain part of line 2.
2. Six Indian scholars, translators of the same line, agree that it reads Baba Nanak fakir. (For names of these scholars, read Pages 128-129 of Book 1).
3. Dr. V.L. Ménage confirms that the photograph of the inscription *certainly* reads Baba Nanak fakir.
4. Dr. V.L. Ménage disagrees with other translators that the line reads Baba Nanak.
5. DM claims that Guru Nanak's visit to Baghdad is:
  - a. Unsubstantiated possibility.
  - b. Possible, equally certain and uncertain.
  - c. Remotely possible.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

Dr. V.L. Ménage confesses that he is unable to understand a certain part of line 2. He confirms that the photograph of the inscription definitely reads Baba Nanak fakir. He, however, disagrees with other six translators of the same line who agree that the line reads Baba Nanak fakir. DM asserts that Guru Nanak's visit to Baghdad is an unsubstantiated possibility, and a possibility with equal certainty and equal uncertainty, and a remote possibility.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. Dr. V.L. Ménage is confused. He agrees as well disagrees with the view that the inscription reads Baba Nanak fakir.
2. DM provides no support to his partiality in accepting the view of an occidentalist that the inscription does not read as Baba Nanak. Manifestly, DM has a pro-Occidentalism bias.
3. DM provides no valid support to his rejection of the unanimous translation by six scholars of Indian origin.
4. Dr. V.L. Ménage considers the first words on the photograph of inscription to be Baba Nanak. Then he, in tune with the sophistry of DM, garbles his account. Referring to some theory of metrical composition, Dr. Ménage declares, "Hence Baba Nanak fakir does not fit the metre-and even if the reading is accepted the complete line does not make sense". Quoted in Book 1, pages 131-32.
5. DM has evidently preferred to ignore the self-professed failure of Dr. Ménage to properly read the inscription.
6. DM discredits various Sikh and Non-Sikh scholars, including Bhai Gurdas, in favor of an occidentalist. Siding with Dr. Ménage, DM labels the visit of Guru Nanak to Baghdad as a suspect story.
7. DM, in utter confusion and self-contradiction, assigns various possibilities to Guru Nanak's visit to Baghdad, thus making a mockery of his own

classification system which he touts for the evaluation of authenticity of sakhis about Guru Nanak's life.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 43**

### **SUFI SAINT DASTGIR OF BAGHDAD**

“If this identification is correct (that the person Bhai Gurdas names as Dastgir of Baghdad is the same person as Pir-i-Piran Sufi Abdul Qadir Jilani) the conclusion must be that we have in this Baghdad tradition another example of an association with a saint of acknowledged fame, introduced in order to magnify the fame of the Guru. This is not to suggest that Bhai Gurdas has related a deliberate falsehood. The likelihood appears to be that he has recorded a sakhi which had already evolved in oral tradition, gathering in the process a number of miraculous details”.  
Book 1, page 126.

#### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. The sakhi that in Baghdad, Guru Nanak met Dastgir, a Sufi saint, is definitely an example of a deliberate inclusion of a fictional account aimed at magnifying the fame of Guru Nanak.
2. The sakhi had evolved orally before Bhai Gurdas recorded it.

#### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

DM asserts that the sakhi about the meeting of Guru Nanak with saint Dastgir in Baghdad is fictional. According to him, the aim of this sakhi was to magnify the fame of Guru Nanak by associating him with a saint of acknowledged fame. The sakhi was already circulating orally when Bhai Gurdas recorded it.

#### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. The portrayal of Bhai Gurdas by DM as an individual looking for sakhis that extolled Guru Nanak, factually or fictionally, is actually an illustration of DM's own proclivity towards perverse reasoning.
2. Bhai Gurdas was a scholar-saint, regarded as such even by the Sikh Gurus. DM should wake up to the fact that Bhai Gurdas was a man of integrity. He had a sharp intellect and was devoted to truth. It is farthest from truth to suggest that he was a credulous man.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 44**

### **BABARVANI COMPOSITIONS**

“There are, accordingly, two principal conclusions which may be drawn from the four Babar-vani compositions. The first is that Guru Nanak must have personally witnessed devastation caused by Babur’s troops. There is in his descriptions of agony and destruction (,) vividness and a depth of feeling which can be explained only as expressions of a direct, personal experience. The actual battle described in Asa astapadi 12 may possibly be based upon hearsay, but even here one is left with an impression of close proximity to the event. The second conclusion is that the four verses were probably composed after 1526 in response to the complete series of invasions, rather than in response to any single event within the series. Asa astapadi 12, with its battle scene, evidently refers to a specific event, but the nature of the reference points to the 1524 capture of Lahore, not to the 1520 sack of Saidpur”. Book 1, pages 137-38.

“This does not necessarily mean, however, that there can be no truth in the janam-sakhi traditions concerning Guru Nanak’s presence as a witness during the Sack of Saidpur”. Book 1, page 138.

“These (four) factors indicate a strong tradition and one which has good claims to acceptance” (that Guru Nanak was present as a witness during the sack of Saidpur). Book 1, page 138.

“The support claimed on the basis of his (Guru Nanak’s) four sabads must go (that Guru Nanak witnessed the Sack of Saidpur)...” Book 1, page 138.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. Guru Nanak must have personally witnessed the devastation caused by Babur’s troops.
2. Guru Nanak did not witness the battle he describes in Asa-astapadi 12, but possibly heard of the battle. In this case, Guru Nanak must have been very close to the location of the battle.
3. The four verses of Babar-vani were probably composed in reference to all invasions of Babur rather than in reference to a single battle.
4. The four *verses* of Babar-vani were probably composed after 1526.
5. The As-astapadi 12 clearly refers to a single battle.
6. The Asa Astapadi 12 refers clearly to the capture of Lahore by Babur in 1524. It does not refer to the sack of Saidpur in 1520.
7. Guru Nanak’s four sabads in Babar-vani do not establish that Guru Nanak witnessed the sack of Saidpur.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, Guru Nanak witnessed the devastation of a particular place caused by the troops of Babur. However, he did not witness the devastation as a result of the battle he describes in Asa-astapadi 12; possibly (Based on DM’s usage

of the word, ‘possibly’ means equally likely and equally unlikely), Guru Nanak only heard about it. However, he was somewhere very close to the scene of battle. The verses in Babar-vani pertain to all battles of Babur rather than to a single battle. The verses in Babar-vani clearly refer to the capture of Lahore by Babur in 1524. Guru Nanak’s compositions in Babar-vani do not establish that he witnessed the sack of Saidpur.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM first asserts that Guru Nanak definitely witnessed the sack of a place by the troops of Babur. Then he doubts his own assertion stating that Guru Nanak possibly heard about it while he was in the vicinity of the location of the battle. Evidently, in self-contradiction, DM scales down from a position of certainty to a position of doubtfulness regarding the presence of Guru Nanak in the place devastated by the troops of Babur.
2. The use of the word “possibly” in DM’s scheme of classification of the events of Guru Nanak’s life refers to equal likelihood of the event happening and equal likelihood of the event not happening. (See DM’s comments on page 87 of book 1, under *possible sakhi*). In other words, regarding possible events, he has no definite position. However, as seen in flaw #1 above, he creates the illusion as if he does have a position, albeit an absurd position which is at once certain and uncertain.
3. DM professes that the four sabads of Babar-vani were composed as a comprehensive commentary after 1526. He claims that these sabads do not refer to the description of a single battle. Then he makes a contradictory assertion by stating that Asa Astapadi does describe the scene of a single battle.
4. A sabad contains several verses. According to DM, Asa Astapadi is one of the four sabads of Babar-vani. However, his confused writing in the above argument treats the four sabads of Asa Astapadi as four verses when he asserts, “The second conclusion is that the four *verses* were probably composed after 1526 in response to the complete series of invasions, rather than in response to a single event within the series”. (Quoted in book 1, page 138).
5. DM asserts that the Babar-vani sabads encompass all battles of Babur. According to this logic, the battle of Saidpur must have been included in the collective description contained in the Babar-vani. And DM admits that Guru Nanak witnessed the sack of Saidpur. It clearly follows that the Babar-vani sabads do describe Guru Nanak’s eye witness account of the sack of Saidpur. However, by flawed reasoning, DM claims that the Babar-vani sabads do not support the account that Guru Nanak witnessed the sack of Saidpur. Manifestly, his argument that the Babar-vani does not support Guru Nanak’s presence in Saidpur is ambiguous and self-contradictory

### **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 45**

## **WORKS OF BHAGAT KABIR**

“Nor is there adequate evidence to establish that Guru Nanak knew the works of (Bhagat) Kabir, although this has been commonly assumed. There exists a possibility that he did, but the likelihood is that he did not know them”. Quoted as footnote # 2, in Book 1, page 86.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. According to DM, there is inadequate evidence to establish that Guru Nanak knew the works of Bhagat Kabir.
2. DM believes that it is possible that Guru Nanak knew the works of Bhagat Kabir. (Refer to DM’s definition of possible under *possible sakhis* on page 87 of Book 1).
3. DM believes that the likelihood, more likely than not likely, is that Guru Nanak did not know the works of Bhagat Kabir.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM the issue, that Guru Nanak knew the works of Bhagat Kabir, is unascertainable; it is possible (equally likely and equally unlikely), and it is more likely than not likely that Guru Nanak did not know the works of Bhagat Kabir.

### **Flaw in the Argument**

The doubt categories, into which DM places the issue of whether Guru Nanak knew the Works of Bhagat Kabir, run a gamut of his classification system as applied to the events of Guru Nanak’s life. (For DM’s classification system, refer to paragraph two on page 68 of Book 1). He characterizes the issue as unascertainable, equally likely and equally unlikely, and more likely than unlikely. What is one to make of this argument? It seems that DM’s reasoning has gone completely haywire in the above argument.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 46**

### **GURU NANAK’S MEETINGS WITH THE SIDDHS**

“The janam-sakhis record two famous encounters (of Guru Nanak) with Siddhs within or near Panjab. Of these one must be regarded with some skepticism, but the other may perhaps be authentic if for Siddhs we read Kanphat or Nath yogis”. Book 1, page 140.

“The location is not named in any of his (Guru Nanak’s) compositions, but it is clear from many of them that his contacts with Nath yogis must have been frequent

and it seems evident from such a work as the Siddh Gost that he engaged them in formal debate.” Book 1, page 141.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. The janam-sakhis record two famous meetings of Guru Nanak with Siddhs.
2. One of the meetings is somewhat doubtful.
3. The second meeting is also not without doubt even if the meeting is renamed as a meeting between Guru Nanak and Kanphat or Nath yogis.
4. Guru Nanak’s contacts with Nath yogis were frequent.
5. The composition of Guru Nanak, titled Siddh Gost, makes it obvious that he engaged the Kanphat or Nath yogis in formal debate.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM both of the meetings of Guru Nanak with Siddhs, as recorded in the janam-sakhis, are doubtful. DM claims that the Siddh Gost is named improperly. The proper name for the composition ought to be *Kanphat or Nath yogi Gost*. The contents of Siddh Gost attest to the fact that Guru Nanak engaged the Kanphat or Nath yogis in formal debate.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. According to DM, meetings of Guru Nanak with both the Sidhhs and the Kanphat or Nath yogis can only be regarded as doubtful. Then he asserts that Guru Nanak did, frequently, engage the Kanphat or Nath yogis in formal debate. Evidently DM fails to notice the contradiction in his argument.
2. The composition of Guru Nanak, titled Siddh Gost, is recorded in Guru Granth Sahib. The title of the composition means *discourse with the Sidhhs*. It is irrational, ludicrous and rude for DM to suggest that the composition is improperly titled.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 47**

### **PUNJAB VISIT OF BHAGAT NAMDEV**

“The tradition of a Panjab visit (by Bhagat Namdev) must still be regarded as open to some doubt”. Book 1, page 154.

“The tradition may still be regarded as possible, but certainly not as established”. Book 1, page 154.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. DM doubts the tradition that Bhagat Namdev visited Punjab.
2. DM categorizes the visit of Bhagat Namdev to Punjab as possible.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

DM regards a visit by Bhagat Namdev to Punjab as doubtful but possible.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM calls a visit by Bhagat Namdev to Punjab as both doubtful and possible. He creates an illusion as if possible means doubt-free. However, in this way he evidently traps himself in a self-contradiction.
2. DM claims that his classification system groups various sakhis about Guru Nanak's life into five categories. These categories, according to him, are established, probable, possible, improbable and impossible. Evidently, the three categories, other than the established and the impossible, refer to various levels of doubt in his mind about the validity of various sakhis. Thus the category of possible sakhis is also a doubtful category. However, as DM describes the *possible sakhis* on page 87 of Book 1, these sakhis *all* contain elements which caution him to not make a judgment. Furthermore, he claims, the possible sakhis also may contain elements that he must reject. Evidently DM accepts nothing in the possible sakhis. It is clear that the category of possible sakhis, as described by DM, is an absurd category, a category which eludes his acceptance, skepticism and rejection. He must withhold judgment in the case of such sakhis. However, he does not do so. As is clear in the above argument, he does make a judgment.
3. DM regards *possible sakhis* as: a) doubtful b) preventing him to make a judgment c) containing elements that he must reject and d) an absurd category of sakhis. In spite of all of these concerns, DM asserts, "The tradition (that Bhagat Namdev visited Punjab) may still be regarded as possible, but not certainly established"!

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 48**

### **COMPOSITIONS OF BHAGAT KABIR**

"The compositions attributed to Kabir are seemingly numberless, but only two collections have adequate claims to be regarded as genuine. These are the Kabir-granthavali and the selection included in the Adi Granth (Sahib)". Book 1, page 156.

"There can be no doubt that the works included in the two older collections (Guru Granth Sahib and Kabir-granthavali) have also been altered in oral transmission, but to an appreciably lesser degree than those of the Bijak". Book 1, page 156.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. There are a very large number of compositions thought to be those of Bhagat Kabir.
2. Out of this large number of compositions of Bhagat Kabir, only two collections are genuine.
3. The Adi Granth (Guru Granth Sahib) and Kabir Granthavali contain the genuine collections of the work of Bhagat Kabir.
4. Doubtlessly, Bhagat Kabir's works contained in the Guru Granth Sahib and Kabir Granthavali are the altered versions of the original compositions of Bhagat Kabir.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, the compositions of Bhagat Kabir included in Guru Granth Sahib and Kabir-granthavali are the only ones that are genuine. Without doubt, these genuine collections are the altered versions of Bhagat Kabir's original compositions.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM fails to recognize the glaring contradiction in his assertion. He claims that the collection of compositions of Bhagat Kabir in Guru Granth Sahib is genuine as well as an altered version of the original compositions of Bhagat Kabir.
2. DM is delusional about his capacity to discern between the genuine and the altered versions of Bhagat Kabir's compositions. He evidently ranks his wisdom superior even to the Guru who authenticated the compositions of Bhagat Kabir by including them in Guru Granth Sahib.
3. DM's remarks in the above argument are decidedly irrational and megalomaniacal.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 49**

### **THEOLOGY OF GURU NANAK**

“This theology (of Guru Nanak) is not, of course, set out in any systematic form”. Book 1, page 149.

“Guru Nanak and (Bhagat) Kabir both offer syntheses and in each case the nature of the synthesis reflects the personality of the author”. Book 1, page 149

Kabir's works have commanded an immense popularity ever since they were circulated, but the popularity has been accorded to thoughts in isolation, not to an integrated pattern of belief”. Book 1, page 149.

“Guru Nanak, on the other hand, produced a coherent pattern and one which, with some additions by later Gurus, is followed to this day by orthodox Sikhism”. Book 1, page 150.

“Moreover, it is only the historical figures of the Gurus which we are compelled to view through a misty screen. The same certainty does not apply to their teachings, particularly the teachings of (Guru) Nanak. Guru Nanak does not present his teachings in the manner of a Western systematic theologian, but his numerous works nevertheless contain a pattern of belief that is complete. From this pattern it is possible to extract a system which is complete and in all respects consistent”. Book 5, page xxvi.

“The system developed by Guru Nanak is essentially a reworking of the Sant pattern, a reinterpretation which compounded experience and profound insight with a quality of coherence and a power of effective expression”. Book 1, page 151.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. Guru Nanak’s theology lacks a systematic form.
2. There are compositions of Guru Nanak that provide a synthesis of his doctrines.
3. There are compositions of Bhagat Kabir that provide a synthesis of his doctrines.
4. Bhagat Kabir’s synthesis is not an integrated one. His thoughts are not interconnected.
5. Guru Nanak produced a coherent pattern of his thoughts, doctrines.
6. Guru Nanak developed a system of his doctrines by reworking the Sant doctrines.
7. DM has extracted a complete and consistent system from the works of Guru Nanak.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, Guru Nanak and Bhagat Kabir have each composed a synthesis of respective thoughts. In the case of Bhagat Kabir, however, his thoughts are not interconnected. In the case of Guru Nanak, his theology lacks a systematic form.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

Before we consider the flaws in the above argument, there is a need to define certain words DM uses in the above argument. According to Webster’s Dictionary, the definitions are as follows:

- Synthesis: The combination of separate elements of thought into a whole.
- Coherent: Logically consistent. Composed of related parts.

- Systematic: Coherent body of ideas.
  - Integrated: Formed into a whole
  - Theology: Religious knowledge and belief, when methodically formulated.
1. DM claims that Guru Nanak provides a theology but he asserts that it is not in a systematic form. Manifestly, DM traps himself in a self-contradiction. Theology by definition is a methodically, systematically formulated body of religious knowledge and beliefs.
  2. DM asserts that Guru Nanak produced a coherent pattern and a synthesis of his religious ideas. DM also claims that Guru Nanak did not set out his ideas in a systematic form. Again, DM traps himself in a self-contradiction. Coherent pattern means a systematic pattern.
  3. First, DM claims that Bhagat Kabir did not provide an integrated pattern of his religious beliefs. Then, he asserts that Bhagat Kabir does offer a synthesis of his beliefs. An integrated pattern and a synthesis both signify a combination of separate elements, such as religious beliefs, into a single whole. Manifestly, DM traps himself in a self-contradiction.
  4. DM is licentious with the use of English language as he seems to believe that the above contradictions signify harmonious statements.
  5. It is totally presumptuous on the part of DM to claim that he is capable of providing or that he has provided a ‘systematic form’ to the doctrines of Guru Nanak. The ‘Western theologian’ in him, the variety that DM subscribes to, confuses and misrepresents the meanings of ‘synthesis’, ‘coherent’, ‘integration’ and ‘theology’.
  6. DM’s contention has no merit whatsoever when he says “Guru Nanak was a representative of the Sant movement and he expresses in his works the characteristic doctrines of the Sants”. (Quoted from page xxvii in Book 5, ‘Sikhism’). For a treatment that exposes and refutes DM’s contention in the above quote and in the above argument, reader is referred to Sophistic Argument No. 83.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 50**

### **BHAGAT KABIR’ THOUGHT**

“The Bhakti influence retains its primacy, but the Nath content of (Bhagat) Kabir’s thought is also of fundamental importance”. Book 1, page 153

“The basis of (Bhagat) Kabir’s belief was not, as has been commonly supposed, Vaisnava bhakti or Sufism but tantric yoga”. Book 1, page 156.

