

# MISREPRESENTATION OF NANAKIAN PHILOSOPHY IN NOMINATION DOSSIER FOR WORLD HERITAGE STATUS FOR DARBAR SAHIB, AMRITSAR

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## BACKGROUND

**D**arbar Sahib, Amritsar is a unique religious and historical center of Sikhism. This is the place where the inherited treasure (The Nanakian Philosophy) embodied in the Bani of Guru Nanak and other Sikh Gurus who succeeded to the House of Nanak was compiled in a Granth, now called as the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) [1], in 1604 by Guru Arjan. After its compilation the Granth was installed in the Darbar Sahib, constructed by Guru Ramdas amidst the *Sarovar* (Holy Tank). This is the most sacred and important place for the Sikhs, which needs its conservation for the future generations of humanity including the Sikhs.

Bibi Kiranjot Kaur [2] has emphasized that to establish the independent entity of the Sikhs in the world it is necessary to include the Darbar Sahib, Amritsar in the list of World Heritage. Therefore, the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar took a decision to include the Darbar Sahib in the list of World Heritage. She also made it clear that to attain the World Heritage Status the Sikh *Maryada* (code) and the control of the Darbar Sahib will not be compromised. Neither the Government of India nor the United Nations Education and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) will be allowed to take over any sort of control and management of Darbar Sahib.

## Preparation of the Dossier [2]

During May 2002 the Secretariat of the SGPC requested to the Secretariat of the Archeology and Cultural Heritage of the Punjab Government for information to include the Darbar Sahib into the list of World Heritage. The Punjab Government introduced the SGPC to the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH). The INTACH deputed Cultural Research and Conservation Institute (CRCI) for preparation of the Dossier. The Secretariat of the SGPC according to their resolution No. 802 dated August 10, 2002 formed a committee to take the necessary actions for the grant of

World Heritage Status for Darbar Sahib.

The then President of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) had taken efforts to get a World Heritage Status (WHS) for Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple), Amritsar. Two members of the SGPC (Bibi Kiranjot Kaur as the Director of the Project), experts from the CRCI and theologians were deputed to prepare an elaborate 400-page dossier.

The team of the CRCI stayed at the Sarai of Darbar Sahib for four months and collected the important information on interpretation of historical, archeological, and religious information from the scholars of the Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. When the Dossier was ready it was given to the Dr S S Bhuparai, Vice Chancellor, Punjabi University, Patiala for verification of the above information by the scholars of his university [2].

## Role of Punjab Government

According to Bibi Kiranjot Kaur [2] for the heritage status, the Darbar Sahib has been divided into two zones;

1. Core Precinct: This includes Darbar Sahib Complex.
2. Buffer Zone: It includes the immediate surrounding area around the Darbar Sahib.

The maintenance and management of the Core Precinct is entirely in the hands of the SGPC that of the Buffer Zone is in the hands of Municipality of Amritsar and Punjab Government. When the Darbar Sahib is included in the World Heritage List then the Government of Punjab and the Municipality will be responsible for providing every facility to reach the Darbar Sahib.

The SGPC cannot file the case for the grant of WHS directly. Therefore, the nominated committee of the SGPC and the Punjab Government prepared the

Dossier and this Dossier was submitted to the UNESCO through Mr Jagmohan, the then Minister of Tourism, Government of India.

#### **Doubts Raised**

When the SGPC took the decision to file the nomination to include the Darbar Sahib in the list of World Heritage, the opposition raised the following doubts:

1. Control of Darbar Sahib will go into the foreign hand, i.e. UNESCO.
2. The devotees will face lot of problems to visit the Darbar Sahib.
3. It will not be possible to gather at the *Gurpurbs* and other important days.
4. *Sarbat* Khalsa cannot be held, etc.

The SGPC wrote a letter to the UNESCO for clarification and a letter from R P Prare received on October 18, 2002 confirmed that UNESCO does not interfere in the religious affairs and management of the Darbar Sahib [2]. After this verification that UNESCO and the Government will not interfere in the religious affairs and management, Prof Kirpal Singh Badungar, the then President of SGPC, submitted the Dossier under the following title:

#### **Nomination of Sri Harmandir Sahib for inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List**

#### **Sponsors**

1. Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), Amritsar
2. The Chadha Family Foundation, Montreal, Canada

#### **Coordinated by**

Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH)

#### **Cost**

An amount over Rs 5,500,000 has been spent on the preparation of this Dossier.

The following experts of various fields prepared the Dossier:

#### **Research and Content**

Dr Savyasaachi, Poonam P. Thakur, Bani Singh, Ujala Dhaka, Madhavi Sanghamitra Bhatia

#### **Editorial Team**

Vidya Rao, Kiranjot Kaur, Ujala Dhaka, Madhavi Sanghamitra Bhatia, Dr Balwant Singh Dhillon, Dr Jodh Singh, Roop Singh, Kirpal Singh, research scholar at the Sikh Reference Library.

