

the newly-built Harmandir Sahib in 1604, for he was acknowledging the higher authority of the bani to that personal importance and significance which he possessed as Guru. This is discussed further in the section on the nature and role of the Guru (p. 100).

The emphasis upon the bani is so complete that the position of the human Guru in Sikhism might seem, to the casual observer, to be one in which complete reverence has given way to complete indifference. A Sikh should not bow to a picture of a Guru as a Hindu would offer puja to a picture of Rama. Pictures of the Gurus should not be displayed near the scripture. In the 1930s paintings of the Gurus were discouraged in gurdwaras but in more recent times this stricture seems to have been ignored. The proper Sikh attitude was once summed up in a single pithy comment, 'The picture of the Guru is the gurbani' (Bhai Gurdas, Var 24, pauri 11).

The bani did not begin with Guru Nanak and in a sense it has not ended with the compilation of a scripture for Sikhs believe that where the congregation of believers gathers to hear the bani, God is present interpreting it to the needs of their situation. From it both the individual and the community can obtain consolation, joy and encouragement. It is therefore the focal point of all important events. The naming of a child is at its direction, a wedding performed by walking round it four times is regarded as valid in Sikh tradition regardless of civil requirements, and it is often read when a family moves into a new house or a firm into new business premises. Chapter 6 describes the Book's importance in domestic life.

Two names are usually given to the Sikh scriptures: the *Adi Granth* and the *Guru Granth Sahib*. The first title is earlier. The second, often preceded by the honorific *Shri*, a term of veneration, frequently used of Krishna or Durga, for example, only occurs after 1708 when the Tenth Guru installed the scripture as his successor. 'Granth' simply means collection, anthology or book and the word 'Adi' means 'first'.

It is customary to explain the title *Adi Granth* as distinguishing the scriptures from the collection of the Tenth Guru's writings known as the *Dasam Granth*. However, 'adi' often means first in sense of importance and not only time and the name should be seen as referring to the unique scriptural status which the anthology possesses. Perhaps the point can be reinforced by noting that Guru Nanak is 'pehle Guru' (First Guru), the *Adi Guru* is God.

3

The Sikh scriptures

One of the most fascinating aspects of Sikhism is the process which began with a human Guru, continued during a period of duality in which there were human Gurus and a collection of sacred writings, and ended with the present situation in which full authority is enjoyed by the scripture.

The development can be appreciated visually by looking at one of the many pictures of Guru Nanak with his companions Bala and Mardana. He is to be seen sitting on a cushion or low stool, a halo round his head and above him a tree shading him with its branches. Bala usually stands at his side with a peacock feather fan in his hand or a chauri of yak hairs embedded in a wooden or silver holder. The tree is intentionally reminiscent of the chattri (umbrella or parasol) which Lakshman holds over Rama in similar Hindu devotional pictures. Compare such a portrait of Guru Nanak with enthroned scriptures in any Sikh temple and the similarity will immediately be seen in fact their position is not similar but identical. In every respect the scripture is what the Gurus were. The Ten Gurus were not worshipped and neither is the Book – even though the worshipper will bow or prostrate fully before it on entering the gurdwara. However, most gurdwaras will install it in the morning and put it to bed at night in much the same way as Rama and Krishna are cared for in Hindu temples. It is not unusual to find such practices denounced in Sikh periodicals.

The Gurus and the Book deserve the respect they are accorded because of the bani which they express, the word of divine truth. Therefore it was possible for Guru Arjan, the fifth in the human line, to bow before the collection which he had compiled and installed in

The origin of the Guru Granth Sahib lies in the hymns of Guru Nanak. Mardana features in many janam sakhi accounts as the Guru's companion and the one who accompanied the Guru by playing a stringed instrument called a rebeck. When the Guru sensed the imminence of an inspired utterance he would warn Mardana to be ready with his music. Once when his companion was looking after a horse the Guru broke the silence of meditation and exclaimed, 'Mardana, touch the chords, the Word is descending.' 'But master,' his friend replied, 'my hands are occupied in holding the reins of this grazing horse. If I let go it may run away.' 'Let the horse go,' insisted Guru Nanak. Such a consciousness of inspiration must have led to the memorizing or writing down of the Guru's compositions during his lifetime. Tradition is uncertain here. Sometimes Guru Angad is named as the first person to assemble the Guru's hymns but it seems more likely that when he was invested as Guru the most important object which he received was a bani pothi, an anthology of at least some of the Guru's hymns.

