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Bābā Farīd's Hymns in Granth Śāhib with Qur'ānic Backdrop: A Review

Hafiz Khurshid Ahmad Qadri*

Abstract

Bābā Farīd al-Dīn Ganj-i-Shakar, considered as the first Punjābī Sūfī poet, not only exercised his skill but also conveyed Qur'ānic and Prophetic (PBUH) message through his Punjābī poetry. His poetry is a rich source of Islamic teachings in lingua franca of the Punjab. The research intends to explore that whether the inclusion of his poetry in the Sikh scripture is recognition of Muslim mysticism or the poetry itself. The study attempts to examine the relation of the hymns of Bābā Śāhib with the teachings of Holy Qur'ān. Bābā Farīd, because of his high stature as an originator of Punjābī poetry, got a place in Granth Śāhib. The goal of this research is to highlight the pivotal position of Bābā Śāhib in connecting the two major religions of the world. The paper not only substantiates the historic position of Bābā Śāhib but also gives an insight to the services rendered by his poetry in promoting the interfaith harmony in the Sub-continent. This article focuses on Bābā Farīd as a literary and moral Canon, which led his work to be included in Sikh scripture. Moreover, it hints at the nuances of religious tolerance, mutual respect and love for knowledge, which lacks otherwise in a multi-religious society. In this article some of Bābā Śāhib's verses in Granth Śāhib will be traced and analysed, taking into account their Qur'ānic interpretations. The comparative and somewhat historical approaches have been adopted to lay out a vivid analysis of his hymns in relation with the verses of the Holy Qur'ān and hence a message is extracted. Thus, he, evidently becoming part of one of the greatest anthologies of Punjābī poetry, attracted a huge outreach. The research question of this article is, whether the Holy Qur'ān is a basic source of Bābā Śāhib's poetry or otherwise. It is strongly recommended that in order to attain actual harmony in our society, Bābā Śāhib's work should be published in Shah-Mukhi script for the contemporary readership.

Keywords: Farīd, Sikhism, Bāni, Taṣawwuf, Chishtī Order, Shirī Gurū Granth Śāhib, Murīd

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Introduction

Bābā Farīd (1179-1266) was a great scholar, poet, religious reformer and the most prominent Sufī¹ of his time. He was the first recorded poet of the Punjābī language. Bābā Ṣāhib, continuing the legacy of spreading peace and love like other mystics of the sub-continent, contributed to the enrichment of folk literature while broadening the horizon of Islam additionally. He was born to a pious couple, Sheikh Jamāl al-dīn Suleimān and Qarsūm Bībī at Kothiwal near Multān. He received his early education at his hometown and higher education from Maulānā Minhāj al-Dīn Tirmidhī at Multān. Bābā Farīd got specialization in different disciplines of Islamic education from Qandahār², Afghānistān. He officially became a disciple of Khawāja Qutb al-Dīn Bakhtiār Kākī, (1173-1235) who was a famous *Chishtī*³ saint, as a young man of 18. Bābā Ṣāhib had been an extensive traveller as well. He not only visited the centres of civilization in central Asia like Bukhāra⁴ and Badakhshān⁵ but also journeyed through Qandahār, Al-Quds⁶ and Baghdād⁷.

Delhi⁸ and Hānsī⁹ had been his second homes. The historians of Punjābī and Urdu poetry recognized him as a pioneer of both languages. He was one of the conspicuous saints of *Chishtī* order¹⁰. Islamic teachings, particularly the Holy Qurʾān, were the main sources of his poetry. Bābā Farīd composed hymns in Punjābī, the likes of which are yet to be composed. He was a great intellectual, a unique enunciator of moral values and a committed devotee of the Timeless Lord

¹ A Muslim Mystic.

² A city of Afghānistān located in the south of the country on the Arghandab River.

³ A mystic order in Sunni Muslims. Its emphasis is on love, tolerance and openness.

⁴ An ancient city in the central Asian country of Uzbekistān.

⁵ An area of Afghānistān between Tajikistān and Northern Pakistan and Gilgit Baltistān. It also has a border of 56.5 miles with China.

