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Mughal - Sikh Relations: Revisited

Abstract

Mughal Empire, attributed to be a Muslim rule, and Sikhism grew side by side in the South Asia; while Zahir-ud-Din Muhammad Babar was founding the Mughal Empire, Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism was expounding a new religious philosophy, Sikhism. Broadly speaking, both religions, Islam and Sikhism, believed in unity, equality, tolerance and love for mankind. These similarities provided a very strong basis of alliance between the two religions. This note of 'religious acceptance' of Sikhism was welcomed by the common people, saints and many sage souls among Sikhs and Muslims alike. The Mughal Emperors had by and large showed great generosity to Sikh Gurus except few ones. However, despite these similarities and benevolence of Mughal Emperors, political expediencies and economic imperatives largely kept both the communities estranged and alienated. The relations between Muslims and Sikhs after the death of Akbar, however, underwent many phases and shades. The circumstances that wove the very relationship between the two communities remained obscured under the thick layers of intrigues of the rulers, courtiers, and opportunists. An in-depth study of the background of Mughal-Sikh relations reveals that some political and interest groups including orthodox Muslims and Hindu elites considered friendship between Sikhs and Muslims, a great threat to their positions. These interest groups deliberately created circumstances that eventually developed into unfortunate conflicts between the two communities. Hence the religion was not the main factor that governed the Sikh Muslim relations rather the political, economic and practical exigencies of the time shaped the events that occurred between the two communities. These events and conflicts later played major role in deciding the fate and conditions of Muslims under Sikh rulers. Many historians have written about the Sikh-Muslim relations and analyzed the factors, nature and development of their estrangement but they built their

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arguments mostly on the religious differences. But the present author will like to argue that there were more similarities than dissimilarities in their religious beliefs, therefore, cannot be considered as the main cause. Gradually a narrative was developed when both the Muslims and Sikhs developed their narratives on the religious basis; however the period under study shows that the basis of their divide was socio-economic and political factors.

Genesis of Sikhism – Sociopolitical Context:

Sikand³ identifies four theories to explain the genesis of Sikh religion. The first approach to the evolution of Sikhism expounds that God sent the Guru Nanak to create a new religion clearly different from the existing religions. However, Sikand lends little support to this approach as Nanak Sahib never wanted to create “another sect to the bewildering variety of narrow and divisive religious orthodoxies”, he all his lifetime has opposed. While second conception defines Sikhism as a “reformist movement” to save Hinduism from Muslims, the third approach suggests that Sikhism evolved under the influence of Muslim Sufis. This relationship between Sikhism and Islam has very comprehensively been highlighted in Nizami.⁴ Pincott⁵ and Hughes⁶ also report a very strong influence of Islamic teachings on the Sikh Gurus including Baba Nanak Sahib. Fourth doctrine believes that Sikhism heavily drew from both Islamic mysticism and Hindu Bhaktism.

Without tracing the historical perspective and framework under which Sikhism developed in the Subcontinent as an ‘egalitarian religio-philosophical faith’⁷, an objective and meaningful discourse cannot be held on relations between the Mughal and the Sikhs. New religious movements are often born out of the existing faiths. Similarly Sikhism was born out of the Hinduism and Islam. Once it was born, it took its

³ Yoginder Sikand, “Building Bridges between Sikhs and Muslims”, *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue*, 9, no. 2 (1999): 178-88.

⁴ Khwaja Hasan Nizami, *Dai-i-islam* (Amritsar:np, 1923).

⁵ Fredrick Pincott, *Sufi Influence On the Formation of Sikhism in the World of the Sufis*, (London: Octagon Press, 1979), 121-45.

⁶ Thomas Patrick Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam* (London: W H Allen, 1885).

⁷ Davinder Singh Chahal, *Nankian Philosophy- Basics for Humanity* (Quebec: Institute for Understanding Sikhism, 2008), 43-54.

own shape and form. While Zahir-ud-Din Muhammad Babar(1526-1530) was laying foundation of Mughal Empire, Guru Nanak, the creator of Sikhism was sowing the seeds of a new religious philosophy; Sikhism. When Baba Nanak was born, many religious reformist movements were influencing the people in India.⁸ Both Islam and Hinduism were passing through very crucial times in the history of Subcontinent. Both Hinduism and Islam were intensifying their 'orthodoxies'. Religious intolerance, social injustice and political persecution were the landmarks of that time.

Besides politically Indian Subcontinent was transitioning through a very crucial phase characterized by confusion and uncertainty. While Lodhi Dynasty was decaying fast, the Mughal Empire was being established under Babar. The Indian Subcontinent was merely a collection of small and large fiefdoms and kingdoms with no sense of unity and nationalism. That was the time when revival and reformation movements of the Middle Ages were taking ground all across the globe.⁹ A number of great personalities and ideas were touching the tender hearts and souls of many all across the world. Around this time, Columbus discovered the New World and Vasco da Gama reached India through the sea route. European art and culture was reborn with the great works of Michael Angelo, Raphael and Da Vinci. This was also the time when Martin Luther, Huldreich Zwingli and John Calvin were also leading the movements for the reformation of the Church. In a similar vein, Indian Subcontinent was witnessing the Bhakti movement and Sufism. Both movements aimed at doing away with the caste system, religious intolerance and social injustice.¹⁰

They emphasized on morality, purity of heart and love for mankind. Birth of Baba Guru Nanak and Sikhism coincided with this religious and social reawakening in the Subcontinent and around the

⁸ Guru Nanak's Understanding of God by Bipin Kujur, <http://snphilosophers2005.tripod.com/bipin.pdf> retrieved 27-07-15

⁹ Habil James Massey, "Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Teachings in the Context of Inter-Faith Dialogue," *Sikh Review* 51, no. 5 (5-2013): 19-23. See Also James Massey, "A Fresh Look At Sikh Religion", *Studies in Sikhism and Comparative Religion*, 6 (1) Apr 1985,69-79.

¹⁰ Ibid.

world. Baba Guru Nanak's social and religious philosophy was indeed, an opportune and timely response to the emerging milieu in the Subcontinent. Baba Nanak's awareness of Islam was not superficial because of the influence of the teachings of Islam.¹¹ In fact, Sikhs and Muslims shared many common cannons of religious and social doctrines and seemed natural allies. Many Muslims claimed Guru Nanak to be a Muslim because many of his Shalouks mention Allah and Prophets. He described the greatness of God in many of his verses and redefined Allah in his own conception of God, which is very much according to the Islamic faith.¹² Guru Nanak's respect for (Holy) Quran is at its highest when he declares that no other book can be that important as (Holy) Quran.¹³

The *Granth Sahib* contains the compositions of six of the ten Gurus of Sikhs including Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjun and Guru Tegh Bahadar. The Guru Granth Sahib is also called the *Adi Granth*, which means the 'original book'. Guru Arjun dictated and Bhai Das scribed the Adi Granth, which was accomplished in 1604. The Adi Granth Sahib includes writings and sayings of many Hindu and Muslim saints such as Namdev, Ramananda, Rav Das and Sur Das, Kabir, Baba Farid, Bhikan, Mian Mir and Mardana.¹⁴

As a matter of fact, while going through the 'Shalouks' in Guru Granth Sahib and the teachings of Baba Nanak, it transpires as if Baba Nanak was a Muslim. In fact, his teachings and beliefs seem very much similar to those of 'Sufi Islam'.¹⁵ It is argued that reference to "Hindu mythological figures and mystical concepts" used in Guru Granth Sahib

¹¹ J. S. Grewal, *Sikh Ideology Polity and Social Order* (Delhi: Manmohan Publishers, 1996), 12.

¹² Ibid., ; Also Syed Muhammed Latif, *History of the Punjab*(Lahore: Peoples Publishing House, 1889), 241-245.

¹³ Ibid.,

¹⁴ Dr G M D Sufi, *Kashir Being a History of Kashmir from the Earliest Times to Our Own with a Bibliography and with Plates Including Maps*, Vol.ii, (Lahore: University of the Punjab, 1949), 707-8.

¹⁵ Yoginder Sikand, "Sikh- Muslim Harmony, Contribution of Khawaja Hassan Nizami," *Economic and Political Weekly* 31, no. 11 (2004): 1113-16.

and in Baba Nanak's teachings were simply to contextualize his Islamic ideals in the local perspective.¹⁶

Sila Khan¹⁷, the latest exponent of this view, goes even a step further. Based on close review of 'Nizari Ismaili' and Sikh accounts and customs, she argues that Guru Nanak was an *Ismaili Shia* Muslim under '*taqiyya*' (disguise) to protect Sikhism from the Sunni Muslim rulers. She finds this to be consistent with the teachings of Ismaili missionaries of the period.

