Guru Nanak Dev and Origin of Sikhism

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ABSTRACT

The Punjab’s geography is as old the earth but their historical importance expressed with the Indus civilization. The Punjab is the part of attached to India, so it always attracted the many foreign invasions. Punjab is the land of various cultures, castes and traditions. The spiritual seeds have also grown in the land of Punjab. The people of Punjab are very powerful. The good and bad deeds are the part of mixed culture of Punjab. There were many political, religious and social evils started in Punjab. In the 15th century many evils established their feet in the society. At that time Sikh religion took birth in the Punjab. The first Guru of Sikhs, Guru Nanak dev and his successors given their contribution to terminating the social Evils in society.

Keywords: Punjab, Geography, culture, society, social evils

By the end of fifteenth century, Punjab had to face the problem of decentralised governance. It was divided into several parts and these parts were largely independent. Due to laxity of the central power, new attacks on a daily basis has made the condition of people in Punjab pitiable. Those were the times when Punjab was ruled by Islamic rulers. From the eleventh century onwards until the advent of Guru Nanak, India remained a slave to the Islamic rulers. Although the Islamic rule itself went into change from time to time like Ghaznavi in eleventh century, Ghori in twelfth century and other Islamic dynasties Tughlaq, Khalji or Lodhi, but the mistreatment of the Indian people did not change. The condition of Hindus in Punjab during this time was undoubtedly mournful. At the time of Guru Nanak's birth, people in the society were only concerned about religion and following its day to day rituals like special eating and drinking habits, special bathing methods, wearing tikka on forehead, idol-worship and many other rituals were involved.

Without the guidance of a true Guru, people were clueless at that time and were busy in fighting with each other. This led to an unusual kind of hustle among them where they considered it right to praise and take refuge in other different religions. Already, there was enough conflict amongst the four Varnas, that the ten sects of Sanyasis and twelvemapts of Jogis came to the fore and two sects of Jains also started quarreling with one another. The followers of Hazrat Muhammad were also divided in seventy-two sects. People of Islam began to demolish worship places of other religions, started building mosques and began to oppress the poor.

As move further about the life of Guru Nanak and the origin of Sikhism, it is rather necessary to talk about the Bhakti movement first that was prevalent in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries founded by the Vaishnava saints (Alvars) as a movement in

