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Bānī of Baba Farid in Śri Guru Granth Sahib and Bhakti Rasa

Balvinder Kaur
Sainik Colony, Roorkee Email: successfulbalvinder@gmail.com

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Abstract

Thebāṇīof Śri Guru Granth Sahib are rich in emotionalism caused by the dialogue on the nature of Ultimate Reality and the search for final meaning of human existence. The consciousness of the Ultimate Reality provides these saint-poets with transcendent vantage point and a liberative vision to re-define the existential social concerns of human life without fear or favour. Bāṇī (Devotional Lyrics) of Baba Farid's spiritual and ethical teachings are of this order. His bāṇī follows Indian collective consciousness which can be summarized in the following way: always remember Death which teaches us the value and merit of life, be kind and compassionate to others, non-violence is the most important virtue in life, live a life of contentment like a true darvesh, and love of God leads to highest spiritual attainment. The present paper aims at Baba Farid's bāṇī with the enrichment of Bhakti Rasa in Śri Guru Granth Sahib.

Keywords: Baba Farid Bani, Bhakti Rasa in Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

Introduction

As far as the bānī of the Sufi saints are concerned, in them they seek a kind of explanation about existential social concerns in bhakti rasa. They are impregnated with Indian collective consciousness which can be understood in the following ways: this consciousness percolates through Bānī which says: always remember Death which teaches us the value and merit of life, be kind and compassionate to others, non-violence is the most important virtue in life, live a life of contentment like a true darvesh, and love of God leads to highest spiritual attainment. The present chapter aims at making an assessment of tenets how they help the seeker/devotee to elevate himself to a higher state, by surrendering to God. The paper deals with the hymns of, Farīd, Guru Arjan Dev included the hymns of important Hindu and Muslim saints. By doing this his concern was to give the path of Bhakti based on existential social concerns. Accordingly, he included those hymns which were impregnated with such images. His total contribution is 541 hymns set to 18 different musical measures (Ragas).

Farid was to Punjabi what Chaucer was to English. He made Punjabi poetry and poetry Punjabi. Later when Adi Granth (Sikh scripture) was compiled by the fifth Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Arjun Dev Ji, Farid's 'slokas' (sacred couplets) were given the place of honour along with those of Kabir, Ramdev and Guru Ravidas. Farid returns thou good for evil; In thy heart bear no revenge.Thus, thy body will be free of maladies, and thy life have all blessings.

Baba Sheikh Farid Ji was a great Sufi saint, very sweet of tongue and who lived an austere life. He asked for only one blessing from God....a life of prayer and meditation. His following insight forms the subject of his thoughts about the omnipresent…. "Sweet are candy, sugar, honey, and buffalo's milk. Yea, sweet are these but sweeter by far is God."

Acknowledged by every literary authority as the first major poet of the Punjabi language, he made Punjabi poetry,the way of life. Later when Adi Granth (Sikh scripture) was compiled by the fifth Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Arjun Dev, Farid's 'slokas' (sacred couplets) were given the place of honour along with those of Kabir, Ramdev and Guru Ravidas. They all sang in the people's dialect about the glory of India's culture, the greatness of Indian values and the supremacy of Indian thought.

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Purpose of Study

Theproposed study is an attempt to assess how the poet in the lyrics of Bānī of Baba Farid, through the conjunction of the *vibhāvas, anubhāvas and vyābhicārībhāvas*, activates, with some kind of empathetic induction, the propensity of *sthāyībhāvās* in the *sahṛdayabhakta* (devotee) who in the course of the *bānī* , experiences an afflatus or transport which is designed as *rasa* (aesthetic sentiment).

Exposition

Among the many social and religious movements in India of the last two thousand years, the Bhakti movement of the Middle Ages from the 13th to the 17th centuries was the most pronounced, as it cut across all distinctions of high and low birth, the learned and the unlettered, men and women and opened the doors of spiritual realization and salvation to one and all. Besides, it provided a base for common socio-religious culture in India. One great characteristic of the Indian civilization is that more than its kings and warriors and generals, it is the Saints and the Sufis who realized the goals of the Renaissance and the Reformation. The cyclic tales recited by the lute players of ancient India, the songs of the wandering minstrels, the ba!lads and the 'kathaks' (storytellers) of medieval times provided a framework for the evolution and growth of the composite culture of India. They integrated the diverse elements of Indian society and knit them in a unified cultural necklace. It is these saints and sufis who bestowed a sense of Indianness on Indians down the ages. Baba Farid occupies a very high place in this cultural anthology.