“Kabir was, however, far from being a Nath yogi. To this background he brought elements from Vaisnava bhakti and perhaps from Sufism also”. Book 1, page 156

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. The Nath beliefs form the foundation of Bhagat Kabir's thought.
2. The bhakti beliefs retain the first place in Bhagat Kabir's thought.
3. The Tantric yoga beliefs form the foundation of Bhagat Kabir's thought.
4. The Vaisnava bhakti or Sufism do not form the foundation of Bhagat Kabir's thought.
5. Bhagat Kabir was not a Nath yogi.
6. To the upbringing and education in the beliefs of a Nath yogi, Bhagat Kabir added certain beliefs from Vaisnava bhakti and Sufism.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, the Nath beliefs, the Bhakti beliefs, Tantric yoga beliefs have a critical importance in the thought of Bhagat Kabir. He was not a Vaisnava Bhagat or a Sufi or a Nath Yogi. Bhagat Kabir combined the beliefs from Nath Yoga, Vaisnava Bhakti and Sufism to form his thought.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM claims that Bhagat Kabir's thought contains, in significant manners, Nath beliefs, Bhakti beliefs and the Tantric Yoga beliefs. In other words, the above beliefs are the critical components of Bhagat Kabir's total thought. DM fails to inform us what other component (s) would make Kabir's thought a whole.
2. DM fails to inform us about the specific beliefs that are missing from the thought of Bhagat Kabir that disqualify him to be named a Nath yogi or a Vaisnava Bhagat or a Tantric yogi.
3. DM does not have a clue about Bhagat Kabir's thought. However, he pretends that he does.
4. Rather than acknowledge his ignorance, DM rambles, in a confused manner, all over a spectrum of religious beliefs in telling us what the central elements of the thought of Bhagat Kabir are.
5. DM tries but fails to establish any order, in terms of importance, in Bhagat Kabir's thought relative to Nath beliefs, Bhakti beliefs and Tantric beliefs.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 51**

### **BHAGAT RAVIDAS'S BELIEFS**

“It (Bhagat Ravdas's composition) belongs to the earlier stage of the Sant movement, to the stage in which the links with Vaisnava bhakti are much more prominent and the evidence of influence from other sources much slighter. The Vaisnava concept of the divine avatar is rejected and likewise all external ceremonies or aids to worship...”. Book 1, page 154.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. Bhagat Ravidas belongs to the earlier stage of Sant movement.
2. Bhagat Ravidas's links with the Vaisnava Bhakti are pronounced.
3. Bhagat Ravidas rejected the doctrine of Divine Avatars.
4. Bhagat Ravidas rejected all rituals and aids as part of worship.

#### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, Bhagat Ravidas's compositions reflect strong affinity with Vaisnava bhakti which focuses on the worship of Avatars. The Bhagat rejects the doctrine of Vaisnava Bhakti in which devotion is directed to the Divine Avtar, Vishnu.

#### **Flaw in the Argument**

This argument is another illustration of DM's proclivity towards making and overlooking self-contradictions. He presents Bhagat Ravidas as a devotee of Vishnu as well as the one who rejects belief in a Divine Avtar, a personal God.

### **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 52**

#### **RECOGNITION RECEIVED BY BHAGAT RAVDAS**

"In the Adi Granth he is called Ravidas, and in it there are thirty-nine of his sabads". Book 1, page 154, footnote # 3.

"Raidas is a particularly attractive figure and one who has yet to receive the attention he deserves". Book 1, page 155.

#### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. The Ad Granth Sahib has thirty nine of Bhagat Ravidas's sabads.
2. Bhagat Ravidas has not received the deserved attention so far.

#### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, Bhagat Ravidas has not received due attention in spite of the fact that there are thirty-nine of his sabads in Ad Granth Sahib.

#### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. The acknowledgement by DM that Ad Granth Sahib has thirty-nine of Bhagat Ravdas's shabads attests to the fact that the Bhagat has received due attention and the highest honor. Countless Sikhs and others have been and continue to be inspired by his compositions. In Guru Granth Sahib he has received the reverence reserved only for the select few.

2. DM has made a wild and irresponsible statement regarding the attention accorded to Bhagat Ravidas. He provides us no basis for his absurd statement.
3. DM fails to recognize the implication of his own statement regarding the inclusion of sabads of Bhagat Ravidas in Guru Granth Sahib. What other attention and honor could DM suggest that may excel the one already received by the Bhagat?

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 53**

### **GURU NANAK'S THOUGHT**

“It is, however, clear that the Sant tradition was by far the most important element in all that he (Guru Nanak) inherited from his past or absorbed from contemporary patterns. This leads to the second question concerning the antecedents of the thought of Guru Nanak, the question of direct influences which operated independently of his Sant inheritance. The dominant issue in this respect must be the extent of his debt to Islamic sources. Nath beliefs certainly exercised an influence and we encounter many examples of Nath terminology in his works, but in so far as these influences and terms constitute integral expression of his own beliefs they represent aspects of Sant inheritance. Guru Nanak himself explicitly rejected Nath beliefs and his works bear clear witness to open controversy with Nath yogis. Nath concepts were communicated to his thought through Sant channels which transformed their meaning, and in his usage such elements are, for the most part, naturalized. They are recognizably of Nath derivation but they belong to the Sants, not to the Naths”. Book 1, pages 157-58.

#### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. The Sant tradition had the most important impact in shaping Guru Nanak's thought.
2. The Islamic beliefs also impacted Guru Nanak's thought in a significant manner.
3. Guru Nanak clearly rejected Nath beliefs.
4. The Sants changed the meaning of Nath beliefs.
5. The Nath beliefs, changed by the Sants, are included in Guru Nanak's thought.

#### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, the thought of Guru Nanak contains, in a descending order of significance, the beliefs of Sant tradition, Islamic beliefs and the Nath beliefs in versions changed by the Sants. Guru Nanak unequivocally rejected the Nath beliefs.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. When something is changed from its original form, it no longer is the original entity. If a table is changed into a chair, then the table disappears and in its place a chair appears. In the same manner, when the Nath beliefs were *changed* into new forms by the Sants, the changed versions or forms of beliefs were no longer Nath beliefs. Those beliefs acquired completely different forms. However, DM claims that the beliefs of the Naths that were changed by the Sants were “recognizably of Nath derivation”. DM fails to inform us what was recognizable after the transformation of beliefs took place. Is he suggesting that the chair of our example is recognizably of table derivation? If so, what a profound statement!
2. DM portrays Guru Nanak’s thought as completely uncontaminated by the Nath beliefs. Then he portrays his thought having been influenced by the Nath beliefs but only in their changed form. DM fails to register the contradiction in his argument. It is a self-contradiction for DM to suggest that Guru Nanak explicitly rejected the Nath beliefs but still welcomed the incorporation of changed versions of Nath beliefs into his thought. Manifestly, DM equivocates; he engages in double talk.
3. It is absurd for DM to suggest that what is explicitly rejected can sneak back in, from the back door.
4. DM fails to give us the descriptions of Nath beliefs after they were changed by the Sants.
5. The evidence from Guru Nanak’s compositions refutes DM’s assertion that Guru Nanak’s views of God and Creation are based on the Sant or Islamic belief systems. There may be certain parallels in Guru Nanak’s teachings and those of Sant and Islamic traditions. But it is a false assertion that Guru Nanak’s perspective is derived from the beliefs of other religious systems.
6. Nothing could be more delusional for DM to claim than his pretension that he knows the truth about the source of Guru Nanak’s theology. Who are we going to trust, a sophist or the Satguru, the True Guru? Of course, the latter. The knowledgeable Sikhs and non-Sikhs know the source to which Guru Nanak himself traces his theology. God Himself.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 54**

### **GURU NANAK AND THE SANT TRADITION**

“Guru Nanak’s principal inheritance from the religious background of his period was unquestionably that of the Sant tradition and evidence of other independent influences is relatively slight. We must indeed acknowledge that the antecedents of Sant belief are by no means wholly clear and that within the area of ambiguity there may be important features which derived primarily from Sufi sources”. Book 1, page 160.

“The Sant Movement of northern India was the tradition that provided (Guru) Nanak with the components of his religious thought and teachings”. Book 5, page 195.

“This leads to the second question concerning the antecedents of the thought of Guru Nanak, the question of direct influences which operated independently of his Sant inheritance. The dominant issue in this respect must be extent of his debt to Islamic sources”. Book 1, page 157.

“The conclusion to which we are led is that Islamic influence evidently operated upon the thought of Guru Nanak, but that in no case can we accord this influence a fundamental significance”. Book 1, page 160.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. The Sant tradition exercised the most important influence on Guru Nanak’s thought.
2. Sufism and Islam exercised marginal influence on Guru Nanak’s thought.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

Guru Nanak’s theology is derived mainly from the Sant tradition. To lesser degrees, it is derived from the Sufi and Islamic beliefs.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM advances a cause-effect relationship between the stated religious systems and the thought of Guru Nanak. Here, he commits a classical error of judgment. Yes, certain ideas in the thought of Guru Nanak correlate with the beliefs of Islam, Sufism and the Sant tradition. The ideas are similar. They are parallel to each other. Erroneously, DM views the similarity in ideas in the context of cause and effect. He wrongly claims that the thought of Guru Nanak is the consequence of external influences.
2. DM provides us with no proof for his assertion that there is a cause and effect relationship between the beliefs of other religious systems and the thought of Guru Nanak. He merely advances biased and conjectural statements regarding the alleged causal relationship.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 55**

### **SANT BELIEF**

“We must indeed acknowledge that the antecedents of Sant belief are by no means wholly clear and that within the area of obscurity there may be important features which derived primarily from Sufi sources”. Book 1, page 160.

“It appears, however, that Sant belief owes none of its basic constituents to the Sufis. For the Sant belief the major source is to be found in the Bhakti Movement, with Nath theory entering as a significant secondary source”. Book 1, page 160

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. DM is not clear as to what came before the Sant beliefs.
2. There may be important features in the Sant tradition that derived from Sufism.
3. The basic constituents of Sant belief are not derived from Sufism.
4. The major and primary source of Sant belief is the Bhakti Movement.
5. The Nath theory’s contribution to the Sant beliefs is significant but it is secondary in importance to the Bhakti Movement.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, *none of the basic features of Sant beliefs is derived from Sufism. However certain important features may be derived from Sufism.*

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM draws a distinction between the *basic* features of Sant beliefs and the *important* features of Sant beliefs. He is certain that the basic features of Sant tradition are not derived from Sufism. He is conjectural about the important features of Sant tradition having been derived from Sufism. However, he fails to elucidate the specific differences between basic features of Sant Beliefs and the important features of Sant beliefs.
2. DM’s argument is ambiguous purposely or unknowingly.
3. If ‘basic’ and ‘important’ mean the same to DM, then he exhibits a self-contradiction by first *affirming* the lack of influence of Sufism upon the beliefs of Sant tradition and then being less than certain about such a lack..

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 56**

### **HINDU BELIEF AND ISLAM**

“It is not correct to interpret it (Guru Nanak’s Religion) as a conscious effort to reconcile Hindu belief and Islam by means of a synthesis of the two. The intention to reconcile was certainly there, but not by the path of syncretism”. Book 1, page 161.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. Guru Nanak made no conscious effort to harmonize the beliefs of Hinduism and Islam by integrating one with the other.
2. Guru Nanak intended to harmonize the two faiths but did not carry it out.
3. Guru Nanak's intention to harmonize beliefs of Islam and Hinduism excluded the use of fusion of the two faiths by removing the conflicting beliefs of the two faiths.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, Guru Nanak intended to harmonize the beliefs of Hinduism and Islam. This intention, even though not carried out, excluded synthesis and syncretism as the means to harmonize the two faiths.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM fails to inform us how he figured out the presence of *intention* on the part of Guru Nanak to harmonize the beliefs of Hinduism and Islam.
2. DM makes an outlandish and incredible statement by which he asserts that he knows of two facts. In the first place, he claims that he knows that Guru Nanak had the *intention* to harmonize the beliefs of Hinduism and Islam. Secondly, he claims that Guru Nanak excluded synthesis and syncretism as the means from his *intention* to harmonize the two faiths. He claims to be a reader of minds. The claim, of course, is absurd.
3. The argument typifies DM's aggressive but irrational pattern of reasoning.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 57**

### **GURU NANAK'S THEOLOGY AND SIKHISM**

“Finally, it must be emphasized that this analysis (about the teachings of Guru Nanak) concerns the theology of Guru Nanak and not the theology of Sikhism”. Book 1, page 163.

“For modern Sikhism the scripture (Guru Granth Sahib) exists as a channel of communication between God and man, but obviously this could be no part of Guru Nanak's theology”. Book 1, page 163.

“The verses (of Guru Nanak) which have been used in the following analysis are those which are recorded in Adi Granth (Guru Granth Sahib)”. Book 1, page 161.

“The theology of Guru Nanak remains the substance of Sikh belief”. Book 1, page 163.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. The theology of Sikhism is distinctive from the theology of Guru Nanak.
2. There is no doubt that the theology of Guru Nanak excludes Guru Granth Sahib as a channel of communication between God and man. In other words, the theology of Guru Nanak is distinctive from the theology of Guru Granth Sahib.
3. The theology of Guru Nanak is the theology of Sikhism (Sikh belief), since the earliest to the modern times.
4. The analysis of the teachings of Guru Nanak is based on the verses of Guru Nanak that appear in Guru Granth Sahib.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, the theology of Sikhism is the theology of Guru Nanak. The theology of Guru Nanak is distinctive from the theology of Guru Granth Sahib. The theology of Guru Nanak is distinctive from the theology of Sikhism. The verses of Guru Nanak that appear in Guru Granth Sahib are the basis for DM's analysis of Guru Nanak's teachings.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM advances a notion asserting that the meaning of distinctive entities is similar entities; that the opposites in meaning are the same in meaning. Thus he says that the theology of Sikhism, being distinctive from the theology of Guru Nanak, is still the theology of Guru Nanak. This is a patently illogical notion.
2. DM betrays an amazing disjointedness in his thinking by asserting that the theology enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib is distinctive from the theology of Guru Nanak. By his own contention, he bases his analysis of the teachings of Guru Nanak on the compositions of Guru Nanak that are part of Guru Granth Sahib.
3. The compositions in Guru Granth Sahib, whether they are of the Sikh Gurus, or they are those of Bhagats are in perfect harmony with one another. For DM to suggest otherwise is nothing but an ignorant, unreasoned and a wild assertion. The theology of Guru Nanak is not different from other Sikh Gurus, including Guru Granth Sahib, or the Bhagats (whose compositions are enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib).
4. DM indulges in a sophistic play of words. Manifestly, he gets entangled in the web of confusion he so cleverly spins.
5. The theology of Guru Nanak is identical to the theology of Sikhism and the theology of Guru Granth Sahib. DM's attempt to inject schism in this eternal fact is mean, perverse, and intentionally misleading.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 58**

## **SUCCESSOR OF GURU NANAK**

“The choosing and formal installation of (Guru) Angad was the first step in the process which issued in the founding of the Khalsa, and ultimately in the emergence of a Sikh nation. The factors, such as the clarity of the teachings, the compiling and promulgation of a canon of scripture, the ethnic constitution of the community, and the incentive to greater cohesion provided by Mughal persecution, certainly played very important parts, but it is inconceivable that these elements could have had the same enduring effect without the original bond provided by Guru Nanak”. Book 1, page 143.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. Guru Nanak’s decision to appoint his Successor was of critical importance.
2. The other named factors were very important in the life of the Sikh community.
3. The other named factors would not have had the same lasting effect should Guru Nanak have not named his successor.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, the factors he names in the above argument would not have the same enduring effect on the life of the Sikh community if Guru Nanak did not appoint his successor.

### **Flaw in the Argument**

In making his polemic argument, DM fails to understand the fallacy in his argument. Several of the factors that he points out as important to the life of the Sikh community would not have come into existence if there was no successor to Guru Nanak. These factors owed their life to the fact that Guru Nanak did appoint his successor. To consider the importance of named factors in the absence of the fact of succession amounts to imagining the importance of sunshine without the pre-existing reality of sun.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 59**

### **HISTORY OF FACTS AND HISTORY OF PERCEPTIONS**

“The strict, at times ruthless, approach is as much required in a quest for the historical Nanak as it has been required in the quest of the historical Jesus”. Book 1, page 68.

“For an understanding of later Sikh history they (janam-sakhis) retain a vital importance which has been obscured by the failure to detach them from the person of the historical Nanak. If, however, our subject is Guru Nanak, and our method is historical, much that they (janam-sakhis) contain must inevitably be rejected”. Book 1, pages vii-viii.

“It is most important to appreciate that, although this book seeks to make a contribution to our understanding of Sikh History, it does not offer a history of events as they actually happened. It deals with popular perceptions of the past”. Book 2, page 91.

“Traditional content and interpretations can indeed have a place in respectable academic history provided that their status is clearly explained”. Book 2, page 91.

### **Assertions Contained in the argument**

1. In order to glean the facts about the events Guru Nanak’s life, DM has strictly applied the standards of historical method.
2. The historical method to describe historical Nanak requires DM to reject the content of janam-sakhis.
3. There are two types of history. One is the history based on perception of people. The other is history based on actual facts.
4. Both, the history based on perceptions of people and the history based on facts, commingle to describe the history of a people.

### **Inference Drawn from the Arguments**

According to DM, there are two types of history. One is history of perceptions and the other is history of facts. The janam-sakhi accounts belong in the history of perceptions, not in the history of facts about Guru Nanak’s life. DM recognizes the importance of history of perceptions. A factual description of the life of historical Guru Nanak can only be achieved by the historical method, as DM understands it. Examined by DM’s historical method, the janam-sakhi accounts of Guru Nanak’s life must be subjected to skepticism.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM fails to enunciate the elements of the historical method that establish the history of facts. From our understanding of his historical method, it is merely his theory of skepticism.
2. In arguments # 17 and #32 discussed in this critique, DM presents his theory or method of sakhi-formation. In these arguments, he shows us how a sakhi is formed or a history of perceptions is created. He claims that this

history owes its production to the credulous nature of Sikh people and their proclivity towards the manufacture of falsehood to exalt the status of Guru Nanak. We debunk his theory of sakhi formation on the basis of the flaws contained in arguments #17 and #32. We also discard his history of perceptions as it relates to the events of Guru Nanak's life, for its genesis from DM's viewpoint is synonymous with sakhi-formation.

3. DM creates an illusion for the reader that he values both the history of perceptions and the history of facts in explaining the events of the history of a people. He makes it appear as if both fact and perception contribute to the formation of history and both help us to explain events of history. However, the illusion, that DM creates, is shattered when one considers what he writes under arguments # 17 and 32. He does not value the history based on perceptions, for he claims that it is an amalgamation of falsehoods from his perspective. He rejects it. He mocks at it. He is doubtful of its claims. He is sarcastic and cynical of its versions.
4. The skill to create an illusion qualifies DM as a sophist but certainly not as an objective historian. In stating that the history of perceptions is important, he certainly does not mean that he has a genuine appreciation for people's perceptions. On the contrary, he claims that the perceptions of people, recorded in hagiographic accounts, are largely the result of their attraction for fiction, falsehood.
5. We refer the reader to Sophistic Argument # 73 for our view of DM's 'historical method'. His method is self-styled and flawed.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 60**

### **CLARITY IN GURU NANAK'S WORKS**

"In (the case of) many (Sants) there is silence at this point and it is possible that the notions which we find developed in the works of Guru Nanak may have existed in an inchoate form in the minds of Sants who preceded him. It is true that even in Guru Nanak's works there is not that manifest clarity, which conveys an immediate understanding, but developed concepts of the divine self-expression are there nevertheless and exegesis will reveal them". Book 1, page 189.

#### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. Guru Nanak's works contain fully formed concepts of the divine self-expression.
2. The Sants, who preceded him, possessed rudimentary, undeveloped concepts in contrast to Guru Nanak.
3. The developed concepts of Guru Nanak are obscure.

4. DM's exposition of the developed but obscure concepts of Guru Nanak makes them explicit, clearly expressed.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, Guru Nanak's concepts are fully formed but they are obscure. He claims that he has removed the obscurity from the concepts.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. Whatever is fully formed is also fully clear. Clarity is an element of a fully formed concept. There is no such thing as a fully formed concept which also is obscure. Manifestly DM commits a fallacy.
2. The vainglorious attitude of DM prevents him to exercise needed intellectual humility to attempt to comprehend the clarity inherent in Guru Nanak's concepts.
3. The clarity of a 'developed concept' is dependent on the 'comprehension-preparedness' of the reader. Any profound concept requires equally enlightened intellect to decipher the meaning of the concept. For example, for DM to comprehend Einstein's Theory of Relativity, he must go to school to learn certain related concepts of physics. The obscurity does not lie in the theory but in his lack of preparedness to comprehend the theory. Similar is the case with Guru Nanak's concepts.
4. DM fails to understand the meaning of 'Guru'. The Guru, as is true in the case of Guru Nanak, is the perfect teacher. He removes ignorance, for his lessons are the clearest and there is no room for further improvement in them. His teachings are final and cannot be improved upon. However, humility is required of the student to learn from the Guru.
5. DM makes an absurd claim that he has succeeded in accomplishing an improvement in the clarity of Guru's concepts through his 'exegesis'.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 61**

### **MEDITATION ON GOD**

"An exhortation of this nature (Meditate on the One and harvest the fruit thereof) assumes, of course, that man has the necessary measure of freedom to make such a decision". Book 1, page 202.

"The truth may be there for all to grasp, but few there be who do in fact lay hold of it". Book 1, page 204.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. Man is free to decide to meditate on the One and harvest the fruit thereof. DM bases this assertion on his translation of Guru Nanak's verse as: "Meditate on the One and harvest the fruit thereof".
2. Only a few men, in fact, decide to meditate on the One and harvest the fruit thereof. DM bases this assertion on his translation of Guru Nanak's verse as: "Many there be who long for a vision of Thee, but few who meet the Guru, the Word, and so perceive (Thee)".

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

Although men are equally free to decide in favor or against meditation on the One God, yet only a few of them do decide in favor of such a meditation.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. The misinterpretation by DM of Guru Nanak's verses has put him in an absurd position. According to DM, only a few men grasp the truth while most men reject it when the truth is equally graspable by them. DM advances the notion that men choose to unite with God or remain separated from Him. He says that men have the power to reject the Divine Exhortation or the Divine Advice. Evidently DM, because of the misinterpretation of Guru Nanak's verses, lands himself in an absurd position because he portrays the Will of God not as dominant but as subservient or obsequious to the will of man.
2. The scope of this book does not permit us to offer an interpretation of Guru Nanak's verses. In the context of the flaw of DM's argument, it is perhaps warranted. God's Will is indeed supreme and dominant over all. Both of the verses that DM interprets wrongly attest to the supremacy of God's Will. Combined together the verses mean: Those who long for and meditate on God are blessed with a vision of God. Those who merely may long for a vision of God and do not meditate on Him, by means of the Word of the Guru, are deprived of the vision. There is no hint of the supremacy of man's will over the will of God in the two verses.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 62**

### **NAMES OF GOD**

"Hari, Ram, Paramesvar, Jagadis, Prabhu, Gopal, Allah, Khuda, Sahib—these are all but names and none are essential". Book 1, page 196.

"Look around you and within you and you shall perceive the Word, the Name, Truth". Book 1, page 203.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. The various names by which God is known are dispensable. They are only incidental.
2. God is omnipresent
3. God's omnipresence enables man to perceive Him.
4. God's attribute of omnipresence defines His Name.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, the various names of God are only incidental and dispensable. The Name of God is the sum total of all of his attributes. God's attribute of omnipresence defines His Name.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM misrepresents Guru Nanak's position.
2. In spite of the fact that God's attributes are infinite, each of His attributes is unique and a critical part of all that God is. The attributes of God as revealed by the Guru are essential in understanding Him.
3. DM contradicts himself by first regarding the various attributes of God as non-essential to define God's Name and then by confirming the attribute of His omnipresence as an essential attribute to define, to perceive His Name.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 63**

### **UNION WITH GOD AND SALVATION**

“God has expressed Himself in the Word which He himself as Guru communicates to man. If by His grace any man be blessed with the perception which enables him to understand the Word he will discern around and within him the nature of God and the means of attaining union with Him. In this manner the way of salvation is revealed. What must man do to grasp this proffered salvation? What effort must one make, what discipline must one follow in order to appropriate the Truth”?  
Book 1, page 207

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. The Word (Guru Sabad) is the means by which God expresses Himself.
2. God, as Guru, communicates the Gurshabd to man.

3. It is God's Grace that blesses man to understand Gurshabd.
4. Gurshabd enables man to understand the nature of God.
5. Gurshabd enables man to understand the means by which he may attain union with God.
6. Union with God is salvation.
7. After having been blessed with God's Grace to understand Gurshabd, to understand the nature of God, and to understand the means of attaining union with God, man must exert effort to follow a discipline by which he would achieve union with God and thus achieve salvation.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM's interpretation of Guru Nanak's verses, it is by God's Grace that man understands Gurshabd. Gurshabd enables man to understand the nature of God. It enables man to understand the means by which he may achieve union with God and hence salvation. However, man must follow a certain discipline. Without the exercise of this discipline, God's Grace, understanding of Gurshabd, understanding of the nature of God, and the understanding of the means to achieve union with God would not result in salvation. Regarding the discipline, DM says, "Salvation depends both upon God's Grace, which is expressed by the Guru in the Word, and upon the individual's own effort to cleanse himself of all evil and so appropriate the salvation which is offered to him". (Quoted from Book 1, page 207).

### **Flaw in the Argument**

Contrary to DM's view, God's Grace is not an incomplete answer to the question of how man achieves union with Him. Grace of God is all that is needed to achieve union with God. Man exerts effort to achieve union with God as a consequence of God's Grace. DM maintains that Grace must be complemented by man's effort to achieve salvation. Guru's verses, that DM misinterprets, mean an adequate understanding of Gurshabd and an active conformance with it come to man as a consequence of Grace of God. Gurshabd provides 'Gyan', the wisdom about Divine Reality, to man. This wisdom contains what man needs to do to achieve union with God. If God Graces man with Gurshabd, then not only an intellectual understanding of what Gurshabd means is had by man but also the active commitment to revere and love God is obtained by man. God's Grace, in the form of Gurshabd, shatters man's doubts about Him, rids him of all fears, imbues him with love and veneration of God, and bestows his mind with eternal peace. As man's grasp of Gurshabd becomes clearer and stronger, he comes closer and closer to God till the distance between God and man disappears. And man is blessed, with, union with God.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 64**

**NAME OF GOD**

“In concluding this section we may note the radical difference between the Name of God and the names of God. Hari, Ram, Paramesvar, Jagdis, Prabhu, Gopal, Allah, Khuda, Sahib -- these are all but names and none are essential. Some do indeed bear a special significance, as in the case of Nirankar and Niranjan, but even these do not constitute the Name although they express aspects of it. The Name is the total expression of all that God is, and this is Truth”. Book 1, page 196.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. There is a radical difference between the Name of God and the names of God.
2. The names of God are not essential.
3. Niranjan and Nirankar only express aspects of the Name.
4. The Name of God is the sum total of all names of God.
5. God's Name is Truth.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to the interpretation of verses of Guru Nanak by DM, the Name of God is totally different from the names of God. The Name of God is the sum total of all names of God. None of the names of God is a constituent of the Name of God.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM asserts that the Name of God is the sum total of all names of God. He also asserts that none of the names of God is essential and none of the names of God is a constituent of the Name of God. DM's reasoning underlying his assertions means that by eliminating the names of God one does not end up with 'nothing' or a 'non-existence'. According to his reasoning, one ends up with the Name of God. Illogically, he equates a non-existence with the Name of God
2. DM makes self-contradictory assertions. First he advances the idea that the Name of God is the sum total of all names of God. Then he claims that no name of God is a constituent or an essential element of the Name of God.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 65**

### **MYTH ABOUT GURU NANAK**

“...the janam-sakhis have served as the vehicle of a powerful myth, one which still commands a wide acceptance within the society which developed it. The myth which they express may be briefly stated as follows. Baba Nanak was the divinely commissioned giver of salvation. To all who would seek salvation the way lies open. The means of salvation consist in loyalty to the person of Baba Nanak and

the acceptance of his teachings. This is the myth. The form which was developed to give expression was the narrative anecdote which, in relating some incident concerning the life of (Guru) Nanak, sought to authenticate the claims made on his behalf. These anecdotes collected into anthologies or structured 'biographies', constitute the janam-sakhis". Book 2, page 227.

"...remembered facts, devout imaginations, suggestive references in Guru Nanak's works, contemporary beliefs and needs, and the mutations which inevitably result from oral repetition must have combined to create a stock of sakhis or isolated incidents concerning the life of Guru Nanak. The next step would be to group a number of these sakhis into some sort of chronological pattern and to give the pattern a measure of stability by committing the selected sakhis to writing". Book 1, page 13.

"Myth means in this context an interpretation of the past or of the present which serves a particular purpose or function within the society which generated it. In terms of content it may draw from either fact or non-fact (fiction) and in so doing it will select and organize according to the situation which produces it and the need which it serves. Such constructs are seldom contrived consciously and if they are to be effective they must be credible as far as a majority of the carrier society are concerned". Book 2, page 225.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. The anecdotes collected into structured biographies constitute the janam-sakhis of Guru Nanak.
2. The janam-sakhis serve the purpose of transmission of the powerful myth about Guru Nanak.
3. A myth is created by drawing from fact and non-fact, fiction.
4. The janam-sakhis are the result of a *deliberate, conscious* process of combining fact with fiction about the isolated incidents concerning the life of Guru Nanak.
5. Only rarely, conscious thought goes into the construction of myth.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, the janam-sakhis of Guru Nanak are the result of a deliberate, conscious process of combining fact with fiction. The myth thus created about Guru Nanak perpetuated itself in the form of janam-sakhis. DM also emphasizes that the construct of a myth is "seldom contrived consciously".

### **Flaw in the Argument**

We have discussed DM's theory of sakhi formation under his sophistic arguments # 17 & 32. *There he asserts, as he does in the above argument*, that most sakhis about Guru Nanak's life are the result of deliberate effort that combined fact with

fiction. He claims that a purposeful, deliberate and sustained effort went into the formation of sakhis. He insists that the sakhis were contrived consciously. This, he asserts, created the Myth about Guru Nanak. He clearly stresses the contribution of deliberate effort in myth formation in the piece quoted above. In the same piece, however, he demolishes his own notion of deliberate effort that goes into myth formation. In self-contradiction, he declares that the construct of a myth is “seldom contrived consciously”.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 66**

### **HUKAM-NAMA AGAINST PASHAURA SINGH**

“Pashaura Singh, as a loyal Sikh, obeyed the summons (to appear before the Akal Takhat in Amritsar) and presented himself before the Akal Takhat in June 1994”.

“Pashaura Singh was duly convicted of blasphemy and required to do public penance. His accusers claimed that he had admitted his ‘lapses’ and ‘wrong descriptions’, and had promised to omit obnoxious features from anything he published in future. Pashaura Singh’s own account of the trial was rather different. He claimed that he had apologized to the Panth for upsetting them, but that he had certainly not promised to restrict anything that he wrote in future”. Book 2, page 102.

#### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. Pashaura Singh is a loyal Sikh.
2. He obeyed the summons to appear before the Akal Takhat.
3. He was duly convicted of blasphemy.
4. His accusers claimed that he admitted to wrong doing and promised to not publish blasphemous material in the future.
5. Pashaura Singh reported to DM that he did apologize but did not promise to restrict his writing in the future.

#### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, Pashaura Singh is a loyal Sikh. Having been convicted of blasphemy at the Akal Takhat, he apologized for his misconduct. Later, he reported to DM that he did not make a commitment at the Akal Takhat to restrict his writing or refrain from writing blasphemous material

#### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. On behalf of his protégé, Pashaura Singh, DM reports that Pashaura Singh, as a loyal Sikh, faked his remorse at having committed blasphemy against the Sikh Panth. Manifestly, DM makes Pashaura Singh appear both as a loyal Sikh and a disloyal rogue.

2. DM portrays himself and his protégé Pashaura Singh as lacking in integrity.
3. What did Pashaura Singh apologize for, at the Akal Takhat? Does a sincere apology not mean a commitment to not repeating the same behavior in the future? DM's answer is that Pashaura Singh, most assuredly, did not promise to restrict his writing in the future. This means that both DM and Pashaura Singh are miserably lacking in personal integrity.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 67**

### **PASHAURA SINGH LABELLED AS A BLASPHEMER**

“The thesis written by Pashaura Singh alarmed them (prominent leaders of the Sikh Panth) and led them to label him as a deviant and blasphemer”. Book 2, page 104.

“One reason was the concern felt by those who were strict fundamentalists in the literal sense of the word”. Book 2, page 104

“The words of the Guru Granth Sahib were fixed for all eternity, yet here was someone who claimed to be a Sikh changing them in a most disturbing manner. But Pashaura Singh was *not* changing or otherwise altering the sacred words. He was merely bringing to bear the strengths of scholarship in determining what the actual words (are)”. Book 2, page 104.

#### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. Prominent leaders of the Sikh Panth were alarmed by what Pashaura Singh wrote in his thesis.
2. The Sikh leaders labeled Pashaura Singh as a deviant and blasphemer.
3. The message of Guru Granth Sahib is inviolable both in form and spirit.
4. The Sikh leaders determined that Pashaura Singh, as a Sikh, had changed certain words in the message.
5. DM claims that Pashaura Singh did not change or alter the sacred words.
6. DM claims that Pashaura Singh, using his superior intelligence, determined the words that were more suitable than the words enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib.
7. The leaders of Sikh Panth were concerned about Pashaura Singh's thesis because they were strict fundamentalists.

#### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, prominent leaders of the Sikh Panth, being strict fundamentalists, labeled Pashaura Singh as a blasphemer because he argued that his choice of words was superior to certain words that occur in Guru Granth Sahib.

DM is at a loss to understand why this action on the part of Pashaura Singh should imply “changing the words”.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. As a self-proclaimed atheist, DM of course has no intellectual regard for the idea that the message of Guru Granth Sahib is inviolable or that the words of Guru Granth Sahib are fixed for all eternity. The issue is not that the fundamentalists of DM’s definition were the only ones concerned about Pashaura Singh’s arguments. The issue is that to all Believer-Sikhs, Guru Granth Sahib’s message, both in form and spirit, is for eternity.
2. A Sikh disqualifies himself to be a Sikh by publishing the idea that his intelligence is superior to the intelligence of his Guru. This is the reason why Pashaura Singh was brought before Akal Takhat and was required to apologize for his misconception and misconduct. In order to regain his status as a Believer-Sikh and to view his Guru as a Sikh must, he obeyed the order to come before the Akal Takhat. It is the greatness of Sikh Faith that an apostate Sikh, by means of *sincere regret and apology*, may receive forgiveness and regain his lost faith. Manifestly, this viewpoint is beyond the comprehension of DM.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 68**

### **ACHIEVING UNION WITH GOD OR SALVATION**

#### **(Further consideration)**

“God has expressed Himself in the Word which He Himself as Guru communicates to man. If by His Grace any man (is) blessed with the perception which enables him to understand the Word he will discern around and within himself the nature of God and the means of attaining union with Him. In this manner the way to salvation is revealed. What must man do to grasp this proffered salvation? What effort must one make, what discipline must one follow in order to appropriate the Truth? Book 1, page 207.

#### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. The Word (Guru Shabad) is the means by which God expresses Himself.
2. God, as Guru, communicates the Guru Shabad to man.
3. It is by God’s Grace that man is blessed with a perception to understand the Guru Shabad.
4. Man, thusly blessed with the perception, recognizes the nature of God within and around himself.
5. The blessed individual recognizes the means to attain union with God.
6. God reveals the way to salvation to the blessed man.
7. Man must act in certain ways to lay hold to the offer of salvation.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM's interpretation of Guru's Shabad, man blessed by God with the perception to understand Guru Shabad recognizes the nature of God, the means to attain union with God and the way to achieve salvation. However these blessings are not quite man's own unless he acts in certain ways, follows a certain discipline.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM misinterprets the Guru Shabad. He states that the blessings bestowed upon man by God are not quite received by man or that the blessings remain in limbo unless man follows a certain discipline. This cannot be. When God bestows the blessings, man receives the blessings. When God bestows the blessing of salvation upon man, man receives the blessing of salvation.
2. DM misinterprets the Guru Shabad when he states that God's *offer* of union to man with Him, the *offer* of salvation, cannot be grasped by man unless he embarks upon a certain discipline. This cannot be. God's offer of salvation to man is salvation bestowed on man. Man is not in a position to accept, to grasp or to reject God's offer of salvation. God's Will trumps man's will.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT 69**

### **INSTITUTION OF LANGAR**

“One of the most attractive aspects of Sikhism is the Langar, the intercommunal refractory which is always attached to a gurdwara. There can be little doubt that the institution was developed as a deliberate attack on caste distinction, but it is not entirely clear whether it was first introduced into Sikhism by Guru Nanak or by the third Guru, (Guru) Amar Das. Although the balance of probability strongly favours the latter there can be no doubt that the Langar expresses an ideal which we find clearly articulated in Guru Nanak's works. Book 1, page 210.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. It is not certain that Guru Nanak instituted the intercommunal refractory (the Langar), which is one of the most attractive aspects of Sikhism.
2. It is more likely that Guru Amar Das, not Guru Nanak, started the langar tradition.
3. The ideal to disregard caste distinction in favor of langar is extolled in Guru Nanak's compositions.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, even though Guru Nanak expressed his views against caste tradition in his compositions, yet the probability, the likelihood, that Guru Nanak started the langar tradition is weaker than the likelihood that Guru Amar Das started it.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM's use of the concept of probability is patently defective, for he uses the concept in violation of the meaning of the concept. The concept of probability refers only to events of the future and certainly not to events of the past. It is used to predict or speculate about the occurrence of future events.
2. In case DM means a personal bias when he uses the concept of probability, he fails to provide any justification for his doubt about the issue that Guru Nanak started the langar tradition.
3. DM fails to tell us how he envisions Guru Nanak taking his food with Bhai Mardana who accompanied him during Guru's long and extensive travels.
4. DM also fails to tell us about the manner of eating food when Guru Nanak was settled in Kartarpur during the last two decades of his life.
5. DM offers no evidence whatsoever against the belief that Guru Nanak lived his views that he preached about caste and status distinctions; that he equalized himself in partaking food with Bhai Mardana during travels and with members of his congregation at Kartarpur. There is no doubt whatsoever that Guru Nanak introduced the concept and practice of langar.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 70**

### **GURU NANAK AND VAISNAVA BHAGATS**

"...Guru Nanak shares with the Sants a particular debt to Vaisnava bhakti". Book 1, page 213.