South India in the sixth century AD. It was a reform movement that gained momentum over time. After Alvars, during eighth and ninth century, the idea of monotheism by the famous philosopher and reformer Sankaracharya became an important part of this devotional movement. The major task performed by him was to drive Buddhism out of its homeland. While Sankaracharya was trying hard that Buddhism and Jainism shall not give its colour to Hinduism, he also aimed to preserve latter from Islam. People lacked basic understanding and were superstitious in those days, due to which it was a common scenario to see masses getting converted to Islam. The given circumstances gave birth to Bhakti movement. This movement worked as a relief to the misery and longing of people. Ramanuja, a well-known preacher of the Bhakti movement was born in the early eleventh century. He opposed the religious ideas of Sankaracharya on the basis of logic, disagreed with it and supported the devotional path and launched a devotional movement. It was during his time that these different ideas of bhakti bloomed into a movement which came to known as Bhakti movement. Ramanuja liberated the lower caste called shudra from social clutches and allowed them to participate in religious gatherings. Hence, many shudras were associated with him in his sect. In response to Sankaracharya’s dvaita (theistic dualism) Ramanuja founded vashishthadvaita (non-dualism). His teachings were well received in northern India and were propagated by Ramananda. The development of Bhakti movement in northern India is credited to Ramanand. With Ramanand's entry into themovement, it took on a special form. Although Ramanandwasa disciple of Ramanuja, but given the needs of time and circumstances he presented many new ideas to the society. If we talk about the worship of Ram in north India, it was Ramanand who spread and propagated it here. He allowed people from all walks of life to worship Ram. He was very strict in thought and very kind in conduct. He was untouched by the evil of caste-divide and considered everyone as equal. A quote about Ramananda in Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha's Mahan Kosh says that “Ramananda was an idol worshiper at first, but in the later stage he has given up all illusions and become a complete philosopher” which acts as an evidence enough to describe him as a person. This was the time when the devotees born in the lower classes accepted Ramanand as their Guru. He not only allowed lower caste Hindus and Muslims to join in the worship but also made them his followers. After Ramananda, his teachings were effectively spread by Kabir, one of his disciples, in the plains of Sindh and Ganga. With the passage of time his sect developed two parallel currents, namely, Sargunabhakti and Nirguna bhakti, consequently his devotees were now also divided into two parts. The followers of Nirguna bhakti believed in the concept of the Ultimate Reality as formless, without attributes or quality and oppose idol worship of gods, goddesses and incarnations. In contrast, Sarguna bhakti was envisioned and developed as with form, attributes and quality and had their belief in idol worship of gods, goddesses and incarnation of Ram, Krishna and many others. The prominent preachers of Nirguna bhakti were, Kabir, Ravidas, Namdev, Jaydev, Pipa, Dhanua, Ramanand, Sain and many Sikh Gurus were intertwined in the same series in terms of ideas even though they live in different times and places in India. The poets of Sarguna bhakti tried to inculcate religious, social and moral values in the lives of people along with the worship of Rama and Krishna. It increased the recognition of pilgrimage, fasting and many other rituals. Whereas Nirguna saints made an important contribution in overcoming the prevailing social evils in the society. Nirguna bhakti had received an agitating response from devotees like Kabir, Ravidas, Ramanand, Jaydev, Tirthochan and Namdev. When Guru Nanak arrived, Islam had already established its firm roots in the Indian subcontinent and bhaktimovement was in its final stages. Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, was born on 15 April 1469 (Vaisakh Sudi 3 Sammat 1526 Bk) in a Khatri family at the site of Rai Bhoi's Talwandi, now known as Nankana Sahib. It is located about 40 miles from Lahore. Guru Nanak's father was Mehta Kalu (Kalyan Das) and his mother's name was Tripta. His father was a Patwari or village writer of Rai Bular, a Bhatti Jagirdar. When Guru Nanak was born, in the joy of the birth of a son, Mehta Kalu performed all the rituals. After this, Pandit Hardayal was summoned to make a birth certificate. After making the certificate, Pandit Hardial said happily, "Mehta ji, this child born in your house will be a yogpurush." He said that, "According to my knowledge, he will be famous but whether it will be political or religious,
I can't say yet. Astrologer Hardial asked a midwife named Daulat what were the features of the baby's voice at birth. The midwife said that the voice was like the laughter of a wise man entering the assembly but I do not have the ability to understand the nature of the child. Astrologer Hardial expressed his desire to see the child but due to extreme cold, the mother refused to accept this. But only at the insistence of the astrologer, the boy was wrapped in a cloth and brought to him. It is said that astrologer Hardial looked at the boy and greeted him with both hands clasped and said that this boy will be worshiped by all Hindus and Muslims but unfortunately I will not live till then. Pandit Hardial said, "Mehta ji, remember what I said today. This boy has been born a great man." The time will come when thousands of heads will bow before it and people will consider it their good fortune to touch his feet.

Guru Nanak's sister Bibi Nanaki was about five years older than him. Bebe Nanaki was born in her maternal village which is why she was named Nanaki and therefore, her brother was named after her. Bebe Nanaki had a deep love for her brother Nanak. Bebe Nanaki was married to Jai Ram of Sultanpur Lodhi.

**Education**

At the age of five, Guru Nanak started talking about Moksha. Mehta Kalu ji must have been very saddened to see Guru Ji's behaviour at an early age. When Guru Nanak was seven years old, his father arranged for his education. At that time there was a small school and the fee was not much. Mehta Kalu ji took one taka, some rice and betel nut as a fees and put it in front of a pandha (teacher) as a fees for the school. Guru Nanak went to school for some time to study his lessons. One day Guru ji sat quietly and did not pay any attention to the books. The teacher asked him why he is not reading then Guru Ji said, "Are you scholarly enough to teach me?" To which teacher replied that,"I have read all the Vedas and all the Sastras." "I am looking into accounting and writing off accounts, cash and interest and I can deal with the amounts," he said. Then the Guru said, "I think it is better to learn the wisdom of God than these qualities you have learned." After which Guru uttered these words:

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	ext{ਜਾਲੀੰਧੋਖੁਰਾਸੋਨੁੰਨੁਕਾਗਦੁਕਾਨਾਿੁੰ}
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Baba, write this account. Wherever you ask for an account, there are true signs. Where the best of the best, the happiest, the happiest.

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	ext{ਕੀਮੀਰਾਚੀਰਕੇਰਨਕਲਰਹਰਜਨਮਰਨਸਿਾਿੁਦੁਆਓ}
\]

The only big court asking for a solution. Let's go ahead. Fear your fear, the next khapi chhijai deh. The name of the ship is Sultan Khan. Nanak got up and left, all falsehoods were broken.

