



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Bhagat Bani, Guru Granth Sahib-An Explicit legacy

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Abstract

In the Middle Ages every Social - Political movement had taken a theological form and the Bhakti movement in India of the medieval times was an idealistic manifestation of the socio- cultural realities of the time. The development of social system consists of a process of structural adaptations generated by cultural coherence and innovations from indigenous or extraneous sources. Interests of society's cultural complexes compete for institutions within a social system, till the tensions are resolved either through integration by consonance or dissonance. The Bhakti movement performed this task by performing at different levels. Its vernacular poetry/ songs provide the country with a sense of shared richness and its literature puts forth a spirit of tolerance for everyone and a tendency to encompass rather than exclude. Bhakti tradition perceived India's democratic vision without distinction of language, religion, cast and community. This Paper intends to touch upon inclusion of hymns/poetry of Saints and Bhaktas from medieval times, as "Bhagat Bani" in the Adi Granth. An attempt has also been made to analyse and explore, how despite different vernacular expressions of regions and periods, inclusion of Bhakti Poetry as "Bhagat Bani" is entirely unaffected from linguistic, social, and cultural boundaries. The research paper concludes with the submission that, since medieval times, Bhagat Bani, is a successful unique example in the dissemination of sense of equality, cultural unity through amalgamation of Vernacular languages and egalitarian components leading humankind towards Peace and Harmony.

KeyWords: Bhakti, Sikhism, Guru Granth Sahib, and Bhagat Bani.

Section-I

INTRODUCTION

Bhakti

Bhakti as a concept was present in Indian religion, but changes in it from 13th-17th Century transformed its original character and shaped the social character of the crystallised society, which was an idealistic manifestation of the socio- economic realities of the time.¹

The word 'Bhakti' is from the Sanskrit word bhaj (sevayaam) ^{aning} to share. In the Sikh tradition, the term *Bhagat* indeed has a dual significance. It refers both to a devotee who practices devotion to the divine through love and selfless service, and to the historical figures who embodied these qualities. These figures, like Kabir, Namdev, Ravidas, and Jaidev, are highly revered in Sikhism for their spiritual contributions and their emphasis on devotion to God through humility and equality. The concept of *bhakti* (devotion)

¹ Pande Rekha, The Bhakti Movement- A Historiographical Critique, (2000), Journal of Historical Research, Vol-X, DU. (49-60)

and *seva* (selfless service) plays a central role in Sikhism, where the focus is not just on ritual worship, but on living a life of love, service to humanity, and dedication to the divine. The *Bhagats* helped spread this message of inclusivity, compassion, and devotion across different regions and social backgrounds. The Bhakti Movement in the northern India developed along two streams of Nirgun and Sagun. Majority of the Bhakti Saints, especially Nirgun was against idolatry, tyranny of caste and creeds along with temple and rituals. Nirguni (devotion to divine without is particularly significant in Sikhism²

Concept of Bhakti in Sikhism

Guru Granth Sahib is the Sikh scripture of 1430(ang) pages. Bani, as a divine manifestation of the Guru's wisdom, offers not just spiritual guidance but a profound model for living harmoniously within both the self and the community. It also presents a model of structural harmony based on 31 ragas (musical meters). The concept that "Banee Guroo, Guroo hai Banee" (The Bânî is the Guru, and the Guru is the Bânî) ^{underlines} the integral nature of the Guru's teachings. Through this connection, Sikhs recognize Bânî as the source of divine wisdom, transcending time and space, and as a direct link to God. This perspective makes the Guru Granth Sahib not just a sacred scripture, but a living embodiment of divine truth, where every line, every verse, and every raga contributes to the formation of a harmonious and peaceful existence.

The unique paradigm of peace in Sikhism, in essence, offers a vision of peace that is both deeply spiritual and profoundly practical. It teaches that true peace comes from understanding and embodying the divine wisdom of the Guru, living harmoniously with others, and being constantly attuned to the music of the soul that connects all beings. It's a peace that is active, lived, and experienced through the rhythms of life and devotion. The Gurmukh (Guru-oriented individual) is someone who does not just seek peace but actively radiates it. Their peace is not merely the absence of conflict, but a presence of inner joy, compassion, and service to others. "Gurmukhs are imbued with the Sabad because of that they are at peace, having lost their self-conceit"³ Moreover, the 31 ragas or musical meters used in the Guru Granth Sahib amplify this message, as each raga carries its own emotional and spiritual resonance. Music has the power to create harmony, not just between notes but between individuals, communities, and even within the self. By aligning oneself with the rhythmic and melodic flow of the ragas, the listener is encouraged to feel a deeper connection to the divine and to the collective human spirit.