Apart from Sila Khan's exploration, many Punjabi Muslims considered Baba Nanak to be actually a Muslim. This respect and love are evident from this saying: "*Baba Nanak Shah Faqir Hindu da Guru Musلمان da Pir*," ("Baba Nanak Shah, the Mendicant, Guru of the Hindus and *Pir* of the Muslims").¹⁸ Duggal further observes that in line with Muslim mystical tradition, many Muslims considered Baba Nanak as a friend of God (*waliullah*).¹⁹

Such was the attachment and sense of belonging that at the time of Guru Nanak's demise, Muslims and Sikhs stood against each other to claim the right for performance of his final rituals.²⁰ His concept of monotheism, equality among all human beings, purity of heart as measure of eminence and love for 'His' mankind very much corresponded to the Islamic concept of religion and way of life.²¹ There

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid. - Yoginder Sikand, "Sikh- Muslim Harmony, Contribution of Khawaja Hassan Nizami," *economic and political weekly* 31, no. 11 (2004): 1113-16. Dr. Dominique-Sila Khan got her doctorate from the Sorbonne University, Paris. She has worked as an independent researcher, associated with the Institute of Rajasthan Studies. She has specialized in the study of Hindu-Muslim interactions in South Asia, particularly the study of obscure branches of Nizari Ismailis in India.

¹⁸ K.S.Duggal, *The Sikh People Yesterday and Today*. (:, 1994),12 (New Delhi: UBS, 1994), 12.

¹⁹ Ibid Duggal, K.S

²⁰ G S Chabra, *Advanced History of the Punjab Vol 1*,(Jullundher: New Academic Publishing Co, 1969), 77-78.

²¹ Kirpal Singh, *the Partition of the Punjab, Revised by Sri Ram Sharma* (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1972),16. Also Harish, K.Puri, *The Scheduled Castes in the Sikh Community- A Historical Perspective*," *Economic and Political Weekly*(June 2003):2-3.also *The Wonder that was India* (Fontana: Sedgwick& Jackson,1971), 148-152.

are many differences between the historians as Sikhism was inspired by the Hinduism or Islam, according to some Muslim historians Sikhism was very much inspired by the Hindu customs and believes and the concept of Guru and the Avatar are very much related to each other²², but on the other hand some historians believe that Guru Nanak's model of inspiration was the last prophet of the Muslim's Muhammad (PBUH).²³

Guru Nanak's and Sikhism grew among many great reformers, philosophers and ideologies in the Subcontinent and across the world.²⁴ It would not be a farfetched notion to say that Guru Nanak's teachings were the logical conclusion of Sufis and Bhakti movements in the Subcontinent²⁵ and that Sikhism was a synthesis of Hindu's Bhaghtism and Muslim's Sufism.²⁶ Under the influence of such saints and social philosophers as Ramananda, Tulsi Das, Kabir, Catania, Mira Bai, Sheikh Farid, Sheikh Brahan, and Mian Mir, these movements had prepared Hindustani mind to accept newer ideas and philosophies of life.²⁷ These movements were heterodox in nature and hence denounced social injustice, religious intolerance, superstitions and prejudice against women.²⁸ These were the woes of a common Hindustani who was looking for a savior and a rescuer. Guru Nanak's religious and social doctrine deeply submerged in humanism immediately touched the hearts of many especially in rural Punjab.²⁹

Sikh Muslim Relations - Common Grounds for Alliance:

²² Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment* (London: Oxford University press, 1964), 152.

²³ Tara Chand, *Influence of Islam On Indian Culture, 2nd Ed.* (Lahore: Book traders, 1979), 169.

²⁴ Ibid Tara Chand,

²⁵ Ethne K Marengo, *The Transformation of Sikh Society* (New Delhi: Heritage Publishers, 1976), 24.

²⁶ C H Loehlin, *The Granth of Guru Gobind Singh and the Khalsa Brotherhood*, (Lucknow: Lucknow Publishing House, 1971), 1.

²⁷ R.M Chopra, "Guru Nanak's Teachings," *The Sikh Review* 44, no. 515 (11-1996): 19-22.

²⁸ Iqbal's Estimate of Guru Nanak M. Abadulla Farooqi, <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/oct62/8.htm>, Retrieved on 16-03-15.

²⁹ Guru Nanak's Understanding of God by Bipin Kujur, <http://snphilosophers2005.tripod.com/bipin.pdf> retrieved 23-07-15

Khawaja Hassan Nizami draws out many similarities and bonds between Islam and Sikhism. While drawing parallels between the two religions, he finds Sikhs to be very similar to Muslims.³⁰ Teachings and beliefs of Sikh religion had a clear bent towards Muslims and Islam.³¹ Available evidence suggests that Muslims and Sikhs shared common perceptions, contexts and at times beliefs. Both religions believe in unity, equality, tolerance and love for mankind. In line with and motivated by these beliefs, Guru Nanak laid down the basis of a new religion created out of 'wedlock of Hinduism and Islam'.³²

Some are called Hindus others are Muslims, members of sects such as Shia or Sunni. Let it be known that mankind is one, that all men belong to a single humanity.....So too with God, whom Hindu and Muslim distinguish with differing names. Let none be misled, for God is but one; he who denies this is duped and deluded. There is no difference between a temple and a mosque, nor between the prayers of a Hindu or a Muslim. Though differences seem to mark and distinguish, all men in reality are the same. Gods and demons, celestial beings, men called Muslims and others called Hindus- such differences are trivial, inconsequential, the outward results of locality and dress. Allah is the same as the God of the Hindus, Puran and Qur'an is one and the same.³³

Guru Gobind Singh also reiterated these beliefs in the following lines:

Recognize all mankind, whether Hindus or Muslims, as one. The same Lord is the Creator and nourisher of all, Recognize no distinction among them:

³⁰ Khwaja Hasan Nizami, *Dai-i-islam* (Amritsar: 1923), (a Book let)

³¹ J S Grewal, *Essays in the Sikh History, from Gru Nanak to the Maharaja Ranjit Singh* (Amritsar: Gru Nanak Dev University, 1972), 17.

³² W.H McLeod, *Textual Sources for the Study of Sikhism*, trans. W.H. McLeod (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 57.

³³ W.H McLeod, *Textual Sources for the Study of Sikhism*, trans. W.H. McLeod (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 57.

The temple and the mosque, the Hindu and the Muslim
prayer, Men are all one.³⁴

These similarities provided a very sound and strong basis of alliance between the two religions. The new philosophy of life and religion was welcomed by many downtrodden and deprived sections of the society.³⁵ However, mere similarities and commonalities between the Sikhs and the Muslims could hardly establish a clear evidence of robust linkages between the two communities. Political expediency, economic imperatives and social systems largely kept both the communities estranged most of the time.³⁶ While masses and the Sufis shared the beliefs and social ethos, political and power lords found Sikhism a threat against the state.³⁷ Available evidence suggests that Muslims were also attracted to the 'egalitarian and monotheistic ideology' of the Sikh Gurus.³⁸ In fact, many of Muslims endangered and sacrificed their lives to save their ideology. Therefore, primarily it was not the religion that governed the Mughal-Sikhs relations rather the political, social and economic realities that characterized the relation between Sikhs and Muslims.³⁹

Both Islam and Sikhism believed that there is only One God. Sikh teachings value humanity and denounce egocentric living. Both religions prohibit renunciation of the world and social obligations unlike Hinduism. Islam and Sikhism require their followers to perform their familial and social duties along with religious ones. Sikhism

³⁴ <http://sikhspectrum.com/2002/10/interview-makhdoom-syed-chan-pir-qadri-on-sikh-muslim-relations/#sthash.JO6VW4Iy.dpuf> retrieved 20-09-14

³⁵ <http://sikhspectrum.com/2002/10/interview-makhdoom-syed-chan-pir-qadri-on-sikh-muslim-relations/#sthash.JO6VW4Iy.dpuf> retrieved 21-09-2014.

³⁶ Prof Henry Francis B Espiritu, "Dalip Singh On Muslim-Sikh Relations in Mogul India: A Pluralist Appraisal", *UNDERSTANDING SIKHISM – The Research Journal* 12, no. 1 (2010): 42-48.

³⁷ Prof Henry Francis B Espiritu, "Dalip Singh On Muslim-Sikh Relations in Mogul India: A Pluralist Appraisal", *UNDERSTANDING SIKHISM – The Research Journal* 12, no. 1 (2010): 42-48

³⁸ Davinder Singh Chahal, *Nankian Philosophy- Basics for Humanity* (Quebec: Institute for Understanding Sikhism, 2008), 43-54.