Siri Ragu Mahla 1
(Aad Granth Pt. 16)

The teacher was astonished to hear this and greeted Guruji as Sant Mahatma and said do whatever you want. After this Guru Ji stopped going to school and remained engrossed in his thoughts at home. At that time Persian was the official language which is why Mehta Kalu ji wanted that if Nanak learns Persian then he will become Patwari because at that time government posts were considered hereditary. At the age of nine, Guru Ji was sent to Qazi Qutbuddin to learn Persian. Guruji learned as much Persian as he could and after that the Qazi was unable to answer the Guru's questions. Soon, Guruji surprised even the Qazi who taught Persian like...

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he did to his previous teacher. The Qazi, impressed by Guruji, said, O Nanak! You are a fakir sent by God. Thou Thyself knowest Thy secrets.21

Janeyu

When Guru Nanak was nine years old, according to a Hindu custom, ceremony of wearing janeyu was arranged. Mehta Kalu Ji called all the relatives. Pandit Hardial came at the appointed time and prepared the genus of threads according to the Vedic rites. When Pandit began to put janeyu, Guru Ji stopped him and asked “Pandit Ji! What are the advantages of wearing it and disadvantages of not wearing it. Pandit ji was very surprised to hear this and for some time he looked at Guru ji's radiant face and said very patiently "O Nanak! It is a basic Hindu principle to wear janeyu. Without this a man is considered Shudra.22Guru Nanak asked again, ‘Religion has more to do with the body or the soul?’ Then Pandit had to accept the real truth and said, "In true sense it is with the soul.” After this Guru Ji said to Pandit, “Then give me such a janeyu that can be the support of my soul.23 Pandit asked Guru Ji with great devotion “O Nanak then what kind of janeyu do you want to have.”Guruji answers this in his own Bani:

"Mercy cotton, Janeyu, Janeyu, Janeyu"

This is a newborn, Hi t padeghatu ..
It does not break, Don't burn, don't burn, don't burn.
Blessed is the man, Nanaka, Who can walk down the street. "

Guruji said, "Pandit ji, by wearing a janeyu, a person is associated as an upper caste. A man keeps away from lowly and indigified deeds and in the true sensebecomes of the higher caste. By doing so, a creature takes his bundle of good earnings to the next world and hence, it is the rightful protector and helper of a man in the next world. Bring this kind of janeyu and put it around my neck.24Centuries-old rituals and established beliefs were challenged by Guru Nanak at an early age. Guruji inflicted a severe blow on the rights of Shastras and this was the first victory of his life which he achieved with determination.25

Guru Nanak was now more absorbed in God than ever before. He sang the praises of akal purakh (the Almighty) all day long and remained absorbed in God's name. He did not eat or drink anything for many days. Therefore, Guru Ji's father Mehta Kalu suspected that his son might be suffering from some illness.26One dayMehta Kalu Ji called Haridas, a famous doctor of the village. When Haridas began to check Guruji’s pulse, he said, “Vaid ji, I have no physical ailment.”

Vaid called Vaidgi holding his arms outstretched.

Then Guru Ji began to say, “Vaid Ji you should leave now and go for your business. Neither can you understand this pain, nor you can give any medicine.” Vaid Haridas looked intently at Guruji’s face and bowed with devotion. He told Mehta Kalu that Nanak has no physical ailment rather he is devoted toNirankar. What disease could he have who is going to cure thousands of diseases.27

After some time, Guruji’s condition improved and he started to regular life like before. So now his father thought why not make his son able to earn a living by doing some work.28That is why Mehta Kalu gave Guru Ji twenty rupees and asked him to make a deal. At that time Talwandi (Nankana Sahib) of Rai Bhoy was a small village and Chuharkana was a good town. So the deal was taken from here and Nanak went with his partner to make the deal. But in the market Guru Ji found a group of hungry sadhu and they had not eaten anything for many days. So Nanak Sahib spent twenty rupees on feeding the hungry saints and they considered it the real deal. A gurudwara is built at the place where Guru Nanak fed the saints by the name Sacha sauda.29

When Mehta Kalu Ji came to know about this, he became very angry and Bibi Nanaki and her husband Jai Ram also came to know about this. After which Guru Nanak was taken to Sultanpur by Jai Ram. Jai Ram was very close to Daulat Khan which is why he gave a job to Nanak Sahib in Daulat Khan Lodhi's mudikhana.30Nanak Sahib started this work with great enthusiasm and carried it out with great competence. Guruji taught everyone the principle of love and equality. He used to treat all the officials, big and small as

