

# **DRIVEN TOWARDS FUNDAMENTALISM - EK GRANTH, EK PANTH, EK MARYADA**

by Harnaak Singh      23-Dec-2016

## **Abstract**

This article comments on the article “Driven towards fundamentalism” by Dr Balwant Singh Bains (the author) in Asia Samachar of 15-Dec-2016.

We look at what a Sikh is from the Gurbani perspective. Then we will delve into the meaning of panth (Utam Panth) prescribed in Gurbani and look at sub-panths which show diversity in the panth. We show the Ek-Ek-Ek ideology (Ek Granth Ek Panth Ek Maryada) espouses a SINGLE SYSTEM which is at odds with the diversity of the panth. Additionally it calls for removal of all spiritual scriptures and watering down of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji (SGGS Ji).

According to Gurbani a Sikh is one who follows the teachings in the SGGS Ji, takes the SGGS Ji as the living Guru and believes in a unitary creator God.

Our Gurus teaching is “diversity with purity” – which essentially means “unity in diversity” to attain truth as a goal. The concept and ethos of UNITY IN DIVERSITY of which the fulcrum is DIVERSITY is not subscribed to in the Ek-Ek-Ek Ideology.

The Sikh Panth, broadly, in SGGS Ji encompasses those who abide by the teachings of our Guru. The key in these is to overcome the 5 evils or vices and the remembrance of God as well as the acceptance of a unitary God, the creator of the whole creation with the collective power of creating, preserving and destroying. There are sub-panths with minor variations in their paths but largely follow the main panth. These have been co-existing for hundreds of years evidencing unity in diversity in the Sikh Panth.

The Ek- Ek- Ek ideology is going in the direction of Kala Afghana Ideology because of their views and preaching. This ideology is creating a divide in the Sangat and is eventually going to break down the diversity. This Ek-Ek-Ek ideology calls for our spiritual parmanic texts, the Dasam Granth, Vaaran Bhai Gurdas, compilations by Bhai Nand Lal plus other supporting literature that are used as reference to understand Gurbani, TO BE DISCARDED, citing Vedic influence as the reason. Once this is achieved they will then call for removal of Vedic references in the SGGS Ji watering down its spiritual wealth.

## **A Sikh, the Ethos and Fulcrum – Unity in Diversity**

We agree with the author that this concept of Ek-Granth Ek Panth Ek Maryada (Ek-Ek-Ek) is driven towards fundamentalism. Fundamentalism causes divisiveness as the adherents do not accept any other view but theirs. It is sort of the common phrase MY WAY OR THE HIGHWAY.

It is assumed that in the article that “the Sikh” is according to Gurbani. “Sikh [ਸਿਖ](#)” in the broad sense means a disciple, student or a learner (Uni Patiala Dict, SGGS Ji Gurmukhi-Eng Dict). It is not specific to spiritual wisdom. However according to Gurbani a Sikh is one

who follows the teachings in the SGGS Ji (the requirements of a Sikh are stated in the SGGS Ji ), takes the SGGS Ji as the living Guru (which is collectively the Jot ਜੋਤ of the ten Gurus Guru Nanak through to Guru Gobind Singh).

We concur that the ethos and fulcrum of the slogan implies a SINGLE SYSTEM, as stated in the article, that is at odds with the teachings of our GuruJi, which was “diversity with purity” – which essentially means “unity in diversity” to attain truth as a goal. The concept and ethos of UNITY IN DIVERSITY of which the fulcrum is DIVERSITY is not subscribed to in the Ek-Ek-Ek Ideology.

That Guru Nanak denounced any form of identity is true in the acceptance of diversity. Wherever he went he wore the “robes popular in the respective faiths and cultures” (reference “Many Ways to Love the Creator – Unity in Diversity” by Harbans Lal at [LINK: https://gurvichar.com/2016/12/05/there-are-many-ways-to-love-the-creator-unity-in-diversity/](https://gurvichar.com/2016/12/05/there-are-many-ways-to-love-the-creator-unity-in-diversity/)). This basic intent was to blend with the locale; essentially “unity in diversity”. He was not “narrow minded” as the author points out, accepting the teaching of the other faiths, but however speaking out against ritualistic and “empty” practices that do not benefit the inner-self to discard the five evils or vices. Here again the ethos “unity in diversity” with diversity as fulcrum is clearly evident.