³⁹ Ibid Devinder Singh Chahal.

condemns blind and inhuman rituals so does Islam. Quite similar to Islam, Sikhism also preaches equality for all races and sexes.⁴⁰

Relationship between Mughal Emperors and Sikhs:

An unending series of unfortunate incidents erupted and worsened the situation between the two communities Sikhs and the Muslims, who once shared common faith and feelings for each other. The killing of Guru Arjun (1605) remains the main reason behind the Sikh-Muslim conflict. Before the murder of Guru Arjun, the Sikhs were peace loving community, however; they turned otherwise aggressive and restless after the murder of Guru Arjun. The whole scenario got changed and the Sikhs became severely against the Muslims. This ill-fated incident proved to be a turning point in the history of the relation between the Sikhs and the Muslims. The sixth Guru established a Sikh army in order to avenge his father and protect the sanctity of the Sikh religion.⁴¹ They picked up arms in their protection and ended up being known as a warrior community and establishing a huge Raj in Punjab under Raja Ranjit Singh. The shocking effects of this unfortunate murder spread over many centuries and are still visible and unforgotten. The relationship between the two religions kept on getting tense because of some very unfortunate incidents, which included the murder of the ninth Guru Taigh Bahadur in Delhi and the battle between the tenth Guru Gobind Singh and Mughals, which resulted in murder of Guru Gobind Singh and his sons.⁴²

From Babar to Bahadar Shah and from the first Guru Nanak till the last Guru Gobind Singh, relationship between the two communities witnessed many forms and stages. Muslim Sufis and masses largely held cordial and amiable relations with Sikh Gurus. While endorsing this view, Dilip Singh and Espirito report that many Muslims including Sufis and their followers lend hand to Sikh Gurus in their mission.⁴³

⁴⁰ The Sikh World; An Encyclopedic survey of Sikh Religion and Culture, 34.

⁴¹ Kanaiya laal, *Tareekh-e-punjab* (Lahore: Majlis-e-tarakiy adab, 1981), 34.

⁴² W.L.M.Gregor, *The History of the Sikhs*,103-104,Botay Shah, *Tarikh e Punjab*,

⁴³ Dilip Singh And Espirito, *Sikh Muslim Relations*, 65

Muslim musician Bhai Mardana served Guru Nanak until Guru's death. Guru Nanak also had very friendly relations with Shah Farid and Pir Jalaluddin Qureshi.⁴⁴ Guru Nanak had long journeys in their company. Hazrat Mian Mir befriended with Guru Arjun and stood by him through thick and thin. Moreover, Hazrat Mian Mir's sincere efforts brought about reconciliation between Emperor Jahangir and Guru Hargobind the sixth Guru of Sikhs. Bond was further strengthened when Hazrat Mian Mir was invited by the Guru to place the foundation stone of the holiest place of the Sikhs, the Darbar Sahib in Amritsar, Punjab, India. Dilip Singh further states that Guru Granth Sahib, the holy book of Sikhs includes sizable number of hymns and spiritual poetry composed by Muslim saints and poets as well.

In the year 1573 during his visit to the court of Emperor Akbar, Guru Ram Dass was bestowed upon 28 Bighas and a sizable amount of cash as well. Moreover, followers of the Guru also got exemption from the road tax.⁴⁵ Present day Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) stands on the land so presented to Guru Ram Dass by Emperor Akbar.⁴⁶

At the time Sikh religion took roots, Subcontinent was predominantly being ruled by the Muslims, the Delhi Sultanate. Hindus had already secured their interests while allying themselves with the Muslim aristocracy and Sultanate. Being in minority, Muslim rulers welcomed the Hindus to perpetuate their rule in the Subcontinent. Scheme of affairs was going well; Muslims were the rules and the Hindu Raja Maharaja were their trusted allies supporting their regime in the Subcontinent. Hindus courtiers and aristocracy, at times enjoyed better status and perks than their Muslim counterparts. Emergence of a valiant Sikh community and Sikh's natural alliance with Muslims because of their common beliefs were clearly a threat to Brahminic interests. Even during the time of Guru Arjun Singh, a Sikh delegation from Sri Nagar approached him and complained against the Brahmins. The pandits of the Kashmir were threatening them to leave the Sikh religion. Resultantly Guru Arjun had to send one of his disciples named Madhu Sodhi to Sri Nagar to preach the teachings of the Sikh

⁴⁴ Sardar Shiakh Muhammad Yousuf, "Sikh Muslim Relation," *Noor*, 1948, 10.

⁴⁵ Yousuf (1948)

⁴⁶ Ibid Yousuf

religion.⁴⁷ This gives a reasonable understanding of relations between the Hindus and the Sikh.

The orthodox Muslims, who already felt endangered against the enormous influence of Hindus in the courts of Muslim rulers, were also alarmed at the popularity of Sikhism among the Muslim aristocracy and masses. Consequently, both Hindu nobility and orthodox Muslims felt threatened by the cordial relations between Muslim rulers and Sikhs. Hindu opposed this alliance for fear of replacement with Sikh community. Similarly Muslim orthodox clergy did not like the alliance for fear of further deterioration in their power and status. These interest groups never let the Sikh Muslim relationship flourish and strengthen. Subsequently circumstances and facts were distorted and misrepresented to create stress and differences between the two communities. It becomes the responsibility of today's historians and researchers to unearth the intellectual and factual distortion in history of relationship between Sikhs and Muslims. To set the historical record right, distorted presentation of historical facts needs to be corrected.

Akbar was an open minded ruler. He not only respected other religions but also awarded gifts and jagirs to their followers. However, Jahangir was not as much as like his father. He was not an orthodox Muslim ruler, but was under the influence of those Ulemas who supported him against his father. Hindus of the court of Jahangir also connived with the Ulemas to create conditions for the arrest and killing of Guru Arjun. In fact, both Hindu aristocracy and Muslim theocracy were afraid of the increasing popularity of Sikhism and resultant deterioration in their influence in the society and the royal court as well.

Available evidence suggests that Baber met Guru Nanak during his conquest of India. Guru Nanak prayed for him and prophesied that Babar and his family would rule India for very long. Baber's son the next emperor of India Humayun also met Guru Angad. Akbar also regards Sikh Gurus for their non-violent, fair and just teachings. In the year 1569, Akbar visited Lahore. He also went to see the Sikh Guru.

⁴⁷ G.M.D.Sufi,701.

The killing of Guru Arjun remains the main reason behind the Sikh-Muslim conflict, although some historians have identified other reasons as well forcing this unfortunate tension between the Sikhs and the Muslim. However, the major role behind this murder and consequent stress between the two communities is argued to be played by Emperor Jahangir. In his *Tuzki Jahangiri*, he has portrayed Guru Arjun in very harsh and provocative words. He says that 'along the river Bias there lives a Hindu named Arjun and many Hindu and stupid Muslims that go around praising him and his teachings'. Jahangir further asserts that it is his duty to halt his views or change them into Islamic views.⁴⁸ In fact, Guru Arjun was popular among the poor that hundreds of thousands of the native people gathered around him.

Guru Arjun's popularity was not the only reason behind the unfortunate assassination of Guru Arjun. In fact, there were a few more that played an important role in this incident. Firstly, Guru Ramada's eldest son Prithia Das wanted to become Guru but Guru Ramadas declared his younger son Guru Arjun to be the next Guru.⁴⁹ This infuriated Prithia Das. Prithia Das went against his brother and father. His hatred for his younger brother did not die even after the death of his father. He continued conspiring against Guru Arjun. He falsely complained to the Mughal Emperor Jahangir about Guru Arjun.⁵⁰ However, the Sikh community refused to give him its allegiance. Prithia Das and high Hindu clerics started their schemes to hurt Guru Arjun Dev. Prithia Das wished to take possession of the Holy Book compiled by the Guru Arjun. In fact, he was misconceived that if he will get the ownership of Granth, he would be able to claim the Guruship for himself. He played a central role in misguiding Jahangir. After the murder of Guru Arjun Dev, he took charge of Guru Granth. His followers kept on protecting Granth and they are called Minas.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Noor-ud-din Mohammad Jahrangir, trans., *Tuzkiajahangiri*, ed. Henry Beveridge, trans. Alexander Rogers (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1909), 1:72-73. and J S Grewal and Irfan Habib, *Sikh History from Persian Sources Translations of Major Texts* (Lahore: Fiction House, 2004), 3-4.

⁴⁹ G.S, Chabra. *Advanced History of the Punjab Vol 1*, (Jullundur: New Academic Publishing Co, 1969), 169.

⁵⁰ G.S, Chabra, *Advanced history of the Punjab*, 170

⁵¹ Ibid. Noor-ud-din Mohammad Jahangir, *Tuzkiajahangiri*, Alexander Rogers, tr., Henry Beveridge, ed., Vol. 1, 72.