Two other narratives indicate the existence of some kind of collection during the Guru's lifetime. The Puratan Janam Sakhi states that a disciple Mansukh spent three years at Kartarpur with the Guru, preparing a pothi under his supervision. More intriguing is the statement of Bhai Gurdas that when Guru Nanak visited Makkah he carried a staff in his hand, a book under his arm, a water pot and a prayer carpet for the call to prayer' (Var I, pauri 32). Perhaps this book contained the bani of Farid, Namdev and Kabir and other pre-Nanak saints whose hymns are found in the Adi Granth, or it may have been a collection of his own bani. It is, however, impossible to be sure what was in the pothi.

The Mohan Pothi was compiled on the instruction of Guru Amar Das at Goindwal/Goindval, and it is therefore sometimes known as the Goindwal Pothi. It is the first anthology of the bani to have survived. The two extant pothis of 600 and 448 pages respectively include works by Guru Nanak then Guru Angad and the complete bani of Guru Amar Das himself, followed by hymns of Kabir, Namdev, Trilochan, Sain, Ravidas and finally Jaidev. The date of the collection is probably 1565. Here is clear evidence that non-Sikh material (called the bhagat bani by Sikhs) had a place in Sikh writings before the time of Guru Arjan. The initiative to include it may have come from Guru Amar Das whose policy of drawing Hindus especially into the Panth

would have included the use of material with which they would have been probably familiar from the writings of well-known north Indian bhaktas. It is possible that a third pothi still exists; Giani Gian Singh reported seeing it in 1895 and left notes on it. Clearly Guru Amar Das had access to existing material. He was not compiling scattered compositions to ensure their survival, though he was attempting to prevent rival collections gaining acceptance. These, like some of the janam sakhis, might have been used to challenge his authority and promote that of break-away groups of which there were now several. Disgruntled sectarian groups were already beginning to assemble spurious collections of hymns attributed to Guru Nanak either for the purpose of promoting their own claims to be the true Sikhs or to bring the Guru into disrepute. The bani of Guru Amar Das contains a number of warnings against apostasy and false teachings:

All other teaching but that of the Sat Guru is false. False are those who utter it, false are those who hear it, false those who recite it and those who invent it. They utter the Name with their tongue but do not understand what they say. (AG, 920).

Baba Farid's bani is found in Rag Suhi of the pothis. There is, however, definite evidence that the first Guru knew at least some of the Sufi's poetry. One of his shabads occurs on page 794 of the Adi Granth.

You could not make a raft at the time when you should have made it. When the sea is full and overflowing it is hard to cross. Do not touch the saffron flower with your hand, its colour will fade, my dear. First the bride herself is weak and in addition her husband's command is hard to bear. As the milk does not return to her breast so the soul does not enter the same body again. Says Farid, O my friends, when the spouse calls, the soul departs crestfallen and this body becomes a heap of ashes.

On page 729 is this verse of Guru Nanak's:

Make meditation and self control the raft by which you cross the flowing stream. Your path shall be as comfortable as if there were no ocean or overflowing stream. The Name alone is the unfading madder with which my cloak is dyed. My Beloved, this colour is everlasting. The dear friends have departed, how shall they meet God? If they are united in virtue the One will join them divine union. Once united the mortal does not separate again if the union is true. The true One puts an end to birth and rebirth.

She who removes self-centredness sews herself a garment to please her husband. By the Guru's instruction she obtained the fruit of the nectar of the Word. Says Nanak, O my friends my spouse is very dear to me. We are God's hand maidens. God is our true husband.

There are a number of obvious similarities of thought and the Guru can be seen to be replacing Farid's warnings against impermanence with positive commendations. In the original gurmukhi there is considerable identity of language. It is not possible to decide why Guru Arjan did not juxtapose the compositions when he compiled the *Adi Granth*.

The *Adi Granth* of Guru Arjan was much more than yet another compilation. It was to be definitive as that of Guru Amar Das was presumably intended to be, and the Guru succeeded in this aim.

