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THE ETHICAL AND POLITICAL DIMENSIONS OF DIALOGUE

(1) The Situation after 11 September 2001

There is an extensive body of writing on interreligious dialogue. Works in this field tend to consider two or more religions, such as Islam and Christianity, understanding them as more or less developed systems and coherent organisms. They tend also to assert the need for adherents of the various faiths to relate to one another on an individual or group basis. Without such dialogue, it is categorically stated, there can be no peace. There are also detailed discussions of themes such as "characteristics of dialogue," "anxieties over dialogue," "developing a capacity for dialogue," and "dialogue and global ethics." Such dialogue is then presented as firmly based in the authoritative texts of the different religions.

Here, however, we shall consciously be taking a different approach. By explaining certain basic concepts we shall first attempt to achieve some understanding of the multilayered realities that are today denoted by the terms "Muslims" and "Islam." Then we shall describe certain underlying tendencies in the attitudes of non-Muslims to Muslims in Europe today. We shall also consider what our responses should be in view of our religious and ethical responsibilities as Christians and citizens. These discussions are offered as a contribution toward the goal of the respectful and just coexistence of peoples and groups of different cultures and religions. Such coexistence assumes an active recognition of human rights and also requires a process of honest exchange over the religious experience

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33. Al-Gazali, *Kimiya-e-Saadat*, p. 370.
34. *Janam Sakhi*, B40 F. 154b.
35. B.Gl. 1:44 GNSR, pp. 35, 142 etc.
36. *Janam Sakhi*, B40.
37. *Janam Sakhi*, B 40 (Eng) p. 50n.
38. *Asrar al Tasawwuf*, Lahore, 1925 pp. 10-11 and Fatima Hussain, *The Chishtis during the Delhi Sultanate; A Balance between ideal and Practice*, Phd thesis, 2002, Jawahar Lal Nehru University, New Delhi.
39. Amir Khwurd, *Siyar-al-Auliya*, Lahore, re-print 1978, p.89.
40. Refer Amir Khwurd, *Siyar al-Auliya*, Lahore, re print 1978, p 63, 204 etc, & Zia al-Din Barani, *Tarikh-e-Firoz Shahi*, p. 344.
41. Founded by Abd al-Qadir Jilani.

10. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol. I, English tr, Guru Bachan Singh Talib, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1988, p.1.
11. *Suhi*, Guru Arjun Dev, 50, p. 747.
12. C.S. Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, Cambridge University Press, reprint, 1999, p.8.
13. *Ibid*, p.6.
14. *Ibid*, p.6.
15. Gurucharan Singh, *Impact of Baba Farid on Punjab*, International Seminar March, 11-13 and 1991 on Sufism: History and Philosophy.
16. The earliest known Sufi treatise written in the subcontinent.
17. 'Amir Khwurd, *Siyar al-Auliya*, Lahore, re-print 1978, pp. 27 & 35.
18. *Ibid*, p. 55
19. Amir Khwurd, *Siyar al-Auliya*, Lahore, re-print 1978, p.67-68.
20. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol. I English tr, Guru Bachan Singh Talib, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1988 introduction, p. xxviii.
21. *Raga Majha*.
22. *Sufi Convents; place of dwelling of the Sufis and their followers*
23. Amir Hasan Sijzi, *Fawa'id al-Fu'ad*, p.74; Amir Khwurd, *Siyar-al-Auliya*, Lahore reprint 1978, pp. 86, 209 etc.
24. Amir Khwurd, *Siyar al-Auliya*, Lahore, re print 1978, p. 203-206.
25. *Ibid*, p. 139.
26. K.A. Nizami, *Life and Times of Shaikh Fariduddin*, p. 105.
27. Gurucharan Singh, *Impact of Baba Farid on Punjab*, International Seminar March, 11-13 and 1991 on Sufism: History and Philosophy, p.13.
28. Darshan Singh, *Sikh Religion, Democratic ideals and Institutions*, Oriented Publishers, New Delhi, 1979, p. 58.
29. *Ibid*, p. 150.
30. Qiwan Al-Aqaid, as reproduced in Qande Farsi, May, 1994, p. 79; also of Fatima Hussain's, *The Chishtis during the Delhi Sultanate; A Balance between ideal and practice*, Phd thesis 2002, p. 155-6.
31. W.H. McLeod, *Early Sikh Tradition*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1980 pp. 70-71.
32. Zia al-Din Barani, *Tarikh-I Firoz Shahi*, p. 433.