Secondly, Chandu Laal a Hindu courtier of the Mughal Emperor in Lahore wanted to marry his daughter to Guru Hargobind. However on the advice of his aides and relatives, Guru Arjun refused to do so. This turned Chandu Laal against Guru Arjun.⁵² He launched a campaign to dislodge Guru Arjun and started conspiring against him. Chandu Laal complained to the Emperor that Guru Arjun who apparently looked like a pious person but was actually not. Chandu further complained that Guru Arjun had gathered people who would harm the Mughal Empire.⁵³ Chandu Laal leveled many false allegations against Guru Arjun including that of a writing a book, which was against Hindu and Muslim teachings. With the help of these false concoctions, Chandu Laal was very cleverly creating hatred in the heart of the Emperor and other influential among the Muslim courtiers. Consequently the Emperor being himself an orthodox in his thinking and practice, decided to take a stern action against Guru Arjun once for all.⁵⁴

Allah has sent a messenger to every nation as their savior and guide. Quran denounces only those Arabs who refuted Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his teachings. Indeed, the Quran taught co-existence even with non-believers who tortured Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his people. It further holds that everyone should care about one's own religion.

Nonetheless, for different reasons this liberal and open methodology of the Quran and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not always find acceptance from some extremist Muslims. They condemned both non-Muslims and those Muslims as *kafirs*, who did not accept their religious ideas. These religious differences are so sharp until today that all the sects of Islam consider the other one wrong and '*kafir*'. These *Ulemas*, on the other hand, take religion as a source of

⁵² G,S,Chabra, Advanced history of the Punjab, vol 1, 169, and J,S,Grewal and Irfan Habib,4.

⁵³ Dr Mohammad Jahangir Tamimi, *Sikh-Muslim Taluqaatek Tehkeeki Jayaiza* (Lahore: South Asian Study Center Punjab University, 2007), 30. and, J,S,Grewal and Irfan Habib,4.

⁵⁴ G,S,Chabra, Advanced history of the Punjab, vol 1,169

power and matter of sole truth which produces attitude of self-importance.

Apart from all these intrigues, there was also a group of people who had their own interests in the Mughal darbar; they also played their role in the murder of the sixth Guru Arjun. Sheikh Sirhindi and his followers belonged to the extremist school of thought. They believed that whatever they said and define about the Islam, was right and who are not agree with them or accept their definition of Islam were *Kafirs*. Sheikh Sirhindi thought that it was his duty to revive *true Islam*. He was known as *mujaddid alf-i-sani* (renewal of second millennium) because he was borne in the second millennium of Islamic calendar.

Mughal court was under the huge influence of orthodox *Ulema*. Khawaja Baki Billa and his follower Sheikh Ahmed Sarhindi believed the Sikh and Sufi teachings against teachings of Islam. They were also against the open minded religious views of Akbar and his land offering to Guru Amerdas in Goindwaal. They believed this had unnecessarily added to the respect of Guru Amerdas. Needless to say that the Naqshbandi Ulemas were not feeling easy since 1598, when on the request of Guru Arjun Akbar remitted the revenue of some Zamindars.⁵⁵

The orthodox Muslims did not like the religious policy of acceptance. Although orthodox Ulemas of Akbar's Darbar bitterly criticized his religious policies but they were helpless in front of mighty Akbar. They had to live with this 'open-mindedness of Mughal Empire' until the death of Akbar. Jahangir's uprising against his father Akbar also had the support of those Ulemas.

Shaikh Ahmad was a strong supporter of the aggressive adaptation of the Zimmis to Islam and regarded Akbar as the one who stood in the way of the spreading of the Islam. The staunch supporter of the revivalist movement at the Mughal court was Sheikh Farid Bukhari who was a follower of Ahmad Sirhindi.⁵⁶ He described Jahangir on his

⁵⁵ Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs* (Bombay: Orient Longmans, 1950), 32. also j.s.Grewal, *The New Cambridge History of India, the sikhs of the Punjab*, 55

⁵⁶ Sirdar Kapoor Singh, "Guru Arjun's Martyrdom: contemporary perceptions", in *Guru Arjun dev: life, martyrdom and legacy*, 102-3

succession as the King of Islam.⁵⁷ The new Emperor Jahangir was already under their heavy influence. After becoming King, Jahangir's orthodox personality readily fell in line with the views and wishes of the orthodox Ulemas. They would always keep pushing Jahangir to launch himself as an Islamic leader and crusader. Special privileges were given to the new convert Muslims to encourage others to join Islam. On the other hand, these Ulemas pressed the Emperor to enforce 'jazia' on the non-Muslims for their protection⁵⁸. Inspired and induced by these orthodox Ulemas, Jahangir considered himself to be the guardian and protector of Islam. Under this so called attire, Jahangir was determined to save Islam from ever spreading Sikhism its leader Guru Arjun.

When Jahangir became Emperor under heavy influence of these Ulemas, he was all set to usher in an Islamic rule in India.⁵⁹ So some historians believe that behind the murder of the Guru Arjun these ulemas played a significant role by influencing the emperor Jahangir.

Some historians also pointed out that Jahangir was not a secular ruler like his father Akbar and he was not the supporter of Akbar's Deen-i-Ilahi, but he adopted an open-minded attitude toward the other religions. Although Jahangir was not like his father Akbar, who did not have any love for Islam or for the Sufis, but Jahangir too, continued some of the rituals and the practice of *sajda-e-ta'zeem*. He once called Sheikh Sirhindi in the Darbar and expected from him to perform the *sajda*. However, the Sheikh refused and greeted the emperor with Islamic way.

Jahangir expressed his anger in the *tuzk e jahangiri* that Sirhindi had spread a net of falseness and dishonesty and he was leading to the muslims to the false believes and the emperor was angry with his false authority to surpass the companions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi was very proud of his ignorance, Jahangir felt insulted from the behavior of the Ahmad Sirhindi and he detained the

⁵⁷ Pashaura Singh, *Life and Work of Guru Arjan: History, Memory, and Biography in the Sikh Tradition* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006), 231.

⁵⁸ Maktoobat, imam rabbani , daftar hissa soum maktoob 193.

⁵⁹ G,S,Chabra, *Advanced history of the Punjab*, vol 1, 174

Sheikh in Gwalior fort and kept him in the fort for more than two and half years.⁶⁰ Yet, the Sheikh had powerful group of courtiers. They pressed Jahangir to free Sheikh Ahmad honorably.⁶¹ So it is not appropriate to say that Jahangir was an orthodox Muslim he executed the guru Arjun under the influence of these ulemas, he even imprisoned the head of these ulemas than how come he on the advice of these people can punish the leader of the sikh community.

The murder of the Guru Arjun was actually a politically murder rather than a religious. Those were the days when Khusro was running from his father Jahangir following an uprising. Khusro wanted to end the sultanate in Delhi. Therefore, he alongside his army when reached Goindwaal (the city in which Guru Arjun resides) asked the Guru Arjun to pray for his victory. Guru offered him protection and prayed for his victory, which added to the hatred of Jahangir for Guru Arjun. All the open-minded people joined Khusro.⁶² Given that teachings of Guru Arjun were a mid-way between the Muslim orthodoxy and Hindu extremism therefore, teachings of Guru Arjun also helped gather likeminded secular people around Khusro.⁶³ These happenings and influences gradually but very steadily increased Jahangir's hatred for Guru Arjun.

Jahangir sent his army to Goindwaal to arrest Khusro, but, Khusro had already left for Lahore.⁶⁴ However, Jahangir's army made Arjun their captive. Jahangir ordered his men to arrest Guru Arjun, seize his land and give his son in the custody of Murtaza Khan⁶⁵. Guru Arjun was brought to Lahore and was given to Chandu Laal his arch enemy. In order to make things even, Chandu Laal inflicted on him excruciating punishments and eventually ended up killing him.⁶⁶ So one can easily understand that the hostility with which Jahangir treated with the Guru Arjun was not based on the religious it was basically a

⁶⁰ Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1995), 287.

⁶¹ Ibid, Rizvi, Muslims revivalist movements, 287.

⁶² J,S,Grewal and Irfan Habib,4.

⁶³ G,S,Chabra, Advanced history of the Punjab, vol 1, 175

⁶⁴ G,S,Chabra, Advanced history of the Punjab, vol 1,170,171

⁶⁵ Ibid 74 Noor-ud-din Mohammad Jahangir, Tuzkiajahangiri, Alexander Rogers, tr., Henry Beveridge, ed., Vol. 1

⁶⁶ Ibid 14 Dr. Mohammad Jahangir Tamnini,

political threat from Guru Arjun to the emperor for helping his son. If he would have been under the influence of the orthodox Muslim ulemas he would never imprisoned the Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi.