## **Guru Gobind Singh and Sri Guru Granth Sahib and Ek Granth**

Guru Gobind Singh reproduced and got written the “lost writings”, there being no re-writing. He however added compositions from Guru Teg Bahadur and his composition, a verse in the Dohra, in the name of Ninth Nanak.

As to the Guruship of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, Kavi Santokh Singh in Gur Partap Suraj Granth Rut 5 Chapter 15, Verse 4 states what Guru Gobind said. English translation from “An Introduction to Sri Guru Granth Sahib” by Gurbachan Singh Talib.

*ਦਸ ਅਵਤਾਰ ਗੁਰ ਏਕ ਸਮ, ਜਯੋਂ ਜਾਨੈਂ ਜੋ ਮੇਰ।*

*ਇਕ ਦਸਮੇ ਗੁਰ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਜੀ, ਬਾਣੀ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਹੇਰਿ ॥੪॥*

*Whoever holds, belief in the ten Gurus as one in spirit, is, my true disciple.*

*Behold ye the Guru Granth as the eleventh Guru, Its Bani, too as the holy Preceptor.*

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is the embodiment of our Gurus and is our living Guru today. We do not believe that any Sikh denies this. But this statement is not mutually exclusive of any other Granth.

Therefore we have four canonised parmanic scriptures or Granths. Our Gurus canonised SGGS Ji, Dasam Granth, Vaaran Bhai Gurdas and compositions of Bhai Nand Lal as parmanic compositions.

The EK-Ek-Ek ideology adherents claim that the verse

ਗੁਰੂ ਪੂਰਾ ਪੂਰੀ ਜਾ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਅਨਿਕ ਗੁਣਾ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਜਾਹਿ ਨ ਗਣੇ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ SGGS 805 Bilawal M5

*Perfect is the Bani, the Word of the Perfect Guru. His Virtues are so many, they cannot be counted. //1//Pause//*

implies “Ek Granth”. They have, BASED ON THIS VERSE and the word “SAREY ਸਾਰੇ” in another verse, derived this conclusion.

On this we wish to allude to the following. Sikh Vichaar Forum (SVF) audio by Dr. Karminder Singh, who very strongly promulgates the Ek-Ek-Ek ideology, posted at Asia Samachar dated 13-Nov-2016; states

*“Many a time our Ragis, Kathakaars, and Kirtanias take a single verse and make just about anything out of it to establish a point of their personal choosing”*

and goes on to state

*“...we should never attempt to use single verses from Gurbani”*

and then add

*“We SHOULD BE SUSPICIOUS on those who insist on taking just one or two verses and try to explain major spiritual principles to us based on that one or two single verses”.*

SVF seems to espouse one thing and do another. SVF, as the phrase goes DO NOT WALK THE TALK.

Can we TRUST what the Ek-Ek-Ek ADHERENTS ESPOUSE about the Ek-Ek-Ek ideology HINGED ON A COUPLE OF VERSES, especially since they themselves say that

*“WE SHOULD BE SUSPICIOUS....on those ... on taking one or two verses...to explain major spiritual principles...”?*

Are they taking the Sangat down the “bottomless pit” of spirituality so to speak; ending up nowhere?

The call for the Ek Granth is also not in line with our Gurus teachings. Nowhere in the above SGGS verses, is stated that SGGS Ji is the ONLY GRANTH though it is clear that SGGS Ji is our LIVING GURU, the embodiment of the TEN Gurus. This is what Guru Gobind Singh stated. Guru Gobind Singh never stated SGGS Ji is the ONLY GRANTH.