The following examples from the hymns of Beni, Kabir, and Guru Nanak will illustrate the point:

1. Beni: the Guru-directed thus meditates; Without the True Guru, one does not find the way⁴
2. Kabir: Without the True Guru, one does not find the way. Explaining the mystery, so says Kabir.⁵
3. Nanak: with trusting faith one meditates; Without the True Guru, one does not find the way.

Bhagat Bani in Guru Granth Sahib

The inclusive approach of Guru Granth Sahib highlights the nuanced approach the Gurus took in selecting and incorporating the *bhagat bani* (the hymns of the saints or bhagats) into the Adi Granth. The Sikh Gurus did not choose these hymns solely because they aligned perfectly with Sikh teachings, but rather because they held both identity with and differences from those teachings. The Gurus sought to preserve and promote a distinct Sikh view of spirituality, practice, and community. This was achieved not only by including the hymns but also by editing and commenting on them, thus recontextualizing them within the broader framework of Sikhism.

This passage delves into the complex process behind the compilation of the *Adi Granth*, the foundational scripture of the Sikh tradition. The selective process of incorporating hymns and devotional verses from various religious traditions—Vaishnavism, Santism, and Sufism—into the *Adi Granth* highlights the Sikh Gurus' openness to spiritual wisdom from diverse sources yet also underscores their distinctive monotheistic beliefs and social reforms, especially rejecting caste and formal rituals.

The inclusion of the *Bhagat Bani*, the devotional verses of fifteen medieval poets, was a key step in shaping Sikh identity. These poets, such as Shaikh Farid and Bhikan, were influential figures within Sufi, Bhakti, and Sant movements, and their hymns resonated with the Sikh vision of a formless, singular deity. Guru

² Lorenzen, David, *Bhakti Religion in Northern India: Community Identity and Political Actions*, 2002.

³ SGGS, p.649

⁴ Beni, Prabhati 1, AG:1351

⁵ Kabir, Basant 3, AG: 1194

Arjan's meticulous compilation, where the hymns were organized according to musical ragas and arranged with great precision, reflects the intricate method behind the *Adi Granth*. It wasn't just a collection of hymns—it was carefully crafted to ensure coherence, both spiritually and musically, in a way that would resonate with the Sikh community and align with the Gurus' teachings. A precise method was followed in setting down the compositions. First came *sabad* by the Gurus in the order of their succession. Then came *ashtpadis*, *chhants* and *vars* in a set order. The compositions of the Gurus in each raga were followed by those of the *Bhagats* in the same format. A very subtle system of numbering the hymns had evolved. *Gurmukhi* was the script used for the transcription.

Composition of Bhagat Bani

Sl. no.	Name	Dates	Place	Hymns	Salokas	Longer works
1	Shaikh Farid	1173–1265	Pakpattan	4	112	---
2	Jaidev	ca 1170–1245	Birbhum	2	---	---
3	Trilochan	ca 1267–1335	Sholapur	4	---	---
4	Namdev	ca 1270–1350	Satara	61	2	---
5	Sadahna	15th CE	Sindh	1	---	---
6	Beni	15th CE	Tonk	3	---	---
7	Ramanand	ca 1366–1467	Paryag	1	---	---
8	Kabir	ca 1398–1448	Banaras	224	237	3
9	Ravidas	ca 1450–1520	Banaras	40	---	---
10	Pipa	15th CE	Gagraun	1	---	---
11	Sain	ca 1390–1440	Rewa	1	---	---
12	Dhanna	15th CE	Tonk	3	---	---
13	Bhikhan	1480–1573	Lucknow	2	---	---
14	Parmanand	15th CE	Sholapur	1	---	---
15	Surdas	ca 1478–1585	Oudh	1 line only	---	---

Table 1. Composition of Bhagat Bani in Guru Granth Sahib.

