

Baba Nanak remembered

thread which was a compulsory symbol for a Hindu. Nanak in search of truth visited many countries in east and west including Iran, Iraq and Arab. He also visited Mecca and Madina. During that visit, he also met a Muslim saint, Behlol, in Baghdad. That was in the 15th century. Wherever he went he wanted to know more and more about the religions of the people of the areas and thus he came to know about Buddhism (in Sri Lanka and Nepal), Jainism (in South India), Hinduism in Benares, and Islam in the middle eastern countries.

Nanak was accompanied by two Muslim bards-cum-musicians Bhai Mardana and Bhai Bahla who later wrote the biography (Janam Saakhi) of Nanak. In all these visits, Nanak had collected the poetry of the saints of the areas concerned including the poetry of Baba Farid Shakarganj. Incidentally, neither the family of Farid nor his Muslim followers had preserved the Farid's poetry which was saved only in the Granth compiled by Nanak.

After completing his pilgrimages or travels to the areas, he came back and settled on the right bank of the River Ravi (lo-

cated in Pakistan) where he died and his grave was the tribute paid by the Muslims while the Hindus erected his Smadhi. The place is known Dera Baba Nanak.

Nanak was all praise for the prophet of Islam (PBUH) and his views but never approved the Muslim rulers and the Muslim invaders. His period was also very disturbing for the Punjab which was considered a trouble area by the Pathan rulers of Delhi. On the other hand, many times the area became the victim of the Muslim Mughal invaders from the central Asian countries. Nanak criticised the Pathan rulers for not caring the common people and condemned the invasion of Babar whose forces imprisoned him at Eimanabad. He was witness to the clashes of Sher Shah Suri and Humayun.

Nanak was part of the history of the Punjab particularly the west Punjab but it still has to establish an institution of knowledge in the name of Baba Nanak while the east Punjab government has established a medical and science university in the name of Baba Farid Shakarganj at Farid Kot.

Many times announcements

came from some ministers or top authorities that a university is going to be established in Nankana where vast agrarian land yield million of rupees to the Evacuee Property Trust.

To observe Baba Nanak's birthday or death anniversary is perhaps not in the purview of the trust now ruled by Asif Hashmi of the PPP.

This time it was the Punjabi Khojgarh which arranged a conference on Nanak where the scholars from Pakistan, India and United Kingdom presented papers paying glowing tribute to Nanak's philosophy of peace which he preached throughout his life. He had laid stress that every individual should search truth and in that respect a writer has more responsibility. He said:

وہن سوکا گوگلم، وہن بھائڑا وہن مس
وہن گھساری ناکا، وہن نام کھلایا جا

(Blessed is the paper, blessed is the pen and blessed is the ink, Blessed is the writer, O Nanak, who writes the true name).

Guru Nanak's teachings had widely spread in the Indus valley and after Punjab, Sindh has a large number of Nanak Panthis

with Hindu names like Sobho Gian Chandani, a great left leader, advocate and writer who was decorated with Life Achievement Award by the Pakistan Academy of Letters. He is a Sikh and not a Hindu. The departments which deal with the Sikh religious or cultural affairs perhaps never bothered to involve the Sindh followers of Nanak in the functions arranged at Nankana, Lahore, Hasanabdal and Eimanabad, the places associated with the great Guru who believed in oneness of God.

It is quite interesting that the late G.M. Syed never appreciated a Punjabi in any field of culture, politics or knowledge. He had been harshly criticising Punjabis like Masud Khadar Posh who stood for the principle that Waderas (feudal) have no property right on the land which he does not cultivate, instead Haris have the total right on the land they cultivated.

Masud's dissenting note on Hari Committee Report had earned him a hatred from the feudals of Sindh. Even scholar like Hameeda Khuro has also harshly criticized Hari Report though on different grounds but the grudge is the same. Masud did not agree with the views of

the committee including maulanas from Karachi. But it was Baba Nanak who in G.M. Syed's view was the well-wisher of Sindh.

From materialistic point of view if the Sikh sacred places mainly associated with the name of Nanak are preserved and developed it would attract the Sikh pilgrims from all over the world and the fact is that Sikh is one of those communities which are spread in the western world.

But because of the myopic approach of the people who matter that a strange story was heard at the Punjabi Khojgarh. The managers booked a sound system for the function from Kasur. All the details were settled and money was advanced to the shopkeeper. But at later stage the shopkeeper inquired for what purpose the system was going to be used. When he came to know that a seminar has been arranged in memory of Baba Nanak, the shopkeeper immediately returned the advance payment and excused that the sound system must not be used for Kafirs. Meaning thereby that Talibans are not only found in the tribal or NWFP areas only but also in the Kasur of Baba Bulleh Shah.



By Shafqat Tanvir Mirza

BABA Nanak to whom Allama Iqbal had paid a tribute in word 'Mard-i-Kamil' was the asset of Punjab's history of mysticism or spiritualism. He was born in Nankana Sahib then (Talwandi Rai Bular), the Bhatti chief who realised the talent of the son of his Munshi, and donated a vast tract of land to the Sikh Guru whose followers were then known as Nanak Panthis. His father wanted him to be a government servant but that was not the destiny of the young Nanak who was taught by two scholars one Muslim namely Hasan and the other a Brahmin. Baba Nanak was born in a Hindu family but in his early life he refused to wear the black