#### **Persons who helped in the collection of information**

Prof Madanjit Kaur, Prof Manjit Singh, Dr Balwant Singh Dhillon, Dr Harnam Singh Shan, Dr J.S. Grewal, Dr Kharak Singh, Dr Dharam Singh, Prof Jolly, Dr S.S. Bopa Rai, Dr Kulwinder Singh Bajwa, Dr Balwinder Singh, Dr Jogeshwar Singh, Roop Singh

It could be easily figured out from the list that there are Sikh Professors from Guru Nanak Dev Universities and Punjabi University, Patiala; the Sikh Vice-Chancellors of both the universities are also involved according to Bibi Kiranjot Kaur. Sikh Experts from Institute for Sikh Studies, Chandigarh; and a Sikh Research Scholar from Sikh Reference Library are also involved. It also includes many experts from Archaeology Survey of India (ASI) and some experts in photography and commercial editors. In simple words the highly qualified Sikh Professors, Sikh Theologians, Sikh scholars, and other experts from CRCI, and Qualified Editors and Photographers prepared the Dossier.

#### **REFERENCES**

1. AGGS = Aad Guru Granth Sahib. 1983 (reprint). Publishers: Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar. (M = Mahla, i.e., succession number of the Sikh Gurus to the House of Guru Nanak, p = Page of the AGGS).
2. Kaur, Kiran. 2005. Ki Harmandar Sahib nuun Vishav Virasat da darja duwaona chahi da hai? (In Punjabi). Ajit Jallandhar, April 3, 4, 2005.

#### **EXAMINATION OF DOSSIER BY WORLD SIKH ORGANIZATIONS**

On a request from a certain group, the SGPC posted this Dossier on their Web site for examination and for suggestions to improve its representation to the UNESCO for the grant of World Heritage Status to the Darbar Sahib, Amritsar. The Internet Discussion on the Dossier was created by Mr Amandeep Singh of Australia under the heading of SGPCDossier under the main group of Gurmat Learning Zone.

The result of putting the Dossier for suggestions turned out to be very different. Various Sikh Organizations including the 5-Member Committee, appointed by the SGPC, Amritsar for evaluating the Dossier, recommended withdrawal of the Dossier instead of submitting suggestions to improve the representation of the Dossier.

**The Institute for Understanding Sikhism (IUS)**, Laval, Quebec, Canada is far the grant of the World Heritage status to the Darbar Sahib provided that the

SGPC will be in full control of Darbar Sahib and its sovereignty is not lost. However, there are many misconceptions and anomalies in the dossier, which should be removed before it is resubmitted to the UNESCO. Only a few major misconceptions and misrepresentations of Nanakian Philosophy have been pointed out and their improvement or replacements have been suggested.

### Corrections and Suggestions

(Note: Statements in SGPC Dossier are referred as 'SGPC' and the response of the Institute for Understanding Sikhism as 'IUS'. The following corrections and suggestions were sent to Bibi Kiranjot Kaur and copies to the SGPC and Hon Mr Baljit Singh Chadha on April 1, 2005.)

#### i) SGPC: Title Page

#### Nomination of Sri Harmandir Sahib for inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List

i) **IUS:** Sri Harmandir Sahib is also commonly known as 'Darbar Sahib'. Its original name is 'Darbar Sahib' in the Revenue Record. The term 'Sri Harimandir Sahib', which has been introduced recently, should be deleted throughout the Dossier and be replaced with its original name, 'DARBAR SAHIB', because the term 'mandir' (temple) indicates that the place is for dwelling of God. In Gurbani, wherever, 'Mandir' or 'Har Mandir' has been used that means the body of a person not a physical place. However, according to Gurbani everything in this universe belongs to God - 'One and Only' - who pervades everywhere. Therefore, title, DARBAR SAHIB, is more appropriate, which means 'Darbar' (court) of the Aad Guru Granth Sahib. The Aad Guru Granth has also been declared as the Juristic Person by the Supreme Court of India [17].

With this declaration the title, **Darbar Sahib**, becomes more appropriate than all others. The term 'THE SANCTUM SANCTORUM' should be added to the title to signify that it is the holiest of all holy places, not only for Sikhs but also for the entire mankind. Although all the places connected with the Sikh Gurus are holy, Darbar Sahib is holiest because the original Granth compiled by Guru Arjan was installed in this building in 1604 and this Granth is the only authentic source of philosophy of Guru Nanak on which Sikhism is founded [14]. Thus the term **DARBAR SAHIB - THE SANCTUM SANCTORUM** is most appropriate title and accordingly should be used throughout the Dossier to express the reality.