As a result of considerable personal effort he gathered the best available manuscripts, even, it is said, going to the extent of singing Mohan's praises outside his window to obtain the loan of his collection of hymns. Mohan, the son of Amar Das, according to the same tradition, was disappointed when his father chose Ram Das to be Fourth Guru. He was therefore not inclined to behave in a very helpful manner towards Guru Ram Das's son. The song associated with the tale is to be found on page 248 of the *Adi Granth*. It does refer to Mohan but the context leaves no doubt that God is being addressed as 'the attractive one' (Mohan). The story's value lies in indicating Guru Arjan's concern to assemble the best available anthologies and probably explains a reason for the new anthology. If Mohan's family was intent on keeping the pothi they might easily challenge the Guru's authority. His anthology, known as the *Adi Granth* and bound in one volume, was an essential part of his strategy of guruship.

He also borrowed a pothi in the possession of Datu, Guru Angad's son, but its contents are not known. In addition to these he had the help of Bhai Buddha, a surviving member of the Kartarpur community and therefore a valuable link with the living voice of Guru Nanak.

However, while fidelity to the bani and comprehensiveness were major concerns, Guru Arjan was not afraid to allow his own genius to express itself. He included his own compositions, almost equal in number to those contained in the pothis; but he also removed some verses of the bhagats, and simplified the language of others, for example the bani of Namdev. One shabad previously designated

'Kabir nama' he attributed to Namdev (AG 1252). Guru Arjan gave the *Granth* its distinctive form. The Book's arrangement is his, though similar to that of the *Goindwal pothis*, so is its final syntax, the poetry being accented in such a way as to make alteration difficult without going against its rhythm and musical setting.

Mohan's pothi had fourteen divisions, the *Adi Granth* has thirty-one. These were made according to Indian musical measures, called rags. Generally speaking rags are composed to suit various moods. Some are appropriate to morning, others to evening, some to joy, others to grief. Guru Arjan indicated that faith should produce a balanced outlook, tempering both happiness and sadness so, for example, between pages 917 and 924 are found both the Anand, Guru Amar Das's hymn of joy, and *Sunder's* dirge on that Guru's death. The setting is *Ramkali rag*, which relates to the season of *Basant* in March shortly before harvest. The mood is one of yearning. The rag was often favoured by yogis. Another example is the inclusion of songs sung by ladies at wedding parties, and laments, put on adjacent pages under *Rag Wadhans* (AG 575-81).

It is difficult to overestimate Guru Arjan's achievement. Scrutinizing the hymns of the earlier Gurus and the Hindu and Muslim poets had been the least of his difficulties. The quantity of their writings scarcely equalled his. To arrange the whole in an orderly manner and in such a way that the philosophy of the balanced life, including presenting Sikhism as the achieved ideal for which other faiths had been striving, was more difficult. The text of Guru Arjan's *Adi Granth* was considered to be the authorized version of the scripture. Two anecdotes illustrate the importance attached to it. The first has been mentioned earlier, and resulted in the name *Ram Rai* standing for apostasy among the Sikhs. The other incident occurred in the time of Guru Arjan himself. A disciple, Bhai Banno, made a copy of the *Granth Sahib* but when he came to the one line of the *Bhagat Surdas* which is to be found on page 1253 in printed versions, he added the rest of the verse. He also included a stanza by the woman poet *Mira Bai* at the end of *Rag Maru*. Guru Arjan deleted this in the original manuscript by crossing it out. Bhai Banno's alterations may appear unimportant, but they were sufficient for the Guru to condemn the copy as 'bitter' in comparison with the 'sweet' authentic version.

To the *Granth Sahib* of Guru Arjan the Tenth Guru merely added

the hymns of his own father, Guru Tegh Bahadur, locating them in places he considered suitable. Also, before his death, he installed the scriptures as Guru thus completing a process which had been developing for well over a century. At Kartarpur it was the hymns of Guru Nanak that were given pride of place in the worship of the community, which was already regarded as being divinely inspired. At Amritsar the Fifth Guru housed the *Adi Granth* in the newly built Harmandir Sahib and bowed before it. The recognition which the Tenth Guru gave the scripture made *de jure* what was in a sense already *de facto*. The distinction between the human Guru and the gurbani now became complete with his decision to appoint no human successor.