Source: Pinterest

The term "Bhagat Bani" appears in the *Guru Granth Sahib*, and it refers to the hymns or compositions of various saint-poets (*Bhagats*), including Kabir, Namdev, and Ravidas, among others. The *Bhagats'* hymns were composed in different languages, including Punjabi, Hindi, and others, reflecting a wide cultural and religious diversity. The significance of the *Bhagats* lies in their devotion to one God, their spiritual messages, and their emphasis on devotion, equality, and social justice—values that resonated with *Guru Nanak* and later *Gurus*. The specific contribution of these *Bhagats* to the *Guru Granth Sahib* occupies a notable portion of the text, roughly 8.2% of the total. Their hymns offer a beautiful blend of mysticism, devotional thought, and critiques of social norms, which is why they hold such an important place in Sikh teachings.

The way the *Guru Granth Sahib* organizes these compositions—sometimes according to the raga or musical framework—illustrates the deep connection between music and spirituality in Sikh tradition. Music is considered a key vehicle for experiencing divine presence, and each of the *Bhagats'* compositions contributes to the rich, diverse spiritual tapestry of the scripture.

An important aspect of the structure of the *Guru Granth Sahib*. Kabir's hymns appear in various ragas, but the title "Siri Ragu Kabir Ji Ka" specifically designates Kabir's compositions under the raga *Siri Raga* (on page 91). He is not only present in multiple ragas but also has two long compositions, the *Bavan Akhari* (often called *Bāvan Akhri*), which is a significant poem by Kabir that expresses his spiritual vision. Kabir's poetic style is characterized by simplicity, directness, and often sharp critique of societal and religious practices. His hymns focus on the realization of the formless God, personal devotion, and rejection of idolatry and ritualistic practices. Similarly, the hymns of *Bhagat Trilochan* and *Bhagat Beni* are given distinct titles according to the raga they are set to, such as *Siri Raga Trilochan Ka* and *Siri Raga Bani Bhagat Beni Jeo Ki*, respectively. The *Bhagats* brought their own unique perspectives to the spiritual conversation within the *Guru Granth Sahib*.

Linguistic Unity in Diversity

The distinctive linguistic imprint of *Farīd Bānī* stands out from the other compositions of the Bhagats primarily because of its heavy use of **Punjabi dialects**, particularly **Multani**, which is closely related to what we now call **Siraiki**. This contrasts with the more commonly used **Sant bhāṣā** (Saints' language), which was a blend of various regional languages and was the predominant language of many other Bhagats, including those whose compositions are part of the Bhagat Bānī section.⁶ The Sant bhāṣā, or "language of the saints," was a mix of various dialects (such as Magahi, Maithili, and others), and it formed the linguistic backdrop for the hymns of many Bhagat-poets like Kabir, Namdev, and Ravidas. This highlights how the linguistic background of the poet influenced the form and expression of their devotion in the Guru Granth Sahib.

Guru Nanak and the early Gurus, particularly Guru Arjan, composed in what Shackle refers to as "The Sacred Language of the Sikhs," which was essentially **early Punjabi** with influences from different regional dialects.⁷ As the Sikh tradition developed over time, particularly during the Guruship of Guru Arjan, there was a growing influence of **Braj Bhasha**, a literary language associated with northern India, which gradually became more prominent in the hymns of the later Gurus. Shackle's idea of this as an "artificial style" suggests that it wasn't necessarily a natural linguistic development but rather a strategic effort to adapt and communicate the Gurus' teachings to a broader audience.

So, the progression of linguistic styles in the Guru Granth Sahib—starting with the distinctiveness of *Farīd Bānī* in the *Multani* dialect, moving through Sant bhāṣā, and later integrating Braj and even dakkhanī—demonstrates the dynamic and adaptive nature of the Sikh scriptures. It reflects both the geographical and cultural diversity of the Sikh community, while also showing the Gurus' self-consciousness in choosing linguistic forms that would best communicate their spiritual messages.

Inclusion of Bani in Guru Granth Sahib

1. The Singing Tradition and the Role of Traveling Singers:

This theory suggests that the hymns of the poet saints were spread primarily through oral traditions, particularly through **traveling singers** or **minstrels** who moved from village to village, region to region across northern India. These singers would perform the hymns, which were likely passed down in a highly melodic and performative style, making them accessible to a wider audience. Through these performances, the hymns reached **Punjab**, where the Sikh Gurus were based. The **oral transmission** of hymns through music was crucial in bringing these devotional compositions to the Gurus' attention. Music, in this sense, acted as a vehicle for spiritual knowledge and was deeply intertwined with Sikh practice. Over time, this oral tradition enabled the Gurus to identify, select, and eventually include certain compositions in the *Adi Granth*.