"All of these (loving devotion, fear, surrender, singing of praises) are aspects of traditional bhakti and they represent a significant area of agreement between the Vaisnava bhagats on the one hand and Guru Nanak on the other. There are, however, basic differences separating them. In the first place, we have already observed, there is in Guru Nanak's works an explicit rejection of Avatars". Book 1, page 214.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. Guru Nanak is indebted to Vaisnava bhakti for the concept of loving devotion to the formless God.
2. Guru Nanak's works also emphasize other concepts related to the loving devotion concept of Vaisnava bhakti. These concepts include fear of God, complete surrender to God, and singing of God's praises.

3. Guru Nanak explicitly rejects avatars.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, Guru Nanak is indebted to Vaisnava bhagti for his concepts of loving devotion to the formless God, fear of God, complete surrender to God, and the singing of God's praises. However, Guru Nanak directs these concepts, unlike the Vaisnava bhagats, to the non-incarnated God.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. First, DM affirms that Guru Nanak borrowed the Vaisnava bhagats' concepts of devotion, fear, surrender and praise directed towards various avatars. Then DM asserts that Guru Nanak rejected the concepts of devotion, fear, surrender and praise offered to the avatars. DM commits a logical fallacy. Rejection of something is the antithesis of acceptance. DM shows Guru Nanak borrowing, incorporating the Vaisnava bhagti concepts into his doctrines as well as rejecting these very concepts.
2. DM's view that Guru Nanak is indebted to the Vaisnava bhagti is totally wrong. The Vaisnava bhagats direct their emotions of devotion, fear, surrender and praise to the avatars, the incarnated divine beings. Guru Nanak directs these emotions to the un-incarnated God.
3. If DM means that Guru Nanak only borrowed the emotions but did not subscribe to the worship of avatars, then his position is an absurd one. The referenced emotions are not exclusive to Vaisnava bhagats. These emotions are an endowment of humanity in general.
4. Guru Nanak borrowed nothing from the Vaisnava bhagats.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO 71**

### **DEVOUT REPETITION OF GOD'S NAME**

“Simple repetition (uttering Ram, Ram) of this kind is not enough, regardless how devout the repetition may be or how sophisticated a system may be built around the practice. It is a pattern which can include the repetition of a chosen word or brief formula, but only if the emphasis is upon the interiorizing of the utterance, upon the paramount need of understanding the word so uttered and of exposing one's total being to its deepest meanings”. Book 1, page 216.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. The mechanical repetition of God's name is not enough even if it is done in a devout manner.
2. The chosen word or formula to remember God must also be intellectually understood as to its full meanings.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, remembrance of God by fully understanding the attribute by which He is remembered is superior to remembrance of God by mechanically uttering the name of his attribute. It does not matter even if the utterance is a devout utterance.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM equates an austere and mechanical pattern of remembering God with a devout remembrance of God. He commits a logical fallacy. A mechanical repetition of the name of God means uttering the name of God without any regard to the meaning of the uttered name and hence uttering the name without any emotional aspect to the utterance. A devout utterance, on the other hand, signifies the presence of emotions of devotion and sincerity.
2. In the event that devout utterance, of the name of God, to DM means the same as an austere and regimented discipline attached to the mechanical utterance of the name of God, then he is manifestly licentious in the use of English language. *Devout utterance* of the name of God does not mean an utterance which is *devoid of emotions*. On the contrary, it means an utterance which is devoted and sincere.
3. DM fails to provide us any justification for his notion that intellectual understanding and remembrance of God's name is superior to devotional (devoted and sincere) remembrance of the name of God.
4. DM offers no justification why he believe that man's intellectual understanding of an attribute of God is separable, is distinctive, from man's emotional linkage to the attribute of God. The understanding of any fact such as an attribute of God, involves both an intellectual and an affective component.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 72**

### **'SAHAJ' OF GURU NANAK AND NATH YOGIS**

“At no point in the whole range of Guru Nanak's works is the link with the Nath tradition, and beyond the Nath tradition with tantric Buddhism, so clearly evident. Of all the terms used by Guru Nanak in his effort to communicate something of the meaning of the experience the most common is Sahaj, the ineffable radiance beyond the dasam duar. It is difficult to distinguish his sahaj from that of the Nath yogis, for in both cases we have a word which must be beyond the understanding of all who have not experienced the condition which it represents. Guru Nanak was in emphatic disagreement with the Nath method, but in both cases similar

claims are made on behalf of the ultimate state called sahad. For both it has a climactic content which unfolds in absolute equipoise and absolute tranquility, and for both it is a condition existing beyond the cycle of transmigration". Book 1, pages 224-225.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. All three -- Guru Nanak, Nath yogis and tantric Buddhists use the term Sahaj to describe the state, the experience, of union with God.
2. The sahad of Guru Nanak's experience is indistinguishable from the sahad of a Nath yogi's experience.
3. Guru Nanak completely disagreed with the Nath method of achieving sahad.
4. Both Guru Nanak and Nath yogis describe sahad as an experience of absolute equipoise and absolute tranquility resulting in salvation.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

Guru Nanak and Nath yogis offer two distinctive and irreconcilable approaches to experience sahad. Both approaches do result in a climactic experience -- an experience marked by absolute equipoise, absolute tranquility and freedom from bondage, i.e., salvation.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM fails to inform us the basis for his claim that the experience of sahad of Nath yogis and Guru Nanak is identical. He has not experienced either of the two to claim that they are identical.
2. DM fails to define the states of absolute equipoise and absolute tranquility. If his contention is that these states cannot be defined in an objective manner because they are subjective and cognizable only in private experience, then it is baseless for him to claim that the sahad experience of Guru Nanak is identical to that of the Nath yogis.
3. It must be abundantly clear to DM, as a result of his professed study of Guru Nanak's works, that the Guru has utmost respect for anyone who worships God with love and reverence. If Guru's awareness of the sahad was identical to that of the Nath yogis, then he would not have been in "emphatic disagreement" with the Nath method of achieving sahad. Therefore, the assertion of DM claiming an identity, oneness, between the sahad of Guru Nanak and that of the Nath yogis is conceived wrongly by him.
4. The words, DM uses to connote the experience of sahad, may equally apply to the experience of an individual intoxicated with alcohol or with one of the hard, illegal drugs.
5. As an atheist, a self-proclaimed one, DM must be the farthest from any hint of experience of sahad that Guru Nanak makes reference to. DM is in no

position to discern what sahaj is and what it is not. No, Guru Nanak's sahaj is not the same as that of Nath Yogis!

### **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 73**

#### **DR. MCLEOD'S HISTORICAL METHOD**

“All these major anecdotes (regarding the life of Guru Nanak) had to be rejected, together with most of the others from the list of 37. The only ones that withstood the process of analysis were those concerning (Guru) Nanak's family relationships, the period of his employment in Sultanpur, and the founding of Kartarpur”. Book 2, page 144.

“As a result of these various analyses I was left with only a small residue for writing an authentic life of Guru Nanak. The resultant narrative came to only three paragraphs, or less than a page”. Book 2, page 145.

“One of the chief benefits of this discipline (Western historical method as understood by Dr. McLeod) is the strong stress which it lays upon doubt, limitation and bias. The Western historian is taught, in the first place, to doubt all his historical evidence and to accept that evidence as accurate only when it answers skeptical questioning concerning sources”. Book 2, page 217.

“All I can do, as a partially equipped outsider, is to ask questions which from my perspective seem relevant to an understanding of Sikh history and religion. At times it will look very much as if I am offering those new interpretations. I am fully aware that indeed my work must sometime give this impression. It is, however, a misunderstanding of the basis on which I conduct my research”. Book 2, page 218.

#### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. The discipline of a Western historian requires that extant information about any subject must be doubted.
2. The extant information about any subject can never rise to the level of certainty.
3. Questions must be asked to understand Sikh history and religion.
4. DM offers no new interpretations of Sikh history and religion.
5. Out of 124 sakhis examined by DM, as noted in Book 1, only four episodes merited his acceptance.
6. The authentic material in the entire range of literature on janam-sakhis could be presented within three paragraphs.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, an extremely limited material out of the extant biographical accounts of the life of Guru Nanak is acceptable to him. He used the Western historical method, which requires the raising of questions and doubts, to reach his conclusion.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM has presented us with a glaring self-contradiction in this argument. On the one hand, he asserts that he doubts all extant information on Sikh history and religion and rejects an overwhelming majority of the extant accounts in the biographies of Guru Nanak. On the other hand, he claims that he offers no new interpretations. The material he rejects is because of new interpretations stemming from his personal doubts, confusion, biases and speculations.
2. We have seen in the analysis of DM's arguments so far that a large number of his conclusions about Guru Nanak's life and his teachings are mired in faulty reasoning. Not only he offers new interpretations about Sikh history and religion, but he also makes his interpretations by supporting them with flawed reasoning.
3. DM is oblivious to the fact that historical analysis, whether it is of the Western type or some other type, does not include flawed reasoning in support of arguments. Of course it is within the scope of sound scholarship to raise doubts, to raise questions, to analyze views of others but it is not a characteristic of sound scholarship to advance arguments and draw conclusions that are based on faulty reasoning.
4. What we have seen, so far in the analysis of his arguments, qualifies DM not as a sound Western historian. However, we acknowledge that he is versed in the skills of sophistry and hence he may lay claim to the title of 'sophist'.
5. Evidently DM cherishes the title of Western historian. He writes on page 129 of 'Discovering the Sikhs', "The second factor is that I am a Western historian, trained in Western methods of historical research and adhering to Western notions of historiography". One wishes, DM had given due attention to logic and logical expression to complement his training in the methods of historical research. Had he done that, we are of the opinion that he would have characterized himself as a member of the society of *Sound historians*, whether trained in the East or the West.
6. A sound historian approaches the 'givens', the 'accepted' versions of past events or faith statements about religious 'belief and practice' with scholarly restraint in verifying the validity of the 'givens', 'the accepted'. He or she researches to look for evidence and facts related to the 'givens'. In authenticating the 'givens' as valid, facts are cited. The same is true in rejecting the 'givens'. In this case too, the sound historian cites facts. In contrast to the approach of a sound historian, DM first degrades the

‘givens’ to positions of uncertainty. Then he knits together his arguments and supports his arguments by means of doubts, speculations and biases. He either deliberately overlooks the flaws in his reasoning that support his arguments, or the flaws escape his notice. Thus, in his hands the ‘givens’ turn into doubt-statements reflecting his personal speculations and biases. We have demonstrated this fact about DM’s historical method. It is definitely distinguishable from the method of a sound, credible historian.

7. In reviewing ninety five (95) topics of DM’s arguments, we have identified and described in excess of three hundred (300) flaws in those arguments. The above description of DM’s historical method is illuminated in his own words on pages xxvi - xxix of ‘Sikhism’ where he cites seventeen (17) “assumptions”. These “assumptions” describe his personal biases.
8. In order to sustain his biases and speculations, DM indulges in a wide range of intemperate, unscholarly and untenable arguments. These arguments are of the nature of propaganda and blitzkrieg. What may be his motive behind this propaganda and blitzkrieg? Is it an obsession with sophistry? Or is it a sinister aim to create confusion and doubts about the faith and history of the Sikhs? Only he may possess a definitive answer to this question.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 74**

### **GURU NANAK’S VISIT TO ASSAM**

“In the Puratan janam-sakhis the story (of Guru Nanak’s visit to Assam) is set in a land which is called either Kauru or Kavaru, both of which are evidently variants of Kamrup”. Book 1, page 110.

“The land of Kamrup was itself identified with an area in Assam or Bhutan, but its true location was in the realm of puranic and tantric mythology where it figured prominently as a symbol of erotic practice and dark magic”. Book 1, page 112.

“It is not possible to state categorically that Guru Nanak never visited Assam, but we must acknowledge that there is no acceptable evidence to support such a visit”. Book 1, page 112.

#### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. According to the Puratan janam-sakhi, Guru Nanak visited Kauru or Kavaru.
2. Kauru and Kavaru are both variants of Kamrup.
3. Kamrup exists only in mythology.
4. Guru Nanak’s visit to Assam is neither rejected nor accepted.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, Kauru and Kavaru are both variants of Kamrup which is a mythical place. Guru Nanak's visit to Assam is neither rejected nor accepted.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. In order to discredit the sakhi that Guru Nanak visited Kauru in Assam, DM floats his notion that Kauru or Kavaru are merely terminological variants of Kamrup. Since Kamrup, according to him, exists only in the puranic or tantric mythology, Kauru therefore also must exist in mythology. However, DM offers us with no specific and verifiable support to his notion of a variant terminology.
2. As a conclusion to his specious argument to invalidate Guru Nanak's visit to Assam, DM declares himself to be lacking in the knowledge to affirm or deny such a visit by Guru Nanak. Then why not honestly admit this fact; refrain from floating a wild notion about terminology; and save him an exercise in futility?

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 75**

### **DR. MCLEOD'S SELF-VIEW AS A SKEPTIC**

"I must admit that I may have chosen wrongly in describing myself as a skeptic. Strictly speaking the word is correct, one meaning being a cautious approach to one's sources. I now realize, however, that it is much more likely to be understood as strongly biased towards doubt and disbelief". Book 2, page 207.

"One of the chief benefits of this discipline (that of a Western historian) is the strong stress which it lays on doubt, limitations and bias. The western historian is taught, in the first place, to *doubt* all his historical evidence and to accept that evidence as accurate only when it answers skeptical questioning concerning sources". Book 2, page 217.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. The word skeptic is very likely to be understood as strongly biased towards doubt.
2. DM claims that he intended his self-description as a skeptic to be understood as one who has a cautious approach to one's sources of information.
3. As a Western historian, DM has been taught to doubt all of his historical evidence.

4. The Western historian considers doubt as one of the chief benefits of his discipline.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

In self-describing himself as a skeptic, DM means that he exercises a cautious approach to his sources of information, but not one who is strongly biased towards doubt. As a Western historian, he has been taught to doubt all of his historical evidence. He considers doubt as one of the chief benefits of his discipline.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. If DM's argument is not a testimony to his great proclivity towards self-contradiction, then we do not know what else this argument testifies to. Here, his 'enlightened' thought processes and his professed rational approach are both gone haywire. He claims that, as a skeptic, he does not doubt his sources of information but he is only cautious towards the sources of information he evaluates. Then he claims that his role as a Western historian is that of the person who has been taught to value doubt and he considers doubt as one of the chief benefits of his discipline as a historian.
2. We have discussed DM's theory of skepticism under Sophistic Argument No. 36. It is hypocritical for him to maintain that he is a skeptic of the type who uses caution and not doubt or disbelief towards the information he scrutinizes. Not only he has applied doubt to the narratives of sakhis about Guru Nanak's life but he has also created an elaborate theory of classification of doubt. He has assigned doubt levels to the sakhis creating a litany of doubt categories.
3. Contrary to common sense, reason, and principles of probability theory, DM assigns levels of doubt in concluding about the validity of numerous sakhis related to the life of Guru Nanak. On a continuum, his numerous levels of doubt or doubt categories range from categorically established to the categorically rejected.
4. DM has carried his theory of skepticism to such an extreme that he portrays his subjective doubts and biases as if these are objectively determined. This irrational approach has led him to view the occurrence of events of the past on a continuum with one extreme being absolute certainty and the other being absolute uncertainty.
5. He fails to understand that evidence can only show, prosecute, events of the past as being valid or not valid. No more. The use of doubt, on a continuum of certainty-uncertainty, is reserved for prediction of future events. Probability is defined as the likelihood or the unlikelihood that a particular event *will* occur in the future. The concept of probability, which DM erroneously uses in lieu of his self-doubts in his arguments, does not apply to events of the past i.e., the events that have already happened.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 76**

## **DIFINITIVE COMPOSITIONS OF GURU NANAK**

“It is the third of these periods which evidently emerges through the pages of Adi Granth (Sahib). Many of Guru Nanak’s recorded works will have originated during the time of his travels, and some may go back even further, but the Kartarpur years must have been the period of definitive utterance”. Book 1, page 227.

“We also reach in this concluding phase the period in which Guru Nanak must have communicated to his followers the works which have been recorded in the Adi Granth (Sahib)”. Book 1, page 230.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. The last period, of about two decades, is the one during which Guru Nanak expounded his doctrines as recorded in Guru Granth Sahib.
2. Guru Nanak may have made many of his compositions during the period of his travels which lasted for twenty years.
3. Guru Nanak may have made some compositions during the first thirty years of his life.
4. During the last two decades of his life, when Guru Nanak settled at Kartarpur, he gave the final shape to his doctrines.
5. The compositions, that are included in Guru Granth Sahib, are from the period when Guru Nanak was settled at Kartarpur.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, the compositions of Guru Nanak, that are included in Guru Granth Sahib, are the compositions made during the last twenty years of his life at Kartarpur. He may have made compositions during his thirty years at Talwandi and Kartarpur as well as during the next twenty years of his travels. It is to be noted that Guru Nanak gave definitive shape to his doctrines at Kartarpur, after his views evolved over a period of fifty years.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM fails to cite any evidence whatsoever to claim that the doctrines of Guru Nanak evolved over a period of fifty years.
2. DM fails to cite any evidence whatsoever to claim that the compositions of Guru Nanak that are recorded in Guru Granth Sahib, are from the period of last twenty years of his life when he was settled at Kartarpur.
3. DM does disservice to the discipline of historians by indulging in unbridled speculations.

4. Guru Nanak's doctrines did not evolve over time. His compositions relate to his life at various stages, from childhood to the later stages.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 77**

### **EVOLUTION OF GURU NANAK'S DOCTRINES**

"...there seems to be every likelihood that the janam-sakhis are basically correct in depicting this as a time of increasing restlessness and of resort to sadhus, faqirs, and other such holy men. This would explain the subsequent years of travel and also seems natural in view of his deep understanding of contemporary religious belief and practice". Book 1, page 228.

#### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. Guru Nanak went through a period of great restlessness.
2. The restlessness, arising out of questions about life, propelled the Guru towards seeking solace from sadhus, faqirs and other holy men.
3. The janam-sakhis agree with DM's viewpoint about the period of restlessness in Guru Nanak's life.

#### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, Guru Nanak spent the first fifty years of his life in search of what would eventually become his doctrines during the last twenty years. His spiritual advancement was of an evolutionary nature marked by initial uncertainties and the attendant restlessness. DM claims, "This would explain the subsequent years of travel". (Book 1, page 228).

#### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM cites the janam-sakhi accounts in support of his speculation about the period of restlessness that Guru Nanak went through before finalizing his doctrines. This speculation is self-serving and false for the following reasons:

- DM displays an intense disdain and incredibility towards the accounts of the life of Guru Nanak as given in the janam-sakhis. This he states again and again throughout his book, 'Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion'. Towards the end of this book, on page 228, he says, "Of the first period of (Guru Nanak's life) we know relatively little, for the janam-sakhis are almost totally unreliable in the accounts of these early decades".
- Nowhere do the janam-sakhis state that Guru Nanak went through a period of restlessness or that his spiritual status was the result of an evolutionary process spanning several decades.