Guru Arjun is called the first martyred Guru in the Sikhs history who sought to protect his cause and fight for what he believed was right. His death is largely attributed to the Mughal emperor Jahangir.⁶⁷ Guru Arjun's murder was the first outbreak of confrontation between the Sikh and Muslim communities. Sikhs believed this sacrifice to be a sacrifice for the cause of truth and sincerity. Gurus Arjun's death had far-reaching significances. It transformed the Sikhs into a fighting nation and thus changed the course of the history of Sub-continent especially the Punjab.

There is a major disagreement among the historians as to who was mainly responsible for this incident. In the beginning, Sikh historians believed that Chandu Laal was the one responsible for the murder of Guru Arjun⁶⁸. After publishing of Tuzki Jahangir, this belief was completely changed because Jahangir and Prithia Das both also played an important role in the murder of Guru Arjun. Emperor Jahangir in the Tuzke Jahangiri very bluntly wrote that Guru Arjun should be taken to task.⁶⁹ Also he very candidly accepted that the reason behind this scandalous act was the Guru Arjun's support to prince Khusro and religious popularity among the Muslims and Hindus as well.⁷⁰ Emperor Jahangir was primarily afraid of the rising popularity of the Guru. An emperor such as Jahangir, who had all the authorities in his hand, could not take it. A state within the state was not acceptable to Emperor Jahangir. Guru Arjun's support to Khusro further fueled the situation and Jahangir's apprehensions.⁷¹ It is also argued that although Jahangir

⁶⁷ G,S,Chabra, Advanced history of the Punjab, vol 1, 172-73

⁶⁸ Sardar Kapoor I C S Singh, *martyred by Shamanistic Laws in Guru Arjan Dev's Life, Martyrdom and Legacy*, ed. Prithipal Singh Kapoor and others (New Delhi: Gurdawara Management committee, 2006), 76.

⁶⁹ Ibid 76. Sardar Kapoor Singh I.C.Sand J,S,Grewal and Irfan Habib, ,4.

⁷⁰ Prithipal Singh and Mohinder Singh, *Guru Arjun's Contribution, Martyrdom, and Legacy* (Amritsar: Singh Brothers, 2009), 21. also Louis E Fenech, *Martyrdom in the Sikh Traditions; Playing the 'game of Love'* (New Delhi: Oxford university press, 2002), 117-18.also J,S,Grewal and Irfan Habib, 57.

⁷¹ Prithipal Singh& Mohinder Singh,21, also, J,S,Grewal and Irfan Habib,),56.

did want to halt Guru Arjun but not on religious grounds to avoid direct confrontation with Sikh community.⁷² Instead, he aimed to finish the Guru's reign under political terms.⁷³ Guru Arjun's support to Khusro proved to be the right opportunity to get rid of the Guru Arjun.

This was an excellent opportunity for Guru Arjun's opponents. They played their card and played fairly well. Jahangir could not understand the undercurrents of then prevailing situation and went after Guru Arjun and his family. Ill-fated death of Guru Arjun brought a sigh of respite to many who were one or the other way opposed to Guru Arjun or the rising Sikhism including Prithia Das, Chandu Laal, other Hindu aristocracy and orthodox Ulemas.⁷⁴

Akbar who was a great liberal and tolerant in the religious policies was not acceptable for the Naqshbandi Ulemas in the court. It has to be noted that Khwaja Mohd-al-Baqi-bi-Allah and his most famous companion Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi mostly famous as Mujadaid Alaf Sani played an important role in the revivalism of Islam. It was their strong belief that Islam can only be flourished with the help of the state. This was the reason that they were against the policies of the Akbar. They along with Sheikh Farid who was later given the title of the Murtaza Khan by the Jahangir made a reactionary bloc. Sheikh Ahmed put his influence through Shaikh Farid on the Mughal King Jahangir for the revivalism of Islam. He was also aware of the growing influence of the Sikhism which was spreading not only in the Hindus but also in the Muslims. this was not acceptable for Sheikh Ahmad and Baqi-bi-Allah, who before this criticize the visit of the Akbar to Giondwal and the Mughal King's meeting with the Guru Amar Das and Ram Das. Sheikh Ahmad was highly against the religious policies of the Akbar. He regarded Guru Arjun as the head of the Kafirs. In fact, following this unfortunate incident, *Mujadid Alaf Sani*, rejoicing at the news of the Guru's death in a jubilant tone wrote to Sheikh Farid to express satisfaction on the death of the Guru Arjun.⁷⁵ But this did not prove that

⁷² Louis E Fenech, *Martyrdom in the Sikh Traditions; Playing the 'game of Love'* (New Delhi: Oxford university press, 2002), 117-18.

⁷³ Ibid 78 Sardar Kapoor Singh I.C.S

⁷⁴ Prithipal Singh & Mohinder, 44

⁷⁵ Prithipal Singh & Mohinder, 163 also Louis E. Fenech, 117-118 also translation and text given in Friedmann, Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi, 73.

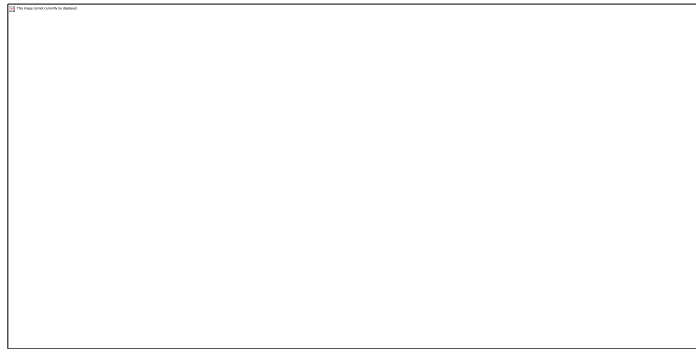
the murder was done under the influence of these orthodox ulemas or on the directions of these Muslim Ulemas.

Murder of Guru Arjun left serious repercussions for the polity of Subcontinent especially the Muslim posterity. Number of unpleasant incidents and conflicts happened among the Muslims and the Sikhs and the both nations estranged even further. Many more incidents occurred that further intensified the affairs between the two communities. These finally led to the arrest and imprisonment of Guru Hargobind in the Gawaliar Fort. Although he was set free on the advice of Mian Mir, the famous Sufi saint who was the friend of Guru Arjun⁷⁶ yet hostility and distrust further intensified the relation between the two communities. An unending series of unfortunate incidents erupted that further worsened the situation between the two communities who once shared common faith and feelings for each other. Before the murder of Guru Arjun, the Sikhs were peace loving community however; they turned otherwise aggressive and restless after the murder of Guru Arjun. The whole scenario got changed and the Sikhs became severely against the Muslims. This ill-fated incident proved to be a crucial separation point in the history of the relation between the Sikhs and the Muslims. The Sikh community turned to politics and military buildup. The sixth Guru established a Sikh army in order to avenge his father and protect the sanctity of the Sikh religion⁷⁷. They picked up arms in their protection and ended up being known as a warrior community and establishing a huge Raj in Punjab under Raja Ranjit Singh. The shocking effects of this unfortunate murder spread over many centuries and are still visible and unforgotten.

The historians also criticized the Jahangir and Shah Jehan for sending the sixth Guru behind the bars and having battles with him. They give the reason that Guru Hargobind did not pay the heavy fines which were imposed on him by the Emperor Jahangir. These were the fines which were imposed on the fifth Guru and after his murder the Sixth Guru have to pay them. But this was not the only reason behind sending him in the jail of the Gwalior fort, actually the new Guru

⁷⁶ G.M.D.Sufi, , vol 2,703.

⁷⁷ Kanaiya laal, *Tareekh-e-punjab* (Lahore: Majlis-e-tarakiy adab, 1981), 34.



started wearing two swords, he used to have his own army and musketeers, start hunting and having conflict with the royal army.⁷⁸ Guru Hargobind further made two new constructions in to Ramdaspur. He built a high platform opposite the Harmandir and named it *Akal Takht*, where he conducted his court. He also built a fort called Lohgarh for the security purpose.⁷⁹ These developments made him suspicious in the eyes of the administration. These were the things which cannot be tolerated by a strong emperor. Actually a state within a state is not acceptable for any ruler. So he was sent to the prison in the fort of Gawaliar. After a long time when Guru made the king satisfied with the justifications for his activities, he was released, and even Jahangir allowed him to continue his activities.⁸⁰

After the death of the Emperor Jahangir, Har Gobind met with the next Mughal Emperor Shah Jehan and put forward the reasons of conflict between Chandu Laal and Guru Arjun. Shah Jehan put Chandu Laal in the custody of Har Gobind; Har Gobind tortured Chandu Laal and eventually killed him, finally avenging his father.⁸¹

The relationship between the two religions kept on getting tense because of some very unfortunate incidents, which included but did not remain limited to the murder of the ninth Guru Tegh Bahadur in Delhi and the battle between the tenth Guru Gobind Singh and Mughals, which resulted in murder of Guru Gobind Singh and his sons.⁸²

The Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb was mainly held responsible for the murder of Tegh Bahadur. Aurangzeb was a very orthodox Muslim ruler.⁸³ He called Guru Tegh Bahadur to his capital city Delhi and asked him to show some sort of miracle or to come to the faith of Islam. The Guru refused to do so and his head was severed from his

⁷⁸ J.S.Grewal and Irfan Habib, ,4. Also Hardip Singh Syan, *Sikh Militancy in the Seventeenth Century: Religious Violence in Mughal and Early Modern India (Library of South Asian History and Culture)* (Newyork: I. B. Tauris, 2013), 21.