#### ii) SGPC: The Spirit of Sikhi at pages I-20 to 22.

ii) **IUS:** The picture at page 20 depicting Guru Nanak

with *Sehli Topi* at his head with *Tilak* at the forehead, and *Mala* in his hand and many *malas* around his neck and with Bhai Mardana, Bhai Bhala and others is to be removed. It depicts the imagination of the artist, which is contrary to Gurbani.

In fact, all the pictures depicting any Guru in any form should be removed from the Dossier.

All the matter given on pages I-21 & 22 before '**The Beginning**' needs to be rewritten with the following points to be kept in mind:

Sikhism, founded by Guru Nanak during the 15th century, is the youngest, scientific, and logical religion of the world. Yet it originated at a time when the modern nations and ideas resulting from development in the fields of science, technology, economics, psychology, etc. had not yet become part of the world consciousness. The philosophy of Guru Nanak was practised, disseminated, and was also enriched by the Sikh Gurus of the House of Nanak (Nanakian School). The philosophy of Nanakian School is incorporated in the **Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS)** [1], the holy scripture of the Sikhs, is found to be true in the light of modern science and is applicable during the Science Age (Space Age/Information Age) [2, 4]. The philosophy of Nanakian School is termed as **Nanakian philosophy** [7].

The term 'Sikhism' has been derived from an *ancient Punjabi* (so-called *Prakrit* by Panini) word '*sikhi*' [11]. It means the philosophy or teachings of Guru Nanak, for example:

ਸਿਖੀ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਗੁਰ ਵੀਚਾਰਿ ॥ (AGGS, M 1, p 465) [1]  
*Sikhi is the teaching from the Guru's philosophy.*

Later the word '*Sikhi*' was Anglicized as "Sikhism". It is also well-established fact that 'Guru' in this case is Nanak (Guru Nanak). The word, *Sikh*, means the one that follows *Sikhi* (follower, student, etc.). Later in *Pali* it became '*sikha*' and in Sanskrit it became '*Shishya*' [11].

#### iii) SGPC: 'Mul Mantra' at page I-22.

iii) **IUS:** Although this term, Mul (Mool) Mantra, is accepted widely by the Sikhs at large, it should be deleted throughout the Dossier since no Mantra System is accepted in Nanakian Philosophy [9, 10, 12]. The word, Mantra or Mool Mantra, has been used in the Gurbani where it means the teachings (message) of the Sikh Gurus but not as the Mantra described in the Mantra System of Vedas to be repeated for a wish to be granted by God. In fact the so-called Mool Mantra is the

Commencing Verse of the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) highlighting the attributes of God. If it is to be mentioned in the dossier, it should be mentioned either as the **Commencing Verse** or its Punjabi equivalent, *Manglacharan* [3, 10, 12].

The Commencing Verse of the AGGS is the foundation of Sikhism, which must be interpreted in its real perspective. The interpretation in the Dossier does not depict it in its real perspective where God has been addressed as 'HE' and 'is realized by holy preceptor'. God cannot be addressed as Male or Female and who is the 'preceptor' here through whom God is realized? The last words, 'Gur' and 'Parshad' are also the attributes of God. In fact every figure, letter and word used in the Commencing Verse is specific attribute of God. Therefore, we, the Sikhs, should be very careful to represent the Definition of God as coined by Guru Nanak. The most appropriate interpretation of the Commencing Verse given as follows shows that the definition of God coined by Guru Nanak is so concise and precise that it is not found in any other sacred book [3, 10, 12]:

#### Definition/Attributes (Manglacharan) of God

ੴ १

ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ  
ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ੨  
ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ३ ॥

*The One and Only, That, the Infinite<sup>1</sup>;  
Exists;  
Creator;  
Without fear;  
Without enmity;  
Timeless (Without effect of time and space);  
Neither takes birth nor dies;  
(Never comes into any anthropomorphic form)  
Created by Itself<sup>2</sup>;  
Enlightener; and Bounteous<sup>3</sup>. [12]*

iv) "SGPC: 'Dev' has been used for Guru Nanak at page I-22 and at others and similarly it has been used with Guru Arjan.

iv) IUS: The use of 'Dev' as suffix with the names of Gurus is not justified since 'Dev' in ancient philosophy means 'Deity'. For example, in Atharvaveda (Book 20, hymn 58 and verse 3) 'Dev' is used for God ("Dev maha asi" - "God is verily great"). Although in old Sikh literature the suffix 'Dev' has been extensively used, this practice has to be abandoned since Guru Nanak and Guru Arjan are the GURUS and should not be equated as a Deity or God.

v) SGPC: **Adi Guru Granth.**

v) IUS: The transliteration of ਅਦਿ (Aad) as 'Adi' is wrong. 'Adi' in Hindi and Punjabi means 'half'. The right title for the Sacred Scripture of the Sikhs as entitled by the SGPC is as follows:

#### Aad Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji

Therefore, it is recommended that the Granth should be addressed as above; however, the IUS has discussed it in detail [8, 13] that 'Sri' is redundant before the 'Guru'; similarly, 'Ji' is redundant after 'Sahib'. Therefore, it was recommended to the SGPC that its title should be "AAD GURU GRANTH SAHIB", which could be abbreviated as "AGGS" throughout the Dossier whether one is talking about the Granth prepared by Guru Arjan or by Guru Gobind Singh after adding the Bani of Guru Teg Bahadur in 1705 or after its declaration as "GURU" in 1708. It is so because for the Sikhs the 'Sabd' is 'Guru' as mentioned by Guru Nanak right in the beginning and the 'SABD GURU' was enshrined in the Granth by Guru Arjan in 1604. Therefore, the Granth is 'Aad Guru Granth Sahib' right from its compilation in 1604 till today and will remain so in the future [8, 13]. Therefore, the Granth should be addressed as 'Aad Guru Granth Sahib' throughout the Dossier which should be abbreviate as 'AGGS' where needed.

vi) SGPC: **The Foundation, p I-24 to 25.**

vi) IUS: The Sabd at page 15 of the AGGS (*Neecha andari neech...*) has got nothing to do with *piri –miri* system in Gurbani [5]. It is in connection with the development of humility. Therefore, this Sabd is to be removed from here.

**On page 25** the Sabd (*Puja karna Niwaj ...*) at page 1136 of the AGGS has got nothing to do here since Guru Arjan is trying to emphasize that he is neither Hindu nor Muslim and he is following the original and unique philosophy of Guru Nanak in which every human being belongs to that God to whom the Hindus call Ram and the Muslim call Allah. This Sabd should be placed where there is need to portray that Gurbani being recited from Darbar Sahib is original and unique; and different than other religions and is meant for the whole humanity of the world.

**On page 25** just after the above sabd of Guru Arjan, it is mentioned: "In Sultanpur, when he (Guru Nanak) emerged from under the water after three days, his message to the world was, *Na ko Hindu na Musalman...*" as is said by a pilgrim.

This story is inauthentic based on a pilgrim's information, although it is accepted as true by many Sikh writers and is quoted very often. Just think on the

statement, “*Na ko Hindu na Musalman...*”, how could Guru Nanak say this when there were Hindus and Musalman (Muslims) in millions. Therefore, this statement should be deleted. However, Guru Arjan has very clearly mentioned that he is neither Hindu nor Musalman since he follows the unique and original philosophy of Guru Nanak. Such mythical stories narrated in the Dossier should be deleted since there is no place of miracles and mantras in Gurbani.

Therefore, there is a need to put emphasis throughout the Dossier on the originality and uniqueness of philosophy in Gurbani and to portray Sikhism as an independent and original religion (not syncretism) of the world.

**vii) SGPC: The Approach, p I-25, 26.**

**vii) IUS:** The whole paragraph under “The Approach” (Water carries the .....Indian thought) is showing the mockery of *nirgun* and *sargun* characteristics of God by comparing it with water. It also cannot be related to the spiritual and temporal (*miri – piri*) concept mentioned in this paragraph. (See references # 5 & 6 to understand the Concept of God and concept of *Miri-Piri* in Nanakian Philosophy.)

**Page I-26:** There cannot be any *nirgun* aspect of Darbar Sahib. It is physical structure clearly visible to everybody. Moreover its front door cannot be equated with the face of Akal Purkh.

In next paragraph, the Parkarma and Harimandir have been equated to the *sargun* aspect. How come the same Harimandir, which was *nirgun*, now becomes *sargun*.

Again the rear view has been equated to *nirgun* aspect of God. The concept of *nirgun* and *sargun* presented in the Dossier is contrary to the concept found in the Nanakian Philosophy [6].

In last column ‘**Dasam Granth**’ has been mentioned. It should not be mentioned anywhere in the Dossier since Darbar Sahib has nothing to do with Dasam Granth.

**Page I-27:** “... he bowed to the Guru Granth, put it on the cot to rest, and he himself lay under it. He did this to communicate to the world that the text was more important than the person.”

This statement is very poor representation of the important message of Guru Arjan. It should be replaced with the following message:

After completion of the Granth, Guru Arjan gave his status of Guru to the Granth keeping in view the philosophy of Guru Nanak that ‘**Sabd is Guru**’. Now the

Sabd is enshrined in the Granth, therefore, the Granth is Guru from that date (1604). The reference of this is found in the AGGS: *Pothi Parmeshar ka thaan*. (AGGS, M 5, p 1226). Since 1604 the Granth is Guru when installed in the Darbar Sahib till today and will remain Guru in the future. Now it is addressed as “**Aad Guru Granth Sahib**” (AGGS) as discussed earlier [8, 13]. This is that Aad Guru Granth Sahib, which is installed (*Parkash*) in the Darbar Sahib every morning from which the Bani is recited as *Kirtan*.