⁶ One of the oldest cities in the world. This city of the Middle East is considered holy to three major Abrahamic religions i.e., Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

⁷ It is the capital of Iraq and the second largest city in the Arab world. It is located along the Tigris River. It had been the capital of ‘Abbasid dynasty.

⁸ The capital of India since the time of Sultāns of Delhi.

⁹ A city in Hisar district in the Indian state of Haryana.

¹⁰ An order of Muslim mystics.

who communicated to the common folk the revealed divine message through the medium of sweet and soothing Punjābī language. He lived a family life marked with contentment and perseverance. The unique humanitarian values of compassion, love, sympathy, mutual understanding and appreciation are clothed in the hymns of Bābā Śāhib as fragrance is in flower. For his sweet words, ideals and behaviour, Farīd became known as an epitome of sweetness, i.e., *Shakarganj*¹¹. He occupies a place of pre-eminence among the Punjābī poets. Bābā Farīd's compositions are deeply sensitive to the feeling of pity & subservience to God. His language is Multānī Punjābī.

Gurū Nanak (1469-1539) wanted to compile an anthology of great Punjābī poets. To include Farīd's hymns he went to Sheikh Ibrāhīm Farīd Thānī (A great grandson of Bābā Farīd).¹² After exchanging some views in verses, Sheikh Ibrāhīm handed over many couplets of Bābā Farīd to Gurū Nanak. Adī Granth was compiled by the fifth Gurū of the Sikhs, Gurū Arjun Dev (1563-1606). Farīd's *Ashloks* were given the place of honour along with those of Kabīr (1440-1518). His literary status can be determined for the fact that he was to Punjābī what Chaucer (1343-1400) was to English. Bābā Farīd sang in people's dialect about the glory of Islām, greatness of Islamic values and supremacy of mystic thought. The saints and Sufis realized the goals of the renaissance in the society.

In 2017, the author participated in 13th Bābā Farīd International Conference at Pakpattan. The proceedings of the conference were the key to unlock the world of Bābā Śāhib. The author managed to have Gurū Granth Śāhib Ād¹³ in Shah Mukhī script with 2351 pages. The personality and poetry of Bābā Farīd is known but not well known. Researcher aims to come up with the uncanny link between Bābā Farīd's poetry in Granth Śāhib and the Holy Qur'ān.

¹¹ A Treasure of Sugar.

¹² Zahūr Ahmad Azhar, *Ma'ārif-i-Farīdiyāh: Dīwān Bābā Farīd-al-Dīn Mas'ūd Ganj Shakar* (Lahore: Religious Affairs & Auqaf Department Punjab, 2005), 30.

¹³ Gurū Granth Śāhib: It was compiled by the fifth Sikh Gurū Arjun Dev (1563-1606) Gurū Gobind Singh (1666-1708), the tenth Sikh Gurū declared this book a living Gurū of Sikhs. So, it was named as Srī Gurū Granth Śāhib. He affirmed the text as his successor.

Literature Review

Bābā¹⁴ Farīd¹⁵ *Ganj*¹⁶ *Shakar*¹⁷ has always been in limelight as far as literature of mysticism and literature of classic Punjābī poetry is concerned. All books of the history of mysticism are swarmed with Bāba Sahīb's contribution in Sūfī thought, political history of his age and poetry. *Siyar al-Aqtāb* of Sheikh Allah Diya Chishtī¹⁸, *Akhhār al-Akhyār* of Sheikh Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dehlawī,¹⁹ *Khazīnat al-Aṣfiyā* of Muftī Ghulām Sarwar Lāhōrī,²⁰ *Tārīkh-i-Mashā'kh-i-Chisht* of Khalīque Ahmad Nizāmī,²¹ *Safīnat al-Auliya'* of Mughal Prince Dārā Shikoh,²² *Asrār al-Auliya'* of Badr al-Dīn Ishāque²³ are some works which mentioned Bāba Ṣāhib's literary contribution. Some recent — rather of near past works also have some traces of the topic under discussion. Syed Afzal Haider's *Farīd, Nānak, Bullha, Wārith*²⁴ and *Zindagī Nāmah Bābā Farīd Ganj Shakar*²⁵ while *BolFarīdī* of Faqīr Muhammad Faqīr²⁶ are worth mentioning. Two research works of 21st century are *Bāba Farīd al-Dīn Ganj Shakar Number*²⁷ and *Ma'ārif-i-Farīdiyāh*²⁸ of research journal *Auqāf* Punjab (Ma'ārif-i-Auliya') is also a unique, fresh, and solid research at the same time. All the above-mentioned works discussed Bābā

¹⁴ Bābā, a Punjābī and Urdu word, means a great old man.