2. The Traditional Sikh Source (Mahima Prakash and the Role of Bhagats):

The second theory is rooted in **traditional Sikh sources**, particularly the **Mahima Prakash** (1776) by **Sarup Das Bhalla**. This text documents how, according to tradition, several Bhagats approached **Guru Arjan** to have their hymns included in the **Sikh scripture**. It is said that Guru Arjan accepted hymns from **15 prominent Bhagats** (like Kabir, Namdev, Ravidas, etc.), as well as others, including **Kahna, Chhaju, Pilo, and Shah Hussain** (from Lahore). These were selected because their hymns were seen as spiritually valuable and in alignment with Sikh teachings. The inclusion of **11 Bhatts** (who were genealogical, or historical poets close to the Gurus) and **disciples** like **Baba Sunder**

⁶ Murphy Anne, Punjab in the (late) Vernacular Millennium, September .2015

⁷ Shackle, Christopher, 1977b. "South- Western "Elements in the language of the Adi Granth', Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, 40(1); 36-50.

Ji, Rai Balwand, and **Satta** also shows how Guru Arjan valued compositions from learned and spiritually advanced figures. These individuals were seen as both **self-realized** and able to explain **intricate spiritual matters**, contributing to the spiritual guidance for the Sikh community.⁸

However, not all compositions were included. Some were **rejected** because they **did not align with the Sikh spiritual tone or teachings**, which focused on the oneness of God, rejection of rituals, and living a life of devotion, equality, and social justice.

3. Spiritual and Doctrinal Considerations in Selection:

In addition to geographic and cultural factors, there were doctrinal or **spiritual criteria** that guided the inclusion of hymns in the *Adi Granth*. For example, Guru Arjan would have been mindful of the **theological consistency** of the hymns, ensuring that they aligned with the central themes of Sikhism, such as the **unity of God, devotion, equality, and the rejection of superstition and rituals**. Even though the hymns of some poets (like **Kahna** or **Shah Hussain**) might have been rejected, this does not necessarily diminish their spiritual value. It simply reflects the Guru's discerning process of ensuring that only those hymns that fully supported Sikh teachings and philosophy were included in the scripture.

4. The Influence of Early Sikh Devotional Movements:

Another theory suggests that **Sikh devotional movements** that preceded or coincided with Guru Arjan's time—such as the **Nirguna** movement, represented by saints like Kabir—may have played a role in fostering a culture of devotional poetry that led to the inclusion of the Bhagats' hymns. The **Nirguna tradition**, which emphasizes devotion to the formless God, resonated deeply with the **Sikh Gurus**, who shared a similar spiritual focus. This shared devotional ethos, particularly with **Bhagat Kabir**, who is extensively quoted in the *Guru Granth Sahib*, may have helped the inclusion of hymns that transcended sectarian boundaries.

These four theories give us insight into the complex and multifaceted process through which the hymns of the **poet saints** were included in the *Adi Granth Sahib*. The **oral transmission via traveling singers**, the **direct requests from the Bhagats** themselves, the **doctrinal considerations** of Guru Arjan, and the larger **Sikh devotional context** all played important roles in shaping the sacred scripture as we have it today. The **inclusive nature** of the Sikh scripture, drawing on various regional, linguistic, and spiritual traditions, reflects the Sikh emphasis on universalism, devotion, and the belief that truth can be found in various forms.

Section-II

I -Bhagat Kabir

He was born in Varanasi. There have been endless controversies over the Kabir's dates, the most preferred dates are 1398-1448. He was disciple of Guru Ramanand, His verses emphasize a personal connection with the divine, free from intermediaries, rituals, or rigid religious structures. His critique of caste and idolatry was particularly profound because it directly opposed the established hierarchies and practices that many saw as barriers to spiritual liberation. Through his work in the *Guru Granth Sahib* and other collections, he spoke out against the blind following of rituals that he saw as disconnected from true spiritual essence. His emphasis was always on inner devotion and realization of the divine within oneself, transcending external divisions like caste. The hymns collection of Kabir's utterances of Kabir in the *Adi Granth* for whom an early and precisely dated manuscript exists.⁹ Raag Gauri: The Fifty- Two letters (Bavan Akhari, Ag, pp340-3. Thitin, (AG, p.343-4); The Seven Days (Var Sat, AG, pp344-345); Salok Bhagat

⁸ Chauhan, G.S, Bani of Bhagats, Amritsar, (2014)

