

# Kalâm of Muslim Saints in Guru Granth Sahib

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## Introduction:

Five centuries ago, Guru Nanak envisioned one God in all universe and made the welfare of all humanity as his life's mission. Guru Nanak was the first Eastern Prophet to adumbrate and define the concept of oneness of human beings, freedom of faith and unity of religions along with their manifold separate diversities. Guru Sahib was a great revolutionary, humanist, a social reformer and a political rebel. He put life into the dead soul of the then Indian society and successfully motivated his followers to sacrifice their life and property for protection of the honour, dignity and faith of the people. Internationalism and inter-religious understanding were gifted to the world by Guru Sahib in the form of the universal Sikh religion and its Universal Scripture – Sri Guru Granth Sahib. He laid the foundation for the concept of fatherhood of God and brotherhood of all human beings.

## Need for Multi Religious Text:

Not many have seen Sri Guru Granth Sahib in its true perspective. Its universality and internationalism has been left untouched by studying it only as a Sikh religious text. Sri Guru Granth Sahib is a multi-religious text, and as such it has ushered a historic chapter amongst world religions by not confining itself to Sikhism alone.

Invariably, all Scriptures are a source of guidance to the people of their respective faiths. They set the guidelines and path to be followed by the follower of a particular religion. Sri Guru Granth Sahib is unique and different.

Sikhism arose historically, as an attempt to harmonize two confronting religions of Islam and Hinduism. Sri Guru Granth Sahib is a beautiful living example of conveying the message of this special mission for creating oneness among the religions. Such harmonization, while historically accurate, does not capture the theological and cultural uniqueness of Sikhism. This nuance has to be clearly and unambiguously understood. **To call Sikhism a compromise between the two warring religions and its co-religionists would be a misleading statement, and virtually an insult, to the Gurus and their Sikh followers. Sikhism is not a cult or a hybrid religion; it is in its own right a full-fledged distinct religious entity, having its own domain of spirituality in its true perspective.**

Sri Guru Granth Sahib's message of unity of religions is a follow up on what Sri Guru Nanak Sahib said and did. The following couplet was very popular among Hindus and Muslims till their political polarization subsequent to partition of the country.

*Guru Nanak, Shah Faqir.*

*Hindu ka Guru, Musalman ka Pir.*

This means, "Guru Nanak is the king of saints. He is the Guru of Hindus and Pir of Muslims, equally venerated by both the Hindu and Muslim communities." Sri Guru Nanak

Sahib had successfully bridged the gap between the two major conflicting communities of Hindus and Muslims, loggerheads at each other, since centuries. He drew attention towards the similarities of fundamentals of their faiths, condemning those rituals and practices which created differences and hatred against one another. He was always accompanied by a Muslim Bhai Mardana and a Hindu Bhai Bala. The picture showing them on both his sides was very common and popular, which also indicates the philosophy and message of the Guru Sahib in taking them together, and a symbol of uniting both the communities.

Keen observers may have noticed that, in almost a conspiratorial manner, those images of the Guru Sahib are no longer in currency. Instead we have new pictures of Sri Guru Nanak Sahib walking on water, with a rosary (*jap mala*) in hand, showing a blessing hand, or other images, which do not carry any message and in fact are a contradiction to the fundamental teachings of the Guru Sahib. **The concept of miracle, blessing or curse is not in consonance with the Guru's philosophy. Gurbani reiterates that all reward or punishment depends upon our good and bad deeds.**

### **Universal Scripture:**

**Sri Guru Granth Sahib is not worshipped like an idol by the Sikhs. It is ascribed divine status as the Living Guru.** It is considered to be a Scripture of the Sikhs, for in most cases they are its custodians. The ethos and teachings of Sri Guru Granth Sahib are universal and Sikhs alone cannot claim to the sole owners and proprietors of this treasure for humankind.

The contributions of enlightenment and spiritual knowledge of the text of the Scripture should determine the status of the Scripture. The key difference with other Scriptures is that in no other Scripture one finds a message for the believers of other faiths. The beauty of Sri Guru Granth Sahib is that, those persons not belonging to Sikhism are sitting and preaching their own different faiths and religions from the single source of this Scripture. **This is a unique mosaic of spiritualism and a marvelous example of a universal message amidst diversity, in spite of the contradictory attitudes, and infamous traditions of the followers of the prevailing Indian religions. This gives an unprecedented message that seemingly different and contradictory religions are basically one in letter and spirit.**

Moreover, all Scriptures are revealed to a prophet who becomes founder of the religion, and inscribed in a single language in the then prevailing script, decades and centuries after their life. **The text of Sri Guru Granth Sahib is a digest of the revelations conferred on the 36 pious souls, during a span of five centuries from Hazrat Baba Sheikh Farid Ji (1175-1265) to Sri Guru Tegh Bahadar Ji (1621-1675). It is inscribed in different communicative spoken languages of the masses, in Gurmukhi, script which was specially invented and refined for the purpose of scribing this multi-lingual and multi-religious text.** Its unquestionable authenticity is that, it is inscribed by the founder Guru Sahib themselves and not subsequently by their followers.