¹⁵ Farīd, an 'Arabic word, means unique.

¹⁶ Ganj, a Persian word, means Treasury.

¹⁷ Shakar, a Punjābī word, means sugar.

¹⁸ Allah Diya Chishtī, *Siyar al-Aqtāb* (Lucknow: Munshī Nawal Kashor, 1913), 161-77.

¹⁹ 'Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dehlawī, *Akhhār al-Akhyār* (Dehlī: Mujtabaī, n.d.), 61-64.

²⁰ Muftī Ghulam Sarwar Lahorī, *Khazīnat al-Aṣfiyā*, trans. Iqbal Ahmad Fārūqī (Lahore: Maktabah Nabawiyah, n.d.).

²¹ Khalīq Ahmad Nizāmī, *Tāreikh Mashāikh-i-Chisht* (Dehlī: Idārah Adabiyāt, 1980).

²² Dārāshikoh, *Safīnat al-Auliya'*, trans. Muhammad 'Alī Luṭfī (Karāchī: Nafis Academy, 1959), 96-97.

²³ Khawajah Badr-al-Dīn Ishāq, *Isrār al-Auliya'*, trans. A'zam Sa'īdī (Karāchī: Zia-al-Dīn Publications, n.d.), 26-208.

²⁴ Afzal Haider, *Farīd, Nanak, Bullha, Wārith* (Islamabad: Daust Publications, 2003).

²⁵ Afzal Haider, *Zindagī Namah Bābā Farīd Ganj Shakar* (Lahore: Daust Publications, 2002).

²⁶ *Bol Farīdī*, ed. Faqīr Muhammad Faqīr (Lahore: Muhammad Bashir and Sons, 1991).

²⁷ *Majallah Ma'ārif-i-Auliya', Bābā Farīd-al-Dīn Ganj Shakar Number*, (Lahore: Religious Affairs & Auqaf Department, Punjab, 2006), 4:4.

²⁸ Azhar, *Ma'ārif-i-Farīdiyāh: Dīwān Bābā Farīd-al-Dīn Mas'ūd Ganj Shakar*.

Śāhib's personality, life and poetry in general, but the research intended by author is inclusively about his poetry in Granth Śāhib with roots deep in the Holy Qur'ān.

Research Methodology

In this research article, author has adopted comparative and somewhat historical approaches to lay out a vivid analysis of Baba Farīd's hymns in relation with the verses of the Holy Qur'ān. Having consulted all the primary (*Gurū Granth Śāhib Ād* in Shahmukhi Script) and secondary resources, which include works over mysticism, Punjabi poetry, and above all the personality and poetry of Bābā Śāhib, writer has worked hard to dig out facts and correlations of the texts involved. It is hereby declared that the translations of verses of the Holy Qur'ān are taken from '*The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'ān*' by Muhammad Marmaduke Pickhtall and the English translation of hymns of Bābā Farīd is taken from '*Ma'ārif-i-Farīdiyāh*' by Zahur Ahmad Azhar. It is to be mentioned that there surly are many translations of Granth Śāhib done by Orientalists and Sikh translators but they do not serve the purpose, as they share little or no sense of reverence and sensitivity of Mysticism practised by Muslim mystics.

A Unique Honour

Bābā Farīd used to spend most of his time in prayers and remembrance of Allah. Khawaja Bakhtiar Kaki (1173-1235 A.D.), his spiritual teacher, had given him a small cell in his Khanqah²⁹ where Khawaja Farīd remained busy as a devout in prayers according to the instruction of his Sheikh³⁰. Here he was bestowed with *Khilafat*³¹ by his spiritual master and grand master jointly. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami described the event in the following words:

"Khawaja Mu'in-ud-Din Chishtī (1141-1236) happened to visit Delhi again. When he saw Bābā Farīd, he remarked: Bābā Bakhtiar! You have caught a noble falcon, which will build his nest on the Holy tree of Heaven. Farīd is a lamp that will

²⁹ *Khanqah* is a building designed specifically for gatherings of a Sufi brotherhood or *tariqah* and is a place for spiritual retreat and character reformation.