Sri Harmandar Sahib, popularly known as Darbar Sahib or Golden Temple of Amritsar in 1604. *Guru Granth Sahib* also includes hymns of 36 others Saints and Pirs.

The influence of Islam on Sikhism, especially through the Sufis and more so by Baba Farid is well understood. Guru Nanak lived during the close of the Sultanate and the dawn of the Mughal period. The religion of the rulers is difficult to be ignored, when it has so much to do with every day life. Not only was it a religion of the ruling class, but also a religion of the greatest ascetics of the time. These ascetics or Sufis not only led a simple life and engaged themselves towards the service the humanity, but also had the audacity to ignore royal overtures and in turn identified themselves with the masses and their problems. Their simple living and simple preaching had made a mark for themselves. Thus imbibing the verses of the Sufis and of their religion added strength to the new faith and was considered by the populace as an extension of the liberal faith of the Sufis. It emerged as a distinct faith at a later stage, probably due to political upheavals.

References

1. Sura Fateh, *Al-Quran* Sura 1.
2. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol. 1, English Tr, Guru Bachan Singh Talib, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1988. p.1.
3. Sura Ikhlas, *Al-Quran*, Sura CXII.
4. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol. 1, English tr, Guru Bachan Singh Talib, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1988, Intorducation, P. xxvii.
5. *Adigranth*, pp. 341, 1035-56.
6. Sura Waqia, *al-Quran*, Sura LVI.
7. Sura Maun, *al-Quran*, Surah CVII.
8. *Sri Guru Granth Sabib*, Vol. I English tr. Guru Bachan Singh Talib, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1988, p.1.
9. Surah Baiyina, *al-Quran*, Sura XCVIII.

describes Baba Farid is mentioned to be maintaining a rigorous ascetic discipline by carrying a wooden loaf (chapatti).³⁵ Nanak is said to have encountered Rukh al-Din, Sharaf al-Din and Baha al-Din Zakaria, all of whom had long predeceased the birth of Nanak.³⁶ Their names appear in the puratan Janamsakhis. Bhai Guru Das and Miharban Janamsakhi both describe encounters with Abd al-Qadir Jilani, the founder of Qadira order of Sufis. Santokh Singh refers to Shams al-Din Tabrizi, preceptor of Rumi.³⁷ B40 Janam Sakhi also mentions about Baba Ratan Haji, who is said to have met the Prophet and lead a life of 700 years and is buried at Tabir Hind, the modern day Batinda.³⁸

The concept of upholding of justice is also clearly seen in Sufi tradition. Once, Shaikh Qutub al-Din brought alive a man who was executed by the Sultanate³⁹ The Sufi Saints considered many of the acts of rulers oppressive and often rejected gifts from the Sultans⁴⁰ as they were from unlawful sources or non-Shariat sources. Pir Budhdhu Shah of Sadhaura, a Sufi, fought a battle in support of Guru Govind Singh along with his four sons and five hundred Muslim followers against the forces of Mughals, which also reflects their principle of upholding justice. This singular example shows that Islam can not be construed as a faith of aggressor, for Islam means "peace" and peace can not be achieved in an unjust way. Similarly, Sher Muhammad Khan, the Nawab of Maler had protested against the execution of Guru Govind Singh's children. The Philosophy of the Khalsa Panth was also similar. Thus, conviction in the oneness of mankind, as they are the children of one God. This Sufism and Sikhism coverage and cross rigid religious boundaries. This was probably why Hazrat Main Mir (1550-1635) the renowned Sufi saint of Qadiria Silsila⁴¹ was invited to lay the foundation stone of the Supreme Sikh Shrine,