Close textual study of the *Adi Granth* is something which Sikh scholars are undertaking with enthusiasm. The material for it exists. The *Mohan Pothi* survives at least in part. Guru Arjan's original manuscript is at Kartarpur in Julandhar district, and the *Banno Granth* is at Dera Dun. This was the one used by Ram Rai. The copy that Guru Gobind Singh used when he conferred gurbani upon the scripture in 1708 was destroyed but those made by Baba Deep Singh and Bhai Mani Singh survive. However, the analytical approach to scriptural texts, which has concerned western scholars for the best part of two centuries, seems not only unworthy but unimportant to many Asian scholars whose concern is for the message of the scripture. It could be that the next decade will see the publication of photocopies of the important texts mentioned above but if it does the enthusiasm for the venture will be greater among non-Sikhs or western-trained Sikh scholars than Sikhs in Punjab, who will probably concentrate their efforts on presenting an understanding of the message of Sikhism to the western world.

Copies of the *Guru Granth Sahib* to be found in any gurdwara from California to Bangkok are identical. Each has 1430 pages. This standardization of page length and numbering took place in the 1950s, printed by the Shromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee. The script used is called *gurmukhi*. It is used irrespective of whether the original hymn was composed in medieval Hindi, Punjabi or some other language. Apart from the *Japji* of Guru Nanak, *Sodar*, *Sopurkh* and the bed-time prayer *Sohila* which follow it, plus seventy-eight pages at the end of the *Adi Granth*, the rest of the book is divided into thirty-one sections. The singing of the bani is called *kirtan*.

It is intended to be simple and straightforward so that the congregation can participate and to prevent concentration upon the words becoming secondary to enjoying a musical feast. Usually in a gurdwara the musicians (*ragis*) will be three in number, one playing the portable harmonium (a result of eighteenth- or nineteenth-century European influence), another playing the drum, either the single instrument with parchment at both ends or two drums fastened together and with parchment at one end only. The third musician sings and explains the bani, and may play an instrument as well. A pair of steel tongs (*chimta*) with rows of brass discs fixed along their length and the *sarinda* with its three strings, which are played with a bow, may be used as well as other stringed instruments, including the violin, an instrument which is not uncommon in southern India. Traditions in the singing of the gurbani change from time to time. The harmonium eventually found its way into the gurdwara despite resistance from the *ragis* of the Golden Temple. They have often been the mainstay of traditions and maintainers of standards. Sikhs speak of such men as the great Mahant Sham Singh Adanshahi who died in 1926 aged 123 years. Most of his 70 years as a *ragi* playing the *sarinda* and singing the bani had been spent in the Golden Temple. Now it seems that the Indian cinema may be influencing some younger musicians.

The structure of the *Guru Granth Sahib* is explained in Appendix 3. In this present section it is only necessary to note a few points. First, there is a major structure to the scripture. Pages 14 to 1352 are divided into thirty-one parts each named after the musical setting to which it should be sung. The compositions before page 14, the important hymns which Sikhs use in daily meditation, are given distinction by being excluded from the dominant form of arrangement. The last 78 pages contain hymns which are often so short that they could not be placed in the main body of the text satisfactorily.

Secondly, within the major structure there is a clear substructure. Each section begins with the writings of Guru Nanak followed by those of the third, fourth, fifth and ninth Gurus. After these are placed the non-Sikh compositions, beginning with those of Kabir. As the table in Appendix 3 indicates, not every author, even Guru Nanak, is represented in each section. Guru Angad's verses were few (sixty-two) and brief and have been attached to the hymns of other Gurus.

Finally, the *Adi Granth* is unique among the world's scriptures in its inclusion of material not written by members of the faith. Hindu and Muslim writings are included in what is called the *bhagat bani*. Whatever the language in which a poet expressed himself, all the hymns of the *Guru Granth* have been recorded in the same script, that of the Punjabi language, called *Gurmukhi*. It is this name, not Punjabi, which should properly be used for written Punjabi, whether the reference is to a daily paper, a novel or the *Adi Granth*. Persian, Punjabi and Hindi are not written alike. The use of a uniform script despite the variety of languages and dialects may have been another way of asserting catholicity, though *Guru Arjan* was not the first to employ it.