26.Sikh History, Principal Teja Singh and Dr. Ganda Singh, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2006, Pt. 3.
29. Sikh History, Principal Teja Singh and Dr. Ganda Singh, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2006, Pt. 3-4.
equals, but sometimes he gave more to the poor and needy. \(^{31}\) Once Nanak started meditating while working in *modikhana* and uttered the words *tera hi tera* while he was weighing flour to a sage. To which the sage replied that if you remained stuck at *tera* (thirteen) then this business will go in loss. Some people used to gossip about Nanak’s conduct to Daulat Khan Lodhi. But every time there was an investigation, no losses were found at *modikhana*. Each time the Nawab was convinced of Nanak’s sincerity and practical ability and gossipers were proved wrong. \(^{32}\) Despite everything Nanak remained meditating name of God. Everyday after taking bath he did *kirtan* along with Bhai Mardana from dawn till dusk. \(^{33}\) Bhai Mardanawas son of *Mirasir* Mir Badreof Chobhar caste who was born at Talwandi. He was about 8 years older than Nanak. It was only due to his excellence in singing *ragas* that Mardana was fortunate enough to associate with Nanak from an early age. \(^{34}\) Mardana also came to Sultanpur soon after Nanak’s arrival at Sultanpur.

While living in Sultanpur, Nanak got married due to the efforts and inspiration of his sister Nanaki. Jai Ram and Bebe Nanaki had no children at home so Nanak got married in Sultanpur. \(^{35}\) Nanak was married in the month of Jeth Sammat 1544 and May 1487 to Bibi Sulakhani, daughter of Mool Chand Ji of Batala Nagar, through his brother-in-law Jai Ram. \(^{36}\) In some time, two sons, Sri Chand and Lakhmi Chand, were born to Guru Nanak and Bibi Sulakhti. Along with domestic life, his love for Akal Purakh has always been intense. Guru Ji spent many years of his life living in Sultanpur and at the same time Nanak wrote most of his Bani. \(^{37}\) It was in Sultanpur that Guru Nanak, along with Mardana and other companions, started chanting *shabad* every night. Everyone who came to listen to his chanting was first served food. Guruji would go to the river for bath during early hours of the day and then after his prayers to Akal Purakh he would go about his work. \(^{38}\)

One day Nanak got up at dawn as usual and went to the river *veyin* to take a bath. This time he went to a farther place than before but did not return. The servant who went with Nanak became anxious seeing that he has not come out for a long time and after searching around, he came to this conclusion that Nanak drowned in the river. He went home and told Jai Ram. The news soon spread all over the city. \(^{39}\) When Nawab came to know, he gave orders to find him. All efforts went in vain after looking for him everywhere. Those who were jealous of Guru also got a chance to gossip that he has disappeared after looting *modikhana*. After listening to the gossips, Nawab ordered that the goods be weighed and accounts shall be checked. When this was done, the profits were found more than expected. After which everyone became even more worried. \(^{40}\)

It comes to our knowledge from Guru Nanak’s *bani*, the work of Bhai Gurdas Ji and the Puratan Janam Sakhsi that Guruji by sitting alone in the forest, meditated on Akal Purakh. Historians are divided on the opinion that Nanak attained enlightenment in the forests whereas others say that it happened in *veyin* river.

Guru Nanak, after attaining enlightenment, returned after three days. People were gathered where Daulat Khan asked him, “Nanak, what has happened to you?” He remained silent. Nanak went on to join a group of *fakirs*. Mardana *rabab* also went with them. One day passed and the next day when Nanak Sahib got up he said:

“*Na koi hindu na koi musalman*”

He said the same thing every time he spoke “*na koi hindu na koi musalman*”. \(^{41}\) By which Nanak meant that Hindus and Muslims have forgotten the principles and doctrines of their respective religions. Nanak Sahib’s first attempt was to unite these two communities who were fighting among themselves and had forgotten their common God. \(^{42}\) The people of both sects were astonished to hear this. Soon his words spread throughout the city. The Muslims were especially angry and the Qazi went to Nawab and complained. \(^{43}\) Nawab summoned Nanak with due respect and he came. Many people had gathered there and the Nawab asked respectfully, “O Good Nanak! There is a lot of talk about your new words. It is said that you are saying, “There is no Hindu or Muslim?”” To which Nanak replied, “I speak what I see. Hence, according to me neither there is any Hindu nor any Muslim. But all are God’s


\(^{33}\) Biography of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Prof. Sahib Singh, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2013, Pt. 35.