⁷⁹ J,S Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, the new Cambridge history of India, 64.

⁸⁰ J,S Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, the new Cambridge history of India, 64.

⁸¹ G,S,Chhabra, *the advanced history of the Sikhs*.22

⁸² W,L,M'Gregor, *The history of the Sikhs*;103-104,Botay Shah, *Tarikh e Punjab*,

⁸³ Prithipal Singh& Mohinder Singh,145,and, J,S Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, the new Cambridge history of India,72.

body on the command of the Emperor⁸⁴. Another reason reported behind murder of Guru Tegh Bahadur happens to be the Hindus of Kashmir who complained to the Guru in Anandpur that Aurangzeb was forcefully converting them to the religion of Islam⁸⁵. They also pleaded to him to lead them to the 'right way' as they found him to be a very pious and religious person. Hindu priests proved very shrewd at this point and also used the Guru's nine year old son as a pawn. Guru's nine year old son pressed his father to offer sacrifice for his piety and goodness and for this noble cause⁸⁶. After listening to Hindus' plea and his son's innocent sentiments, Guru Tegh Bahadur decided to scarify his life and face the Mughal Emperor.⁸⁷

Another reason that is given by M Gregor that the son of the seventh Guru Har Rai who was in the court of the Aurangzeb had already complained against him that Guru Tegh Bahadur had snatched his right to be the Guru, on his request Guru Tegh Bahadur was called in the Mughal Darbar for more than three times. It was not the emperor who insisted the Guru to show his miracle, it was Ram Rai the son of Guru Har Rai who claimed to be the next Guru to show some Miracle, if he is the right person. On his insisting the Guru Tegh Bahadur tigh a paper around his neck and asked the emperor to order someone to cut that paper with a sword. In a result his neck cut off and fell down on the ground. Even Mc Gregor had mentioned a poem which was written by the last Guru Gobind Singh, where he described the death of his father on the complaint of Ram Rai and the murder took place in the presence of the Mughal Emperor.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Ranbir Singh, *Glimpses of the Divine Masters, Guru Nank – Guru Gobind Singh, 1469-1707* (New Delhi: International Traders Corporation, 1965), 212. also J,S Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab, the new Cambridge history of India*, 72.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 213. Ranbir Singh, *Glimpses of the Divine Masters, Guru Nank – Guru Gobind Singh, 1469-1707*, also J,S Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab, the new Cambridge history of India*, 72.

⁸⁶ Sardar Ratnal Singh, *The Khalsa* (Amritsar: Gurdawara Parbandhak Committee, 1979), 5. Also, J,S Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab, the new Cambridge history of India*, 72.

⁸⁷ Jaswinder Singh Kang, "Shahada Deh Sartaj Guru Arjun Dev," *Monthly Z-premier Uk*, 2000, 50.

⁸⁸ W,L,M'Gregor, *The history of the Sikhs*; 66-67, 95-96.

This is quite obvious that the Guru had no personal complaints against the Mughal Emperor. This was the product of Hindu's Machiavellian mind that created urgency and a situation that Guru couldn't comprehend and got ready to take on Mughal might. Logically Hinds of Kashmir should have gone to some Hindu Raja however; they chose to involve Sikh Guru, which creates suspicion. There should have been a Hindu Raja or 'Pruhat' confronting the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb and not the Guru. However, as Aurangzeb was not being able to comprehend the undercurrents and the motives of orthodox Muslims, similarly Guru was not being unable to see through Hindu conspiracy. Naivety of Guru proved fatal. Orthodox Muslims and clever Hindu won the day and the gulf between the Muslims and the Sikhs further widened.

However, Latif reports another reason for the murder of the ninth Guru. He reports that the ninth Guru started looting the people of Punjab especially the rich Hindus and the Muslims.⁸⁹ It was done mostly in the agricultural rich areas of the Punjab. Many notorious and dangerous people who were against the Mughal Empire ran away from the custody of the Mughals and joined hands with the Guru. The Emperor Aurangzeb sent his armies to arrest these people and the Guru as well. Consequently the Guru and his allies were arrested. When the Guru was being brought to Delhi, he appointed his son Gobind Singh as his successor and the last Guru of the Sikh religion.⁹⁰

When Guru Tegh Bahadur reached Delhi, he faced the opposition of Ram Rai, who was the elder brother of Guru Har Kishan (eighth Guru of the Sikhs). He was in the court of the Mughal Emperor shortly after Aurangzeb's succession to the throne. He had his own right to the Gurship. Ghulam Muhiuddin Bute Shah in his *Tarikh-i-Punjab* says that the Guru Tegh Bahadur was summoned to Delhi at the request of Ram Rai. Ram Rai portrayed Guru Tegh Bahadur as a very proud person, for having great spiritual powers. He further said to the Emperor that Guru Tegh Bahadur will not surrender himself in front of the emperor, unless he was punished. Ram Rai also proposed to the Emperor Aurangzeb that Guru Tegh Bahadur should be asked to show

⁸⁹ S.M.Latif,519

⁹⁰ S M Latif, *tarikh e Punjab*, 520,

some of his miracle in the court of the Mughal Emperor, if he is not being able to do it, he could be put to death.⁹¹

When he was presented before the Mughal Emperor, he was asked to accept Islam but the Guru refused to do so. He was asked to show some of his “mojza” (miracle), which the Guru agreed to show. He wrote some words on a piece of paper and tied it on his neck. He announced that the sword if struck on his neck would not harm him in anyway. The executor struck his sword at the Guru’s neck which cut off his throat. Later when the piece of paper was opened, it was written in bold, “I would have my head expurgated but not reveal the secrets”⁹². In order to create deterrence, the dead body of the Guru was taken and showed in every street of the city⁹³.

Well this explanation of murder of ninth Guru seems to be very interesting yet little weird. In Islam, when somebody is captured for looting innocent people, one is not given choice to accept Islam as a punishment and neither is asked to show some miracle to prove his faith to prove innocence. Moreover, if the accused is a non-Muslim, the matter is decided as per the guidelines of the religion of the accused. Surely the Sikhism also does not offer this option. Now we come to the matter of showing miracle. Why a looter and a plunderer of innocent people, would not try to save his life? Why such a worldly person did not agree to the terms of Emperor? And what were the secrets that were even precious than Guru’s life who was reportedly in the business of looting people? Historians’ job is not limited to only narrate events but also assess their veracity and reliability to set the record right. Events must be presented in their proper context and logical unfolding and explanation. Announcing his son as tenth Guru also seems quite misplaced under the situation while being arrested for something as looting. It seems ninth Guru knew his fate. It surely seems that some other important forces and factors also contributed to the death of Guru. Aurangzeb was a very hard, rigid and strict Islamic ruler under the heavy influence of Mujadad-Alf-Sani and his policies. He had very

⁹¹ Ghulam Muhiuddin Bute Shah in his *Tarikh- i-Punjab*,

⁹² *Ibid* 521 S M Latif, *tarikh e Punjab*

⁹³ *Ibid* S M Latif, *tarikh e Punjab*

boldly and openly tried to enforce those policies and school of thought to eliminate every non-Muslim and even non-Sunni Muslim rule all across his Empire.⁹⁴

Another theory also exists to explain the death of Guru Tegh Bahadur, which only adds to the existing confusion. This theory holds that the Mughal Emperor Aurungzeb had no hand behind the murder of the ninth Guru. It is argued that when the Guru was brought in front of the Emperor, the Emperor invited him to the message of Islam. Ninth Guru however, refused to accept Emperor's offer and remained silent. The Guru remained adamant and held his faith. Resultantly the Guru was jailed. He was tortured yet he remained steadfast. Along with him, there were three more Sikhs who somehow managed to escape from Mughal captivity. In order not to suffer any further, Guru asked a fellow Sikh to sever his head from his body. Initially the fellow Sikh refused to do so however, on insistence the fellow Sikh had to give in and kill the Guru.⁹⁵ Major Henry Court has also endorsed this incident and theory that the murder of the Guru was done by the hands of his servant on his own command.⁹⁶

Like other theories explaining the circumstances and the people leading to the murder of Guru Tegh Bahadur, this theory also shows some flaws, which are either due to non-reporting or non-availability of full account of events. How come those fellows of Guru Tegh Bahadur were able to flee the jail but Guru couldn't? Was the command to kill was worthy of a Guru? Needless to highlight every theory that has been expounded to explain the murder of the Guru Tegh Bahadur, points towards the Muslim and Hindu pundits. While delving deep into each conspiracy theory, one can easily discern that whatever the circumstances had been for the murder of Guru Tegh Bahadur, those were either created or forced by interest groups of Muslims and Hindus. Indeed, it was; the request of the Hindu pundits that brought the Guru to Delhi to save the sacred cow and the Brahmin⁹⁷. The sad saga of ruining of Sikh Muslims relations has many more episodes

⁹⁴ G.M.D.Sufi, vol 2,703.