No other Bani should be recited here, although *Rehit Maryada*, which was composed recently in 1945, recommends the recitation of Varan Bhai Gurdas, works of Bhai Nand Lal and some portions of the Dasam Granth. It is not an inherited treasure from our Sikh Gurus. The Bani in the Aad Guru Granth Sahib is the inherited treasure (*Pio dada da khol dhitha khazana....*) (AGGS, M 5, p 186) of Guru Nanak, which was received by Guru Arjan as follows:

Guru Nanak handed over his Bani to Guru Angad who added his Bani in it. Then he handed it over to Guru Amardas who added his Bani in it. Then he handed it over to Guru Ramdas who added his Bani in it. Finally, Guru Ramdas handed over the inherited treasure of Bani to Guru Arjan who added his Bani in it. Guru Arjan compiled this inherited treasure of Bani into Granth in 1604 in which the Bani of Bhagats was also included. Later Guru Gobind Singh added the Bani of Guru Teg Bahadur in this Granth in 1705 [14]. This is the inherited treasure, enshrined in the Darbar Sahib, which is to be highlighted in the Dossier. And this is the Darbar Sahib, which was constructed to enshrine the inherited treasure.

The picture at p I-27 shows a *Gutka* in the hand of a person. This *Gutka* contains only a few Bani. The quote in the picture is for the whole Bani in the AGGS. Either the picture should be removed or the quote be removed from the picture.

**viii) SGPC: Causeway, Page I-30:** The space inside the Harimandir is the Sachkhand<sup>32</sup> or the realm of truth. The physical structure of the Harimandir has three levels, each of which correspond to the three aspects of the Supreme Being described in the Mul Mantra, **Ik Oankar**<sup>33</sup>. **Om** is pronounced as ‘oam’ and **oam** consists of three letters o, a, and m. o stands for *Urdham*, i.e. above; a for *adham*, i.e. below; and m for *madham*, i.e. in between. Thus the word *Oam* means that which is above, below, and in between, referring to the entire universe. Taking the three components of *Ik Oankar* together, we can say that it means the ‘One Universal Being.’<sup>34</sup> These components describe the cultural meaning of the three floors of the Harimandir,

which together constitute the Sachkhand. The Harimandir as Sachkhand is thus illuminated by the presence of the One Universal Being.

**viii) IUS:** The entire above statement in the Dossier needs to be removed. The terms '*Sachkhand*' and '*Oam*' are misinterpreted. *Sachkhand* does not mean the 'realm of truth', but it means the realm of 'UNIVERSE' [12] God pervades in Universe comprising of known and unknown spheres and planets including the planet 'Earth'. The 'above' 'below' and 'in between' terms explained in dossier are unscientific, illogical and contrary to Gurbani's concept that structure of Darbar Sahib was built to create '*Sachkhand*' so that God (*Nirankar*) could reside in it. It is contrary to Gurbani.

**ix) SGPC, Page I-27:** The *Sachkhand* is illuminated from the Prakash Asthan. Prakash Asthan emanates light, which is carried by the sound of the Bani to spread over the water of the Sarovar on to the Parkarma and through the deoris into the city. The sound travels as far as the winds carry it, spreading the aura of the Harmindir.

Ref # 32 in the Dossier: *Sachkhand* has been described as the abode of the One who is beyond form, The *Nirankar*.

**ix) IUS:** Here again the statement in its entirety should be removed from the Dossier. *Sachkhand* in fact is 'Realm of Universe'. The entire universe is the abode of the God, the formless, known as *Nirankar*. Therefore, the *Prakash* of God is reflected in the whole universe, in every human being, in every structure, *Parkarma*, *Sarovar*, city, etc. God is not confined to any particular place. However, the spirituality, embodied in the Gurbani enshrined in the Aad Guru Granth Sahib, is continuously being recited which is heard throughout the Sanctum Sanctorum by all the visiting devotees.

**x) SGPC, Ref # 33 at page 40:** "Ik Omkar = 1 (Ik) + Oam + akar ...the word has been explained in many different ways by many different writers. But so far as Sikh writings are concerned, the prefix *Oam* makes its meanings clear. Pritam Singh. 1985. The Sikh Concept of the Divine. Amritsar, Guru Nanak Dev University Press (p 6,7).

**x) IUS:** The above description is absolutely contrary to Nanakian Philosophy. In this connection I have written a detailed article entitled, **OANKAR OR OMKAR : The Misunderstood Word – Annotation by Guru Nanak** [see pp 17-33].