³⁰ A spiritual teacher or mentor.

³¹ Spiritual successorship.

illuminate the chain of *Durweshes*³². Khawaja Mu'in-ud-Din then asked his disciple to bestow spiritual gifts and blessings on Bābā Farīd, but Sheikh Qutb al-Dīn apologized that in the presence of his spiritual teacher he could not exercise the right of bestowing anything on him. Thereupon, both saints blessed Bābā Farīd. It was a unique honour to be given in the history of the *Chishtī Silsilah*³³. No saint before him, or even after, was thus blessed by the master and the grand master at the same time.”³⁴

After the sad demise of his spiritual teacher Khawāja Qutb al-Dīn Bakhtīār Kākī, he became the spiritual successor of his Mentor. Having this honour, he decided to leave Hānsī and Delhi and settled at Ajodhan³⁵ (now Pakpattan³⁶).

A Messenger of Optimism

Bābā Farīd, in spite of spreading the blessings of *Chishtī* order, also jotted down his pure and blissful feelings into poetry. The generic name of Bābā Šāhib's poetry is “*Ashloke*” or “*Bol*”³⁷. In *Srī Gurū Granth Šāhib* it is also named as “*Bānī*”³⁸.

There are four *Shabads*³⁹ in *Granth Šāhib* namely:

1. *Sheikh Farīd Geo*⁴⁰
2. *Boley Saikh Farīd*⁴¹
3. *Sheikh Farīd Gī*⁴²
4. *Saloke Sheikh Farīd Gī*⁴³

³² Disciples of mysticism.

³³ An order of the Muslim mystics.

³⁴ Muhammad Asif Khan, *Ākhiā Bābā Farīd Ne* (Lahore: Punjābī Adbi Board, 1978), 78.

³⁵ Muhammad Sultan Shah, *Hazrat Bābā Farīd-ud-Dīn Mas'ud* (Lahore: Religious Affair & Auqāf Department Punjab, 2006), 6.

³⁶ It was on the banks of river Sutlej.

³⁷ Sacred couplets.

³⁸ Short for *Gurbānī*, the term used by Sikhs to refer to various sections of the Holy Text that appears in their several Holy Books.

³⁹ *Shabad*: It is a term used by Sikhs to refer to a hymn or paragraph or section of their Holy Text

⁴⁰ *Gurū Granth Šāhib Ād*, (Lahore: J. S. Sant Singh & Sons Tājran Kutub, n.d.), 803.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 803-04.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 1342-43.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 2292-300.

The total count of *Ashloks* of Bābā Jī in Granth Śāhib is 112.

In his poetry, he profoundly narrated some universal truths using religious metaphors and connotations. Due to this reason, his poetry served the purpose of preaching. After listening to his inducing poetry, many of the local tribes embraced Islam.⁴⁴

Bābā Farīd's poetry is full of open and hidden meanings of many verses of the Holy Qur'ān. Bābā Śāhib's mysticism was not just a simple view but a staunch belief. He did not ponder over the symbolism of mystics but described the basics of Islam. He believed that patience, contentment and fear of Almighty are the necessary characteristics of a Muslim. His poetry is free from the complaints against the difficulties of life. Rather, his poetry is the message of optimism. He conceived the world as a temporary abode. Obviously, this concept is derived from this verse of the Holy Qur'ān: "On Earth will be your dwelling place and your means of livelihood for a time."⁴⁵

Bābā Śāhib considered this temporary abode as a journey towards Almighty. It can be stated that Bābā Farīd's *Ashloke*, *Bol* and *Bān* are a great treasure of Punjābī language, literature and mysticism. As a true Muslim sufi he, time and again, referred to Muslim terminologies in his poems. Refraining from philosophy he delved strictly into Islamic terms. The role of Muslim Sufis in the propagation of Islam is much larger than the role of the conquerors and kings.