Revelation in the Guru Granth Sahib

When Sikhs describe the *Adi Granth* as the word of God they are making a statement which is both exclusive and inclusive. It is exclusive in the sense that it is the sacred book of their religion, it is the scripture which is to be found in the *gurdwara* and which forms the basis of meditation, understanding of God and world-outlook. At the same time they would not confine the phrase 'word of God' to the *Adi Granth*. Not only would they wish to include the revealed scriptures of other religions, Sikhs would also wish to leave room for the words of living men and women, now and in the future, to be regarded as revelation. Godly people, having been enlightened by God, possess divine knowledge intuitively through meditation. 'God resides in the soul and the soul is contained in God' (AG 1153). The *bani* is the verbal expression of this. Revelation in the *Adi Granth* has as its heritage the rich concept of *shabad* in Indian thought, plus the belief that revelation is the expression of the experience of the truth which is God, in verbal form. The *bani* is God. *Guru Amar Das* said:

The *gurbani* is God and it is through it that humans obtain union with God. (AG 39)

Guru Ram Das expressed the same thought in slightly different words:

The *gurbani* is God's name and this name is the shrine in my mind. (AG 1239)

The compiler of the *Adi Granth*, *Guru Arjan*, said:

The holy book is the abode of God. (AG 1226)

The *Vedas* are not explicitly condemned by the Sikh *Gurus* though the formalism arising from them is:

There are six Hindu schools of thought, each has its own *guru* and its own doctrine but the *guru* of all *gurus* is one, however many manifestations there are . . . As there is one sun and many seasons so there is one God though in many forms. (AG 357)

The principle of revelation is nowhere better demonstrated than by the inclusion of the *bhagat bani*. It comprises about one-sixth of the total (938 *shabads* out of a total of 5894), thus exceeding the contribution of any one *Guru* other than *Guru Arjan*.

Of course the danger of false teachers exists. Accepting the view that God may speak through anyone leaves one open to the blandishments of any self-styled holy man, especially in the Indian village. Sikhs are advised to keep the fellowship of the *sangat*; in their company they will learn discretion. In practice they will test the teaching against the *gurbani*, the body of doctrine given by the *Gurus*.

Subject-matter and content

The form of the *Guru Granth Sahib* is poetry. Its major concern might be described as soteriological, though in the special Sikh sense of enabling the reader, or originally the hearer, to realize the essential unity with God. There are no mythological narratives, though God is described in anthropomorphic terms and the *Gurus* are not afraid to use the imagery of family relationships to describe the union of God and his human creation:

A young wife sits at home. Her beloved is away. She continually thinks of him and pines for him. If her intentions are good their reunion shall not be delayed. (AG 594)

The nearest the *Guru Granth Sahib* comes to narrative is the discourse between *Guru Nanak* and the *yogis*, *Siddha Gosht*. For the Sikh right living is the key to a proper relationship with God. Consequently the poems are full of references to individual conduct.

The most important themes are covered in the later sections of this book. At the end of the *Adi Granth*, in a passage called *Mandavani* or

the Seal, Guru Arjan explains the scripture in these words, comparing it to a dish of food:

In the platter are placed three things, truth, contentment and meditation. The nectar-name of the God, the support of all, has also been put therein. If someone eats this food, if someone relishes it, they are emancipated. This cannot be forsaken so keep it enshrined in your mind always. Falling down at God's feet the dark world ocean is crossed. O Nanak, everything is an extension of the One. (AG 1429)

The place of the Guru Granth Sahib in worship

The scripture is more than a visible focal point for Sikh devotion, though to sit for a time in a gurdwara, view its centrality and watch men and women bowing reverently in front of it is probably the best position from which to begin to understand its significance. The Guru Granth Sahib so dominates Sikh ritual and Sikh theology that it forms a recurrent theme in this book. In this section we shall confine ourselves to noting how the Guru Granth has taken the place of the living Gurus.

In 1920 an incident occurred that demonstrates the way in which the Adi Granth holds the position of Guru in another respect. The custom of consulting the scripture is a regular act. At the end of a service the Adi Granth will be opened at random and a portion read. Many Sikhs do this daily, regarding the verses as word from God which they will find helpful during the day. This is called *vak lao*, taking advice. The 1920s was a period when large groups of Punjabi outcastes were becoming Sikhs or Christians in the hope of improving social status. Whilst commensality is practised by Sikhs, the question of allowing so-called untouchable converts to offer *karah parshad* presented a new issue as hitherto most Sikhs had been of a higher status. Members of the Singh Sabha reform movement advocated the right of the converts to offer *karah parshad* but organizations are as often influenced by traditions which have accrued as by the doctrine and in the nineteenth century Sikhism had often been introspective. In 1920 a large number of outcastes were initiated into the Khalsa. Afterwards they went to the Golden Temple to offer *karah parshad*. Traditionalists wished to refuse it; the reformers pressed the principle that *karah parshad* should be given by all Khalsa members. It was agreed that advice should be taken from the Guru and therefore

a copy was opened at random. The passage which was turned up read:

Upon the worthless God bestows grace, if they will serve the True Guru. Exalted is the service of the True Guru, to hold in remembrance the divine name. God offers grace and mystic union. We are worthless sinners yet the True Guru has drawn us to that blissful union. (AG G38:M3)

The words of Guru Amar Das, denoted in the Guru Granth Sahib by the figure 'three', clinched the issue. Clearly the Guru had accepted the converts. The *sangat* followed his direction and accepted *karah parshad* from the hands of untouchables.