⁹ Schemer, Karine, 'Kabir in the Guru Granth Sahib: An Exploratory Essay,' in Mark Juergensmeyer and N.G. Barrier, Ed's, Sikh Studies: Comparative Perspectives on a change Tradition (1979), P.76

Kabir Jiu Ke (AG, p-1364-77), in which 5 are by Guru Arjan, one by Guru AmarDas, three may be by Namdev and one by Ravidas.¹⁰ On the authenticity of these work Vaudeville remarks: ‘...the simplicity of the language and the naturalness of the style gives an air of the authenticity to Kabir’s saying in the Granth.’¹¹

“Kabir, whatever I propose, God disposes, so why propose and Scheme?
For, what God Proposes, He does, and does He what one cannot even dream”¹²
“Kabir, if you start off to join the Sadhu, take no companion with you,
And never retrace your steps, whatever may come in your way”¹³

II-Bhagat Ravidas

Saint Ravidas, born in the late 14th century, is widely revered for his spiritual wisdom and devotion. His teachings transcend social boundaries, and he emphasized devotion to God above caste and class distinctions, making him a significant figure in the Bhakti movement. His connection with other saints like Kabir, Dhanna, Peepa, and Sain highlights the unity among the diverse spiritual traditions of that time. Ravidas's inclusion of 40 compositions in the *Adi Granth* highlights his profound influence in Sikhism as well. The *Siri Raga* in which some of Ravidas's hymns are composed is known for its deep, meditative qualities, reflecting the depth of Ravidas's spiritual experience. His impact stays powerful, both within the Sikh tradition and beyond, as his life and teachings continue to transcend time.¹⁴ *Siri Raga Ravidas, Tohee mohee mohee tohee antar kaisa. Kanak katik jul tarang jaisa 1*¹⁵

III-Sheikh Farid

Sheikh Farid was born in 1173 A.D, his early life reflects a strong spiritual foundation. His mother, Bibi Mariam, not only guided him in religious education but also instilled in him the virtues of charity and selflessness. The story of the sugar candy under the prayer mat is an important anecdote in this regard, as it highlights the early emergence of his compassionate nature. Sheikh Farid’s spiritual contributions, particularly his poetry, found a significant place in **Adi Granth**, which is a remarkable example of interfaith reverence. Guru Arjan Dev's inclusion of Sheikh Farid's verses was an acknowledgment of his wisdom and humanity, irrespective of religious boundaries. Farid's verses in the **Guru Granth Sahib** often focus on themes of divine love, the impermanence of life, and the importance of detachment from worldly desires, which resonate deeply within Sikh philosophy as well. Sheikh Farid’s teachings transcend sectarian divisions, and his influence extends beyond Islam and Sikhism. He is revered in various mystical traditions and continues to be a symbol of spiritual devotion, advocating for the practice of unconditional love and compassion toward all beings. Sheikh Farid’s life and poetry embody timeless spiritual truths that transcend religious differences. His focus on love for God, humanity, and the importance of inner purity continues to inspire people across different cultures and faiths.

“Aasa Sheikh Farid Jiu Ki Bani Ik Onkar Satguru Parsadi

*Dilhu muhabbat jinh sei sachia. Jinh mun hore mukh horre
se kandhe kachia. (1) Ratte isk Khudai rang didar ke. Visriya jinh Naam te bhui bhar thie. (1) Rahao Aap
lie larhi lai dar darwes se. Tin dhan janendi mau ayi safal se. (2) Parwardgar Appar Agam Beant Tu. Jinha
pachhata such chuman pair mu. (3) Teri panah Khudai Tu bakhsandagi. Sheikh Faride khair deeaji
bandagi. (4) (1) (Sri Guru Granth Sahib page 488)*

*Farida sakar khundu niwat gurm makhio majha dudhu. Sabhe wastu mithian Rub na pujani tudhu. (27)
Farida roti meri kath ki lawanu meri bhukh. Jina khadhi choprhi ghane sahinge dukh. (28) Rukhi sukhi
khai kai thunda pani pee. Farida dekh parayee choprhee na tarsayai jiu. (29) Aju na satee kunt siu ungu
mure muri jayi. Jai puchhuhu dohagni tum kiu raini wihayi. (30) Sahurai dhoyee na lahai peyai nahi thau.
Piru watrhi na puchhayee dhun sohagani nau.” (31)*

IV-Bhagat Namdev

¹⁰ Singh Pashauara.