Sufi tradition, mentioned in Sufi hagiography, further have been extensively used in *Janam Sakhis*, which narrate Sikh traditions. W.H. MC. Leod has dealt this aspect extensively in his work '*Constituent of the Janam Sakhis*'. The Janam Sakhis compilers appear to have followed the pattern as well as anecdotes of Sufi hagiography. The encounter of Sufis found in Sufi hagiography, has similar replica in Janam Sakhis. Guru Nanak is referred to as 'Baba Nanak' in the pattern of reference to 'Baba Farid'. Guru Nanak is attributed to have visited Mecca and other places in the same pattern as the Sufi saints are narrated to have visited in Sufi hagiography. A parallel can be drawn between the Sufi hagiography *tazkras malfuzat* literature and *Janam Sakhis*. Janamsakhis are loosely described as biographies of Nanak, many of which are considered spurious. Their importance lies in the insight they give us about the popular perceptions regarding Nanak and his new faith. W.H. Mcleod has highlighted the character of Janamsakhis. Sufi hagiography mentions about miracles including miraculous locomotion, levitation and instantaneous transportation (Tai-i-Safar) by closing of eyes. The story of moving mosque of Kaba illustrates this variety of locomotion.⁴³ Similarly Bhai Gurdas provides an example of levitation in his account of Baba Nanak as he ascended into the air during his visit to Baghdad. Tai-i-Safar is also used in Janamsakhis at occasions and there is mention of Guru Nanak's travel of hundred of miles instantaneously. The explanation to this miracle is conveniently found in Sufi Hagiography. Baba Farid is said to have been traveling this way.

Sufi impact on Sikhism is also apparent, as Guru Nanak is said to have encountered various Sufis, most of whom were dead long back. The encounter with Baba Farid prominent whereby the Janamsakhis,

and gurudwaras. While in the former there were provisions for *wazu* or ablutions³², which comprises of washing of face hand and feet etc., in the latter also there is provision of water for washing of hands and feet. This is typically mandatory for the followers or visitors there. Further, covering the head in the vicinity is also a convention. Covering the head with a handkerchief is thus a common practice at Sufi dargahs and gurudwaras.

The Sufis practiced *Sama*. *Sama* literally means hearing of music. Sufis organized sama with a view to inducing ecstasy (*wajd*). Al-Ghazali said: "For him whose heart is with the love of God, sama is momentous (muhi), because the fire (of love) is increased by it".³³, Later it took the form of *qawwali*. Bakti movement, which was inspired by the Sufi movement also followed suit and restored to kirtan, which was also sung in such a way as to attain ecstasy. In Sikhism also similar practice was followed. In Gurduwaras a band of musicians were employed who were called rababis. Rababis who were Muslims, were the principal singers at Darbar Sahib, Amritsar and other Gurdwaras till the days of partition. There are some verses attributed to Mardadana, which is symbolic of broad vision of Sikh religion which was influenced by Sufis who accepted to their fold both Hindus and Muslims. These rababis were Muslims who sang in the pattern of qawwals. However they used rabab, a musical instrument, then known in central asia, which later came to be known in North-West part of the sub-continent. Hamid Qalandar has made a mention of this instrument in his work *Khairul Majalis* while deliberating upon the concept of *sama*. Thus it leaves us to wonder whether the rababis were qawwals and participated in *sama*. Guru Nanak was born much later. The services of rababis were obtained subsequently.

The Sufis were probably the first ones to preach the concept of equality during medieval period, which was followed by Bhakti saints and taken to its highest manifestation by Sikhism. The concept manifested clearly in the concept of 'deg' and langar system of Sufism and carried forward by Sikhism. The following prayer of Sikhs, even today, reflect the concept of equality and service towards humanity in its correct perspective:

Those who shared their food (with others)

Applied the sword,

Ran the free food service

Consider their great work

And please, Khalsa, utter Wahe Guru

The egalitarian ethos of Sufism were adopted by the Bhakti saints and further developed by the Sikh faith. The concept 'Zakat' is popular among Muslims from the beginning. This concept was used in giving *futuh* to the Sufis for running of the langar. The amount fixed for this was of certain percent of the income of a person. The Sikh tradition of 'daswan' or parting ten percent of income towards community welfare including langar is akin to this. A linkage between the two thus appears logical even if borrowing of the concept is not indicated by authentic sources. The emergence of similar concepts in two different religions, however, could not be accidental.

The architecture of Gurudwaras is close to the architecture of the mosques and Sufi *khanqahs*. Both are influenced by Persian architecture, in which the dom is roundish and the structures have rounded pillars. There are also notable similarities in the etiquettes of visitation to Sufi *khanqahs* even mosques

Din Auliya.³⁰ Other princes and amirs also joined them in their service towards the faqirs.

Islam preached social equality, but the aristocratic character of the ruling class in India, especially after Balban, emphasized on clear class division based on blood. It was Sufism which fought the aristocratic character of the Muslim ruling class and the Hindu verna system prevalent during Medieval period. The mosques were open to Muslims and thus, there equality among the Muslims prevailed, but in the court there was clear class distinction. However, Sufi khanqah not only demolished the theme of inequality among Muslims alone, but also did not extend any special treatment to the Sultans, when they visited them.