It can be aptly said that *Taşawwuf* is not a subject of research, but it is a subject of self-search. Whatever the outcome of researcher may be, Sufis exercised it in their routine life. Researchers described the meanings of words as the result of their hard work but Sufis revealed the spirit of the Islamic teachings by their actions. It is the very reason due to which researchers never had a strong binding with common people. They remained in the boundary walls of institutions. Sufis always have had a very strong relation with the common people. They knew the problems,

⁴⁴ Murtaza Ahmad Khan Mekash, "Farid-al-Din Ganj Shakar," Urdu Dāirah-i-Ma'ārif-i-Islāmiyah (Lahore: Dānishgah-i-Punjab, 1975), 15, 341.

⁴⁵ Al-Qur'ān 2:36

worries difficulties and faculties of the folk. Sufis were the masters of spiritual dynasty. They ruled over hearts. So, their poetry or sayings were also named as Shah Ashloke means Shahloke, or the words of King.

Peculiarity of Bābā Farīd

In *Srī Gurū Granth Śāhib*, the length of Bābā Farīd's Ashloke is from two to 26 lines. Khawāja Mu'īn al-Dīn Ajmairy (1141-1236 A.D.) was the founder of *Chishtīa* order in the Sub-continent but Bābā Farīd (1179-1266 A.D.) gave this order a second birth in the region.

As a poet, Bābā Śāhib had some unique characteristics which are as follows:

1. According to the researchers Bābā Farīd was the originator of the Urdu poetry.
2. He was the first who composed Punjābī verses.
3. Bābā Śāhib was the first Punjābī poet who had a complete *Dīwan*⁴⁶ on his credit.
4. He was the harbinger of mystic poetry in the Sub-continent.

Subjects of Bābā Śāhib's Poetry

The frail and temporary nature of life are the major topics of Bābā Farīd's poetry. Others are as follows:

1. *Taşawwuf*
2. Ethics
3. Self-recognition
4. Rectification of self
5. Worship of Almighty Allah
6. Submissiveness

Though *Srī Gurū Granth Śāhib* is a Holy book of Sikh religion, it has the verses of Bābā Farīd along with other Sufis and Saints. His verses are quoted with great

⁴⁶ *Dīwān*: A collection of poems by one poet.

reverence. In *Gurū Granth Śāhib Ād*, the pages of contents 18, 31 and 54 are illuminated with Bābā Śāhib's name. This name glitters like a pearl in a necklace. First time the words are: “*Sheikh Farīd Geo*”⁴⁷; second entrance is in these words: *Bolay Saikh Farīd*⁴⁸; third time its wording is “*Sheikh Farīd Ge*”⁴⁹ fourth time it is mentioned in this way: “*Saloke Sheikh Farīd Ge*”⁵⁰. In the text, the topic is described in this manner: “*Āsa Saikh Farīd Geo Ke Bāni*” *Ik Ounkar Sat Gur Parsad*.⁵¹

The first Bāni of Bābā Śāhib consists of five couplets. The opening verse looks like the second version of the Qur'ānic narration:

“Why say ye that which ye do not?”⁵²

As he said: “Those who love their Lord from the core of their hearts they are the truthful and sincere! But those whose hearts and lips differ they are un-ripened and fake in their love.”⁵³

The second couplet of this *Bāni* might have been derived from the Qur'ānic verse: “[Say: “Our life takes its] hue from God! And who could give a better hue [to life] than God”⁵⁴ As Bābā Śāhib said:

“Those who are the true lovers of their Lord and have been coloured in His hues and grace, they will be honoured by the presence before Him! But those who have forgotten, even the name of Allah Almighty, they are indeed a burden on His earth!”⁵⁵

The same idea later narrated by renowned Urdu poet Nasir Kazami (1925-1972) saying that, we, the common people are a burden on this Earth, and inquires about

⁴⁷ *Gurū Granth Śāhib Ād*, 802.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 803.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 1342.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 2192.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 803.