¹¹ Vaudeville, Kabir, P.58

¹² Kabir, Salok, 219, AG, p.1376

¹³ Kabir Salok 116, AG, p.1370.

¹⁴ Chauhan, D.S, Ibid.

¹⁵ SGGS, P. 93

Saint Namdev's spiritual legacy is especially significant within the **Sikh tradition**, where his hymns are included in the **Adi Granth**, the holy scripture of Sikhism. A total of **61 of his hymns** are included, spread across **18 ragas** (musical modes), and are known for their deep spiritual insight, simplicity, and sincerity. His hymns emphasize the importance of **devotion**, the **unity of the Divine**, and the futility of worldly attachments. Saint Namdev's life and teachings are still a powerful inspiration for people across various traditions, symbolizing the strength of simple devotion, humility, and the belief in God's presence in all creation.

Rag Gauri Cheti Bani Namdev Ji Ki

“Dewa pahan tariale. Ram kahat jan kas na tare (1) (Rahau) Tariale Ganika, bin roop Kubija Biadh Ajamal tariale. Charan badhik jan teu mukat bhae. Hau bal bal jin Ram kahe (1) Dasi sut janu Bidar, Sudama, Ugarsen kau raj die. Jap heen, tup heen, kul heen karam heen Name ke Suami Teu tare.” (2) (1)¹⁶

V-Bhagat Jaidev

Saint Jaidev's influence extends into the **Sikh tradition** as well, with **two of his compositions** included in the **Adi Granth** (on pages **526** and **1106**). These hymns, while written in a difficult Sanskrit-based language, focus on deep **meditative practices** and the path of **Yoga** and **Pranayama** (breath control), aiming at **union with the Unmanifest Lord**. They discuss how one can control the senses and energies through spiritual discipline, culminating in the realization of the Divine's transcendental nature. Jaidev's hymns in the **Adi Granth** align with the **mystical themes** prevalent in the **Bhakti** and **Sufi** traditions. His compositions explore the union of the soul with God through meditative practices and a life of devotion. The emphasis on **Yoga, breath control, and meditation** reflects a deep understanding of the spiritual journey, aimed at realizing the **Unmanifest Lord**—a God beyond physical form and name. **Saint Jaidev** is revered not only for his contributions to Bengali devotional literature through his work **“Geet Gobind”**, but also for his spiritual influence, which has had a lasting impact on **Sikhism, Bhakti, and meditative practices** in India. His legacy as a poet-saint whose hymns emphasize devotion, and the direct experience of the Divine continues to inspire spiritual seekers across generations.¹⁷

VI-Bhagat Trilochan

Saint Trilochan, born in 1267 AD in Barsi, Maharashtra, was a contemporary of Saint Namdev. A Vaishya by profession, he was a devoted Vaishnav and a household man who served fellow devotees. Trilochan had deep faith in Saint Namdev and often visited him to meditate together, during which Namdev would share stories of great devotees. In an incident recounted by Bhai Gurdas in his 10th "Vaar," Trilochan asked Namdev to pray for the Lord's appearance. The Lord, however, remarked that he was not happy with Trilochan's offerings but acknowledged that saints, through their devotion and intercession, could invoke His presence more easily on behalf of devotees.¹⁸

The lord is One, Unmanifest and Manifest. He can be attained only by the grace of the True Master.

VII-Bhagat Sadhna

Saint Sadhna, born in Sehwan, Sindh (now in Pakistan), was a contemporary of Saints Namdev and Gyaneshwar. He worked as a butcher by profession but was deeply spiritual. Sehwan, is visited by Guru Nanak. A memorial in an old fort, the local Muslim community now reveres there. Saint Sadhna's devotional hymns are part of the Sikh scriptures, and his bani includes "Sadhne Ki Ragu Bilawalu Ik Onkar Satgur Prasadi," reflecting his deep connection with the divine. Saint Sadhna was contemporary of Shri Namdev and Saint Gyaneshwar.

Bani Sadhne Ki Ragu Bilawalu Ik Onkar Satgur Prasadi¹⁹

VIII-Bhagat Sain

Saint Sain, a contemporary of Saints Kabir Das, Ravidas, Peepa, and Dhanna, was also a disciple of Swami Ramanand. There are three views about his birthplace: one suggests he was born in Maharashtra, another in Rewa (Rajasthan) where he served King Ram Singh of Bandhoga, and the third places his birth in Sohal, a village in Amritsar, Punjab. His father was Shri Mukand Rai, and his mother was Shrimati Jiwan Devi.