The khanqah was open to all. All were treated alike. It reflected brotherhood of humanity. Large number of yogis, and untouchables flocked to the khanqahs. There are many anecdotes relating to encounters between the Sufis and yogis in which the latter attained higher status of spirituality due to their interaction with the Sufis. There are striking similarities of Sufi hagiography and janam sakhi style of Sikhism in this regard.³¹ Baba Farid learned yoga from yogis and practiced 'ardha mukhogami', the most difficult known yoga i.e. having one's feet tied on a tree and lettering the person up side down with his eyes peeping deep into a well for meditation. All were allowed into Sufi faith. One could retain one's religion and still be a companion of the Sufi. A low caste could become an important disciple. Similar practices are seen in Sikhism as well. Guru Nanak opposed caste system and so did subsequent Gurus. Thus in 1969, Bhai Jatia, a low caste was administered the oath of the creed and renamed Jiwan Singh.

these were institutions, popular among Muslims as well as Hindus, specially the lower strata of the society. Similar institutions sprang up among the Sikhs as well. As a result of Guru Nanak's travels and activities of successive Gurus, there sprang up, networks of temples and centers of Sikh missionary activities known as *sangats*. Sangats were placed under the charge of a leader known as Bhai-ji, the revered brother, who presided over their congregative and instructed them in their spiritual, religious, social and moral duties. Sangats were on the pattern of khanqahs. Bhaiji—similar to the Shaikh of a Khanqah.²⁸ The term pangat was also popular. The evolution of pangat was a practical demonstration of the high ideals of the gurus and it helped to inculcate into the minds of the Sikhs the spirit of the dignity of labour. The same is in vogue today also, as in Gurudwaras, people of all classes perform services to the visitors i.e. not only serving food, but also washing dishes and polishing shoes, which is remarkable.²⁹ This community service appears to be inspired by the practices of Sufi khanqahs where community service was extremely important. Indicative of abolition of taboos related to touch, smell, interdining etc—which had been stretched to absurd limits under the agies of Brahmanism. Great Sufis like Shaikh Burhan al-Din Gharib and Shaikh Nasir al-din Chiragh Delhi who led the society in spiritual terms respectively in the south and north after Shaikh Nizam al-Din Auliya, also performed similar services. The former was personally looking after the kitchen of Shaikh Nizam al-Din Auliya. Khizr Khan, the heir apparent of Sultan Alauddin Khilji and prince Sadi Khan are reported to have served the faqirs with their own hands, by washing their hands, serving food, sherbet and betel, when they commemorated their discipleship of Shaikh Nizam al-

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langarkhana twice a day i.e. at 11 am and 4 pm even today.

Khanaqahs were the only places where people of different shades of opinion, professing different religions and speaking different languages met. These Khanqahas became veritable centers of cultural synthesis where ideas were fully exchanged and a common medium for exchange was evolved.²⁶

The Sikh Gurus followed this practice as well. In exemplifying the creed of 'deg' Guru Govind Singh introduced twenty-four hour kitchen service at Anandpur Sahib, which was open to all without discrimination. The concept of deg and langar that was taken from Sufi traditions, in due course, has percolated down to almost all gurudwaras the world over. In fact, the concepts of langer and deg are more popular and more often practiced in Sikhism than Islam. Though this originated as Islamic traditions.

Ala-al-Din Sabir and Nizam al-Din Auliya had performed the duty of looking after the kitchens in Baba Farid's Kanqah before they founded and became heads of Sufi orders i.e. Sabiria and Nizamia orders of the Chisti silsilah. In similar tradition Angad and Amar Das performed the same service in their spiritual leaders' house before they were elevated as Gurus. Both Kanqah and langar belonged to a common pattern and their development in Sikh society, as institution unknown in Hindu society might not have been quite accidental.²⁷ There is also similarity between Udasi sect in Sikhism and Sabiria sect of Chishti Sufis, as both believed in seculsion.