For preparation of the Scripture, Guru Nanak (1469-1539) collected the revelations and teachings of the pious souls from their respective places, in their original different languages, that had passed away even more than 250 years earlier than him. Some of the contributions include Baba Sheikh Farid Ji (1175-1265) a Muslim from Punjab, Bhagat Jaidev Ji (1201-1245) a Brahmin from Bengal, Bhagat Namdev Ji (1270-1350) a so-called untouchable and Bhagat Trilochan Ji (1267-1335) a Vaish from Maharashtra, Bhagat

Ramanand Ji (1366-1467) a Brahmin from Uttar Pradesh, Bhagat Sain Ji (1390-1440) a barber from Madhya Pradesh, Bhagat Dhanna Ji (born 1415) a Jat, Bhagat Pipa Ji (born 1426) a Rajput king of Rajasthan and Bhagat Sheikh Kabir Ji (1398-1495) a Muslim weaver from Uttar Pradesh. The dates of Bhagat Sadna Ji a Muslim butcher from Sind and Bhagat Beni Ji are not known; probably they were of much earlier period.

**The first five Gurus continued the process of collecting and compiling the material for 135 years from 1469 to 1604 for inclusion in the holy Scripture: Pothi Sahib.**

### **Preservation of The Text:**

Some scholars have written concocted stories about the compilation work done by the Gurus. To understand the work of the Gurus, one need not go far. One has to see it in Sri Guru Granth Sahib itself. The following evidence is enough proof that Gurus possessed the text of their predecessors and contemporaries to compile the Sri Guru Granth Sahib. At various places in the text of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the Gurus have inserted few explanations wherever there was any confusion regarding interpretation, keeping, of course, the original verses intact, in the name and heading of the saints.

For example, we can see the chapter of "Jap" of Guru Nanak. On page No.8 of Salok the last line goes like, "*Jini naam dhiyaiya, gaye masaqat ghal. Nanak, te mukh ujle, keti chutti naal*". To explain it further, the second Master, Sri Guru Angad Sahib Ji compiled the same bani of Salok on page 146 under his name and included one extra word "hor" saying, "*Jini naam dhiyaiya, gaye masaqat ghal. Nanak, te mukh ujle, hor keti chutti naal*". At other places from page 1410 onwards in the chapter "*Waran Te Wadheek*", Sri Guru Nanak Sahib Ji's 33 Saloks are inscribed. Out of it, Salok 27 goes like this, "*Lahore shahar, zahar kahar, sawa pehar*". To explain the changed circumstances of Lahore city during his period without touching the original, the Third Master, Sri Guru Amar Das Ji compiled another Salok 28 and added to it saying, "*Lahore Shahar, Amrit Sar, Sifti Da Ghar.*"

The chapter "*Salok Sheikh Farid Ke*" starts from page 1377, in which his 130 Saloks are inscribed. Out of this the Third Master, Guru Amar Das has compiled and added in his own name Salok 13 on page 1378, Salok 52 on page 1380 and Salok 104 on page 1383. This indicates that this bani was very much with the Guru Sahib, which could make him to write an explanation about it. And the Fifth Master, Guru Arjun Dev's compilation were added quoting in his own name, Salok 75 on page 1381, Salok 82 and Salok 83 on page 1382, Salok 105, Salok 107, Salok 108, Salok 109, Salok 110 on page 1383 and Salok 111, on pages 1383-1384. This shows how much they revered the original text, and kept it fully intact, with their authorship.

In the chapter of "*Salok Bhagat Kabir Jio*" which starts from page No.1364, wherein 243 of his Saloks are inscribed. The 3rd Guru Sri Guru Amar Das Ji has compiled and added in his own name Salok 220 on page 1376. And the Fifth Master, Sri Guru Arjan Sahib Ji has compiled and added in his own name Salok 209, 210 and 211 on page 1375, Salok 214 and Salok 221 on page 1376.

In the chapter of "*Aasa Bani Bhagat Dhanne Ji Ki*" (page 487), the Fifth Master, Sri Guru Arjan Sahib Ji has compiled and added in his own name a complete Shabad no. 2, namely "*Gobind Gobind Gobind Sang Namdev man leena.*"

On page 947 a chapter is titled as “*Ram Kali Ki Var Mohalla 3*”, of the Third Master, Guru Amar Das Ji. Its Shabad 2, starts with the Salok of Bhagat Kabir Ji in Kabir’s own name and followed by the verses of Guru Sahib.

From 1599 to 1604, over a period of five years, the Fifth Master, Sri Guru Arjan Sahib got the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji inscribed under his personal supervision. Out of its 36 contributors, there were 7 Muslims, 6 Sikh Gurus, 2 so-called untouchables, 1 Sikh and remaining Hindus from different denominations. The hymns (*bani*) of the Ninth Master, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadar Ji was added in the year 1705 by the Tenth Master, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Sahib, who bestowed Guruship to the Scripture in the year 1708, concluding the 239 years of Guruship of the Ten Gurus in a single individual personage.