⁹⁵ Dr. Earnist triumph, *The Adhi Granth()* (London: 1871), 14.

⁹⁶ Major Henry Court, *History of the Sikhs* (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1888), 35.

⁹⁷ Tamimi,63

including killing of Mati Das a companion of ninth Guru and throwing of Bhai Dyaal into the boiling water. Similarly Bhai Mani Singh and Bhai Taru Singh's skin was taken off and some others were slaughtered.⁹⁸ All this was done just because they did not accept Islam.

Guru Gobind Singh (22nd Dec 1666 – 7th Oct 1708) was the last of the Sikh Gurus. He was a great fighter, a writer and a philosopher. At a tender age of nine, he succeeded his father Guru Tegh Bahadur. He formalized most of the Sikhism and gave an separate identity to Sikh community. He established the *Sikh Khalsa* in 1699.⁹⁹ On the invitation of Raja Mat Prakash of Sirmaur, he shifted to Paonta in April 1685. The Gazetteer of the Sirmaur State reports that the Guru had to leave Anandpur Sahib because of disagreement with Bhim Chand who was the Raja of Bilaspur.¹⁰⁰

By the 1680s, the Guru's impact and force had expanded significantly. His followers visited from far places and brought him important gifts. An enthusiast called Duni Chand went to Anandpur in 1681, and brought a royal canopy for Guru weaved in gold and silver, and was decorated with pearls. Ratan Rai, the son of Raja Ram Rai of Assam, visited Anand pur and presented so many gifts to the Guru, along with an elephant called Prasadi .

In mid-1680s, the relation between Guru Gobind Singh and Raja Bhim Chand became worst when Guru Construct a war drum named Ranjit Nagra, to motivate his army. The Raja's can only use this type of drum within their own territory. Raja Bhim Chand considered it threat from the Guru against him. His Prime Minister advised him to have a meeting with the Guru in Anandpur. There, he felt so much jealous on the expensive gifts presented to the Guru by his followers.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ G,s, chhabra, 21

⁹⁹ William Owen Cole and Piara Singh Sambhi, *The Sikhs. Their Religious Beliefs and Practice* (n.p.: Sussex Academic Press, 1995), 36.

¹⁰⁰ *Gazetteer of the Sirmur State*. New Delhi: Indus Publishing. 1996. ISBN, 978-81-7387-056-9

¹⁰¹ Harjinder Singh Dilgeer, *Sikh History (In English)* (n.p.: Sikh University Press, 2010), 1:11.

After few days, Bhim Chand asked the Guru to lend his elephant to him. Bhim Chand wanted the elephant to make a show of his prosperity to the guests at his son's wedding. The Guru doubted that Bhim Chand wanted the permanent ownership of the elephant, and refused the Raja's request. Bhim Chand sent his messengers for three times to the Guru. Nevertheless, the Guru didn't accept his demand, and refused to send the elephant.

The Raja feel insulted and worried by the Guru's refusal and his authorizing and his interest in armed exercises. This developed a sense of aggression between the two. In April 1685, Guru Gobind Singh shifted his residence Paonta in Sirmur state.¹⁰²

During these days, he met many military chieftains along the banks of the river Beas. Later on the request of Rani Champa, the Rani of Bilaspur, the Guru returned to Anandpur 1688 soon after the battle of Bhangani. Various tales and stores are associated with the tenth Guru of the Sikhs. In order to avenge his father death from Mughals, the Guru carried out many Hindu rituals to please and get help Hindu Devi.¹⁰³

The Mughal emperor Aurangzeb was very closely and anxiously following these developments and was quite upset. He at once sent off his son to redeem Mughal supremacy and authority in the area.¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, the Sikh Khalsa army who was against caste system could not amass support from Hindu Rajas of Sivalik Hills who believed in caste and classes. Hindu Rajas instead united themselves to get rid of Guru.¹⁰⁵ However, Hindu Rajas failed to intercept rising power of the Khalsa army and had to finally request the Mughals for aid. Following repeated pleas from the Hindu Rajas, Mughal Generals Din Beg and Painda Khan were sent to help the Hindu Rajas. Their armies were also supported by the local Hindu Rajas¹⁰⁶. The Mughal

¹⁰² Ajay Singh Rawat, *Garhwal Himalaya: A Study in Historical Perspective* (n.p.: Indus Publishing, 2002), 50-54.

¹⁰³ W,L,M'Gregor, *The history of the Sikhs*;70-71

¹⁰⁴ Gopal Singh, *A History of the Sikh People, 1469-1978* (Delhi: World Sikh University Press, 1979), 289-90.

¹⁰⁵ Hardip Singh Syan, *Sikh Militancy in the Seventeenth Century, religious violence in Mughal and early Modern India*, 219.

¹⁰⁶ Indubhusan Banerjee, *Evolution of the Khalsa* (Calcutta: A Mukerjee;, 1963), 25.

Emperor also dispatched an army under Saiyad Khan who was brother-in-law of Pir Budhu Shah, a close aide to the Guru. On persuasion by Pir Budhu, Saiyad Khan subsequently joined the Khalsa army. Resultantly Ramzan Khan replaced Saiyad Khan to command the Mughal army. He, aided by Hindu Rajas attacked Anandpur in March 1704. This was tactically a good time for Mughals to strike the Khalsa army. In fact, most of Guru's followers were farmers and had already left for harvesting. Guru was greatly assisted by two Muslim devotees Maimun Khan and Saiyad Beg. However, Khalsa army was outnumbered and Guru had to abandon Anandpur¹⁰⁷. After taking over Anandpur, the Mughal army marched to Sirhind. However, Khalsa army caught Mughal forces in a surprise attack and retrieved the valuables amassed by Mughal army after the fall of Anandpur. Following this success, the Guru returned to Anandpur.

Time passed and Aurangzeb expressed his wish to personally meet the Guru. He ordered to lift all restrictions against the Guru. He also directed his 'prime minister' to ensure a comfortable journey for the Guru. He also sent Sheikh Muhammad Yar Mansabdar and Muhammad Beg Gurzbardar to convey his respect to the Guru¹⁰⁸. He passed through what is now called Rajasthan, on his way to Ahmednagar where the Emperor was then encamped. When the Guru reached Baghaur, he received the news of Aurangzeb's death in March 1707. He subsequently decided to return to Punjab via Shahjahanabad. Aurangzeb's son Muazzam ascended the throne as Bahadur Shah.

During the succession war, Bahadur Shah wrote to the Guru for his blessings only and didn't ask for military help as Bahadur Shah knew that the Guru had no army. In fact, the Guru had only three to four hundred Sikh disciples with him at that time. He had good number of Khalsa army with him earlier because of the threat from the Hindu Hill Chiefs who had caused unrest in the country because of religious

¹⁰⁷ Prithi Pal Singh, 128-147.

¹⁰⁸ Dilip Singh, *Life of Sri Gobind Singh Ji, Includes Clarifications On the Authenticity of Zafarnama, Fatehnama, Role of Banda Bairagi, Amarnama, and the Facts Connected with the Guru's Final Departure from Earth* (Amritser: B.Chatter Singh Jiwan, 2003), 286.

intolerance¹⁰⁹. Guru helped Bahadur Shah not only with his blessing but he himself fought for the Emperor.