2. In fact, and contrary to DM's claim, the janam-sakhis depict Guru Nanak as uniquely gifted in divine knowledge from his earliest childhood. These accounts also show him possessing the extraordinary serenity of a great sage from early childhood.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 78**

### **GURU NANAK AND DAULAT KHAN LODI**

“These two conclusions (that Daulat Khan was the son of Tatar Khan and was governor of Lahore) certainly do not establish a connexion between Daulat Khan Lodi and Sultanpur prior to 1500, and if considered apart from the janam-sakhi tradition they do not even imply one. They do, however, render it at least possible. An appointment to Lahore in 1500 or shortly after would fit the chronology of Guru Nanak's early life in the sense that the association, if it actually took place, must have been prior to this date. The evidence available seems to indicate a two-fold conclusion. In the first place, we may accept as established the tradition that Guru Nanak, as a young man, spent a period in Sultanpur, working in the employment of the Nawab of that town. The location of the incident within the Panjab and the basic unanimity of the janam-sakhis appear to justify this conclusion. Secondly, we may accept as probable the claim that this nawab was Daulat Khan Lodi. In this respect an element of doubt must remain, for it is possible that the connexion may have arisen through Daulat Khan's undoubted association with Sultanpur in 1524, or through the common tendency to introduce association with persons of acknowledged stature. The reference in Bhai Gurdas and Dabistan indicate, however, an unusually strong tradition and the external evidence raises no objection to its acceptance”. Book 1, pages 109-110.

#### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. Daulat Khan Lodi, son of Tatar Khan, was appointed the governor of Lahore in or soon after A.D. 1500.
2. It is not certain that Daulat Khan Lodi had anything to do at Sultanpur prior to 1500.
3. It is possible, a 50 percent chance, that Daulat Khan Lodi was connected with Sultanpur prior to A.D. 1500.
4. It is doubtful that Daulat Khan Lodi was connected with Sultanpur prior to A.D. 1500.
5. It is doubtful that there was any association between Guru Nanak and Daulat Khan Lodi at Sultanpur.
6. In case there was an association between Guru Nanak and Daulat Khan Lodi, it must have been earlier than A.D. 1500.
7. Guru Nanak spent a period of time in Sultanpur.
8. Guru Nanak was employed by the Nawab of Sultanpur.

9. It is possible (a chance of 50 percent) that the Nawab of Sultanpur was Daulat Khan Lodi.
10. The connection between Guru Nanak and Daulat Khan Lodi was possibly invented by the Sikhs and authors of janam-sakhis in order to exalt the status of Guru Nanak by connecting him to a man of repute and authority.
11. It is accepted without any doubt that Guru Nanak was associated with Daulat Khan Lodi who was Guru's employer.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, the association of Daulat Khan Lodi with Sultanpur occurred only in 1524. It may be that the association occurred prior to A.D. 1500. Guru Nanak definitely spent some time in Sultanpur working for the Nawab of Sultanpur. It is not certain that the Nawab then was Daulat Khan Lodi. The tradition that Guru Nanak worked for Daulat Khan Lodi in Sultanpur is based on the following:

- The Sikhs and authors of janam-sakhis fictitiously connected Guru Nanak with Daulat Khan Lodi to exalt the status of Guru Nanak, for Daulat Khan Lodi was a man of repute and authority.
- Daulat Khan Lodi was undoubtedly associated with Sultanpur in A.D. 1524.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM, in self-contradiction, argues that the association of Daulat Khan Lodi with Sultanpur occurred *only* in 1524 and *perhaps, may be*, also prior to A.D. 1500.
2. DM makes an irrational argument by asserting that the connection between Guru Nanak and Daulat Khan Lodi is fictional. He cites the tendency of Sikhs and the authors of janam-sakhis, to create and propagate fictions, as the explanation for the connection. DM's claim is false, absurd and a deliberate affront to the Sikh community.
3. In self-contradiction, he counters his own argument about the connection between Guru Nanak and Daulat Khan Lodi. In the earlier part of his argument, he maintains that the connection was fictional. He ends his argument by asserting that the Guru was undoubtedly associated with Daulat Khan Lodi. DM violates a rule of logic according to which it is impossible for something to be and not to be at the same time.
4. DM makes a vain attempt at creating an illusion of a valid, refined argument. He dissembles it by embedding it with clever verbiage. In fact his argument is manifestly a sophistic argument.
5. Manifestly, his art is illusory and his reasoning is opposed to ratiocination, exact thinking.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 79**

## **RAHIT AND KHALSA**

“The code of belief and conduct which all members of the Khalsa are required to obey” is called Rahit. Book 3, pages 3 and 452.

“For more than three centuries most Sikhs have regarded the Rahit as absolutely central to their faith. Guru Gobind Singh imparted the Rahit when he inaugurated the Khalsa order, and in the minds of most Sikhs it remains unchanged to this day”. Book 3, page 3.

“Some features have entered the Rahit at various times; others have been abandoned”. Book 3, page 3.

“The Rahit lies at the very heart of the Khalsa and to be a Sikh of the Khalsa one must observe it, *at least in a rudimentary sense*”. Book 3, page 4.

“This study, then, concerns the Rahit of the Khalsa. It is a study of how the Rahit came into being, how it developed in response to the historical circumstances surrounding it, and why it still retains an unchallenged hold over all who regard themselves as Khalsa Sikhs”. Book 3, page 4.

“The Khalsa is the order instituted by Guru Gobind Singh at the end of the seventeenth century. That definition is certainly correct as far as it goes, but does it go far enough? Is membership limited to those who undergo the formal rite of initiation, or do those who follow at least the elementary rules of the Khalsa also belong to it?”. Book 3, page 7.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. All members of the Khalsa are required to obey a code of belief and conduct.
2. Most Sikhs regard the Rahit as absolutely central to their faith.
3. In the minds of most Sikhs the Rahit remains unchanged.
4. At the time of inaugurating the Khalsa order, Guru Gobind Singh imparted the Rahit to the initiated (at the time of the baptismal ceremony).
5. Over time, the Rahit has undergone change.
6. The Khalsa is permitted to observe the Rahit in a rudimentary manner.
7. The Khalsa wholeheartedly obey the Rahit.
8. Who is a Khalsa?
9. Is Khalsa only an individual who is formally initiated into the order?
10. Or, is Khalsa also an individual who only obeys the Rahit in an elementary manner, skipping some of the rules?

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, Guru Gobind Singh inaugurated the Khalsa order and imparted the Rahit at the baptismal ceremony. Rahit, belief and conduct, must be obeyed by the Khalsa. Rahit has changed over time. But most Sikhs believe that the Rahit has not changed. Must the belief and conduct of the Khalsa unwaveringly conform to the Rahit or may the Khalsa skip some of the rules of the Rahit? According to DM, the Khalsa is permitted to observe the Rahit in a rudimentary manner.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM is confused. He argues that the Rahit has changed over time while acknowledging the fact that most Sikhs believe otherwise. In arrogance, he pits himself against the belief and practice of millions of Sikhs. Is this an 'enlightened', 'rational' stand he takes? In his various writings, he professes that he is an enlightened-rationalist historian of the West. This argument proves otherwise.
2. DM indulges in double talk. First he acknowledges that the Rahit must be obeyed by the Khalsa. Then he reverses his acknowledgement by doubting the fact of full obedience and claims that the Khalsa are permitted to skip some of the rules and obey the Rahit in a rudimentary manner.
3. From the very beginning of his 'Sikhs of the Khalsa', DM's perspective about Rahit is confused and erroneous. He fails to distinguish between the original Rahit, with its fundamental, mandatory elements, and the expanded versions of the Rahit (described in the Rahit Namas). Some of the expanded versions include elements (the prohibitions and permissions) introduced by various Sikhs to exert and clarify the original elements promulgated by Guru Gobind Singh. The Sikhs have attempted to do this in conformity and harmony with Guru's orders.
4. Clearly in the above argument, DM has tried to create a disjunction in the belief of the Sikh community regarding the definitions of Rahit and Khalsa. The word 'Khalsa' denotes the Sikh as well as the Panth that Guru Gobind Singh created at Anandpur Sahib, in 1699 A. D. Rahit means the obedience of the orders Guru Gobind Singh issued at the time of baptismal ceremony, in 1699.
5. In his book 'Sikhs of the Khalsa', DM has tried his utmost to create further disjunction in the belief of Sikh community regarding the definitions of Khalsa and Rahit. He wants the Sikhs to deviate from the pristine and clear definitions set forth by Guru Gobind Singh. He uses his interpretations of the various 'Rahitnamas' to create schism and confusion in the belief of Sikh community.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 80**

### **INITIATED AND UNINITIATED SIKHS**

“A strict interpretation, it is true, still limits membership to those who have undergone the formal initiation, but today no one knows how many Sikhs wearing

the essential panoply of the Khalsa have actually taken initiation. Certainly it is a comparatively small proportion of all adult Sikhs, the figure of 15 per cent being frequently suggested". Book 3, page 8.

"There are, however, well over 15 per cent who observe the principal features of the Khalsa order (notably the ban on the cutting of hair). Here too there is no way of knowing the precise proportion, but certainly one is not going to quarrel with a claim that more than 80 per cent of the Panth (the Sikh community) belong to this category (even if for the males the beard is often surreptitiously trimmed)". Book 3, page 8.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. No one knows the exact number of Sikhs, look alike of the Khalsa, who have been baptized.
2. Approximately, 15 per cent of the Sikhs are baptized.
3. Well over 15 per cent of the Sikhs do not cut their hair, a principal feature of the Khalsa.
4. 80 per cent of the Sikhs do not cut their hair in obedience to a principal feature of the Khalsa. However, the males trim the beard.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, 80 percent of the Sikhs do not cut their hair; they often trim the beard. These Sikhs obey one of the principal features of the Khalsa. There are approximately 15 per cent of the Sikhs who are Khalsa, baptized Sikhs.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM rightly states that the Khalsa, the baptized Sikhs, do not cut hair from any part of the body. He states that about 15 per cent of the Sikhs are baptized. And, about 80 percent of the Sikhs are not baptized, are not Khalsa. He further informs us that these 80 per cent of the Sikhs "observe the principal features of the Khalsa order, notably the ban on the cutting of hair"; but he notes that the male Sikhs often cut, trim, the beard. It is remarkable that DM does not notice the self-contradiction in his remarks. First he depicts 80 per cent of the Sikhs conforming to the order of uncut hair, a feature of the Khalsa Rahit. Then he depicts the same 80 per cent of the Sikhs not conforming to the order of uncut hair because they secretly trim the beard.
2. DM vehemently maintains in his writings that he is a rationalist, an enlightened historian of the West. He claims that he seeks truth and speaks truth. And he is fair and straightforward, not devious. Here in the above argument, however, it is not hard to notice his deliberate and clever attempt at blurring, clouding the distinction between the Khalsa and non-Khalsa, between a baptized Sikh and a Sikh who is not baptized.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 81**

### **FUTURE OF RAHIT AND THEOLOGY**

“Are these Sikhs (who observe the principal features of the Khalsa and may secretly trim the beard) not members of the Khalsa? In terms of a strict definition of the term ‘Khalsa’ they are not members, but there must be very few who assert this in practice. For a large majority (,) ‘Khalsa Sikh’ means a person who observes the basic features of the Khalsa, and when they use the term it embraces a large number of Sikhs who lie outside the strict definition with which we began. Indeed, there are many of those who cut their hair yet claim to be members of the Khalsa because they come from families with a history of observing the Khalsa tradition”. Book 3, page 8.

“There can, however, be no doubt concerning the historical meaning of the term. The Khalsa is defined by those who have formally undergone *amrit sanskar* (the *amrit* ceremony) and taken *khande di pahul*”. Book 3, pages 8 and 9)

“We must remind ourselves yet again, though, that the Sikh Rahit Marayada represents a normative statement of the Khalsa belief and way of life. It represents the ideal situation. No one will seriously maintain that it portrays Khalsa belief and action as it is actually practiced”. Book 3, page 256.

“What then will be the future of the Rahit? Two things can be said, one of them with assurance and the other much more hesitatingly. The simple one is the assurance that the Rahit will gradually change over time as there are shifts in theology or the circumstances of the Panth change”. Book 3, page 256.

“The other one is much less certain, at least as far as the actual results are concerned. What can be positively affirmed is that the Panth will experience a progressive increase in education and in the sophistication of those Sikhs who at present lead comparatively simple lives”. Book 3, page 256.

“Just what effect an increase in education (whether formal or informal) and in global understanding will have on this large segment remains to be seen”. Book 3, page 257.

#### **Assertions Contained in the Argument**

1. A large majority of the Sikhs considers a Sikh to be a Khalsa as an individual who observes certain features of the Rahit and who may secretly trim his beard and cut his hair.
2. No one (Sikh, non-Sikh or Khalsa) claims that the Rahit refers to belief and action as it is actually practiced.

3. The Rahit will, assuredly, change as the Sikh theology changes and the situation of the Panth (Sikh society) changes.
4. It is certain that more and more members of the Panth, who presently lead simple, unsophisticated lives, will become sophisticated (cultured, refined, suave) as education spreads in the Panth.
5. Only the future will tell what effect an increase in education and global understanding will have on the large unsophisticated segment of the Panth.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, a large majority of the contemporary Sikh Panth believes that a Sikh may trim his beard and cut his hair and yet be called a Khalsa. Everybody (Sikh, non-Sikh, Khalsa) believes that Rahit means belief and action in theory but not in practice. A majority of the contemporary Sikh Panth is unsophisticated but this situation will definitely change as more and more Sikhs partake in formal or informal education. Along with the increased sophistication, changes will happen in Sikh theology and Rahit.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. It must be a state of drunkenness or the consequence of an attack of insanity for someone to compose such thoughts as DM has done in composing his thoughts for the above argument. If neither drunkenness nor insanity account for the thoughts, then DM is deliberately rude in the extreme. To call an individual, who cuts his hair and trims his beard, a Khalsa, is irreverent in the extreme towards the Sikh Panth.
2. The misrepresentation of 'Khalsa' is perhaps a deliberate act on DM's part. If so, then his divisive, iniquitous motive is evident in this argument.
3. DM claims, elsewhere, that he does not have any nefarious motives to malign and misrepresent the Sikh faith as many scholars have alleged in their works. In light of the above argument and certain of his earlier comments, it is not easy to accept his contention.
4. In his 'Discovering the Sikhs' DM claims he hid his true feelings about his faith in Christianity from the Sikh Panth for decades; thus he deliberately misled them. After decades, he came out of the closet and declared that he did not believe in Christianity, that he was an unbeliever. He hypocritically, dishonestly and dishonorably misled the Sikh Panth.
5. DM's prediction that the Rahit and theology of the Sikhs will change with time is absolutely absurd. He takes pride in being a Westerner, Westerner historian, enlightened-rationalist, critical thinker, cautious investigator, and a scholar of Sikh history and Sikh religion. And yet he fails to understand and acknowledge that the Khalsa deeply and resolutely values Rahit. Rahit ranks very high in matters that are important to Khalsa. DM is oblivious to the sacrifices Khalsa made and the resolve Khalsa demonstrated, throughout the history, to uphold faith in God, Guru, Panth and the Rahit.

6. DM's friends who cut their hair and secretly trim the beard and yet claim to be Khalsa are imposters, not Khalsa.
7. The future of Khalsa is bright and glorious in believing and acting upon the teachings of their Gurus and in obedience of the orders of Guru Gobind Singh.
8. Yes, contrary to DM's view, Rahit refers to belief and action as it is actually practiced. Millions of Sikhs attest to this fact.
9. DM claims that million of Sikhs, who live in villages, are unsophisticated. (Refer to pages 256 and 257 in his 'Sikhs of the Khalsa'). He also claims that this segment of Sikh Panth will become sophisticated through education in the years to come. He further claims that the "future of Rahit" with respect to obedience to it by this group is uncertain. What he means by these claims, most likely, is that as Sikhs become "sophisticated", they are likely to *move away* from the idea that Rahit refers to belief and action as it is actually practiced. Or to put it in his vulgar and offensive viewpoint, the Khalsa will *move towards* cutting of the hair and surreptitiously trimming the beard. We, of course, believe that his views are patently absurd.
10. We think DM is trying to live his old Christian fantasies. He fantasizes that the 'sophisticated' Sikhs would be that much more inclined towards paying heed to Christian proselytism. But, he is sadly, woefully, mistaken in his fantasy.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 82**

### **SYNTHESIS AND NATURE OF THE SANT TRADITION**

"For the vast majority of Guru Nanak's contemporaries, both Hindu and Muslim, the essence of religion was to be found in external authority and conventional ceremony". Book 1, page 151.

"These conventional patterns did not, however, command universal acceptance. Customary religion had received numerous challenges and of the dissenting movements three were of particular importance". Book 1, page 151.

"Within each of these religious groupings there was a recognizable continuity, but none of them was completely insulated. All were to some extent influenced by one or more of the others and underwent corresponding modifications. In one significant case this reciprocal exchange issued not simply in the modification of an existing tradition, but in the emergence of a recognizable synthesis, a new pattern which in various respects strongly resembled other existing patterns but which in its wholeness corresponded to none of them. This was the Sant tradition of Northern India". Book 1, page 152.

“The Sant tradition was essentially a synthesis of the three principal dissenting movements, a *compound* of elements drawn mainly from Vaisnava bhakti and the hath-yoga, with a marginal contribution from Sufism”. Book 1, page 152.

“It was this Sant tradition which provided the basis of Guru Nanak’s thought, an inheritance which, like (Bhagat) Kabir, he reinterpreted in the light of his own personality and experience”. (Quoted from page 157 of book 1).

### **Assertions Contained in the Argument**

1. During the time of Guru Nanak, the Vaisnava bhakti, hath-yoga and Sufism were the principal movements that dissented from the faiths of a vast majority of people in India.
2. The above-noted three religious movements experienced mutual syncretism but still maintained their distinguishing features.
3. The syncretistic process resulted also in the creation of a new religious movement, called the Sant tradition.
4. The Sant tradition was a synthesis in which elements from the three existing traditions coalesced.
5. The Sant tradition was similar in many respects to the parent traditions.
6. Taken as a whole, the Sant tradition was distinctive from its parent traditions.
7. Guru Nanak’s thought is inherited and based on the Sant tradition.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, the Sant tradition is a *compound*, a peculiar synthesis of the elements drawn from three distinctive parent traditions, namely Vaisnava bhakti, hath-yoga and Sufism. Within the Sant tradition, he claims, the elements of the parent traditions are totally unrecognizable. Guru Nanak’s thought is based on and derived from the Sant tradition.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

DM’s conception of the synthesis of Sant tradition is defective for the following reasons:

- He asserts that the synthesis of the Sant tradition is a compound in which the compounding beliefs and practices are unidentifiable. We dispute this notion on the ground that any religious tradition that is considered to have come about by a synthesis of other traditions must exhibit identifiable beliefs and practices of the parent traditions.

- Evidently, he has borrowed the word ‘compound’ from chemistry wherein the word means, according to the Webster’s Dictionary, “A distinct substance formed by a union of two or more ingredients in definite proportions by weight”. It is true that the ingredients that result in a chemical compound are transformed. After the formation of the compound, the ingredients are not identifiable without reversing the process of transformation. The chemical definition of a compound does not apply to a religious tradition which is formulated by the beliefs and practices of two or more religious traditions.
  - The beliefs and practices compounding together in a synthesis from varying religious traditions, to form a new tradition, remain clearly identifiable. DM argues that the Sant tradition is of the nature of a compound wherein nothing identifiable is found that is also found in Vaisnava bhakti, hath-yoga and Sufism. We have shown that a religious tradition can only be a synthesis of the nature of a mixture of elements from other traditions. The religious synthesis does have identifiably common features with its parent traditions.
  - The synthesis of religious traditions is more aptly defined as a mixture. In a mixture, the identities of constituent elements are retained. Contrary to DM’s position, a synthesis (a mixing together) of elements of various religious traditions definitely retains the identity of elements that coalesce to form a new tradition.
1. DM’s premise is untenable, for the above reasons, in describing the Sant tradition and how it came into existence. Therefore any derivative statements he makes in view of this premise must also be untenable.
    - Based on his false premise, DM makes an untenable assertion by stating, “It was this Sant tradition which provided the basis of Guru Nanak’s thought, an inheritance which, like (Bhagat) Kabir, he reinterpreted in the light of his own personality and experience”. (Quoted from page 157 of book 1). This assertion is false, for it is derived from a false premise.
    - It is irrational for DM to connect Guru Nanak with the Sant tradition the origin of which he fails to comprehend properly.
    - DM is wrong in claiming that the Sant tradition evolved from Vaisnava bhakti, hath-yoga and Sufism and it exhibits none of the characteristics of these traditions. This is a preposterous proposition. He is flat wrong in maintaining that the synthesis has nothing in common with the parent traditions.