Khanqas of the Sufi sheikhs spread throughout the length and breadth of the country by the end of the Sultanate period. By the time Guru Nanak was born

The inmates shared the food and poverty in equal proportion. In his khanqah the inmates irrespective of their status had to pluck *pelu* and *delha* from the *kareel* trees, fetch water, collect wood from the jungle and thus food without a grain of salt was prepared.²³ Similar traditions are found in Sikhism also. It is noteworthy that one of Baba Farid's khalifas and his son-in-law, Ala al-Din Sabir or Pran Kalliyar,²⁴ who is the greatest known jalali Sufi in the subcontinent was in charge of the langar. As he was in charge of it, he performed his duty with religious devotion and did not eat even a morsel out of it. He had thinned down and looked sick. Baba Farid, on enquiry found that he did not eat out of the langer, as he was merely asked to look after it. Because of this patience or *sabr*, Baba Farid named him as Sabir. He preferred him to his own sons because of his spiritual attainment.

Another khalifa of Baba Farid was Shaikh Nizam al-Din Auliya who is considered the most popular Sufi saint of his lifetime. Shaikh Rukn al-Din, the spiritual head of the then Suhrawardi school, the rival of Chishti silsilah, addressed him as 'kind of religion'.²⁵ The concept of 'langar' was further popularized and carried forward by him. 'Langar' was meant to serve food to all, the inhabitants of the khanqah as well as all the visitors, without any discrimination. The food was cooked in a 'deg', which could cook large amounts of food materials and could feed large number of people at a time. Food was cooked in 'deg' intermittently till all were fed. The 'deg' of Shaikh Muoin al-Din Chishti at Ajmer is probably the largest deg found in India and is a tourist attraction. The langer system is still prevalent in many Sufi *dargahs*. In the *dargah sharif* of Shaikh Qutub al-Din, the spiritual leader of Baba Farid, there is a practice of

He who looks upon both parties as one

Will alone be able to solve mystery;

He who regards others as heretics;

Will burn (in hell fire)²¹

Almost in the similar vain, a century earlier, despite Islamic aversion to idol worship, Amir Khusrau, a disciple of Shaikh Nizam al-Din Auliya had said:

Don't look down upon the idol worship of Hindus

Learn from them the way of worship.

Baba Farid, like his predecessors popularized the concept of 'deg' and 'langar' in Punjab. Deg means food pot, which was popularly used in Sufi khanqahs²² of that time. Baba Farid had his khanqah at Ajodhan, which was strategically a very important place, as all trade routes passes through Ajodhan. People of all sections, creed and religion came to his khanqah or Jamat Khana. Both inmates and visitors partook food cooked out of the common 'deg'. Whatever was available was consumed together by all on the basis of equality. This concept is linked with the concept of *langar* i.e. open kitchen.

Thus, the principle of food for all was incorporated in the khalsa rank, whereby each from khalsa panth including the Guru must eat the same food. Sharing food and eating together was laid down as a rule. Like in Sufi khanqahs, Sikhism outlawed untouchability. Both Sufism and Sikhism in their turn thus opposed the dogmatic principles of the caste system, status based on birth and concept of 'pollution' accruing due to touch by lower castes.

Baba Farid's '*langer*' was run out of unasked-for gifts i.e. *futuh*. Sometimes dire poverty was witnessed.

heroism and are focused on the liberalistic mystical mode in great measures. His verses totaling 123 in *Guru Granth Sahib*²⁰ emphasise on good deeds and high thinking. There are about 2000 words contained in *Adigranth*, which pertain to verses of Baba Farid, out of which more than 1800 words are in chaste Lehindi. Some of the words like 'Raab' or 'Sahib' used for 'God', which did not belong to Lehindi language, were later incorporated in *Guru Granth Sahib* and now are completely naturalized. Thus, to begin with such naturalization *Guru Granth* is called *Guru Granth Sahib*.

The originality of Baba Farid's verses in Lehindi is pure and well preserved. Those are chaster with minimum Persian or Arabic words, which for that matter is common in many compositions. Another influence of Baba Farid on Sikhism is his use of word 'om' at the end of verb form such as 'bhaviom', which was incorporated by Guru Arjan towards the close of sixteenth century.

During Baba Farid's time and thereafter there were cordial relations between Hindius and Muslims, due to the impact of his teachings the impact of his teachings continued during the Sultanate and the Mughal period. This is also evident from the fact that Bhai Mardana, a Muslim, was Guru Nanak's constant companion during his long journeys. Guru Nanak's message was like that of the Sufis in as far as it was meant both for Hindus and Muslims. Thus in his first utterance in his mission he said:

There is no Hindu, no Musalman

Nanak the true teacher's great trust is to unite all.