The Dasam Granth

Guru Gobind Singh was a prolific poet and seems to have been equally at home in Persian, Sanskrit or Punjabi. He included none of his writings in the *Adi Granth* and at the time of his death they were scattered in various parts of India. The Guru himself does not seem to have attempted to compile them into an anthology and certainly he would not have approved any suggestion that they might rival the *Guru Granth Sahib*. The corpus of Guru Gobind Singh's writings, which bears the title *Dasam Granth* is the product of the devoted labours of Bhai Mani Singh and was not completed until 26 years after the Guru's death in 1734. It includes a number of compositions written by poets who were in the service of his court.

The Gurmukhi script is used throughout the book irrespective of whether the language be Sanskrit, Persian, Hindi or Punjabi. The form of verse and the type of poetry is as variable as the language.

There are more than 2,000 poems in the twelve sections of the 1428-page book. The first is the *Jap*, a meditative hymn reminiscent of the *Japji* of Guru Nanak. It begins:

God has no marks or symbols, is of no colour, of no caste, not even of any lineage. God's form, hue, shape and garb cannot be described by anyone. God is immovable, self-existent; shines in self-splendour; No one can measure God's might. God is the king of kings, the lordly Indra, of countless Indras; the supreme Ruler of the three worlds of gods, men and demons, Even the meadows and the woodlands cry in God's praise, Infinite, Infinite! who can tell the number of your names? I will try to relate your names according to your deeds.

In the second hymn, entitled Akal Ustat, the Praise of the Lord, there are verses which indicate that the early spirit of Sikhism still lived; it stated that behind the diversities of religion lay the oneness of God:

By shaving his head a man hopes to become a holy monk. Another sets up as a Yogi or as some other kind of ascetic. Some call themselves Hindus, others call themselves Muslims. Among these are shiahs and also sunnis. Yet humanity is one race in all the world. God as Creator and God as Good, God in Bounty and God in Mercy is all one God. Even in our errors we should not separate God from God! Worship the one God, The one divine Guru for all people. They all have the same form, they all have the same soul.

Some of the poems are very different. Vichitar Natak, the Wonderful Drama, outlines the Guru's family history, reforming mission and war-like exploits. The Zafarnama is a letter in Persian written to the Emperor Aurangzeb. In it the charge of deliberately provoking war is rejected but a doctrine of the just war is laid down:

When all efforts to restore peace prove useless and no words avail, lawful is the flash of steel, it is right to draw the sword.

Together with the thirty-three verses in praise of the Immortal One (Swayyas) the poems already mentioned probably constitute the best known and most important of the Guru's works. The Jap, some stanzas from the Akal Ustat and the thirty-three Swayyas are all used liturgically in the initiation ceremonies or other acts of worship, and are to be found in gutkas, small anthologies of hymns which many Sikhs possess and use for daily meditation.

In the Guru's own time other poems probably had a very strong appeal and significance but they fall into the class of occasional literature written to meet the needs of the day which once past makes their appeal diminish with time. Of such is Pakhian Charitra, a compendium of medieval legends and romances reinterpreted for use as the means of communicating homespun wisdom and ethical teaching, though a few passages from this 579-page section of over 400 stories are used in the amrit initiation ceremony. With Chaubis Avtar, based on the incarnation of Shiva, and Chandi Charitra, the exploits of Chandi, goddess of war, Pakhian Charitra is to be seen as a method which the Guru used to express Sikh ideas through the Hindu and local Punjabi culture. Instead of rejecting folk tales and myths out

of hand he reinterpreted them, hoping to wean those who had been brought up in them from the old traditions to the ideals of Sikhism. Sometimes in doing so he also explained mythological and historical references which are to be found in the Adi Granth. However, the unity of the Dasam Granth is only one of presumed authorship and of the Gurmukhi script. Its language, purpose and form are diverse and it must not be regarded as anything more than an anthology.