⁵² Al-Qur'ān 61:2

⁵³ *Gurū Granth Śāhib*, Ād, 803

⁵⁴ Al-Qur'ān 2:138

⁵⁵ *Gurū Granth Śāhib Ād*, 803.

those towering personalities who had carried the weight of the Earth. This can be implied that the ones who are forgetful of Allah Almighty are wretched indeed.⁵⁶

Varied Names of God in the Hymns of Bābā Farīd as mentioned in Granth Śāhib

The name of Almighty in the hymns of Bābā Farīd is mentioned with different words, like: *Allah*, *Khuda*, He (pronoun for Almighty), *Parwardigar*, *Śāhib*, *Kirpāl*, *Shoh*.

A slight glance on above mentioned names of Almighty tell us that Allah is a Qur'ānic word, *Khuda* and *Parwardigār* are Persian words, *Kirpāl* is a Hindi word and *Shoh* is derived from the mystic tradition of the Sub-continent.

Allah, in the Hymns of Bābā Farīd, Mentioned in Srī Gurū Granth Śāhib

There is a *Bāni* of nine couplets named *Āsa* (Hope). The word Allah came here in this way: “Sheikh Farīd says, O’ my dear friend! Be with Allah and be for Him alone! Because you have to die and your body shall become dust, as the grave is your original home where you shall have to rest forever!”⁵⁷

“Allah was very kind to that lonely (Soul) woman in that horrible place of lonely well. Where she joined the company of Holy people all around her. She was also blessed with the company of pious people (just like Bābā Farīd himself was blessed with the company of true *Chishtī* saints and was also blessed with the mercy and kindness of Allah Almighty!)”⁵⁸

Devotion to Almighty Allah, humble nature of human beings and the significance of good company are the key subjects of these verses.

⁵⁶ Nāsir Kāzmī, *Deewan e Nasir Kazmi*(Lahore: Maktaba e Khayal, 8 Hakeem Street, Islam Pura, 1981), 149-150.

⁵⁷ *Gurū Granth Śāhib Ād*, 803.

⁵⁸ *Gurū Granth Śāhib Ād*, 1343.

Pronoun Āp (He) for Almighty in Bābā Farīd's Hymns, Mentioned in *Granth Śāhib*

“Those whom Lord Almighty choses for His love, He makes him graceful by guiding him to have connection with some great dervish so that his life may be fruitful in both the worlds and the mother who gave him birth also considered a graceful and a blessed one!”⁵⁹

This couplet is highlighting the fact that the friendship with Allah's friends is a great success. As the Holy Qur'ān says: “Lo! Verily the friends of Allah are (those) on whom fear (cometh) not, nor do they grieve.”⁶⁰ It can be inferred from the above given couplet that Allah's all-accompanying knowledge and constant watchful care over all His creatures may be a source of fear to sinners, but there is no fear for those whom He honours with His love and benevolence neither in this world nor in the world to come.

***Parwardigār* (Sustainer)**

“O God! You are the Sustainer, Endless and Eternal! I kiss the feet and face of those who have believed in You!”⁶¹

Company of the blessed and modesty is preached by this couplet.

***Khudāyā* (O Lord)**

“O God! I seek refuge in You because You are the Forgiver, your slave Farīd asks You to give him the alms of the fortitude to worship You alone!”⁶²

It seems that the content of this couplet is derived from the last two surahs of The Holy Qur'ān that is *Al-Falak* and *Al-Nas*. As it is mentioned in Surah *Al-Falak*: “I seek refuge in the Lord of the Daybreak”⁶³ And in Surah *Al-Nas* the words are: “I seek refuge in the Lord of Mankind, the King of Mankind, the God of

⁵⁹ *Gurū Granth Śāhib Ād*, 803.

⁶⁰ Al-Qur'ān 10:62

⁶¹ *Gurū Granth Śāhib Ād*, 803.

⁶² *Gurū Granth Śāhib Ād*, 803.

⁶³ Al-Qur'ān 113:1

Mankind.”⁶⁴ These verses necessitate the need of a sanctuary provided by the divinity of our Lord from all kinds of evil and dark forces which are the hindrance in the way of worship. Likewise, the inferiority of Man is highlighted in the face of His Mastership for it is Allah who provides a refuge to sinner and pious alike, and it is him they turn to for everything.

