

Tracing Guru Nanak's lineage

Introduction

Christians consider Jesus as God. Hindus venerate Ram and/or Krishna as the highest avatars or reincarnations of 'Bhagavan' or God. Muslims claim Muhammad as the highest and last Prophet to be sent on Earth. I have personally met many Buddhists who routinely address Gautam Buddha as God.

In the same way, Sikhs in all their devotion equate Nanak with 'Nirankar' or Almighty Himself...and thereby is born the seeds of differences between the various religions.

It was only with the advent of Dwapar Yuga [1] in the year 1700, that the landscape of spirituality gradually started changing. Saints started promoting more and more scientific methods of enquiry in spiritual matters. This is in a sharp contrast to the Bhakti movement of India and elsewhere in the preceding Kalyug, when the minds of general masses were not yet suited for more scientific exploration of the Unknown.

The Saints of medieval times such as Saint Francis of Assisi, Kabir, Nanak, Mira Bai etc. mainly emphasised love, devotion and complete surrender to Spiritual Preceptor or God as necessary and sufficient condition to enlightenment. Well, this approach is the purest approach and will work in all ages, but the problem in present times is that human mind has become all the more troublesome, inquisitive and restless. It is just not satisfied with straight answers. Paramahansa Yoganandaji says gone are the times of Commandments. Today, you tell a child not to do something, and he will not rest without doing exactly that very thing!

In fact, in my research, SriYukteswarji were the first Master who publicly encouraged scientific approach to seeking God by forming various Sadhu-Sabhas across the country.

In this scientific age, mind keeps on churning tons of questions and simply can't develop enough pure devotion to Divine without the help of specific meditation techniques such as Kriya Yoga or Surat-Shabd Yoga or intense mantra chanting to first subdue the mind.

I mean, Jesus Christ condensed the whole spiritual living in two rules:

1. Love thy Lord,
2. Love thy neighbour as thyself.

That's it. It's so simple.

But if we look around at what is going on in the world, absolutely no nation, religion, sect or person-in-power follows that. Material selfishness is rampant and is the root cause of all poverty, famine and on-going wars.

In the same way, Nanak, when he came at the darkest hour of Kalyug gave in his Mool-Mantra the way of righteous living:

1. Sat Naam: Only Name of God is True (Constant/Unchangeable), rest all is delusion (transient/fickle).
2. Nirvair: Hold enmity with none. Live harmoniously with everyone.
3. Nirbhau: Be Fearless. Fearlessness being the bedrock of spirituality.

Coming back to the topic of Saints and God.

I think the following quote of Paramahansa Yoganandaji from his scripture, *God Talks With Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita*, commentary on IV:7–8, will aptly clarify the whole point:

“Can God Himself ever incarnate as a human being?

To say that God can not do a certain thing is to limit Him. But there are so many things that God can do, yet does not do — at least not as human beings expect of Him. *God has never been known to have taken a human form called “God” and dwelt in it among men.*

(Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God,” Jesus said, to distinguish himself, an avatar, from God the Father, the Absolute, the Formless.)

The Lord has condescended many times, however, to manifest Himself through the incarnation of a fully liberated being who, *once an ordinary human being*, has become a true reflection or ‘son of God’. God, who is almighty and can do anything thus operates His Omniscience through the human body of an avatar. Just as the ocean of Cosmic Consciousness is aware of a soul wave manifesting on its surface, so the soul wave of an avatar is aware of the ocean of Cosmic Consciousness manifesting through its form.”

In Kalyug, Jesus Christ was considered God.

=> Now, Christ Consciousness, immanent in body of Jesus is referred to as Supreme.

In Kalyug, Krishna was considered God.

=> Now, the Consciousness in Krishna is identified as Supreme Consciousness.

And it is the same Supreme Consciousness that gets manifested in all true Saints and Masters of all religions.

Yoganandaji addressed Krishna first as a Saint then as a Saviour, and his accompanying male and female cowherd disciples as past life rishis, who had condescended on Earth to enact the play of Divine Love.

In interpreting *Bhagavad Gita*, Yoganandaji always said, **God ‘through’ Krishna instructed Arjuna...** which is in subtle contrast with most other *Gita* commentaries which identify Krishna with God Himself.

My point is till the time we address leaders of all spiritual schools of thoughts as the Ultimate Gods themselves, we will continue to have discords and communal disturbances.

We need to understand the significance of One Absolute God, whom Nanak called Akal Purakh, meaning beyond time and space realms.

Now, comes the question of how Nanak got enlightenment? Did Nanak have any human or astral Guru? We will delve into all these topics to the best of my ability.

I have heard rumours that Nanak met Kabir and Ravidas in the troupe of Sadhus whom he gave free lunch, commonly referred to as Sacha Sauda in history. Some say, Nanak accepted one of those Sadhus, maybe Kabir or Ravidas as his Guru.

Mr. Sant Rampal of Haryana, publicly claims that Kabir was Guru of Nanak and has published some contrived text on his website supporting his claim.

