

2. If such documents do in fact exist, are we in a position to produce them, and so justify all the changes that have been made ?
3. If we are not in a position to support our claim for all the changes we have introduced, but wish to justify a few of them, what documents and arguments are we going to forward for this justification ?
4. Would it be those Ginan Books which were published after the late forties, embellished with unauthorized and unwarranted changes, or
5. Would it be those unreliable and unauthorized hand-written 'Chopdas' which were floating around before the time of Mukhi Lalji Devraj's publications ?

6. Can we really consider these hand-written documents, which have not been proven to be reliable and authentic documents by any logical or scientific test, as our genuine documents ?
7. Do we really consider those Ginan Books, published after the late forties with significant variations in their texts, as our genuine documents ?
8. Has the Paris Conference granted its recognition to all such documents ?
9. Because we have not made any mention in our preface about the Paris Conference decision to make corrections on the basis of Hindu Elements, do we want to imply that all Ginanic literature published between Mukhi Lalji Devraj's earliest edition (1899) and the Ismailia Association for India's early 50s publications contained faulty elements,

and now with the fresh discovery of some old and new materials, we have corrected those faulty elements, and that too by the authority granted by Khudawand Mowlana Hazar Imam at the Paris Conference ?

These are the fundamental questions, and if we are not in a position to give satisfactory and logical answers to them, our claim of having examined all available manuscripts and old and new documents, and reflecting something of those documents in our present editions, will not carry any conviction. As a matter of fact, it will prove to be a carrier of more complications and it will be counter to the basic aim of the Paris Conference resolution.

It will readily be observed from the enclosed review-sheets that we have not questioned the truth of any modifications or corrections in our modern editions which are in accord with Mukhi Laljibhai Devraj's Ginan Publication; it is because this publication is the real successor of our primordial Ginanic literature which was handed down to us through the generations directly from our Pirs and it is impossible to determine the authenticity or originality of any Ginanic literature without having

consulted this publication. Because of this indisputable fact, we have made that publication as a basis for comparison, and a person who knows the background history of this publication would never disagree with our action.

THE BACKGROUND HISTORY OF THE EARLY GINANIC PUBLICATIONS

Mukhi Lalji Devraj was not only a publisher of the early Ginanic literature, but he was also, in his own right, a research scholar in the field of Ginanic literature. He was the pioneer in publishing this literature, at the end of eighteenth century, in the systematic Khojki (so called Sindhi) type-set form.

It is especially note-worthy that when Mukhi Devraj took up this momentous task of making a systematic publication of our Ginanic literature, he did not simply pick-up some hand-written documents scattered around him, and sent them to the press. Rather, he took the hard-featured pain to bring together all available genuine documents from across the country, and examined and re-examined

each and every item to make sure that he published the genuine, authentic and reliable material.

During the time of this publication, there were two different sources for obtaining manuscripts of our Ginans. The first popular source was 'Ginan-na-Chopda', written by various individual Ismailis who used to write these Ginans in order to preserve and increase their own knowledge of Ginans. They used to write such 'Chopdas' to fulfill their own personal hobby of compiling religious literature, but also considered this work as a part of their religious devotion. The other aim of writing such Ginans was to have their own exclusive Ginan Book at home. Sometimes they used to copy different Ginans from the different books, previously written by some other Bhagats. Also, they used to write some Ginans from memory. In this process, they sometimes created discrepancies, sacrificed accuracy, and involuntarily adulterated the text of Ginans.

As against this popular source of hand-written documents, there was yet another source for obtaining reliable and authentic manuscripts, and that was related with our primordial system of Dawa, established by our Pirs, before the advent of our Imams in India.

We can find much historical evidence for the fact that our Pirs, during the time of their mission activities in India, used to send their companions, sadats and vakils, all across the country for the cause of our Holy Mission,⁹ and with them they used to send their authentic versions of the Holy Ginans for Jamati record and recitation.

The bearers of this Ginanic Literature had copies made under their direct supervision, and these copies were being maintained by the designated authorities of Jamats, who eventually used to transfer them to their successors. Some times this office remained in one and the same family and hence, these documents used to be handed over in the same family from generation to generation.