## What is a panth?

The word “PANTH” generally means a way, a religious order, essentially a path one follows. Broadly “panth” in SGGS Ji means those who abide by the teachings of Guru, which are essentially words from God. The key in these is to overcome the 5 evils or vices and the remembrance of God as well as the acceptance of a unitary God, the creator of the whole creation with the collective power of creating, preserving and destroying. Similarly in the Dasam Granth (DG), e.g. DG Pana 136 Stanza 29 ([searchgurbani.com](http://searchgurbani.com)) the role is to induct people to the righteous path and stop them from evil actions (again the 5 evils refer here). This is the panth (Utam Panth) of all mankind that follows the righteous path. In our scriptures the members of this panth, commonly termed Gurmukh in the SGGS Ji, are those who have sanctioned the 5 virtues (i.e. rid themselves of the 5 evils). In the DG the five evils are well expounded for example in Tav Prasad Sawaeeyay these are explained with examples, while Chaupee is the supplication to God to protect one from the 5 evils.

Now let's look at the next level of panth. Within the Sikh Panth there are a number of paths (sort of sub-panths). For example there are Taksali Sikhs, Nihang Sikhs, Sikhs who follow the Akhand Kirtanias, Sikhs who follow the Sant Deras. They can be seen as sort of “a panth” since there are slight variations in their paths, though by and large they follow the teachings of the SGGS Ji. They have co-existed in this diverse form for hundreds of years while following their slightly different Maryadas productively. In fact Roger Ballard in the article “The Oxford Handbook of Sikh Studies: Reflections on the current State of Play in an Emergent Discipline” (Center for Applied South Asian Studies online article see <http://www.casas.org.uk/papers/religion.html>) highlights this diversity. He further points out that this, in essence, is preached in SGGS Ji by Guru Amar Das (SGGS 442 M:4 Asa Chant Stanza 4). We quote Roger Ballard

*“The vast ocean is filled with treasuries of jewels and pearls. This is attainable by those who are devoted to Gurbani.”*

*The metaphor here is well understood: the Ocean in question is nothing less than the created Universe, of which we are all integral components, regardless of our interests and orientations. As they go on to observe*

*Those individuals, who dive deeply into that ocean, through reflection and meditation, find within themselves, and see within others, a treasure trove of gems and realize gain and true spiritual insight.*

*Others who remain on the surface level of that ocean may be dealing with the literal sense of the sacred utterance, without having any deeper understanding of its meaning.*

This is unity in diversity.

## **Threat to Diversity and Philosophy of the Sikh Panth**

The author's alarm is genuine but we do not know what direction this Ek-Panth Maryada is going to take.

As pointed out above, the present system is a diverse system where the highest panth is that in accordance with the teaching of SGGS Ji as discussed above. This prescribes the development of our inner self. The next levels the sub-panths are diverse and it is up to one to choose according to personal preference. Note that spiritual development is an individual endeavour and it is up to the individual, as to the path to be taken. One should not force the path of one's choice onto another. It will never benefit anyone.

One thing for sure is that this concept of Ek-Panth if allowed to eventuate is going to break down this panthic diversity and result in a divide and chaos in the panth. In fact this is already taking place in North America and now also in Malaysia. In fact there is a socio-political angle to this drive. Please refer article "What is Ek Panth? A Threat to our Scriptures and Diversity" at LINK: <https://gurvichar.com/2016/12/20/what-is-ek-panth-a-threat-to-our-scriptures-and-diversity/> for further discussion on this.

The author, mentions rigidity presently though we see that there is no rigidity. The very evidence of the diverse sub-panths as stated above co-exist is evidence of this. There is nothing stopping one from following one or the other or none for that matter, spiritual development being an individual endeavour. The choice is personal. Neither are the diverse panths forcing anyone to follow them. They have co-existed for hundreds of years. However the introduction of the Ek-Panth concept is damaging this co-existence by denouncing the practice of the others.

One comment by the author, about children becoming fanatic after attending the samelan and terrorising their own homes, maybe an overreaction. Here it is important for the parents to appreciate and accept the path the children are taking and help them along instead of opposing them. Terror starts when we oppose. We have personally seen families where this has occurred and there was no terror because the parents accepted and encouraged the children even though their path was different. See how there can be unity in diversity.