If you ask Sikhs, they either say Nanak needed no Guru or he was Almighty Himself appearing in human form etc.

Nothing can be far from truth.

We all know the incident that sparked the spiritual mission of Nanak when at the age of around 30 years, he disappeared in river Bein in Sultanpur. He remained in unknown realms for three days and when he emerged back from river, he was a changed man. He renounced his earlier life style and devoted himself full time to preaching the Name of God.

And this is exactly the mystical incident which Nanak relates to his companions Bala and Mardana, explaining what had actually happened, in the biography [2] of Guru Nanak, “*Bhai Bala Vali Sri Guru Nanak Devji Janam Sakhi*”. This biography was narrated by Bhai Bala, Nanak’s closest companion, at the request of Guru Angad, after the passing of Guru Nanak.

I am quoting and translating from this Punjabi text:

Transliteration Page 222:

Mardana pucheya ji tusanu jo Guru miliya si usda naam kiya hai? Taan Guru Nanakji keha Mardana usda naam **Baba Jinda** aakhde hain. Jitho tak jal aur pavan hai usde hukam vich chalde hain ate agni aur mitti eh bhi usde aakhe vich hain. Es tahi Baba aakhna chahiye, horas tahi Baba nahi akhna.

Taan Mardane keha Guruji asi bhi taan tuhade naal hi firde aahe tusanu kad mileya hai? Taan Guru Nanakji keha Mardana aje tu asa thi nahi aaya so jad asi milan gaye. Taan Mardana keha ji kad gaye so?

Taan Guruji keha jad Sultanpur vich tubki layi si tab Mardana asi trai din os pas rahe se. Mardana Bhai Bala janda hai. Mardana oh aisa Guru hai jo jisdi sata sampooran jagat nu aasra de rahi hai aate Mardana Jinda usnu kehnde han jo Kaal de vas na aave, hatho Kaal usde vas hosi.

Taan Mardana keha ji usda rang keha hai ate us da asan kithe hai? Taan Guruji keha Mardana usda rang lal hai par us lali naal koi lali mildi nahi ate usda raum savran de rang de haan par ohna de naal sona bhi dakh nahi denda, te rasna thi bolda bhi nahi ate room room thi Mardana eho Shabad ho reha hai Gahar Gambhir, Gahar Gambhir.

Translation:

One day, Mardana asks Guruji, what was the name of the Guru whom he had met before?

Guru Nanak says, he is called by the name **Baba Jinda** (The Living One). All the five elements of nature, air, water, fire etc. are in his command. Guruji further adds, only such a high being should be called a Baba, and not other self-styled masters.

Then Mardana says, Guruji we always accompany you, so, how come we never met him? Guruji replies, you were not there with me when I met him. Mardana further asks when did that happen?

Then Guruji says when I took a dip in the river in Sultanpur, I remained with him for three days. Bhai Bala knows about this. Guruji continues, Mardana, my Guru is such who is giving support to the entire world. And, Jinda (Living One) means who is beyond the clutches of Kaal (symbolic governor of finite world). Rather, Kaal is in his control.

Mardana then enquires about the form and colour and place of stay of **Jinda Baba**. Guruji replies, that his form is of crimson colour but no ordinary red color occurring in nature matches with his hue. Also, a golden glow emanates from his entire body. But pure gold feels

lackluster in front of his glow. He doesn't need to speak through his tongue, yet his every cell resonates in a deep solemn vibration.

Some unscrupulous people have tried to prove that Nanak's Guru, **Jinda Baba** is in fact Saint Kabir. This claim gets falsified by the following verse in same biography:

Transliteration Page 300:

(During the course of Siddh Ghosthi, conversation of Nanak with Nath yogis)

Mardana aakheya ji tu ta Nirankar hai, tere aage ta koi bhi nahi thahar sakda, sabe bhasam hoyi jande haan. Guru Nanak bachan kita Mardana sada itna vada Guru hai jo bina Kartar thi asadi drishti tale nahi aavanda aate Mardana Kabir bhagat thi aadi le bahut mahatma aage hoye hain aur es dehi ke sath Nirankar ka darshan kise nu nahi hoya. Taan Mardana keha Guruji Nirankar tuhade vich koyi bhed nahi. Taan Guru Nanakji kahiya Mardana Kartar nu sabhe pyare eko jahe hi haan.

Translation:

Nath yogis were unable to convince Guru Nanak to accept their practices and join their tribe. Rather they had to bow down in reverence after perceiving the reflection of Infinite in the gentle and ever-loving Nanak. During this conversation, Mardana remarks to Nanak that you yourself are Nirankar (Formless or Almighty) as no one was able to better you in the spiritual debate. Guru Nanak then very innocently passes the credit to his own Guru, **Jinda Baba**, saying, Mardana my Guru is so powerful that I can't even capture him in my vision without the direct presence of God along with (*meaning my Guru is ever in communion with God*). Further Nanak states, that in the past there had been many other Masters such as Kabir who also had the blessings of Jinda Baba (maybe in his astral form), but they were not able to meet him in his human form. (*Here Guru Nanak is hinting at his unique spiritual mission for which he was sent on Earth by God*). Then Mardana says there is no difference between Almighty and you. Guruji then stresses, everyone is equally dear to One Lord.