During the time of Mukhi Lalji Devraj some of these noble families still had such documents in their possession. The treasury office of the Imam-e-Zaman also preserved such documents. The Daftarkhana of Bombay Darkhana also possessed as many as 200 volumes of such documents dating back to the time of Imam Shah Hasanali and Mukhi Ladakbhai Haji. Some of the prominent Jamats like Junagadh and Rajkot also had such documents with them. Mukhi Lalji Devraj tried to collect all such documents from wherever possible and started working on the final draft of his publication.

All those documents, which were having their roots in the mission net-work of our Pirs, were regarded as 'Official Documents' by Mukhi Lalji Devraj, and that is because his intensive and profound investigation had proved the fact that the Ginans which were being recited all across the country at that time were in agreement with those of the official documents, and where there was a little variation in the recitation, such as in a small section of the Jamat in some remote area, was due to those of 'Domestic Chopdas', and such variation had not gained country-wide recognition.

After having studied this situation carefully, he set out a criterion for examining all available documents and separated all unreliable documents from the official documents. In doing so, he sought confirmation and legitimacy of his action from those highly qualified experts in this field who had devoted their whole life to the study of Ginanic literature, so as to avoid any injustice to this tradition on his part. Finally, upon universal acceptance of his action, Mukhi Lalji Devraj started publishing Ginanic literature in a systematic form.

More than eighty years have passed since this publication, and intensive research and further study of this literature has since occurred, but no one has so far produced a single document which can logically be proven to be more authentic and more accurate than the Mukhi Devraj publication.

The Khoja Sindhi Press, the Recreation Club Institute and the Ismailia Association for India were the legitimate successors of Mukhi Devraj's literary activities. They produced a vast and valuable treasure of Ginanic Literature on the basis of Mukhi Devraj's

publications, which had gained Hazrat Imam Sultan Mohammed Shah's recognition and appreciation through the firmans specifically made to these and other institutions.

The detailed account of Mukhi Devraj's publication has been given here so as to explain why we have made this publication the basis of our comparison. It is hoped that this account will help to guide the course of those who are really in search of authentic and reliable documents. As a matter of fact, Mukhi Devraj's work is the one and only publication which may be safely taken as an authoritative and bonafide source of Ginanic literature, and only that source, in a real sense, can be the absolute basis of comparison for all Ginanic Literature. It is an indisputable fact that the literature, which has been worthy to gain the recognition from the Imam of the time can certainly be worthy of being a yard-stick to measure the authenticity of other publications.

The account of Mukhi Laljibhai Devraj's publication which is given here was related to the signatory of this paper by Alijah Valimohamed

Nanji Hooda, who was popularly known as 'Vali Master' and was closely attached to Mukhi Devraj's publication activities for several years. He rendered a magnificent service to the field of religious publications and succeeded Mukhi Lalji Devraj in continuing the same activities with the Recreation Club Institute, which was ultimately converted into the Ismailia Association for India, and was eventually to become the pioneer institute of all other Ismailia Associations the world over. Alijah V.N. Hooda deserves a lot of credit for publishing vast treasures of Ginanic literature and Religious Education text-books under the banner of the Recreation Club, and later, of the Ismailia Association for India. He also played a significant role in the publications of the Ismaili Society and translated many useful books written by Dr. W. Ivanow into the Gujrati language. He was also the editor of some of the most popular magazines during his life time. 'The Ismaili' and 'Ayna' were most prominent amongst them.

This was all about the authentic and official documents which we have used as our yard-stick throughout the process of our comparison. As we have

already stated, we observed during this process that there are numerous corrections and amendments that replace or otherwise modify words, phrases or stanzas which are made WITHOUT A SLIGHTEST PRESENCE OF DIRECT OR INDIRECT HINDU ELEMENTS in the original; and there are also such corrections and amendments that replace or otherwise modify words, phrase or stanzas which are MISTAKENLY CONSTRUED TO BE HINDU ELEMENTS, or in other words, they are made under the FALSE ASSUMPTION OF HINDU ELEMENTS.

In making our point clear about the corrections made under the false assumption of Hindu Elements, we would like to make mention of our earlier paper, submitted at the International conference of Ismailia Associations, held at Nairobi, in February 1979, (see Appendix II) and reiterate that :

"Our Ginanic languages have an idiosyncrasy of their own, a mode of expression and a poetic style, which is unique and incomparable; and because of this unique, artful, divinely inspired independent style and mode of expression, our Holy Ginans are also a Divine literary corpus in its own right, with all the honours and dignity that pertain to any other Divine literature.