### **Birth of a Faith:**

**To call the Gurus as Hindus ( or - for that matter, their followers as Hindus - not as Sikhs ), merely because they were born to Hindu parents, is the height of ignorance and narrow-mindedness.** Founders of all religions are born in other religions, i.e., those of their parents. For example, Moses was the founder of Judaism. He was not a Jew, nor born to Jewish parents. Jesus, the founder of Christianity, was not a Christian nor born to a Christian mother Prophet Mohammad was the founder of Islam. He was not born a Muslim but founded Islam. Gautam Buddha the founder of Buddhism and was born in Hindu royalty; Buddhism came after his nirvana.

So why is this fallacious logic confined only to Sikhs and the Gurus? The reasons are not far too seek. It is again a deep rooted conspiracy to undermine the uniqueness of the Sikh religion, the independent identity of the Sikhs. The political fallout of positing Sikhs versus the Muslims is another major dimension to this sinister game.

Whereas all the Guru Sahibs repeatedly denied being part of either the Hindu or Muslim religion, significantly they kept themselves close to both the religions and its co-religionists, but also maintained the necessary respectable distance. To create international understanding for the worship of God and equality of human beings, Sikhism decries barriers of geographical boundaries, languages and rituals, which have caused a gulf among religions and their followers.

When Guru Nanak was eleven years of age, elaborate arrangements were made by the family for the formal initiation ceremony into the Hindu religion by tying the *Janeu* (sacrificial thread) according to prescribed usage and guests were invited. This is worn round the neck and slung over the shoulder by Hindus of the upper strata to mark them off from the lower-caste. Sri Guru Nanak Sahib refused to wear it. In the presence of the gathering, he asked the Pandit, “*How can you differentiate between men by such badges? It is their actions that should categorize them.*” This is how Sri Guru Nanak Sahib, without mincing words denounced being a Hindu at that tender age.

The first bold, rebellious and religio-political statement of Sri Guru Nanak Sahib, which was to set the course of the new religion of Sikhism was, “*There is no Hindu and there is no Musalman*” - All human beings are equal without any discrimination. This unique mission was followed by an unbroken line of nine appointed successor Gurus, maintaining the line of leadership for 239 years, up to 1708, culminating in the unending form of the present Guru Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

### **Muslim Co-Authors:**

There are seven Muslim contributors in Guru Granth Sahib. They are, Sheikh Kabir Ji, Sheikh Bhikan Ji, Sadana Ji, Rai Satta Ji, Rai Balwand Ji, Bhai Mardana Ji and Hazrat Baba Sheikh Farid Ji. In all the Banis of the Muslim savants, there is strong disapproval of those Muslims who do not offer Nimaz (Muslim prayers), especially from Hazrat Baba Sheikh Farid Ji.

Inscribed on page 1381, the words of Hazrat Baba Sheikh Farid are: *“O Benimazi (prayer-less) dog, this is not a proper way of life. You never come for prayers to the Mosque for the five times. Get up, O’ Farid, wash your face, hands and legs and offer the Nimaz in the morning. The head, which does not bow to the Saayeen (Allah), cut it off and remove that head. The head, which does not bow before the Saayeen, what is the use of such a head? Burn it under the earthen pot in place of firewood.”*

**Another peculiarity of Sri Guru Granth Sahib is its monotheistic message.** Sri Guru Granth Sahib not only starts with the unique name of God as numerical “1” (one) but also continues with a one line description of the concept. *“Ik Onkar sat naam karta purakh nirbhav nirvair akaal moorat ajoni saibhang Gur persad”*. It means, *“God is alone. He is all-pervading. His name is true. He is doer of all-deeds. He is fearless. He does not have enmity. He is eternal. He has not taken birth. He is self-existent. With the grace of such God (Gurprasad) I am beginning this text”*. This is recorded in abbreviated forms also and the smallest form is *“Ik onkar satgur prasad”*. This is written 525 times before the beginning of Chapters and Ragas.

### **Conclusion:**

Sikhism and Sri Guru Granth Sahib discard outright the monopoly of priesthood and declared that, for worshipping the God, no mediator is required. Gurbani has stressed the need of obtaining Knowledge (light -vision) given in the Shabads (hymns - knowledge - words) of the Guru (spiritual mentor), which dispels the darkness of ignorance.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib is the universal Scripture for mankind, preaching a unique science of life, uniting different religions. It contains the teachings of Hindu, Muslim and other religious guides in multilingual spoken languages. At the same time, it is the Guru (World teacher) teaching its prescribed syllabus of leading life and not an object of worship. **This should be preserved, protected and propagated among the people of all faiths in the larger interest of developing the international and inter-religious understanding among the human race, through out the world.**