Shoh (The Master)

“The death approaches and the human spirit begins to throb and flutter twisting the hands in the despair as if she has become mad and searching out her beloved!”⁶⁵

“O God You are my Lord no doubt but You seem to be angry with me but I pray that I have no fault of mine except that I am unfortunate and wretched one!”⁶⁶

“God Almighty calls all the time for good deeds because you shall never return to this world again! For it is impossible the milk once it is out of teats it cannot be retracted.”⁶⁷

“Farīd tells his fellows that Allah will send His call to all the human beings. The pious will walk to Him like swan but the others will fall flat on the ground!”⁶⁸

“*Shoh*” is a mystic term for the Almighty Allah but it ushers towards the blessings, graciousness, good deeds, and love of Almighty in this short life because no one will come to this world again. The inspiration of Bābā Farīd is a verse of the Holy Qur’ān which informed us the plight of the bad doers in these words: “And what is the reward of those who do so save ignominy in the life of the world.”⁶⁹ The wrongdoers will never succeed neither in this world nor in the other. The distinction though will be made crystal clear by the Day of Judgment, but the intimation is given pre-handed.

⁶⁴ Al-Qur’ān 114:1

⁶⁵ *Gurū Granth Śāhib Ād*, 1342.

⁶⁶ *Gurū Granth Śāhib Ād*, 1342.

⁶⁷ *Gurū Granth Śāhib Ād*, 1343.

⁶⁸ *Gurū Granth Śāhib Ād*, 1343.

⁶⁹ Al-Qur’ān 2:85

Śāhib (The Lord)

“O God! You are my Sustainer and Lord! But alas! I could not realize Thy place and power and now when I have wasted my youth and grace, I repent, and I am ashamed!”⁷⁰

Repentance is a great way back to the sublimity. Bāba Śāhib is hinting towards the blessed window of repentance for the solvation of whole of humanity. The basis of this idea can be traced from a verse of the Holy Qur’ān which says: “But whoso repenteth after his wrong-doing and amendeth, lo! Allah will relent toward him.”⁷¹ Confession is a key characteristic of a good believer. One who repents becomes dear to Allah Almighty.

Kirpāl, Parabhū (Beneficent, Merciful)

“Without his beloved companion it is not possible for him to rest and live in peace! But this reunion is only possible if the Lord Almighty is kind enough to facilitate for that!”⁷²

In the sub-continent, *Kirpāl* and *Parabhū* are the words used for the mercy and graciousness of Almighty. There are a number of Qur’ānic verses pertaining to beneficence of the creator. As the Holy Qur’ān says :“(Allah is) the Beneficent the Merciful.”⁷³ It is Allah Almighty who tends to the pleadings of suffering humanity.

Islamic & Mystic Terminologies in Bābā Śāhib’s Poetry

Salāt, Nimaz (Prayer)

“O Farīd, you prayer-less cursed one! You are just like a wretched dog. The conduct you have adopted not to turn up five times to mosque for the prayer, is not the conduct of God-fearing gentleman.”⁷⁴

It is a straight forward preach to perform prayer five times a day. The taunt in this saying of Bāba Śāhib has a connection with a verse of the Holy Qur’ān. “His

⁷⁰ *Gurū Granth Śāhib Ād*, 1343.

⁷¹ Al-Qur’ān 5:39

⁷² *Gurū Granth Śāhib Ād*, 1342.

⁷³ Al-Qur’ān 1:2

⁷⁴ *Gurū Granth Śāhib Ād*, 2296.

likeness is as the likeness of a dog.”⁷⁵ He here is professing to pray five times a day as made pivotal by Islam. This couplet is a vivid imitation of an ayah of Surah al-Nisā'. “Worship at fixed times hath been enjoined on the believers.”⁷⁶

Murīd (Disciple)

“We should speak the truth and never tell a lie! Whatever way the guide or *Murshid* chooses for us we have to follow it faithfully and with confidence!”⁷⁷ Truthfulness is a religious duty to every believer, and an obligation for an honest *Murīd* or disciple. To speak a truth is the advice of all the greats of all religions, Bābā Farīd is saying the same by having inspiration from a verse of the Holy Qur’ān. “And whoso bringeth the truth and believeth therein – such are the dutiful.”⁷⁸ There are two conditions for a disciple or anyone who wants to follow the path of goodness: be truthful and a faithful follower. This will open new vistas of holiness for him.