Baba Farid lived in Punjab in the 13th century and composed hymns in Punjabi, the likes of which are yet to be composed. There was something in his poetry akin to prayer. He spoke of his people in the people's dialect and asked them to use Punjabi for religious purposes. He started a 'silsilah at Pak Pattan and established a mystic organization, a 'Khanqah' (Monastery) on the lines of a European seminary upholding the rule of mind over matter in the ultimate analysis of human affairs.Baba Sheikh Farid had been in the 12th & 13th centuries, a great intellectual, unique renunciat, perfect ascetic and committed devotee of the Timeless Lord who communicated to the common folk the revealed divine message through the medium of sweet, soothing Punjabi language. Farid lived a householder's life marked with contentment and perseverance. One of the greatest virtues of his life was his love and sympathy for entire mankind. His heart felt pain of oppression perpetuated by the Muslim invaders in the name of religion. He tried to put balm on the hurt psyche of the people through the medium of sweet, soothing words so that the adverse impact caused by excesses of the orthodox Muslims to the image of Islam could be neutralised. Such an act on the part of someone was required for the revival of the feeling of fraternity amongst mankind. The unique humanitarian values of compassion, love, sympathy, mutual understanding and appreciation are clothed in the hymns of Farid as fragrance is in flowers. For his sweet words, sweet ideals and sweet behaviour, Farid became known as an epitome of Sweetness (*Shakarganj)*; his full name was Sheikh Farid ud-din Maund Ganj-I-Shakar.

The essence of the hymns of Farid can be stated as follows:

Never forget Death under any circumstances. Avoid all quarrelling &polemics. Non-violence is the most beautiful ornament of Peaceful life.

Baba Farid ji exhorts mankind to cultivate these & all such virtues. He states that Contentment resides in the heart purified of all traces of Ego & Greed. Talking of a Faqir (hermit) he states that any new cloth is like a coffin for him. According to him, the detached person is also the wisest. He is the greatest who can face both pleasure & pain with Equanimity. The richest person is the one with the most content heart. He who has given up contentment is the worst dependent. Farid ji preached Ideology reflecting the reality of life. That is perhaps why he has been known as the best poet of old age & death.

According to Farid, self-realisation or liberation from self is the other name for God-realization. One who is subject to desires of senses, is the meanest of all because such a man fails to control his mind, and the endless desires emanating from mind make him a tool in the hands of the devil who makes him dance to his tune. Farid not only preached detachment and austerity but also made these the

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guiding principles of his life. It is said that at the time of Farid's death even a small piece of cloth to serve as coffin for his body could not be found in his house. For the tomb over his grave, the bricks were taken by pulling down a portion of one of the walls of his house.

The hymns of Sheikh Farid are available at 3 different places in the Sri Guru GranthSahib: two hymns under Asa musical measures, two hymns under Suhi measure and 112 slokas toward end of Scripture. Farid's '*Bani*' (religious text) is small in volume but has moved mankind over the last eight centuries. The lyrical content and haunting melody of these 'slokas' has been so great that every visitor to Punjab has stopped to pay homage to the soul, which conceived them. In the true Sufi tradition, Farid employed sensual imagery to convey mystical meaning. Regarding God as eternal beauty, the Sufi poets, both in Persia and India, had set new trends in poetry. Its special quality lay in the fact that unless one knows the intentions of the poet, one cannot distinguish whether it is an ode to human love or a hymn addressed to a deity. Take for example this love song of the Baba.

"The alleyway is muddy, O Farid, The Beloved's House is distance, if I go I would drench my cloak, And break my bond if I stay. It's the Creator's ordinance, this deluge;
Go I will to my Beloved to strengthen
The links of love, and let my woollen sheet
Be drenched with downpour."