The above defects in DM’s argument may be integrated and restated as follows:

1. DM claims that the Sant tradition is a synthesis of certain beliefs and practices taken from Vaisnava bhakti, hath-yoga and Sufism. He maintains that some of the elements, the beliefs and practices, of the Sant tradition bear a striking similarity to elements in the parent traditions. However he asserts that the Sant tradition, *as a whole*, does not have anything in common with the parent traditions. This is a self-contradiction and puts

DM in an absurd position, for it is impossible for a religious tradition **to have** common features and **to not have** common features with other traditions. His claim is wrong and false. If, however, he means that the Sant tradition has additional features besides certain features from each of the three parent traditions, then he clearly violates the definition of ‘synthesis’ which Webster’s Dictionary gives as: ‘A combination of separate elements, such as religious beliefs, into a single whole’. There is nothing else in the ‘whole’ or ‘synthesis’ besides the constituent parts. In its ‘wholeness’ the new tradition, of DM’s conception, is not new in an absolute sense as DM claims, for distinguishable beliefs and practices of the parent traditions continue manifesting themselves in the new tradition. And, besides the collective manifestation of features of parent traditions, there is nothing more in the synthesis.

2. DM claims that Guru Nanak’s thought is inherited from and based on the Sant tradition. However, his description of the Sant tradition is wrong and false as we have shown above. He fails to define it properly. He fails to explain how it came about. He lacks precise knowledge of the Sant tradition. It is irrational for him to connect Bhagat Kabir or Guru Nanak with the Sant tradition. Therefore his claim that Guru Nanak’s thought is inherited and based on the Sant tradition is wrong and false.
3. DM has put forward another fallacious assertion whereby he states that the Sant tradition is a ‘compound’ of the nature of a chemical compound. The ingredients of a chemical compound lose their original identities. What follows from his analogy of a ‘compound’ is that the beliefs and practices from Vaisnava bhakti, hath-yoga and Sufism, that came together to form the Sant tradition, lost their identities. But he asserts that the ingredients of the ‘compound’, he calls Sant tradition, are at *once recognizable* in the compound. This is a logical fallacy.
4. DM wrongly conceives the process by which religious traditions come into existence. We believe that a religious tradition has its origin in a founder. The attributes, the beliefs and practices, that make a religious tradition distinctive from others, are propounded and propagated by the founder and carried forth into the future by stalwarts of the tradition. Contrary to DM’s view, this is the manner by which the Sikh faith began with Guru Nanak. *The doctrines he set forth are his; they originated with him.* They are in full agreement with the doctrines of Guru Gobind Singh, other Sikh Gurus and everyone else whose composition is recorded in the Holy Guru Granth Sahib. Max Arthur Macauliffe, an illustrious scholar, writes on pages Iiv and Iv of his book ‘The Sikh Religion’ (volume 1, published by Satvic Media Pvt. Ltd., Amritsar, India), “Now there is here presented a religion (The Sikh Religion) totally unaffected by Semitic or Christian influences. Based on the concept of the unity of God, it rejected Hindu formularies and adopted an independent ethical system, ritual, and standards which were totally opposed to the theological beliefs of Guru Nanak’s age and country”.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 83**

### **ACCORDING TO DR. MCLEOD GURU NANAK WAS A ‘SANT’**

“Must we conclude that (Guru) Nanak was a Sant? The answer will depend on the tone and color of the question. If it is a strictly neutral question of antecedents and influences the answer must be in the affirmative. Because he represents the essential concerns of the Sants we are bound to locate Guru Nanak within the Sant tradition. If, however, the question implies a lack of originality on the part of (Guru) Nanak the answer must be an emphatic negative. Plainly there is much that is profoundly original in the hymns which we find recorded under his distinctive symbol in the Adi Granth”. Book 4, page 31.

#### **Assertion contained in the Argument**

1. DM claims that Guru Nanak was a ‘Sant’ because he inherited his doctrine from the Sant tradition. (The reader should be aware that the meaning DM attaches to “antecedents and influences” is that Guru Nanak’s thought is inherited and based on the Sant tradition).
2. DM claims that the doctrinal thought of Guru Nanak was definitely original.

#### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, Guru Nanak was a ‘Sant’. He inherited his doctrines from the Sant tradition. DM also claims that Guru Nanak’s thought was definitely original.

#### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. It is rude and offensive for DM to call Guru Nanak a ‘Sant’. The reader should be aware that the meaning DM attaches to the term ‘Sant’ is not the same as the word ‘saint’ as understood by the Sikhs.
2. As we have explained in Argument No. 82, DM does not even understand what the Sant tradition is and how it came about.
3. DM indulges in double talk in this argument. In a glaring self-contradiction he claims that the doctrines of Guru Nanak are inherited as well as Guru Nanak’s own original doctrines.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 84**

### **FASHIONING A SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY OF GURU NANAK**

“The fact that Guru Nanak’s thought is not set out systematically does not mean that it is necessarily inconsistent”. Book 1, page 149.

“In (Guru) Nanak’s case the consistency is there even if it is not at once apparent. There is certainly that doctrinal tension which is inevitable in a system upholding both the gracious activity of an absolute God and the necessary participation of man endowed with free will, but the person who seeks to extract the components of Guru Nanak’s thought and to fashion with them a systematic theology does not have to decide between statements which are mutually incompatible”. Book 1, page 149.

“There is in (in the hymns of Guru Nanak) them an integrated and coherent system which no other Sant has produced...”. Book 4, page 31.

### **Assertions Made in the argument**

1. Guru Nanak’s thought is consistent, compatible.
2. Guru Nanak’s thought reflects doctrinal tension.
3. The doctrinal tension exists between the view of God as absolute and the view of man as having free will, free to choose what he may believe.
4. The doctrinal tension in Guru Nanak’s thought is not a problem for DM’s undertaking.
5. DM’s undertaking to fashion a systematic theology of Guru Nanak steers clear of the mutually incompatible, inconsistent, statements in Guru Nanak’s thought.
6. Guru Nanak’s hymns reflect an integrated and coherent system.

### **Inference Drawn from the Assertions**

According to DM, Guru Nanak’s thought is consistent, compatible. Although there are doctrinal tensions between the thought of Guru Nanak, yet DM’s effort to fashion a systematic theology encounters no difficulties because he steers clear of incompatible statements in Guru Nanak’s thought.

### **Flaw in the Argument**

DM portrays the thought of Guru Nanak as consistent / compatible and inconsistent / incompatible. He claims that Guru’s thought contains statements which are mutually incompatible. If this portrayal is not an example of self-contradiction and self-mockery on the part of DM, then what is it?

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 85**

### **DM AS UNBELIEVER AND KNOWER OF GURU’S TEACHINGS**

“I prefer to call myself an unbeliever. Sikh readers should note this carefully, for it does much to explain the kind of role I was thereafter (after acknowledging that he is an unbeliever) to adopt. Sikhism believes in God (or Vahiguru, or Akal Purakh).

I do not believe, and my lack of belief lies behind all that I have written”. Book 2, page 48.

### **And**

Note: On pages 148 – 226 of his book ‘Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion’, DM provides his understanding of the teachings of Guru Nanak.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. DM is an unbeliever.
2. Sikhism believes in God.
3. DM does not believe in God.
4. The writings of DM about Sikhism reflect his perspective as an unbeliever.
5. The teachings of Guru Nanak, described by DM, reflect his perspective as an unbeliever.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, he does not believe in God. His interpretations of the teachings of Guru Nanak reflect his perspective as an unbeliever.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. By his own admission, the teachings of Guru Nanak have no effect on DM’s unbelief in God. He maintains, however, that he understands and knows the content of Guru’s teachings, doctrines, well enough to fashion a “systematic theology” of Guru Nanak. What this means is that he claims that he understands and knows the doctrines but he does not believe in them. The question arises; does he *really* understand and know the doctrines? Or, it is that he *thinks* that he understands and knows the doctrines. Our view is that he *thinks* that he understands and knows; but truly he does not understand and know the doctrines. The proper, adequate understanding and knowledge of Truth must lead to belief in Truth, not unbelief.
2. Unlike a Sikh who approaches the Guru with humility, respect and the attitude of a student to learn from the Master, DM approaches the Guru with an attitude of arrogance and disbelief in his teachings. And, from a position of false sense of superiority, tells the Guru how his views could have been better organized. This is exactly how DM presents himself on page 5 of his book ‘Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion’. He writes, “The teachings of Guru Nanak are dispersed throughout his numerous works, but from these dispersed elements it is possible to reconstruct a coherent theology”.

3. In spite of his claim to know the teachings of Guru Nanak, he fails to understand a pivotal doctrine of Guru Nanak: Relinquish ego. Approach God and Guru in reverence and humility to receive the blessing of divine knowledge.
4. To his great loss, DM remains deprived of the Grace of God and Guru. He continues to be an unbeliever because of the dysfunction in his thinking.
5. DM applies faulty reasoning to the interpretation of teachings of Guru Nanak as we have illustrated in the analysis, earlier, of a few of his arguments related to the teachings. Here, we should point out, again, that the flawed arguments of DM regarding the teachings are not limited to the few we analyzed. There are a plenty more.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 86**

### **WHAT SETS APART A MODERNIST FROM A TRADITIONALIST?**

“At least as far as the religion of Sikhs is concerned the object of my research has certainly not been to tell Sikhs what they should believe. It is to tell inquisitive Westerners what Sikhism apparently means in terms they can understand”. Book 2, page 129.

“Many educated Sikhs share this essentially Western mode of thought. They have been educated in schools and universities that communicate information according to much the same pattern as I received and they think thereafter in terms that a New Zealander can easily share”. Book 2, page 130.

“Those who accept the standard account of Sikh history and religion normally follow the path of tradition and I suggest that they should therefore be called traditionalists”. Book 2, page 130.

“Against this view of past events history takes a firm stand. What are the sources and what evidence can be produced? Without adequate evidence to support them traditional events or beliefs must be regarded as unproven. When the evidence indicates an alternative fact or range of facts tradition should be relegated to the unlikely category. If the proven evidence clearly denies it then tradition must be discarded”. Book 2, 130.

### **Assertions in the Argument**

1. The objective of DM’s research of Sikh religion is to explain Sikhism to the Westerners.
2. The Western thought stands unique from traditionalism.
3. DM shares the Western mode of thought with Sikhs educated in the West.
4. Those who accept tradition should be called traditionalists.
5. History is opposed to tradition.
6. History identifies sources of information and the evidence that supports it.

7. The acceptance or rejection or doubtfulness of traditional accounts of events should be based on evidence.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, the objective of his research of Sikh religion is to explain it to the Westerners in the western mode of thought. The Western mode of thought is shared by Sikhs educated in the West. In contrast to the thought of Westerners or ‘modernists’, there is the thought of traditionalists. The Western historical thought is opposed to that of the traditionalists; the former lays importance to evidence, critical research, but the latter does not in accepting the validity of past events.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. As we have demonstrated in this critique of DM’s arguments, *his type of Western thought* is definitely not sound. The superiority of thought lies in its conformity to reason and the rules of logic and not in mere labeling of it as ‘Western’. If the reasoning embedded in an argument to support a viewpoint or a hypothesis is flawed, is incongruous with the rules of logic, then it ill-serves the viewpoint. It matters not whether the reasoning is offered by a Westerner or a non-Westerner.
2. DM has done great disservice to Western education and Western thought by propagating flawed arguments about the history and religion of the Sikhs.
3. DM has manifestly done a disservice, through his flawed arguments, in communicating the Sikh Faith to readers of his books, whether Sikh or ‘Westerners’.
4. The number of Sikhs educated in the West who shares his views on Sikh religion and Sikh history could not be more than a dozen or two. And, unfortunately, the truth has evaded these Sikhs regarding the pattern of reasoning used by DM in advancing his arguments. We may have exaggerated the number of Sikhs who are educated in the West and who share DM’s views, for he refers to only three in dedicating his book, ‘Sikhism’, to them. Evidently these three have imbibed DM’s views to his satisfaction, for he believes they “keep the flag flying”
5. A patently faulty belief inheres in DM’s thinking. It is that he relentlessly puts forward arguments doubting the validity of past events as though his personal biases, speculations, dogmatic assertions, and doubts are sufficient to call into question the validity of such events. He does not bring forth facts, truth, as evidence to support his arguments.
6. DM fails to understand that past events may *either* be accepted or *rejected* but not doubted. Doubt, probability, deals only with speculation and forecasting of future events. Doubting the validity of a past event is rejection of the event.

7. DM portrays himself as a modernist in contrast to traditionalists, with a connotation that traditionalists are content with ignorance while he has forged ahead progressively in ascertaining the truth about Sikh history and Sikh religion. Of course, his claim cannot be acknowledged, for his sophistic arguments are glutted with flaws.
8. DM's arguments contain nothing more than his personal opinions regarding matters of Sikh history and Sikh religion. He advances his arguments with the fervor of a dogmatist as if his opinions amount to facts.
9. DM makes his assertions with positiveness in matters of opinion. Thus he is frequently and clearly dogmatic and derogatory in making his assertions.
10. Tradition may be challenged and proven wrong by truth, by logic, by the force of facts. A modernist who demonstrates the invalidity of a tradition, in this manner, wields his tools rightly and justly. But the rejection or casting of doubt on a given tradition on the basis of illogical assertions and aggressive opinions can never be accepted as a proof of invalidation of the tradition. DM may be a modernist by title but he certainly is not one in substance, not one by the essential standards of modernism.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 87**

### **DR. MCLEOD'S STYLE OF WRITING IN HIS OWN WORDS**

“Attempts have also been made to undermine or wholly demolish what I have produced by selecting portions of what I have written and ignoring other portions that follow immediately after. These latter portions commonly modify or explicitly deny what is contained in the earlier parts. It is perhaps a stylistic feature that would have been better avoided, though it is one which is frequently used by other writers in all manner of fields. First state a case you believe to be exaggerated or patently wrong and then follow it up by an amended or contrary case. It is a style that personally I like to use...”. Book 2, page 112.

#### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. Critics have used DM's writing selectively in order to undermine or wholly demolish what he has written.
2. DM deliberately styles his writing to first assert a viewpoint and then modify it or contradict it.
3. The affirmative expression coupled with a self-contradictory expression is a style of writing used by writer of various disciplines.

#### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, his style of writing is to first make an affirmative and declaratory statement and then renege upon it. His critics have exploited this

attribute of his writing style, which is widely used by writers of various disciplines. DM maintains that the soundness of this style has eluded his critics.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. The style of writing touted by DM is not used by responsible writers of any discipline.
2. The style promotes deliberate deception; confuses and misleads the reader.
3. To assert something and to renege on it is called perjury in jurisprudence.
4. In the field of logic, assertions made under DM's style of writing are called self-contradictions or sophistry.
5. It is impossible for the same thing **to be** and **not to be** at the same time.
6. Only the sophists or paralogists indulge in the style of writing which Dr. McLeod prefers to follow.
7. In common parlance, the style of DM is called double-talk.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 88**

### **PANJA SAHIB**

“The following (the sakhi of Panja Sahib among others) may be rejected on the grounds that they are miracle stories without any features which suggest a substratum of truth”. Book 1, page 77.

“The Panja Sahib Gurdwara marks the spot where Guru Nanak is believed to have caused a spring to well up, thereby drying up another on the crest of a neighboring hill”. Book 2, page 87.

“Gurdev Singh insists that ever since he began visiting the Gurdwara *before 1932* the hand-mark was the same, recessed into the rock and worn smooth by the touch of innumerable pilgrims”. Book 2, page 166.

“Hugel described it (the Panja) as a bas-relief and the 1893-4 edition of the *Gazetteer of the Rawalpindi District* as a ‘rude representation of a hand in relief’. The same feature was again noted by G.B. Scott in 1930. It was evidently during the course of 1940 that the original representation in relief was eventually replaced by a crude intaglio cut into the rock. The edges which were at first sharp have now been worn smooth”. Book 2, pages 230-31.

### **Assertion Contained in the Argument**

1. The Panja Sahib sakhi is absolutely a fictional sakhi.
2. Panja Sahib Gurdwara commemorates the Panja Sahib sakhi.
3. Certain Westerners are witness to the fact that the Panja in the rock was attached to the rock and was not imprinted on the rock.

4. In 1940, The attached Panja was removed. It was replaced by an engraving of the Panja, below the surface of the rock.
5. Subsequently, the Sikhs smoothed over the sharp edges of the Panja.
6. Justice Gurdev Singh offers personal testimony refuting the claim of the occidentalists.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, the Panja Sahib sakhi is absolutely fictional. The Gurdwara at Panja Sahib commemorates a fictional sakhi. The modern day appearance of the Panja in the rock is the result of several deliberate actions taken by the Sikhs over time. It is not the original imprint of the hand of Guru Nanak. Several occidentalists attest to this fact while Justice Gurdev Singh refutes it in his personal testimony

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. This argument, beyond doubt, exposes DM's strong parochial leanings towards the West and Westerners. It also exposes him as a pseudo-western historian, not a true Western scholar of history.
2. DM takes the support of a couple of parochial occidentalists who show no hesitation in maligning the integrity of Sikhs.
3. DM shamelessly portrays the Sikhs as deceptive in craftily but crudely making the hand print look like the original impression.
4. DM ignores the fact that Justice Gurnam Singh, a man of integrity and a judge of a High Court of India, has personal testimony to make that the Panja in its present form existed before 1932 and not since 1940. DM deliberately ignores this fact offered by a man whose very profession required him to weigh evidence and seek the truth.
5. As an atheist (a self-proclaimed one), DM steps beyond the boundaries of his belief and comprehension to make dogmatic and derogatory judgments about the integrity of Sikhs as a people.
6. Instead of taking the fair and reasonable position of 'no comment', which his belief in atheism dictates regarding the Panja Sahib sakhi, he calls it miraculous and fictional.
7. In his narration of the Panja Sahib sakhi which DM gives on Page 87 of his book 'Discovering the Sikhs', he states Guru Nanak "simply stretched out his hand and stopped the boulder" hurled at him by Vali Qandhari. The implication in his statement is that Guru Nanak performed a miracle. This is false because all Sikh Gurus rejected the performance of miracles.
8. Because of his unbelief in God and Godly matters, being a self-proclaimed atheist, DM manifestly fails to understand the idea that the extra-ordinary event, which he names as a miracle, was not *caused* by the Guru but it *happened* at the Will of God to avert injury to the Guru and to quench the thirst of Guru's companion, Bhai Mardana. The springs that issued forth at

that moment have since ‘quenched’ the thirst of countless millions of inhabitants of the Panaj Sahib area.