Pul-Sirāt (Bridge of Sirat)

“The youth with full strength (i.e., the pious people) shall easily cross the bridge but the weak like golden damsel will be cut by the saw-like sharpness of the bridge and they will fall in the deep Hell!!”⁷⁹

“The way we have to tread is perilous and hazardous one. Because it is thinner than the edge of a sword and very dangerous too!”⁸⁰

“On that edge like bridge, I have to tread and cross it. It is therefore necessary for you O Sheikh Farīd that you should make the earliest preparation for that stage in your youth.”⁸¹

It is a universal phenomenon that strength belongs to youth. In *Taşawwuf*⁸² the ‘youth’ and ‘strength’ are symbolic words for piousness. In Qur’ānic

⁷⁵ Al-Qur’ān 7:176

⁷⁶ Al-Qur’ān 4:103

⁷⁷ *Gurū Granth Śāhib Ād*, 804

⁷⁸ Al-Qur’ān 39:33

⁷⁹ *Gurū Granth Śāhib Ād*, 804.

⁸⁰ *Gurū Granth Śāhib Ād*, 1343.

⁸¹ *Gurū Granth Śāhib Ād*, 1343.

⁸² Islamic Mysticism.

terminology the word '*Taqwa*' is synonym for the above-mentioned words. To achieve *Taqwa* or piousness, the way is not zigzag but a straight path. The righteous people pray to Almighty Allah for the straight path five times a day in these words. "Show us the straight path."⁸³ In Qur'ānic descriptions, it is stated that to tread on a straight path is like walking on a path which is sharp as a saw, and thin like the edge of a sword; Bābā Farīd is insisting for the right path in the verses about the *Pul-Ṣirāt*.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, it can be stated that Sufis had played their part in the spread of Islam by acting in the local traditions, cultures and languages. History speaks of the inhabitants of the Sub-continent as the ones having great taste of poetry. Bābā Ṣāhib, albeit the expert of Qur'ānic Sciences, felt the pulse of society and so came up with unmatched poems which touched the hearts of millions. His exposure added the element of universality in the literature he produced which paved the way for his ever-green fame. He had a strong footing and this led the founder of a new religion being compelled to include Bābā Farīd's hymns in his religious compilation. By connecting these dots, the research has illuminated this point loud and clear that the primal source of all the literature produced by Sufi poets, particularly Bābā Ṣāhib's, is nothing but the Holy Qur'ān.

The crux of Bābā Farīd's poetry, included in *Srī Gurū Granth Ṣāhib*, may be mentioned in these points:

1. A saint is free from the love of worldly things.
2. He is a practicing slave of Almighty Allah.
3. A *Sūfī* is free of turbidity, impurity and resentment.
4. He is always immersed in the remembrance of Almighty Allah.
5. A Mystic remains away from the worshipers of the world and the wealthy.
6. He is in fact a true embodiment of charity.

⁸³ Al-Qur'ān 1:5

Recommendations

After reading, evaluating, ascertaining and analysing Gurū *Granth Śāhib* itself and literature about this great compilation of classic Punjābī poetry, some recommendations are obvious:

1. Gurū *Granth Śāhib* is not only dear to the Sikhs but also for Muslims and some mystic sects of Hindus as well. The official version of this great book is in *Gurūmukhi*, not in *Shahmukhī* script. A great number of people of the Sub-continent do not have any acquaintance with *Gurūmukhi* script, so it should have an official modern *Shahmukhī* version available in the libraries, at least for the researchers.
2. Present era is known as the era of religious harmony. To achieve this harmony the poetry of Bābā Farīd in Sikh scripture should be highlighted.
3. The compilation of Bābā Śāhib's poetry in the great book of Sikhs should be published in *Shahmukhī* script widely to spread its pearls not only in the Sub-continent but throughout the world.
4. The official English version of *Gurū Granth Śāhib* should also be available in Universities, research centres and libraries.

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