He further says:

Baba Fārid, the famous wandering Sufi, had tremendous influence on Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh religion. Thus, it is no wonder that he is a highly venerated saint in the Sikh traditions. There are many verses of Baba Farid recorded in *Adigranth*. In fact, his verses are well preserved only in *Adigranth*. Baba Farid is also considered the first ever to compose in any of the modern Indo-Aryan languages. He composed his prachings in Lehindi-Punjabi, which was then spoken in Punjab and some parts of Rajasthan. Many consider him as the father of Punjabi literature and others consider him as the 'father of Sindh-Sagri poetry'. Sindh-Sagri is meant here to convey the link language spoken in this part of the country, which was a broader version of Lehindi-Punjabi. Urdu is also attributed to have emerged out of this language. Farid bani, which includes twenty-four shlokas and four shabds is included in Guru Granth Sahab.

Adigranth contains Baba Farid's verses on 'Dhola', which is the first symbol of an ideal lover in Lehindi and its dialects. It reads:

"Nath na ain kasumbhre jal jasi, Dhola"

(Dhol, don't touch the opium water, lest it spells disaster on you)

This is in the context of Umru, a villain's design to intoxicate Dhol, while he was traveling with his wife, so that when Dhol was out of his sense, he would abduct his wife. The verse was made out to have been sung by drummer-women as a warning. It was a warning to all to not to be lured by evils or evil designs of others.

Baba Farid composed both in Persian and Lehindi. His compositions in Lehindi are pure, unalloyed and undiluted and are away from aparbhransha tradition of love-romance and feudal

by Guru Arjun Deve in 1604.¹⁵ At a later stage, verses or kafies of Shah Hussain of Lahore, a great Sufi saint, inspired the Sikh community in their devotion, as his verses have deeper meaning and lyrical excellence in expressing passionate love for the Creator. Similarly, Waris Shah's composition of Heer Ranjha in 18th century had a definite influence on Punjabi classical literature.

The first popular Sufi who had settled in Punjab was Data Ganj Baksh or Ali al-Hajwiri. He is considered the father of Sufism in South Asia. All other Sufis who came to India, sought his permission on their pilgrimage or ziyarat to his shrine known as Data Darbar at Lahore. He came to Lahore in mid 11th century and wrote the famous *Kashf al Mahjoob*,¹⁶ which became the bible for Sufis of various orders. Shaikh Muin al-Din Chisti who is considered the founder of the Chishti order in India, visited his mazar to seek his permission to settle in India and addressed him as "Data Ganj". Hitherto, people called him as 'Data Ganj Baksh'. Shaikh Muin al-Din settled at Ajmer¹⁷ and his khallifa Shaikh Qutab al-Din Bakhtiyar Kaki¹⁸ at Delhi. Shaikh Farid Ganj-i-Shakr or Baba Farid was the latter's khallifa or 'spiritual successor' who settled at Ajodhan.¹⁹

Baba Farid was a great Sufi Saint who gave importance to human values and tolerance. The following verse reflects his concept of tolerance and non-violence in a simplistic way:

"Faride Jo tein marain mukkian, tinhan na marain ghumm

Aa panrc ghar jaiya, pair tinhan de chumm"

"Do not strike when struck on the face, you will rather go back home after kissing their feet".

Islam. The remarkable resemblance of the Quran and the Adigranth could not merely be accidental. It could possibly be attributed to Guru Nanak's interaction with and learning from the Sufis. He had evidently visited Pakpattan and Multan to meet the descendant successors of Shaikh Baha al-Din Zakaria and Baba Farid.¹² Guru Nanak's interaction with the officials of Daulat Khan Lodi, a Siqdar at Sultanpur and later Governor of Lahore also might have influenced him. Guru Nanak had worked under Daulat Khan Lodi at Sultanpur.¹³

The Sufis taught the way the religious books were to be respected. Quran was the core book guiding force for all their activities. The importance of this singular book in Islam was immense. They preserve this with highest regard, which is always kept at a higher place and on a 'rehal'. In Sikhism also, similar practice is followed. 'Guru Granth Sahib' is preserved and revered in similar way, kept on 'rehal' and is considered the singular most guiding force, as Quran is for the Muslims. The opening verses of Quran and Guru Granth Sahib are similar which reveal the greatness of God, who is one and alone, merciful and all encompassing and all embracing.