9. The Gurdwara at Panja Sahib commemorates a factual event. Sikhs do not fictionalize events related to their Gurus. It behooves DM to retract his derogatory remarks about the ethical standards of Sikhs.
10. We would like to cite personal testimony, from two recent visits to Panja Sahib, that the inhabitants of the area including Moslems believe in the sakhi and regard the Gurdwara and the tomb of Vali Qandhari on the hill with great reverence. We (my wife and I) visited the tomb. The deliberate modifications rendered to the Panja, which DM alleges, are the farthest from the minds and memories of inhabitants of the area.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 89**

### **TRAVELS OF GURU NANAK**

“Such a conclusion should not, of course, imply that Guru Nanak never traveled. All sources agree that he did and tradition which emerged within a century of his death could hardly have been mistaken in a general issue of such importance. This we can certainly accept, and we may also assume that the period of his travels probably covered the first two decades of the sixteenth century”. Book 1, page 145.

“The forth and fifth decades (of Guru Nanak’s life) are the period of his travels in and possibly beyond India”. Book 1, page 145.

“While in Sultanpur he experienced a sense of divine call and it was evidently in response to this that he began a period of traveling in and perhaps beyond India, accompanied for at least some of the time by a bard named (Bhai) Mardana”. Book 1, page 146.

#### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. DM accepts that Guru Nanak traveled in India.
2. He is not certain that the Guru traveled beyond India.
3. Bhai Mardana accompanied Guru Nanak during some of his travels in the fourth and fifth decades of Guru’s life.

#### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, Guru Nanak traveled during the fourth and fifth decades of his life, accompanied by Bhai Mardana for some of his travels. He accepts that Guru Nanak traveled in India. But he is less than certain about Guru’s travels beyond India.

#### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM claims that he doubts Guru Nanak traveled outside of India. However, in spite of this a-priori position of doubt, he has ventured into passing numerous judgments about Guru Nanak's visits to foreign lands. This is a dishonest and an illogical position he puts himself in.
2. Earlier in this critique of DM's arguments, we have pointed out the flaws in reasoning DM exercises to develop and conclude his arguments about Guru Nanak's visits to Mecca and Medina, Baghdad, and Assam.
3. DM has labeled certain of Guru Nanak's visits in and outside of India as follows:
  - Visit to Iran: Improbable. (See pages 84, Book 1).
  - Visit to Ceylon: Rejected. (See pages 114 - 117, Book 1).
  - Visit to Mecca and Medina: Highly improbable. (See pages 122 - 125, Book 1).
  - Visit to Baghdad: Remotely possible. (See pages 125 – 132, Book 1).
  - Visit to Assam: Improbable / unacceptable. (see pages 110 – 112, Book 1).
  - Visit to Dacca, Bengal: Rejected. (See pages 112 and 113, Book 1).
  - Visit to Mount Sumer: Rejected. (See pages 119 – 122, Book 1).

There are numerous flaws in DM's reasoning in support of his arguments rejecting Guru Nanak's visits to Ceylon, Dacca and Mount Sumer. All he offers are his personal speculations, biases, and doubts which he uses to reject the sakhis about visits to these places.

4. DM, throughout his book 'Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion', has asserted a totally untenable position. He treats events of the past as if these are yet to happen in the future. This present argument which appears towards the end of his book illustrates the same position.

Regarding the occurrence of an event of the past, he fails to understand that there are only two possibilities. Either the event did occur or it did not occur. The probability that an event of the past occurred is either one or zero. And the same is true regarding the probability that an event of the past did not occur. Undoubtedly, the probability in this case is also either one or zero. It is illogical to assign a probability of other than one or zero to any event of the past.

The assignment of doubt, or probability other than zero or one, can pertain only to events of the future. Having failed to understand this axiom, truth has consistently evaded DM while arguing about the events of Guru Nanak's life. Essentially, what he has done is to advance arguments and assign levels of doubt to the events of Guru's life on the basis of his personal speculations, biases and doubts. He fails to understand that his biases and doubts do not

change the fact that a particular event of Guru Nanak's life did happen. As he does, it is patently absurd of DM to label events, sakhis, of Guru Nanak's life as probable, very probable, improbable, highly improbable, possible, remotely possible etc. Rationally, he has only one choice to make with respect to any sakhi about Guru Nanak's life. Either he accepts the sakhi or he rejects it. There is, rationally speaking, nothing other than choosing between rejection and acceptance for anyone who critiques the narration of any event of the past.

5. An event of the past, related to an individual who is no more, cannot be replicated. Hence the validity of such an event cannot be empirically verified. The validity of occurrence of such an event may either be accepted on face value, on faith, or verified by incontrovertible evidence. Similarly, the validity of occurrence of a past event may be rejected by an arbitrary choice or verified by incontrovertible evidence, evidence beyond all reasonable doubt. DM's arguments rejecting certain events of Guru Nanak's life, such as his visits to Mecca, Medina, Baghdad and other places consistently fall way short of the required incontrovertible evidence. Typically he resorts to assigning doubt levels to the validity of occurrence of events of Guru Nanak's life. He assigns doubt levels such as probable, highly probable, improbable, and highly improbable and many more doubt levels to the events. This manner of assigning doubts to past events is absurd in view of the rationale we offer above. DM, irrationally, expects the readers to accept his personal speculations, biases and doubts in lieu of incontrovertible evidence to call into question the validity of sakhis about Guru Nanak's life.

6. DM rejects a large number of sakhis, calling them as 'wonder stories', 'miracle stories', and 'fictional accounts'. If he was to exercise due honesty and humility towards the faithful, then his proper response, as a self-professed atheist, would have been to refrain from making any comments about those sakhis.

7. DM fails to understand that the sakhis, which he rejects by dispute, intellectual squabble, only manifest his biases and doubts. The authenticity of a given sakhi, believed to be true by millions of Sikhs, is not made unauthentic by one individual concocting a certain flawed argument against the validity of the sakhi.

8. He consistently fails to marshal *facts* to support his arguments in rejecting or doubting the events of Guru Nanak's life.

### **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 90**

#### **SIKH COMMUNITY OF GURU NANAK'S TIME**

"The community that gathered around Guru Nanak was in no fundamental way different from other such communities which formed in India before, during and after his time". Book 5, page xxvii.

"The combination of piety and practical activity which Guru Nanak manifested in his own life he bequeathed to his followers and it remains characteristic of many who own him as Guru today". Book 1, page 232.

“By the time he died Guru Nanak had obviously gathered many disciples and within this following his numerous compositions were preserved”. Book 1, page 5.

### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. In the context of contemporary communities of Guru Nanak’s time no perceptible distinctions could be discerned about the community that gathered around Guru Nanak
2. Guru Nanak’s doctrines have been believed and practiced continuously by his Sikhs since the time the doctrines were first taught by the Guru.
3. The first followers of Guru Nanak preserved his teachings and transmitted these to the next generation.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, the disciples of Guru Nanak, the Sikh community of the time of Guru Nanak, was not distinctive from other communities around it. However, he maintains that Guru’s teachings were believed and practiced by his earliest disciples. These teachings were faithfully preserved and transmitted to the next generation by the Sikhs of Guru Nanak’s time.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. DM has made a flagrant self-contradiction in the above argument. He claims that the Sikhs of Guru Nanak’s time participated in his “piety and practical activity”. They believed, practiced and transmitted the *distinctive teachings* of Guru Nanak. And yet DM asserts that those Sikhs were no different from the other contemporary communities.
2. DM proudly includes a comment by Khushwant Singh on the cover his book ‘Sikhs of the Khalsa, A History of Khalsa Rahit’. It states, “McLeod knows much more about Sikhism than anyone else in the world”. Astonishingly, however, DM believes that the Sikh community of Guru Nanak’s time and of the time after Guru’s death “was in no fundamental way different than other communities of India”. This comment, from our viewpoint, qualifies him not as the foremost knower of Sikhism but as just the opposite of it. Contrary to DM’s view, the beliefs and practice of Sikh community were and continue to be strikingly different than the beliefs and practices of other communities. Sikhism is unique in its faith, heritage and history!

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 91**

### **IS DR. MCLEOD'S WORK NOXIOUS AND CORRUPTING?**

“Whether one is a believer or not the risk of causing grievous offence to those who are believers is in only too obvious...I have certainly aroused these very feelings and for a number of years I was demonized by a section of the Sikh Panth”. Book 2, page 131.

“My work is widely regarded as tainted and few Sikhs want to share in that reputation. There are, of course, others again who are implacable in their opposition”. Book 2, page 212.

“Guru Gobind Singh, they (Namdharis) believe, lived his later life in secret as Baba Ajapal Singh and personally passed the office of Guru on to Balak Singh before dying in 1812 at the age of 146”. Book 5, page 191.

“The historical evidence enables us to affirm categorically that in Nander Guru Gobind Singh repeated in a more dramatic way the stratagem which he had earlier used when escaping from Chamkaur. It is clear from the evidence that the Guru did not die in Nander but that he was able by means of a ruse, to escape under cover of darkness....” Book 6, page 127.

#### **Assertions Made in the Argument**

1. By virtue of the style and content of his writings about Sikh history and Sikh Religion and the grievous offence felt by the Sikhs, DM has been demonized by the Sikhs.
2. The Namdhari belief, stated by DM on behalf of the sect, about how long Guru Gobind Singh lived, where he died, who he bequeathed as the next Guru, is in opposition to the belief of Sikhs whose Gurus are from Guru Nanak to Guru Granth Sahib.

#### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, there is an intense opposition by Sikhs to his views expressed in his books on Sikh history and Sikh religion. He offers to the reader a version of an alleged belief of the Namdhari sect, about Guru Gobind Singh.

#### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. Based on the context from which we have quoted DM, he appears to believe that he has been treated harshly and unfairly by the Sikhs because of what he has written about them. The criticism may have been harsh

but in most cases it definitely is not undeserved. The critics of his writings have taken different tacks in reviewing his views. We have taken the approach of exposing the sophistry embedded in his arguments. In this undertaking, we too have passed certain strong but justifiable remarks about his arguments.

2. The intemperance that DM has exercised in his writings is illustrated in the above quote in which he unhesitatingly states a most vulgar, outrageous and blasphemous viewpoint about Guru Gobind Singh. He may not agree with the viewpoint but he uses no discretion to avoid giving the impression that he in fact agrees with the viewpoint.
3. It is not possible to tell whether DM agrees with this viewpoint because of the way he couches it. Based on the context from which the above quote has been taken, it is also not possible to tell whether it is indeed Namdhari viewpoint. DM has used an unusual and exceedingly ambiguous format of 'Notes' disallowing the identification of the holder of the viewpoint.
4. In his arguments, about Sikh history and Sikh religion we have reviewed so far, he has taken full liberty to cast doubt on the validity of numerous Sikh traditions. Strangely, however, he makes no skeptic remarks whatsoever about the alleged Namdhari viewpoint.
5. Is this avoidance of making skeptic remarks deliberate? If so, then it is definitely an attempt at arousing hostile feelings between the Sikhs and Namdharis.
6. In his remarks about who is a Sikh? DM deliberately erodes the distinctions between an individual who is a Sikh of Guru Nanak-Guru Gobind Singh and who is not. The reader is referred to pages 60-81 of DM's book 'The Sikhs' for an understanding of what we mean. In the same book on page 81, he writes, "Changing circumstances will ensure that the question "Who is a Sikh? must forever be asked and never definitely answered".
7. If the Sikhs were to believe in DM's verdict, then without doubt, they will instantaneously lose their identity as Sikhs; and will have to wait forever for its reemergence. In the meantime they might as well join the ranks of unbelievers and give DM company.
8. At the end of the day what truly matters for an author is to express truth by focusing on fairness and the language of logic. Sadly, for decades, Dr. McLeod has expended his dubitative, speculative, imaginative, conceptual and assertive energies in the service of sophistic arguments. He creates illusions of valid statements, when they are flawed, about Sikh history and Sikh religion. If he had expended the same energies in service of expressing the truth, with fairness and the language of logic, about Sikh history and Sikh religion, then we believe he would have made two significant accomplishments. First, he would have acquired an accurate understanding of the Sikh history and Sikh religion. Secondly, he would have made a significant contribution towards properly

acquainting others about Sikh history and Sikh religion. *This would not have gone unrecognized or unappreciated by the Sikh community.*

9. DM would like the Sikhs to believe that he understands and appreciates their faith and has similar regard for the Sikh community. On page 213 of his book 'Discovering the Sikhs, Autobiography of a Historian', DM writes, "The Punjab I regard as my second home and always I shall remain immeasurably indebted to the people of the Panth". On the cover of one of his books, he depicts a Nihang Singh, and a picture of Harmandar Sahib, Amritsar on the cover of another. However, the above cannot be regarded anything other than vain and insincere attempts on the part of DM to create a favorable impression in the mind of the reader. On the back cover of his book 'Guru Nanak and the Sikh religion', he has included certain obnoxious remarks credited to someone at Times Literary Supplement. This individual calls the sakhis About Guru Nanak's life as "the turgid and sometime puerile fables".
10. The arguments, from DM's books that we have quoted and analyzed, illustrate his true views about the faith of Sikhs. His views are disrespectful and disparaging. He attacks the beliefs and traditions of the Sikhs. He categorizes the accounts related to many historic Gurdwaras as fictional and wonder stories. He alleges that Guru Nanak did not travel to certain places within and outside of India. He asserts that visits of Guru Nanak to certain places and his discourses with certain individuals there, which Sikhs for generations have reverentially held to be true, are doubtful or plainly false, fictitious. Given these facts, it would not be an exaggeration to categorize DM as a Tartuffe. He promulges views to create the images of his appreciation of Sikh symbols, Sikh institutions and Sikh community, without a genuine regard for any one of them. He is a dealer of confusion. His views are that of a destructionist towards the beliefs of Sikhs.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 92**

### **DID CERTAIN SIKH GURUS CHANGE THE 'DOCTRINES AND PRACTICE' ORIGINATED BY GURU NANAK?**

"The institution of the Khalsa, with its conspicuous external symbols, also raises the question of how its creation could possibly be reconciled with Guru Nanak's adamant insistence that external features must necessarily stand squarely in the way of liberation through the divine Name". Book 5, page 55.

“Decisions attributed to the third Guru (Guru Amar Das) may look suspiciously like the kind of thing that (Guru) Nanak abandoned and roundly condemned. They include the digging of a sacred well (baoli) in the Guru’s village of Goindval to serve as a place of pilgrimage for Sikhs. They also include the introduction of particular festival days and the compiling of a collection which was later to become a sacred scripture. ...Would (Guru) Nanak, with his strong emphasis on interiority, have permitted this to occur?”. Book 5, page 24.

“Two features probably account for the nature of the change (Guru Hargobind wearing two swords, one of Miri and the other of Piri). The first is that the Panth had, in a sense, always been armed. The majority of its members were rural folk, predominantly Jat; and the Jats would be entirely accustomed to bearing arms”. BOOK 5, page 36.

“It is here (The Jat followers of the Guru accustomed to bearing arms) that the personality of the sixth Guru is important, and this constitutes the second feature”. Book 5, page 36.

### **And**

**Note:** DM, in his various books, repeatedly harps on the tune that radical changes were introduced into the theology of Guru Nanak by later Gurus of Sikhs. (The exact quotes are too many to reproduce here). According to him these changes represented doctrinal features that were distinctive from the theology of Guru Nanak.

### **Assertion Made in the Argument**

1. External symbols of the Khalsa, introduced by Guru Gobind Singh, are opposed to the doctrine of Guru Nanak.
2. Certain of Guru Amar Das’s actions are similar to the ones which Guru Nanak condemned in his life time.
3. The tradition of Jats to bear arms and the personality of Guru Hargobind coalesced to constitute a radical departure from the beliefs and practices preached and lived by the earlier Gurus.

### **Inference Drawn from the Argument**

According to DM, certain actions of Guru Amar Das, Guru Hargobind and Guru Gobind Singh are opposed to the teachings of Guru Nanak.

### **Flaws in the Argument**

1. The exercise of doubt and speculation in DM’s way of thinking is astonishingly extreme. This exercise may be due to nefarious intentions, as many Sikhs have claimed, to show contradictions in the Sikh Faith and to

unsettle the sense the Sikhs have about their Gurus and their own identity. The exercise may also be to deliberately misrepresent the Sikh Faith to non-Sikhs. If the above is true, then what does account for such perversion? The answer can only be speculated about. The first answer is that DM is a self-proclaimed atheist and perversely he has taken upon himself to belittle and malign the faith of believers, the Sikhs. The second possible answer is that he still, at heart, is a Christian and as a pervert Christian cannot tolerate the truth about Sikh Faith. The Christians, who are unbiased, do not engage in similar practice.

2. If it is true that DM is neither a pervert atheist nor a pervert Christian, then the explanation for his extreme and untenable views must lie in the fact that his skeptical and speculative proclivities prohibit him to think in a rational manner.
3. Contrary to DM's assertion, the doctrinal content and its practice in Sikh Faith continues to sustain its original shape, given by Guru Nanak. The changing times have not and will not change this fact.
4. The changed circumstances that the Gurus faced were changed by the Gurus to sustain the original doctrines and their practice by the faithful.
5. When there was the challenge of persecution and barbarism by the Mughals, the Gurus, in protection of the original doctrines and their practice, changed the prevailing and threatening circumstance to include in the circumstance a valiant and unbending resistance. The circumstance of Mughal persecution and barbarism demanded submission on the part of Gurus and their Sikhs. This was not to happen and did not happen. The history is witness to this fact.
6. DM fails to understand that the construction of 'Baoli' at Goindval or the construction of Sarovar at Amritsar or the creation of Khalsa had the direct involvement of Gurus. The Gurus presided over such events. Guru Granth Sahib, the present Guru of the Sikhs, continues to preside at Goindval Sahib, Amritsar Sahib, and all other historical places. The Guru, at the present time, also presides over the Sikh Panth. As a critical distinction, does DM not witness Guru Granth Sahib presiding at Sikh Tiraths (the Gurdwaras), unlike the Hindu Tiraths?
7. The claim of DM regarding the Jats lending their helping hand to the Gurus is totally spurious. The Jats served, not save the Gurus!
8. The Jats or non-Jats of bygone times or of the modern time have sought the favor and guidance of the Guru and not the other way around.
9. The subsequent Gurus did not change the doctrines and practice originated by Guru Nanak to adapt to the contemporary circumstances.
10. The Gurus adapted the contemporary circumstances to the doctrines and the practice originated by Guru Nanak.

### **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 93**

#### **WHO IS A SIKH, A KHALSA; AND WHAT IS SIKH PANTH?**

The identity of a Sikh, a Khalsa and Sikh Panth are the three issues that Dr. McLeod discusses with sustained interest in his various books. The gist of his views is summed up easily. He blurs the definitions of the three identities. According to him there are varieties of Sikhs; there are varieties of Khalsa; and there are varieties of sects within the Sikh Panth.

The interested reader is referred to Dr. McLeod's book 'The Sikhs: History, Religion, and Society' for his extensive treatment of the identity of a Sikh and a Khalsa. For an extended treatment of Sikh Panth, Dr. McLeod's book 'Sikhism' may be consulted.

### **Flaw in DM'S Argument**

We believe Dr. McLeod is wrong in construing that there are varieties of Sikhs, and Khalsa; and that there are varieties of sects within the Sikh Panth. His explanations of the three identities serve to create confusion among the Sikhs and non-Sikhs.

### **We Maintain the Following**

**Sikh** is an individual who subscribes to the teachings of Sikh Gurus, from Guru Nanak to Guru Granth Sahib; who bows before the Gurus, pays obeisance to the Gurus, reveres the Gurus; who is devoted to the Gurus; who seeks inspiration from the noble deeds and teachings of Sikh Gurus; who strives to act in conformity of the noble deeds and teachings of Gurus; who recognizes Guru Granth Sahib as his or her contemporary Guru; who 'recognizes and believes' in no other Guru besides the Sikh Gurus.