On invitation, the Guru Gobind Singh met Bahadur Shah at Agra on 23 July 1707. The Guru was received with honor and was titled as '*Hind Ka Pir*'. He was also awarded with royal robe, a jeweled scarf and 50,000 in cash. Expensive cloths, jewelry and ornaments were sent to Mata Sundari.¹¹⁰ The Guru stayed with the Emperor in Agra till November 1707. He made Dholpur a center of his preacher activities and travelled the local areas for many days before going on to Deccan. The Mughal Emperor also appointed him as a military commander. The Guru also got a piece of land where later the Guru's shrine was built.¹¹¹ Guru Gobind Singh was quite wary of Bahadur Shah's good relations with Wazir Khan of Sirhind. The Guru believed that the Emperor had fallen to Wazir Khan's evil propaganda and was planning to wage a war against him. Consequently the Guru appointed Banda Singh as the commander of the Khalsa army. He was asked to march towards Punjab.¹¹²

However, in the meanwhile, the Guru Gobind Singh was attacked by a Phatan named Gul Khan whose father was killed by the Guru.¹¹³ The attackers were killed on the spot. One by the Guru's own hand and the other was killed by the Sikhs who ran to the camp of the Guru after hearing the noise. It is also reported that the Guru bought some horses from Gul Khan's father and did not pay him.¹¹⁴ Bahadur Shah sent the European surgeon to stitch the Guru's wounds. However, the wounds re-opened and caused significant bleeding after a few days¹¹⁵. Reading his fate, the Guru declared the Granth Sahib as the next Guru of the Sikhs.¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁹ Dilip Singh, *Life of Sri Gobind Singh Ji*, 290.

¹¹⁰ Dilip Singh, *Life of Sri Gobind Singh Ji*, 294.

¹¹¹ G.M.D.Sufi, vol 2, 704

¹¹² Harbans Singh. Noor, *Connecting the Dots in Sikh History* (n.p.: Institute of Sikh Studies, 2004), 23.

¹¹³ W,L,M'Gregor, *The history of the Sikhs*; 99-91

¹¹⁴ G.M.D.Sufi, vol 2, 704

¹¹⁵ G.M.D.Sufi, vol 2, 704

¹¹⁶ Prithi Pal Singh. *The history of Sikh Gurus*. 158

Dalip Singh while revisiting the Sikh history has very aptly tried to dissect, unveil and subsequently refute various 'myths' that have for centuries devoured the sincere and serene relations between the Muslims and Sikhs. He has very logically dismissed the myth that this was Bahadur Shah who actually engaged the Pathan mercenaries to murder the Guru.¹¹⁷ He further observes that this theory seems to be highly ambitious concoction and gimmickry of political facts by 'interest groups'. Dalip Singh also laments the thinking of today's students of political science and history, who readily believe in such unreasoned explanations to the historical events.

Dalip Singh terms this account a product of 'Brahminic blend' and ambitions. He allocates a sizable portion of his book 'Life of Master Gobind Singh' to dispel and argue against this theory that sowed the seeds of further disharmony between Muslims and Sikhs. He breaks down all events spanning eighty days before attack on Guru Gobind Singh and analyzes them to prove that the story was nothing but a mere farce. He elaborately highlights that a relation of respect and trust existed between the Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah and Guru Gobind Singh. He also proves that close bonds existed between the two even long before Bahadur Shah ascended to the throne¹¹⁸. The Emperor was a true well-wisher of the Guru and bestowed upon him the robe of honour symbolizing brotherhood and respect. Bahadur Shah even facilitated the Guru to freely undertake his missionary activities across Mughal Empire. Besides, the Emperor designated orderly to ensure the wellbeing of the Guru and his disciples during his lifetime. All these acts of benevolence point towards the fact that actually the shrewdness and malaise of Wazir Khan of Sirhind was behind the Guru's homicide. Threatened by the closeness between the Guru and the Emperor, Wazir Khan hatched that unfortunate plan to murder the Guru and settle the score with the Guru¹¹⁹. In fact, Wazir Khan was involved in the murder of Guru's sons hence he was afraid of Guru's closeness to the Emperor.

¹¹⁷ Dilip Singh, Life of Sri Gobind Singh Ji, 296.

¹¹⁸ Dilip Singh, Life of Sri Gobind Singh Ji, 300.

¹¹⁹ Dilip Singh, Life of Sri Gobind Singh Ji, 328, 331.

Dalip Singh further reports that the Pathans and his aide mercenaries admitted this fact before being killed that Wazir Khan hired them to kill the Guru Gobind Singh. Emperor Bahadar Shah, was then in Maharashtra. On hearing about the lethal attack on the life of Guru, the Emperor at once sent his medical specialist Mr. Cole to treat the Guru. The Emperor also ordered arrest of 700 Pathans residing in the region where the incident took place. However, Guru Gobind Singh requested the Emperor not to do so to avoid arrest of innocent Pathans and unrest in the region.¹²⁰

Dalip Singh's hard work has very aptly uncovered some of the veiled complexities of relations between the two communities. Such a sincere effort to bring about rapprochement between the Sikhs and the Muslims is highly appreciable and mutually beneficial for both the communities. While doing so, Dalip Singh has indeed, instilled the need to revisit the history of relationship between the Muslims and the Sikhs with different perspective and set the record right.

Conclusion

India, being a heterogeneous polity, needed an open minded and tolerant system of administration and justice for smooth functioning of the Empire. Early Mughal Emperors understood this and hence adopted very liberal and fair policies in dispensation of state functions. Therefore, from Baber till Akbar the relation between the two communities was based on harmony, tolerance and understanding.¹²¹ Unlike Hinduism, both Islam and Sikhism teach tolerance, equality, love for mankind and belief in One God. Both the religions forbid worshipping of anything but One God. The tenth Guru Gobind Singh called himself as an 'image breaker'. There is no difference between a prince and a peasant in both the religions. Both religions strongly support inter marriages and inter dining. 'Zakat' in Islam and 'Daswant' in Sikhism are to be used to help the needy people.¹²² These similarities brought the two communities closer.

¹²⁰ Dilip Singh, Life of Sri Gobind Singh Ji, 330, 329.

¹²¹ G.S. Chabra, Advanced history of the Punjab, vol 1, 119

¹²² G.M.D. Sufi, vol 2, 727

Closeness between Muslims and Sikhs meant little space for Hindu nobility and Hinduism and losing of all the benefits and benevolence of the Mughal Empire. Consequently illicit bond between Hindu aristocracy and Muslim orthodox theocracy forced many unfortunate incidents, which first created and then deepened the enmity between the two communities. One can easily see the deadly consequences of this cohort first in the form of the murder of the Guru Arjun by the Emperor Jahangir on account of political grounds and later in the shape of the murder of the ninth Guru by Aurangzeb for not accepting Islam.

Annals of history have adequate evidence and material to highlight the fact that how Hindu shrewdness and Muslim orthodoxy maneuvered the Gurus' fall. However, even under the worst circumstances, the common Muslims always helped the Gurus. They stood by them, fought for them and many died for them. Many Muslim saints also remained associated with Gurus. But unfortunately some of the most loyal Muslims were treated very harshly during later days including Syed Badar-ud-Din commonly known as Bhudhu Shah, a close friend of Guru Gobind. Pir Budhu Shah a noble Muslim lost his sons while protecting Guru Gobind Singh from the armed attacks of the Hindu mountain chieftains. Later Bhuddu Shah lost his family and fortune to the brutalities of Banda Singh Bairagi¹²³. Sayyed Bhikha Shah is another devotee who sanctified his life for the Guru. In fact, Syed Bhikha Shah prophesied about spiritual elevation of Guru Gobind Singh. Moreover, Nabi Khan and Ghani Khan and Sayyed Muhammad Nurpuri risked their lives while saving Guru Gobind Singh from Wazir Khan, the governor of Sirhind. Murders of Guru Arjun, Guru Tegh Bahadur and finally Guru Gobind Singh still remain obscure and disputed under the intricate layers of Subcontinent history. However, one thing get clearer after each discourse on the subject that it was not the religion or faith rather political ambitions and designs of Hindus and Muslims and later those of Sikhs that were mainly responsible for the unfortunate events¹²⁴.

¹²³ G.M.D.Sufi, vol 2,704

¹²⁴ Dilip Singh and Espirito, Sikh Muslim relations, 66.

On the other hand, these developments also left intelligible imprints on Sikhism. After the death of Guru Arjun and even during his life time, Sikh Gurus on purpose entered into politics and formalization of their religion. These ambitions to gain political as well economic power further alarmed the foes and friends of the Sikhs. Mughal Emperors as well as Hindu Rajas also got skeptical of the political designs of Sikh Gurus and Sikhism. These ambitions indeed, brought the Sikhs right in front of Mughal Emperors. While this was a matter of concern for the rivals of Sikhism, it was also an opportunity for them to strike Sikhism. These designs actually provided the enemies of Sikhism a chance to provoke the Mughal Emperors against Sikhism. Rising power and popularity of Sikhism was taken as a threat to the existence of Mughal Empire.

In light of the above facts and analyses, it seems imperative to revisit the history of Mughal-Sikh relationship. Dalip Singh had pointed out that Hindu intelligentsia deliberately has marred the relationship between Muslims and Sikh communities. In short, above-mentioned facts and figures clearly show that though relationship between the Mughal and Sikhs gradually began to sore from friendship to estrangement but these relations were between the rulers and the Gurus but not between common Muslims with the common Sikhs.