Even the illiterate could understand and enjoy Farid's metaphors and imagery - rooted as they were in the soil. The *ālambanavibhava* of God's love is beautifully portrayed by Farid. Although the way is muddy and the house of Lord is distant but then also it is acting as *uddipanavibhava.* The *vyabhicāri bhava* of *nirveda*is persuading him to go in search of his Lord, inspite of all the difficulties he faces on his way, he is not bothered about the muddy way and even the drenching of his robe did not bother him.

They alone are true, whose love for God is deep and heart-felt.
Those who have one thing in their heart, and something else in their mouth, are judged to be false.
Those who are imbued with love for the Lord, are delighted by His Vision.
Those who forget the Naam, the Name of the Lord, are a burden on the earth.
Those whom the Lord attaches to the hem of His robe, are the true dervishes at His Door.
Blessed are the mothers who gave birth to them, and fruitful is their coming into the world.
O Lord, Sustainer and Cherisher, You are infinite, unfathomable and endless.

In this hymn Farid is trying to differentiate between a believer and a nonbeliever. He has given a number of illustrations and used a lot of metaphors and imageries to display his heart's desires. He says there are two type of people, one are truthful and the other are the people who are worldly and do not believe in truthfulness. He says true are the people in whom the *sthayibhava* of love for God is found. Farid says that in an*āshraya,bhakt*the *ālambanavibhavas* of God's mercy are inborn and lucky are those mothers who give birth to them. In them the *vyābhicāri bhava* of *nirveda* and remembrance are already present. They are always delighted by the consequents (*anubhavas)* of meditation and prayers.

Those who recognize the True Lord - I kiss their feet.
I seek Your Protection - You are the Forgiving Lord.
Please, bless Shaykh Fareed with the bounty of Your meditative worship.
Says Shaykh Fareed, O my dear friend, attach yourself to the Lord.
This body shall turn to dust, and its home shall be a neglected graveyard.

Farid says he can even kiss the feet of the *bhakts*who possess *sthāyibhavas* of love for God. He calls other people also to get the blessings of Lord by attaching them to the bounty of meditative worship. He says *anubhavas*of meditation and prayers are of highest order. He further says that this body of ours will ultimately turn into dust as it will be mingled into dust after death into unkept graveyard, therefore the present time or the time we are alive is the time to live a life of truthfulness and salvation, those who are enchanted with the glitter of gold that is with the worldly life will never receive God's love as no one on this Earth live permanentely, therefore one should submerge himself in the glory of God which is the ultimate destination and its *sthāyibhava.*

That seat, upon which we now sit - many others sat on it and have since departed.

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As the swallows appear in the month of Katik, forest fires in the month of Chayt, and lightning in Saawan,
And as the bride's arms adorn her husband's neck in winter;
Just so, the transitory human bodies pass away. Reflect upon this in your mind.
It takes six months to form the body, but it breaks in an instant.
O Farid, the earth asks the sky, "Where have the boatmen gone?"

The seat of life on which we are sitting at present is not everlasting. The transcendental beliefs of Farid can be felt in each of his hymns. He has used a number of metaphors in the hymns so that normal human being can understand this, he says as the birds appear in winter, forest fire can be seen in summer season and lightening in rainy season, this is all transitory, everything is momentary, nothing remains forever. He further explains that it takes six months to form a life in mother's womb but a person dies instantly. After death the bodies are of no use as the body without soul is a boat without boatman. Farid further says he is the culprit that he forgot the name of lord. The *sthāyibhava*of love for god can be felt with magnetic intensity. The *āsrayabhakt* believes that everything is transitory, nothing remains except bhakti. The *vyabhicari bhavas* of *nirveda*and remembrance are prominent in this hymn. He has given a lot of examples to get detached from worldly things. And this can be felt by the *anubhāvas*of meditation and prayers. The *bhakt*is regretting that he wasted his youth in the wordly desires and now as his end is arriving, he is all alone and suffering without the *alamanavibhavas*of God's mercy and pity.

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