After reading the above article one would realize that

ੴ is not *Ek Oankar or Ek Omkar or Ek Oamkar* as forcefully represented by some Sikh writers. Instead ੴ is an original and unique logo coined by Guru Nanak. The detailed study indicates that ੴ is: **ੴ ਓ ਖੋਅੰਤ (Ek + Oh + Beant) (One Oh ∞ = One and Only, Oh, the Infinite). Or ੴ ਓ ਅਨੰਤ (Ek Oh Anant)**. It is contrary to basic Nanakian Philosophy to equate ੴ to *Ek Oankar or Ek Omkar or Ek Oamkar* and to three layers of Universe as described in the Dossier at page I-30.

It is apparent from the discussions that ੴ has been misinterpreted by the famous Sikh writers, consequently, some writers have openly declared that Guru Nanak did not have any originality and uniqueness in his philosophy since he borrowed the ancient philosophy from Vedas and Upanishad. Therefore, it is time to correct misinterpretations of ੴ being carried on by some famous Sikh writers since a long. The ੴ should be represented as an original and unique logo coined by Guru Nanak, which has been placed in the beginning of Commencing Verse (Manglacharan) of the Aad Guru Granth Sahib. The ੴ should be pronounced as **ੴ ਓ ਖੋਅੰਤ (Ek + Oh + Beant) (One Oh ∞ = One and Only, Oh, the Infinite) or ੴ ਓ ਅਨੰਤ (Ek Oh Anant)** in the Dossier.

**xi) SGPC: Page I-34: Jau tau prem khalan kaa chao;**

**xi) IUS:** This verse has been used under the heading of **Shaheedi Seva**. This verse is usually misinterpreted to relate it with Shaheedi. Interpretation given by Talib is very literal translation and it loses the real message being conveyed by Guru Nanak. It should be interpreted as follows:

"If you want to participate in righteousness, then be ready to be sacrificed while treading on the path of my philosophy of righteousness. Once you accept this path (of righteousness) then don't back out of this." [5]

This is the real message of Guru Nanak to follow the path of righteousness promulgated by him. This was the principle on which Guru Arjan and Guru Teg Bahadur sacrificed their lives and set the living example of Shaheedi for the up keep of righteousness.

**xii) SGPC: Page I-44-45.** It has been pointed out that Sikhism incorporates the idea of Islam (such as the idea of martyrdom) and Hinduism (such as the name of Harimandir) as much as it is critical of the ritualistic and discriminatory elements in both....

**xii) IUS:** As it has been explained earlier that martyrdom in Sikhism is different than that in Islam and similarly it

has been suggested earlier that the Name of Harimandir should be changed to Darbar Sahib because in Sikhism no place can be designated for God to dwell in it.

Here again the emphasis should be to represent originality and uniqueness of Sikhism [2, 4 - 6,9].

**xiii) SGPC: Page I- 47 to 52.** Description and comparison of the physical structure of Sachkhand (Sanctum Sanctorum) are based on the philosophy of Hinduism and Buddhism (References in Dossier 10, 11, & 12.)

**xiii) IUS:** The description and comparison of physical structure of Sanctum Sanctorum should be deleted altogether. The misinterpretation of 'Ik Oankar' into three levels has been condemned earlier as quoted in the article, OANKAR / OMKAR [15]. And it should be replaced with sensible description based on Nanakian Philosophy.

On Page I – 49-52. All types of comparison or inversions to Manasar Shilpa Shashtras have no meaning here to show uniqueness. It should be deleted.

The last paragraph at page 52 (is repetition given at page I-26) is contrary to basic philosophy of Guru Nanak. It should be deleted.

On Page I- 55 to 56: Authenticity of the Harimandir Sahib (Darbar Sahib) Precinct is poorly written. It is to be elaborated properly.

**xiv) SGPC:** On Page I-59 first column: The components of the Sikh faith are unique.

**xiv) IUS:** Very little emphasis is given on this aspect of uniqueness of Sikh faith, which is the most important part of the Dossier. List the most important outstanding and unique components of Sikhism in details in this section. (For information see references from # 1 to 15 at the end.)

**xv) SGPC:** The Word in the Vernacular: The vernacular Word became more than a pale reflection or translation of the mainstream classical Sanskrit thought. On the contrary, it established a parallel structure of thought.

**xv) IUS:** The above statement is very damaging to the originality and uniqueness of philosophy of Guru Nanak since first it declares its 'pale reflection of Sanskrit thought' and then declared as 'a parallel structure of thought'. In both cases it is very damaging to the originality and uniqueness of Nanakian Philosophy.

Throughout the Dossier it has been tried to compare all

the thought of Sikhism on ancient philosophy of Vedas, Upanishad, etc. I pose a very pertinent question to the Custodians of Sikhism; the Experts who have drafted the Dossier; and the panel of the experts appointed by the SGPC, who have examined this Dossier now:

Was Guru Nanak preaching philosophy of Vedas and Upanishads?

- If the answer is YES then the Sikhs should forget that Sikhism is unique and different religion than Hinduism.
- If the answer is NO then the Sikhs should have to rediscover Gurbani and Sikhism in their real perspective.