\(^{34}\) Biography of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Prof. Sahib Singh, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2013, Pt. 21-22.


\(^{40}\) Biography of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Kartar Singh M. A., Lahore Book Snake, Ludhiana, 2008, Pt. 82.


own child and belong to one brotherhood." Then Guru pronounced: -

“ The only giver of all souls, So I did not forget.”

(Japji Sahib)

Meanwhile, it was time for Namaz. Qazi asked Nanak Sahib that if he believe all religions are equal then let's go to the mosque with them to read Namaz. Guru Nanak went to the mosque with the Qazi and the Nawab. Qazi began to read Namaz and Guruji stood behind them. All maulvis and Namazis’ continued to pray but Guruji remained steadfast. It again gave a chance to Qazi to complain and told Nawab that Nanak talks about equality but did not participate with us in Namaz. Guru said, “With whom shall I read Namaz? Qazi himself did not do Nawaz wholeheartedly rather his mind is constantly wandering over the calf born at his home. He was thinking that calf was untied, it may not fall in well.” Qazi was astonished to hear this and said whatever Nanak said is right. Then Guru Nanak uttered these words: -

‘Muslims Proverbs It is difficult to be called a Muslim.'

Muslims die in the face of deen The illusion of life is dispelled.
Lord What a quilt Mr. Assuming the doer above the head, he loses himself.
You Nanak Sarab Jiya Mihrammat Happened He is called a Muslim.

Guru quit his job atmosikhana, became a fakir and encamped in the desert near Sultanpur. The news about Nanak becoming a fakir spread all over. Hearing this, Mehta Kalu, Mata Tripta ji and other relatives also came to Sultanpur. Upon receiving Jairam's message, Guru's in-laws also arrived. Together they tried to persuade Guru that he shall abandon fakiri and take care of his household. Guru listened to everyone patiently and said that your opinion is correct, however, he has been commanded by his God to go to every nook and corner and save the world from burning, misery and trap of sorrow. Saying this Guru left, leaving his family in forever sorrow. For a short time Guru stayed with the religious persons with whom he had previously accompanied. Before embarking on a long journey or udasis,

Then in 1500, he embarked on his Divine Mission and went towards east, west, north and south and visited various centers of Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Jainis, Sufis, Yogis and Sidhas. He met people of different religions, tribes, cultures and races. He travelled on foot with his Muslim companion named Bhai Mardana, a minstrel. His travels are called Udasis. In his first Udasi (travel), Guru Nanak covered east of India and returned home after spending about 6 years. He started from Sultanpur in 1500 and went to his village Talwandi to meet and inform his parents about his long journey. His parents wanted their young son to provide comfort and protection for them in their old age and so they told him they would prefer it if he did not go. But he told them that the world was burning in the fire of Kalyug and that thousands and thousands were waiting for the Divine message of the Almighty for comfort, love and salvation. The Guru, therefore, told his parents, "There is a call from Heaven, I must go whither He directs me to go.” Upon hearing these words, his parents agreed and gave their blessings. So Guru Nanak started his mission and the roots of Sikhism were laid down first towards the east of India.

According to the Puratan Janamsakhi, which is one of the oldest accounts of the life history of Guru Nanak, Guru Ji undertook five missionary journeys (udasisya) to the far away places of Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Mecca, Baghdad, Kamroop (Assam), Tashkand and many more. Guru ji travelled far and wide to spread the word of Gurbani and covered most of India, present day Bangladesh, Pakistan, Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, South West China, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Syria, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan.

After long Udasis Guru came to Kartarpur from Saidpur. Four Large udasis From Guru Stay By Already Preaching to do About Thought. He was a saint in times of Bhakti movement, The fakirs who wore the bana, He had taken off the bana of domestic life. While staying in Kartarpur, Guru would sometimes visit the areas near Kartarpur so that the divine message could be conveyed

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to the people and they could be guided to the path of the true Akal Purakh.\textsuperscript{51} Now the Guru had become the leader of a new society. Here While living already Gurudid Agriculture In the morning Sam Came Congregations With Verses Of Recitation To do Of With, The langar and other cars would be involved in the work themselves. Guru spent most of his last days in Kartarpur. While living in Kartarpur, Guruchose Bhai Lehna Ji as his successor after many trials and named him Angad. Guru Nanak passed away soon after on 22 September 1539.\textsuperscript{52}