Our analysis reveal that the Ek- Ek- Ek ideology is going in the direction of Kala Afghana Ideology because of their views and preaching. This Ek-Ek-Ek ideology calls for all spiritual parmanic texts, the Dasam Granth, Vaaran Bhai Gurdas, compilations by Bhai Nand Lal plus other supporting literature that are used as reference to understand Gurbani, TO BE SIDELINED. It is claimed that the writers of these literature were influenced by Vedic Philosophy and hence the literature has to be DISCARDED. Once the removal of spiritual texts and reference literature, is achieved the SGGS Ji will be reinterpreted to absolve it of all reference to Vedic Mythology watering down its spiritual wealth. This ideology is derived from North America as we can extrapolate from Roger Ballard's paper. The attached picture "If the Anti-Dsmee Nindak's have their way" clearly shows their ideology and the eventual state of affairs.

The author is correct; the people shouting the slogans of "Ek-Panth Ek-Granth Ek-Maryada" are leading in the direction of destroying our scriptures and supporting literature, including



the SGGS Ji, eventually leading to a watered down Philosophy devoid of the “SAINT SOLDIER” concept which took our Gurus more than 200 years to create.

### IF THE ANTI-DASMEE NINDAKs HAVE THEIR WAY

ANTI-DSMEE NINDAKs (ADNs) with the teaching of their Gurus Kala Afgana and his cronies e.g. Darshan Singh (Ragi), Devinder Singh Chahal (author of Jap IUS) and others.		STATUS QUO from our FOREFATHERS TIME
<b>SPIRITUAL AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS</b> (rectangular boxes are used to depict relative size)		
A fraction of the SGGS left	Ek Granth 666 <input type="text"/>	SGGS 1430 Pages <input type="text"/>
	Pages ?	DG 1428 Pages <input type="text"/>
Vaaran Bhai Gurdas and other references rejected because they are claimed to have Vedantic influence	Vaaran Bahi Gurdas ✗ Supporting reference ✗	Vaaran Bahi Gurdas <input type="text"/> References <sup>Note 1</sup> <input type="text"/>
	Banee of our Gurus	Banee of our Gurus
ADNs reject Banee of Bhagats	Banee of Bhagats ✗	Banee of Bhagats
	Bhatts	Bhatts
	Sikhs	Sikhs
ADNs reject mythology and say it is RUBBISH	Mythological references ✗	Mythological references
	Raagmala ✗	Raagmala
ADNs dispute the definition in SGGS	Amrit Vela ✗	Amrit Vela
ADNs denigrate Jup to Ratna	Mediation/Jup/Chant ✗	Mediation/Jup/Chant
Replace with Ek Oh Beant	Ek Oangkar ✗	Ek Oangkar
ADNs reject this concept	Reincarnation ✗	Reincarnation
<b>Note 1:</b> These are spiritual reference documents to learn Gurbani e.g. Prof Sahib's teeka + other teekas, Mahan Kosh etc.		
<b>RELIGIO-CULTURAL AND SHARDA BASED ACTIVITIES</b> <sup>Note 2</sup>		
ADNs say these are rituals	Akhand Path ✗	Akhand Path
ADNs say these are rituals	Sangrand ✗	Sangrand
ADNs say these are rituals	Nishan Sahib ceremony ✗	Nishan Sahib ceremony
ADNs say these are rituals	Divali ✗	Divali
ADNs are going after every thing ?	... and others ✗	... and others
ADNs question the dates	????	Events related to our Gurus e.g. Guru Nanak's birthday
<b>Note 2:</b> Our Guru's, evidenced by Vaaran Bhai Gurdas (Vaar 19), teach us to practice life as a householder in society, working hard, experiencing happiness and suffering alike, partaking religio-cultural social activities and accepting destiny but remaining virtuous and achieving God realisation. On the other hand the ADNs reject all these. Life would revert to the SANYASI life-style being preached by the then ideology when Guru Nanak came into this world. This is the very life-style our Gurus rejected. <b>Do they really understand our Guru's teachings?</b>		

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## Conclusion

According to Gurbani a Sikh is one who follows the teachings in the SGGS Ji, takes the SGGS Ji as the living Guru and believes in a unitary creator God.

Our Gurus teaching was “diversity with purity” – which essentially means “unity in diversity” to attain truth as a goal. The concept and ethos of UNITY IN DIVERSITY of which the fulcrum is DIVERSITY is not subscribed to in the Ek-Ek-Ek Ideology.

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Thank You for reading on. ਗਲਤੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਖਿਮਾ.....

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh.

(Audio of this summary is available in the main article)