My response to the above question is:

Nanakian Philosophy is original and unique and has all the characteristics of universal acceptability by the humanity of the Science Age on which Sikhism is based. Therefore, Sikhism should be represented scientifically and logically in its real perspective throughout the Dossier.

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### EFFECT OF PRESSURE OF ANOMALIES FOUND IN THE SGPC DOSSIER ON WHS OF DARBAR SAHIB

The pressure from the opposition of the SGPC and the scriptural and historical anomalies found in the SGPC Dossier, as discussed previously, started to build up to withdraw the nomination for the grant of WHS for Darbar Sahib. The SGPC, led by Jagir Kaur as the President, started to drag its feet. She wrote to the director of UNESCO asking him not to do anything since some members of the SGPC and Sikh organisations raised objections to some “distorted facts” in the Dossier and feared it would misrepresent Sikh religious history and culture.

#### Report by the expert committee

The SGPC designated five members panel of Sikh scholars for analysing the Dossier submitted to the UNESCO. The members of the sub-committee were: Prof Prithipal Singh Kapur, a former Pro Vice-Chancellor of Punjabi University, Prof Niranjan Singh Dhesi, Dr Darshan Singh, Mr Sarbjinder Singh and Dr Jasbir Singh Sabar of Guru Nanak Dev University. All the five members of the committee also found the document full of anomalies, both conceptually and factually. Four out of five recommended withdrawal of

the Dossier without any suggestions. However, it was only Prof Prithipal Singh Kapur who recommended the submission of the dossier after removal of anomalies.

#### Withdrawal of the Dossier

According to [India News, Amritsar, April 21 (<http://www.123bharath.com/news/index.php?action=fullnews&id=47156>) the executive committee of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) has rejected the dossier prepared for seeking heritage site status for Sri Harmander Sahib. A decision to this effect was taken at a marathon meeting of executive members held here on Thursday which was also attended by Kiranjot Kaur, executive member and coordinator of the project. The SGPC would now be shooting off missives to central and state governments to convey UNESCO for official withdrawal of the dossier submitted with them.

Talking to media persons here, SGPC president Bibi Jagir Kaur said that the SGPC had gracefully rectified the mistake committed by it earlier without making it ego or prestige issue. Jagir Kaur said that the members had thoroughly examined the dossier and felt that seeking a heritage site status for Sri Harmandar Sahib was a challenge to its spiritual power as well as to Sikh sentiments. The members also observed that there would be outside intervention once the heritage site status was accorded to Sri Harmandar Sahib that would hurt Sikh sentiments.

While reacting over the decision taken by the executive body, Bibi Kiranjot Kaur said that "**It is a hasty decision**" she retorted while adding that she had submitted the descending note stating that the discussion on the dossier should have been held at a wider platform and suitable amendments be made as the five member committee had submitted three different reports.

Levelling serious charges on the five-member committee, which was constituted to contemplate over the objections raised on dossier and make relevant suggestions, Kiranjot said that the committee had deviated from its investigations and had instead found wrong mistakes. (ANI)

#### HOW TO WIN THE LOSING BATTLE?

According to the following report a number of anomalies about the control of the Darbar Sahib have been eliminated:

The Director, UNESCO, Prof M. Tawfik, has categorically stated that after granting the World Heritage Status (WHS), it becomes the responsibility of the organisation (UNESCO) to protect the site from any external aggression. Such security would have been provided to Harmandar Sahib, if it had received the WHS.



Mr Babu Rajeev, Director-General, Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), had clarified that the inscription of Harmandir Sahib on the WHS would not in any way alter the management status of the shrine. The management of Harmandir Sahib would continue to remain with the SGPC even after the inscription of the shrine on the WHS. Neither in the nomination dossier nor in the site management plan, there was any proposal to replace the present management system. Therefore, the question of the new management system, after inscription on the WHS list does not arise.

Much to the embarrassment of the SGPC executive committee, which had recommended the withdrawal of the dossier, all three members who attended the meeting concluded that the apprehensions raised by the committee were unfounded.

The ASI Director clarified that there was no proposal to interfere in the management of the core precinct (Darbar Sahib complex). UNESCO did not and would not impose any management directions on the WHS, he said. Any suggestion from UNESCO as an expert body would only be advisory in nature with regard to upholding and conserving the heritage value of a site. Full responsibility for protection as well as suggested conservation of the heritage property would be with the SGPC, he added.

He said the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) was only a nodal agency for such tangible heritage in India in so far as UNESCO was concerned. Therefore, the ASI reports to the World Heritage Committee on all matters of importance on WHS.

Professor Tawfik, Director, UNESCO, however, clarified that the purpose of granting WHS to a particular historical monument was to preserve it for generations to come for record and for their posterity. He said the Director-General, ASI, had taken a wise decision by withdrawing the dossier. He urged the ASI to take the initiative of organising a discussion in the form of seminars or debates to discuss on the issue to appraise the apprehensions of the Sikh community.