In Sikh religious history, Sufism had an important role to play. The compilation of the Guru Granth Sahib is the core event of Punjabi literary and religious history. The best compilation of Nirguna Bhagat like Baba Farid and Namdev are contained in it. Guru Nanak who was born on April 14, 1469, i.e. 204 years after the death of Baba Farid had gone to Ajodhan to meet Shaikh Brahm or Shaikh Farid Sani, who was in the line of succession of Faridi order of Chishti silsilah to collect hymns of Baba Farid, which were later on incorporated in the Guru Granth Sahib

prayer without purity of heart has no meaning. Quran reads;⁷

Vain were worship without heart and soul.

In the same vein mulamantra in Adigranth reads;⁸

Ritual purification, though million fold,
May not purify the mind.

Both Quran and Adigranth lay down that the salvation lies in obeying the commands of God. Quran reads;⁹

And they have been commanded

No more than this

To worship God by offering sincere devotion

Being true (in faith) by establishing regular prayer

And to practice regular charity

And this is the Religion Right and Straight.

The Adigranth unfolds;¹⁰

How then to become true to the Creator?

How demolish the world of illusion?

Through obedience of His ordinance will.

Elaborating the concept further Guru Arjun Deve notes;

Whoever by the Master's guidance

Utters the holy Nam is liberated.

Notwithstanding this, the source of the basic Sikh philosophy was not the Orthodox Islam, but the Sufis and their concepts and way of practicing of Islam, which was universal and often crossed the boundaries of religion and region. It was through Sufis they knew

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verse is identical to the first surah of the Quran i.e. surah fateha which reads as follows:¹

“Praise be to Allah,
The Cherisher, Sustainer of the worlds,
Most Gracious, Most Merciful...”

Similarly, Mulamantra in *Adigranth* pronounces:²

He is the Supreme Being of eternal
manifestation;
Creator, Immanent Reality; Without
Fear;
Without Rancour, Timeless Form;
Unincamated;
Self Existent; Realised by grace of the
Holy Preceptor.

Thus, there are striking similarities between surah fateha of Quran and mulmantra of *Adigranth*. Both spell out the God as Almighty, the Creator and Sustainer and also seek His grace for attaining salvation. Both Islam and Sikhism believed in unity of Supreme Being i.e. one God. Quran spells out;³

Say, He is God,
The One and Only,
God, the Eternal, Absolute;
He begetteth not, nor He is begotten,
And there is none like unto Him.
Similarly, *Adigranth* spells out “EK
Oankar, Nirguna, Nirankar Brahm”⁴

Further, *Adigranth* spells out⁵ about the Day of Judgment as that of Islamic concept of Qayamat.⁶ Both believe in equality, reject idol worship and oppose caste system. Both reject ritualism and conceive that any

When Muslims came to India, it was Punjab through which they came. The land of Punjab has rich cultural heritage. The Vedas were composed mainly on the banks of five flowing waters of the ancient Punjab; Indus valley civilization also flourished on the soil. In the epic age, this was a land of glorious people broken into a number of tribal Republics, who had pride in their chivalry and honour. Here Sufism flourished to an unprecedented extent. And here was born, probably, chronologically the youngest religion of the world, 'Sikhism'.

The advent of Islam and Sufism in Punjab led to cultural and linguistic interaction between the two civilizations. The influence on each other was immense. Persian and Arabic vocabulary was imbibed by the Punjabi language. On the other hand, cultural tenets of Islam also received fulsome impact of local dialects and culture. The most important and interesting outcome of the said intercourse was on the metaphysical thoughts and practices. Sheikh Farid-ud-Din Ganj-i-Shakr, popularly known as Baba Farid played an important role in transforming the religious, linguistic and cultural ethos of the land. Two centuries later Guru Nanak was born when a new composite culture and vitally transformed language had evolved in the soil. Hence, the impact of the Arabic-Persian culture and Islam, especially through the Sufis on Punjabi language, culture and on the socio-religious ethos of Punjab and more so on Sikhism needs no emphasis.

The essence of Islam is the belief in one God. The people of the land knew Islam through the Sufis, their verses and their literature. These had tremendous impact on Sikhism as well. The single most impact was introduction of monotheism as the basic philosophy of Sikhism laid down in the first verse of Adigranth. The

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THE IMPACT OF SUFISM ON SIKHISM: SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BABA FARID

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The Sufis during the Sultanate period had acquired great veneration from the masses due to being independent preachers of monotheism and the concept of equality and their services towards the humanity. Their shrugging off the state patronage and criticism of the state system brought them closer to the people.