They express the eternal message of divine will
and wisdom equally to any other expression of the kind."

"Most unfortunately, in recent times, a tendency has
grown to distort its poetic beauty and its meanings by
changing or mutilating its Sanskrit-Prakrit original
words into Persian-Arabic base words. It is the general
understanding and belief of those who have advocated
such changes in our 'Wonderful Tradition' that since the
words originated from the Sanskrit language they must
symbolise or must have a Hinduistic connotation and
in order to correct the so called 'Hindu Element' and
to prove themselves non-Hindu or 'Good Muslims' have
switched or exchanged or even mutilated the Sanskrit based
words to some Arabic or Persian substitutes."

"In other words it is their contention that in order
to exhibit a so called 'Islamic Spirit' in life or in the
faith, Sanskrit words or terminologies from our Holy
Ginans must be discarded, or replace such words or

terminologies by some Arabic or Persian originated words or if not able, then simply altogether reject the stanza or the Ginan as a whole, all this at the cost of the poetic and literary beauty, but even more, at the cost of the eternal message contained therein."

"Regrettably, the advocates of this Arabic-Persian languages have failed to understand the fact that the mode of expression of any particular language, has in actual fact nothing to do with the Truth or the Message as expressed in any religion."

Members of our Jamat who have been able to inspire their lives with the meaning of our Holy Ginans; who have been able to understand the significance of Imamat and the secret doctrine of Marifat from our Holy Ginans; who have understood the true meaning of the Holy Quran as well as the true meaning of religion through our Ginans; who have admired and loved the divinely inspired poetic beauty and the well-chosen ornamental words that express deep feeling and noble thoughts in a beautiful language;

and who have whole heartedly accepted Khudawand Mowlana Hazar Imam's Holy firman to hold to this tradition 'through the ages and from generation to generation' have, ever since our first attempt at making corrections in our Holy Ginans, been asking one question :

"Why are we distorting our wonderful tradition by making such unwarranted alterations in our Ginans"? They have been given one simple answer :

"We are making corrections in order to remove Hindu Elements from our Ginans. These 'Hindu Elements' have created such a self-imposed illusion in our minds that whatever is beyond our ability to appreciate or understand in our Holy Ginans has been labelled as 'Hindu Elements'; it is, however important to note that no one has so far produced a precise definition of what have we been calling 'Hindu Elements' and what would qualify as such. In the absence of such a working definition, changes have been made that are clearly arbitrary and random. In other words, our Ginanic tradition is at the whims of individual inspiration and interpretation, and those who wielded the pen did so with a heavy pen, making 'corrections' to suit their own will and wisdom.

As we have stated on many occasions, we most sincerely respect the Paris Conference resolution and readily admit that Hindu Elements should be removed from our Holy Ginans. We do not want even a slight trace of anti-Islamic Teaching to remain in our Holy Ginans; but, at the same time, we do not want this precious heritage to be destroyed under the false assumption of Hindu Elements. We wish to save all those Ginans which are being aimlessly 'corrected' and mercilessly rejected under the false classification of Hindu Elements. We regard such action as a persistent insult to the authors of our Ginans, and it is an unjust accusation of their work, not to mention, a fundamental challenge to the system of our Piratan.

As already stated, almost none of the corrections which have been made in our modified editions are found to be legitimate. No one would risk asserting that these corrections have been made solely on the basis of some old and authentic documents, but it will be maintained that they were necessary in order to eliminate Hindu Elements. Should such a claim be made in order to substantiate all additions, omissions and alterations which have been made so far, and which are going to take place in our forthcoming editions, then we most respectfully seek clarification for the following questions :

1. Do we have a specific definition for describing Hindu Elements in our Holy Ginans ?
2. Have we applied a definite criterion to judge Hindu Elements in our Ginans ?
3. Do we consider some profound expressions, which are generally used in a literary or poetic language, to be Hindu Elements ?
4. Do we consider some common expressions of our day-to-day language as part of Hindu Elements ?
5. Do we consider the stories, the metaphors, the allegories and the parables through which the fundamental principles of Islam and Ismailism are presented in our Holy Ginans to be Hindu Elements ?