He said a country could send only one nomination for WHS every year, but India had lost the chance to send the nomination this year. "We have only withdrawn the nomination of Harmandir Sahib this year, but there is no bar on resubmitting the application next year.

#### REFERENCE

Varinder Walia. 2005. **UNESCO clarifies on Harmandir Sahib status**. *The Tribune, Chandigarh, July 5, 2005.*

#### AN APPEAL

Therefore, it is requested to send the following appeal for resubmitting the Nomination Dossier to the UNESCO for the grant of World Heritage Status to:

President, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar, Punjab, India  
Email : [sgpc@vsnl.com](mailto:sgpc@vsnl.com), Fax : + 91-183-255-3919.

With CC to:

1. Kiranjot Kaur, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar, Punjab, India  
Email : [kiranjot@yahoo.com](mailto:kiranjot@yahoo.com)
2. Prof Devinder Singh. Chahal, President, Institute for Understanding Sikhism, 4418 Martin-Plouffe, Laval, Quebec, Canada. H7w 5L9.  
Email: [sikhism@iuscanada.com](mailto:sikhism@iuscanada.com)

Your co-operation in this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Thanking you.

Sincerely yours  
Devinder Singh Chahal

#### WORLD HERITAGE STATUS FOR DARBAR SAHIB, AMRITSAR.

The Darbar Sahib, Amritsar is a unique, sacred, and historical center of Sikhism. This is the most sacred and important place for the Sikhs, which needs its **conservation for the future generations** of the humanity including the Sikhs living all over the world.

During May 2002 the Secretariat of the SGPC requested the Secretariat of the Archaeology and Cultural Heritage, Punjab Government for information to include the Darbar Sahib into the list of World Heritage. Punjab Government introduced SGPC to the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH). INTACH deputed Cultural Research and Conservation Institute (CRCI) for preparation of the Dossier. The Executive Committee of SGPC through its resolution No. 802 dated August 10, 2002 formed a sub committee of two members -- General Secretary and Secretary of SGPC to coordinate the preparation of the dossier. The dossier was prepared by CRCI. Two members of the SGPC (Bibi Kiranjot Kaur as the Director of the Project), experts from CRCI, and theologians were deputed to prepare an elaborate 400-page dossier.

The team of the CRCI stayed at the Sarai of Darbar Sahib for four months and collected the important information on interpretation of historical, archaeological, and religious information from the scholars of the Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.

When the Dossier was ready it was given to the Dr S S Bhuparai, Vice Chancellor, Punjabi University, Patiala for verification of the above information by the scholars of his university.

It is a pity that various Sikh Organisations instead of suggesting the improvement of the Dossier recommended withdrawal of the Dossier on the following three major objections:

1. The Management of Darbar Sahib will be interfered by the Government of India (GOI) and the UNESCO.
2. The Darbar Sahib will be turned into a Cultural Centre and its religious sanctity will be lost.
3. The Dossier was full of misrepresentations of Gurbani and Sikh history.

So much so the four members out of the 5-member Committee appointed by the SGPC to evaluate the Dossier gave conflicting reports. Although all the five members agreed that there are some anomalies but none of them suggested how to remove those anomalies and improve its representation.

A letter to Bibi Kiranjot Kaur from the Director-General of the ASI states that the management of Shri Harmandar Sahib would continue to remain with the SGPC and there would be no change at all to this management as a result of its inscription as the WHS. The letter further reads that UNESCO does not and will not impose management discretions on the WHS. Any suggestion from UNESCO would only be advisory in nature (as an expert body) with regard to upholding and conserving the heritage value of the site. The full responsibility for the protection as well the suggested conservation of the heritage property will be with the SGPC. “The Government of India will not have any role in the management of Golden Temple”; the communication of ASI Director-General reads.

Keeping in view the advantages and importance of World Heritage Status for the Darbar Sahib there seems to be a general consensus among majority of Sikhs around the world that rejection of the dossier was done in haste without due consideration being given to all the facts.

Recently Prof M Tawfik, Director of UNESCO, has clarified all the above objections (The Tribune, Chandigarh, July 5, 2005).

It is also general consensus of the most of the Sikhs that the **dossier is kept pending** and that a **5-member**

**non-political Task Force of Sikh experts** from around the world be appointed by the SGPC:

1. to review the dossier,
2. to remove anomalies,
3. to ascertain once again that the sovereignty of the Darbar Sahib will be maintained before the Dossier is re-submitted for grant of the WHS to the Darbar Sahib, Amritsar.

The main goal of the WHS status is to ensure that the original and old artworks / architecture are properly persevered / protected from random destruction and makeovers by different committees.

This will open an avenue to get the WHS for Nankana Sahib in Pakistan and other Gurdwaras in the world.