**Khalsa** is a Sikh who has been baptized according to the tradition and instructions prescribed by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699 A. D

**Sikh Panth** is composed of all Sikhs and the Khalsa, defined above. The Sikh Panth also includes children who are too young to make an independent judgment about their affiliation to the Panth.

**Who is a True Sikh or a True Khalsa?** The answer to this question is for the Guru to know who is aware of the inner self of the Sikh and of the Khalsa. The genuineness of being a Sikh or Khalsa of the Guru is also measured, determined, by the closeness of a Sikh or a baptized Sikh to his Guru. The closeness is determined by the inward reflection of the individual on his or her own state of mind in relation to the teachings, precepts of the Guru.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 94**

### **DR. MCLEOD'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS TRANSCENDENTAL EVENTS**

Dr. McLeod treats the accounts of *unique* events related to the lives of Sikh Gurus as *wonder stories* and *miracles*. Furthermore, he equates such descriptions to be the outcomes of imagination, without any connection with the reality. He also calls the descriptions as fictions. And he rejects all such metaphysical events.

### **Flaws in DM's Argument**

1. In so far as his personal belief or experience is concerned, DM is right in calling the *unique events*, of the lives of Sikh Gurus or Bhagats ( whose verses are included in Guru Granth Sahib), as miracles. However, he is wrong in projecting his personal bias to the belief and experience of those who disagree with him. Without doubt, there are those who have no problem in accepting that the referenced transcendental, metaphysical, events did happen.
2. DM's argument suffers from another misconception. Whenever DM categorizes an event as a miraculous event, he without fail imputes to the event a special characteristic. He treats the event as if it resulted from the *deliberate action* of the Guru or Bhagat. Thus the genesis of the unique event, according to DM, lies in the causative and deliberate action on the part of the Guru or the Bhagat. This is a false contention. Sikh Gurus and the Bhagats (whose compositions are included in Guru Granth Sahib) were against the performance of miracles.
3. So what accounts for the occurrence of unique events? The answer to this question lies in many anecdotes recorded in Guru Granth Sahib. Akal Purkh, God, Wills the occurrences of unique events which defy natural laws. This He does so to protect, or to support, or to exalt his devotees, or to preserve their reputation and honor. Of course, DM will disagree with all of this. But this is understandable, for he maintains that he is an atheist, an unbeliever.
4. In contrast to DM, the believers contend that the transcendental events caused by God are only symptomatic of the scope of His Will which brought the wondrous universe into existence.

## **SOPHISTIC ARGUMENT NO. 95**

### **DOES DR. MCLEOD KNOW AND EXPERIENCE WHAT SIKHS DO KNOW AND EXPERIENCE AS BELIEVERS?**

1. No, Dr. McLeod does not know and experience what Sikhs do know and experience as believers.
2. By self-proclamation, Dr. McLeod is an 'unbeliever'. He does not believe in God. Therefore he is incapable of knowing and experiencing what Sikhs know and experience as believers. Without possessing the knowledge and

experience of believing Sikhs, he is ill-suited to comment upon the history and religion of the believers.

3. DM is like a sieve turned into a serving spoon. What applies to a serving spoon applies to DM. The serving spoon cannot smell food; it cannot taste it; it cannot ingest it; without digestion, it cannot get nourishment from it. In the manner a serving spoon does not benefit from food, DM too does not benefit from the belief of Sikhs in God. He was an unbeliever before his study of Sikh Religion and he remained an unbeliever after his study of Sikh Religion.
4. DM is unable to dispense his beliefs convincingly to others about Sikh history and religion because of the holes in his serving spoon. While the serving spoon refers to his unbelief, the holes refer to the numerous flaws in his arguments by which he attempts to serve his assertions about the history and religion of Sikhs to others. His prescriptions of doubt and confusion which he creates by his sophistry have been exposed and rejected in our analysis.
5. The sophistry and the unbelief of Dr. McLeod are the two primary reasons why his arguments, contrary to his predictions, will have no effect upon the Sikhs in persuading them to relinquish their 'belief and respect' towards their heritage.
6. The traditions connected with the Gurdwaras, which DM mocks at, are true. In case an element of transcendental or of unique quality is connected with certain traditions, such as the tradition of Panja Sahib, the Sikhs have no problem in accepting the unique events.
7. The Sikhs believe in God who creates the universe; who sustains it; and who destroys it. What then is not possible for God to do? DM asserts that God could not have stopped a boulder hurled towards Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana by Vali Kandahari at Hasan Abdal (Panja Sahib). He claims that the handprint on the boulder is not of Guru Nanak. We disagree with DM, for we believe that the natural laws have been made by God and He supersedes these when He so Wills.
8. DM's mind is closed towards God by his own pronouncement. It is then irrational for him to engage his intellect into Godly matters.

## **CONCLUSION**

After reviewing the arguments from Dr. McLeod's six books: 'Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion', 'Discovering the Sikhs, Autobiography of a Historian', 'Sikhs of the Khalsa', 'The Sikhs: History, Religion, and Society', 'Sikhism', and 'Textual Sources for the Study of Sikhism', we are in a position to summarize the characteristics and flaws of his arguments. It should be pointed out again, as has been done in the introduction to this critique, that the arguments we have reviewed are not the only ones that are defective in Dr. McLeod's books. There are indeed many more in the same books we have reviewed. Out of the ninety two (95) topics

of sophistic arguments reviewed in this critique, how many flaws have we found? The answer is we have identified and described in excess of three hundred (300) flaws!

There is higher incidence of flaws in his arguments on topics other than the teachings of Guru Nanak. What may be the reason for this disparity? One explanation is that Dr. McLeod has less wiggle room to apply the tools of his specialty of sophistry to the teachings. Here he is constrained from wielding speculation, imagination, skepticism, personal bias and assertiveness with the same ease and freedom that he does in the case of other topics. Thus he is less able to create illusions of valid statements. Lesser the number of illusory arguments, lesser is the number of flaws.

As an overall impression of the style of Dr. McLeod's writing, we have found that he advances his arguments in an eristic manner. He argufies pertinaciously and pugnaciously. His excessive aggressiveness in advancing his arguments perhaps is one of the main reasons why he overlooks the flaws of his reasoning. He touts his conjectural statements creating illusions of valid statements. However, these illusions fall apart upon close scrutiny. The true worth of his arguments thus comes to light. Nevertheless, it should be acknowledged that Dr. McLeod seems to succeed in enchanting the hearts of his admirers regarding the style of his disputation.

To gain respectability in Sikh scholarly circles, he mesmerizes his audience by putting forth fanciful notions. In his essay published in 'Punjab Past and Present, Essays in Honor of Dr. Ganda Singh', Edited by Dr. Harbans Singh, and published by Punjabi University, Patiala in 1976, Dr. McLeod takes his sophistry to new heights but commits a mega self-contradiction.

With regard to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Dr. McLeod asserts, "The most cursory survey of the geography of the (Punjab) area, of its known history, and its social structure will indicate the vast extent of the trade which must have passed through the Punjab, and also of the considerable amount which must have been conducted within it". Having made this pronouncement, he cannot escape certain acknowledgements that follow from his assertion. These include: 1) Existence in Punjab of financial investments by traders. 2) Existence of sophisticated procedures related to the purchase and sale of goods. 3) Existence of the means of transporting the goods to short and long distances. 4) Existence of small, medium and large scale mercantile enterprises. 5) Existence of traders who dealt in consumer goods that were needs-based. 6) Incidents of difficulties and dangers faced by the traders. 7) Relationships of the rulers of the time with traders. Directly deduced from his assertion, these and other related factors were very much part of the trade scene in Punjab during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

However, Dr. McLeod contends in his essay that needed evidence to support such an economic activity ('investments and mechanics of trade') is missing. This

contention is like claiming, ‘the sun is shining all over in the meadow but there is no evidence to show that there is sunlight and that there is no cloud cover’. Given the fact that the sun is shining all over the meadow, what other evidence is needed to confirm the presence of sunlight? Dr. McLeod misses to notice the glaring self-contradiction in his assertions about trade in Punjab during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

As he develops his argument in this essay about the lack of evidence regarding investment and mechanics of trade, he resorts to the use of Holy Sikh Scriptures and janam-sakhi literature to document and exemplify the small, medium-size and large scale economic activities plus the prevailing means of transportation of economic goods. This action is not only foolish but it is evidently aimed at enchanting his receptive audience with a clever but an outlandish notion.

As a sophist, Dr. McLeod asserts his opinions to signify expertness in many disciplines. Without a hint of humility, he advances his arguments on Sikh History, Sikh Religion, Sikh Hagiography, Historiography, Sikh Scriptures, Theism, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Sufism, and the features of Nath, Yoga and Sant Traditions.

In contrast to the laudations of Dr. McLeod’s arguments by his admirers and the rebuttals by his critics, we have offered a different perspective on his arguments. To those who admire or loathe Dr. McLeod’s arguments, we offer the fruits of our attempt at dialectical analysis that exposes the quality of reasoning in his arguments. The flaws thus uncovered from his arguments persuade us to make the following judgment.

We recognize Dr. McLeod’s fine achievement in learning the Punjabi language well enough to translate the compositions he quotes from Guru Granth Sahib. Of course, we are assuming that the translations are his own. In contrast to this, we are unable to accord the same appreciation to his arguments about Sikh History and Sikh Religion. His arguments are bereft with flaws. We find that his arguments are contaminated with confusion, inconsistencies, and self-contradictions. The abundance of such flaws makes it impossible to decipher the points of his arguments. One is left perplexed as to what Dr. McLeod really wants to establish by his arguments. What may appear to him as precise and clear assertions, in the argument he makes, turn out to be confused and unreliable statements when the argument is subjected to dialectical analysis.

In a nutshell, he rejects numerous sakhis in their entirety about Guru Nanak’s life and in the case of many other sakhis, he rejects certain elements. This he does by employing faulty reasoning. He also has misinterpreted many of Guru’s teachings using faulty reasoning.

Dr. McLeod imputes to himself an august status as a Westerner, as an historian, and as a Western historian. He refers to this status repeatedly in his writings about

Sikh History and Sikh Religion, about Guru Nanak's life and his teachings. Undoubtedly, he is proud of his background, which is understandable. However, he seems to insinuate more than this. It appears that he would like us to believe that his background puts him at a unique pedestal from where he is able to observe the truth about Guru Nanak's life and teachings better than those of the Eastern background. If the above is what he believes in, then clearly it is a hollow claim. In the preceding critique, we have repeatedly demonstrated the invalidity of his views by systematically uncovering the flaws in his wide-ranging arguments.

On pages 130 and 131 of his book 'Discovering the Sikhs', Dr. McLeod traces the source of his skepticism. He claims that it derives from 'Enlightenment' – a philosophical movement of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. He claims to have used the rationalist approach in studying past events, an approach in which reason guides the study. He calls this approach the approach of Western historians. He contrasts this approach with the approach of traditionalists and claims that the traditionalists do not use reason in describing events of the past. Ironically, Dr. McLeod debases the very tool that he values by advancing arguments that are replete with faulty reasoning. Yes, he leaves no doubt about his dedication to one aspect of rationalism – he questions, he doubts every aspect of tradition. But he fails in his pursuit of the second aspect of rationalism--the use of *sound and flawless reasoning* to advance arguments, to sustain doubts, to answer questions, to provide facts, and to reach sound conclusions.

What accounts for the dilemma that there are those who spare no words in praise of Dr. McLeod's writings and there are those who are vehemently opposed to the views of Dr. McLeod regarding Sikh history and Sikh religion? Included in both of the positions are reputed scholars and writers. Based on our findings from the analysis of Dr. McLeod's arguments, we offer the following explanation.

Dr. McLeod is extremely well versed in the skills of sophistry. Following in the tradition of sophists of Socrates' time, Dr. McLeod ranks high among the modern day sophists. He is assertive. He is persuasive. He has an uncanny ability to create illusions, making his opinions and biases appear like logically sound statements. It is no wonder that his arguments create either instant admiration or instant repulsion in the minds of those who do not take the trouble of analyzing his arguments and the assertions he makes in the arguments. We claim to have carefully and dispassionately done that and we believe that it is a valid claim. The flaws exposed in this critique of Dr. McLeod's arguments are offered to the readers for their reasoned evaluation. It is hoped that both the admirers and those who loathe Dr. McLeod's views would dispassionately read the flaws we have exposed painstakingly.

Is Dr. McLeod a sophist? Does he engage in fallacious arguments being aware of the unsoundness of his arguments? Or, is he a paralogist who engages in fallacious arguments being unaware of the unsoundness of his arguments? Is he deceived by his own fallacious arguments? An exact answer to these questions can only come

from him. As has been the case in our critique, we believe he is a sophist. He relentlessly creates doubts and confusion to mislead the readers by his arguments. He misinterprets and misrepresents various aspects of Sikh history and Sikh religion.

We hope that we have accomplished a fair analysis of Dr. McLeod's arguments. It is also hoped that he would revisit his various arguments and improve upon them to remove the flaws that have been exposed. If he was to do this, then he would likely reap a better understanding of Sikh Religion and Sikh History. The humility of a true scholar and humility towards the Guru to learn about his life and teachings would likely change him from an 'unbeliever' to a 'believer'. We are of the opinion that his lack of belief in God and the lack of humility towards God and Sikh Gurus are two of the most important reasons why he did not personally benefit from the teachings of Guru Nanak. It is amazing that, in the chapter on 'The Teachings of Guru Nanak' in his book 'Guru Nanak and the Sikh religion', the topic of 'humility' completely escaped his notice in describing Guru Nanak's teachings.

It is unfortunate that certain individuals in the academic world continue to bolster Dr. McLeod's paralogism rather than encourage him to follow the rules of logic in his reasoning. N. Gerald Barrier, in his forward to Dr. McLeod's book 'Discovering the Sikhs', notes: "...the extensive scholarly record as well as the personal honesty and commitment exemplified by Hew McLeod constitute an important standard for Western and Sikh interpretation of tradition, history, values, and practice". It is a conundrum that Mr. Barrier did not observe the flaws, in Dr. McLeod's reasoning, in the arguments we have analyzed in this critique. The truth must not be treated lightly, or with bias and one-sidedness. Self-criticism followed by self-correction is better than finding solace in unfair and unjust criticism of others. According to Socrates, "The next best thing to a man being just is that he should become just".

It seems proper to conclude this book by quoting Plato from his 'Gorgias'. The statement appears, on page 294, in '*Great Books of the Western world*', by Robert Maynard Hutchins, Editor in Chief. This volume was published by the University of Chicago in 1952, by arrangements with the Oxford University Press and the Cambridge University Press.

*"Let us, then, take the argument as our guide, which has revealed to us that the best way of life is to practise justice and every virtue (Shubh Karam -- noble deeds) in life and death. This way let us go; and in this exhort all men to follow, not in the way to which you trust and in which you exhort me to follow you; for that way, Callicles, is nothing worth".*

Dr. McLeod has expended a sustained effort in an obvious attempt to unsettle the love, devotion and reverence of Sikhs towards the life events and teachings of Sikh Gurus. He has used 'doubt' and 'sophistry' as the mainstay of his effort. We have

attempted to counter his onslaught by exposing the flaws in the schema of ‘doubt and sophistry’ he wields in his arguments. ‘Doubt’ destroyed his own belief in Christianity. Would his ‘doubt’ and ‘confusion-creating’ inflict the same on the faith of some Sikhs? We think not; if they read this exposure of his doubt-laced sophistic arguments.

We may also be permitted to make another modest claim. The dialectical analysis, we have used in exposing the flaws hidden in the sophistic arguments of Dr. McLeod, may be effectively used by anyone interested in exposing the flaws in sophistic arguments. Conversely, dialectical analysis of arguments may also be used to establish conformity with the rules of logic and the lack of specious reasoning on the part of an arguer.

All what is required is to judicially and exactly extract the elements or assertions that are contained in an argument; to accurately infer from the assertions, i.e., derive the meaning; and to catch the flaws as these jump out of the assertions and the inference. Of course, a reasonable knowledge of the subject matter being analyzed is needed. Equally important is the need to become familiar with what the arguer says not just at one spot of his writing about a given topic but at various points in a given book and in other books he may have authored. Would the up-and-coming, and seasoned Sikh scholars undertake the task of confronting misrepresentations and misrepresentations of Sikh history and Sikh religion? Would they logically, sagaciously, truthfully and confidently put forth their own descriptions of Sikhism? We hope and pray so.

### **Recommendatory Comments to Sikh Panth**

As a result of the critique of Dr. McLeod’s arguments, we would like to recommend and appeal to the Sikh community to encourage its saint-scholars, the believers among the learned, to undertake the task of thoroughly authenticating the available information about Guru Nanak’s life. This can be accomplished by painstakingly studying and reconciling all of the valuable source material available in the form of janam-sakhis, Bhai Gurdas’s Vars, comments of later Gurus, compositions in Guru Granth sahib, many earlier and modern commentaries on the source material, and oral history related to each Gurdwara built in memory of Guru Ji’s visit. This approach would result in an authenticated and harmoniously integrated version of the events. The version should include the places visited by Guru Nanak, time frame of each visit, who Guru Ji met at each of the places he visited, and what was said by him in relating the Truth to the individuals he met .

There seems to be a definite need for this undertaking in the context of controversy and untruth that is being propagated, unwittingly or deliberately, about the life events of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. The products of such an undertaking would be of immense value to the present and future generations of Sikhs. *These products would also enlighten non-Sikhs who are interested to learn about the Sikh Faith.*

The Sikh scholars who engage in the suggested effort should share their work, their manuscripts, for comments with contemporary Sikh saint-scholars ('Sadhus', 'Braham-Gyanis', individuals who fit the descriptions noted in 'Sukhmani Sahib').

A step further than the above is also recommended. The biographies of other nine Gurus and the Rahit Namas should receive similar attention. The learned-Sikhs, who revere their faith and the Gurus, have an obligation and an important role in this regard. They should pursue, unravel the truth and disseminate their findings about the lives of their Gurus and their teachings. A lot of good work has already been done by dedicated Sikhs and certain non-Sikhs. There is need to add to their contributions.

It is important that the literature produced and disseminated by the above efforts includes books that are designed for children of school age. They too must be exposed to the correct versions of their religion and history.

Vigilance is needed to catch distortions and misrepresentations of Sikh Faith and set the record straight. Sikh scholars who have proper understanding of their faith need to take up this challenge. They must ensure that the truth and logic are on their side in the responses they make.

### **BOOKS OF W.H. MCLEOD USED TO ANALYZE HIS SOPHISTIC ARGUMENTS**

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2. Discovering the Sikhs, Autobiography of a Historian, Permanent Black, Delhi, 2004. **(This book is identified as Book 2 in the text)**
3. Textual Sources for the Study of Sikhism, Barnes & Noble Books, Totowa, New Jersey, 1984. **(This book is identified as Book 3 in the text)**

4. Sikhism, Penguin Books, New York, 1997. **(This book is identified as Book 4 in the text)**
5. The Sikhs: History, Religion, and Society, Columbia University Press, New York, 1989. **This book is identified as Book 5 in the text)**
6. Sikhs of the Khalsa, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2003. **(This book is identified as Book 6 in the text)**

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### **CONSULT THE FOLLOWING FOR FURTHER READING**

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