From the above passage, it is clear that Saints such as Kabir or Ravidas, though Supreme in their own right were not Gurus of Nanak.

Transliteration Page 400:

A Mughal fakir questioning Nanak: Us fakir ne sawal kita shama nama Chidari aate Sri Guru Nanakji keha hamara naam Nanak nirankari ta Mughal boleya maiyne fahmidam taan Guru

Nanakji boleya ma banda Khudaim taan Mughal pucheya shuma Pir guftam taan **Sri Guru Nanakji boleya ma Pir Jinda Pir.**

Translation:

Basically, Guru Nanak introduces himself to a Mughal fakir by saying that his Pir (Guru) is **Jinda Pir.**

After thoughts

There is an uncanny similarity in the meeting of Lahiri Mahasaya with his Guru, Mahavatar Babaji (as recounted in Autobiography of a Yogi) and meeting of Guru Nanak with his Guru, Jinda Baba in river Bein (as stated above).

Both incidents happened during similar age groups of the Saints, which later changed the course of spiritual destiny of the world.

Both incidents bordered along the domains of matter and Spirit, and justifiably so, may be difficult to accept by pure rational minds of modern men.

Both involved some higher Power, a Divinity that appeared in human form to fulfil the eternal Guru-Disciple spiritual relationship.

My mind questions, can that higher Power be same? Maybe, Mahavatar Babaji, who initiated Kabir* and Adi Shankracharya before, is *the Jinda Baba*, who initiated Guru Nanak?

...I am convinced this to be so. Jinda means ever-living in human form and that is the defining attribute of Mahavatar Babaji. The crimson imbued Jinda Baba with golden radiance and Mahavatar Babaji with copper coloured locks are the same.

*There is no known text that describes the initiation of Kabir by Mahavatar Babaji. Literature says Kabir was a disciple of Saint Ramanand. Kabir, in fact, tricked Ramanand to formally initiate him in Ram Naam mantra, as is well known in literature. It is quite possible that Kabir got further initiation in Kriya yoga by Babaji *in a astral vision*. Because it is clear that Kabir used to practice Kriya from several of his hymns recorded in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*.

This biography also mentions about past births of Guru Nanak and also their salient aspects which I will go over in future:

In Satya Yuga, Nanak was born as Meharban.

In Treta Yuga, Nanak was known as Raja Janak of Videhi.

In Dwapar Yuga, Nanak was Raja Harish Chander.

Tribute to Mahavatar Babaji in Sri Guru Granth Sahib

There is a beautiful tribute to Mahavatar Babaji by Guru Arjan (5th Sikh Guru) in Sukhmani Sahib:

[na-o khand parithmee firai chir jeevai](#)

He (Mahavatar Babaji) is ever-living and has his presence across all spheres of creation

[Maha-Udas Tapeesar theevai](#)

He is totally detached from the entire creation and is a great Tapasvee

[Agan mahe homat paran](#)

His life-force remains merged in Celestial Fire

...How to reach Him?

[kanik asav haivar bhoom daan](#)

All worldly charities one can do

[ni-ulee karam karai baho aasan](#)

but still he accrues karma while practicing meditative asana-postures

[Jain maarag sanjam aat saaDhan](#)

However, there are many other ways of meeting Him such as well-defined Jain philosophy

[Har kay Naam samsar kachh naahi](#)

Still, meditating on Lord is the best way

[Naanak gurmukh naam japat gat paahi](#)

Says Nanak, Guru-ward devotees always reach their goal

Legacy of Guru Nanak

It is a myth that Guru Gobind (10th Sikh Master) terminated the line of **human** Sikh Gurus after himself.

Let us deeply concentrate and understand the words of Guru Gobind, that are still reverberating in ether:

[Aagya bhai Akaal ki Tabhi chalayo Panth,](#)

I started a new Sikh sect (Khalsa Panth) only at the behest of God,

[Sab Sikhan ko Hukum hai Guru manyo Granth.](#)

All Sikhs (devotees) are commanded to venerate Guru Granth Sahib
as their eternal Guru and Guide.

[Guru Granth ji manyo, pargat Guran ki Deh,](#)

Those who enshrine love for Guru Granth Sahib in their hearts, will meet next **human** Gurus
(*who will enable them to assimilate Spiritual Wisdom of Guru Granth Sahib*)

[Jo prabh ko milboch hai khoj Shabd men le.](#)

Those who ardently seek God shall find Him through the spoken and unspoken hymns.

@masters' feet

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[1] The Holy Science, by Swami SriYukteswar Giri, SRF/YSS publications

[2] <https://archive.org/details/BhaiBaleWaliJanamSakhi>