¹⁶ SGG, p.345

¹⁷ SGG, p.526

¹⁸ SGG, p.525-526

¹⁹ SGG, p.858

Bhai Gurdas, in his 10th "Vaar" (Para 16), recounts the story of Saint Sain, describing how, after hearing about Saint Kabir's glory, Sain chose Swami Ramanand as his Guru. The narrative includes a tale of saints visiting Sain, engaging in night-long kirtans, and the Lord appearing as a barber to serve the king in Sain's form. Saint Sain's composition is found in the Sri Guru Granth Sahib, where only one of his hymns is included in Dhanasari Bani Bhagtan Ki Shri Sainu P.695

IX-Bhagat Peepa

Saint Peepa, a disciple of Swami Ramanand, was born into a Rajput family as a prince in Ghatan Nagar. He later became the²⁰ ruler of Gagrongarh, found 45 miles from Kota in Rajasthan. Peepa was younger than Saints Kabir and Ravidas, and his life story reflects a transition from royalty to spiritual devotion. Peepa was younger to saints Kabir and Ravidas.

"Jo Brahmande soi pinde, jo khoje so pawai."

i.e., whatever is in the cosmos is also in our body. Only one who searches shall find.

inThere is only one composition of Saint Peepa in Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

Dhanasari raga

Dhanasari Bani Bhagatan Ki- Peepa)²¹

X-Bhagat Dhanna

Saint Dhanna was born in the village of Dhuan in Tonk district, Rajasthan, to a farming family, is known for his carefree and deeply devotional nature. He was a contemporary of Saints Ravidas and Namdevand disciple of Swami Ramanand. Dhanna developed a unique relationship with the Lord, and his devotion became widely celebrated.

Saint Dhanna's story is famous for his simple yet profound connection with God, which transcended worldly concerns. His compositions are included in the *Adi Granth*, with four hymns in Aasa and Dhanasari raga. In one of these hymns, he describes how worldly people forget moral ethics and the remembrance of the Lord amidst their daily activities. His teachings emphasize devotion and a direct connection with the divine.

XI-Bhagat Surdas

Surdas, a prominent figure in the Bhakti movement, was deeply devoted to Lord Krishna and is celebrated for his devotional hymns, particularly through his magnum opus, *Sur Sagar*. Born into a Saraswat Brahmin family, His *Sur Sagar* is often regarded as one of the finest works in Braj Bhasha, the vernacular language of the region, and is considered a significant contribution to Indian devotional literature. Surdas's spiritual journey and impact extended beyond his compositions. There is only one composition by Saint Surdas in the *Adi Granth* (on page 1253). Several scholars, believe that when Surdas composed the line "Chhadi mun Hari bikhman ko sang," he became so emotional that he entered deep *Samadhi* (spiritual absorption). It is believed that Guru Arjan Dev completed the rest of the stanza in Sarang Mohalla 5 Surdas.²²

XII-Bhagat Parmanand

Saint Parmanand, born in 1407 AD to a Kanya Kubaj Brahmin family. He is remembered as a deeply devoted and gentle poet-saint who had a profound connection with Lord Krishna. Parmanand's poetry is renowned for its literary excellence and his compositions are noted not only for their emotional depth but also for their philosophical and devotional content. In the Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the central religious scripture of Sikhism, there is a single composition by Saint Parmanand²³ found on page 1253, in the Sarang Raga.

The lord is One, Manifest and Unmanifest. He can be attained by the grace of True Master. This composition is highly respected for its profound devotion and spiritual significance, embodying the deep faith and connection that Parmanand had with the Divine.

XIII-Bhagat Bheekhan

Saint Bheekhan's identity is debated. Group of scholars suggests that he was a Sufi scholar from Kakori, known for his deep Islamic scholarship. However, this theory is questioned due to the language and tone

²⁰SGGS.P.695

²¹ SGGS, P.695

²² SGGS, p.1253

²³ SGGS, p,1253

of his compositions, which do not align with this background., Saint Bheekhan was born in 1473 AD in a Hindu Kayasth family from the village of Pakai in the Lucknow district. He has two compositions in the *Adi Granth*,²⁴ found on page 659, written in the *Sorath* meter. Both hymns are full of emotions and focus on the profound benefits of reciting the Lord's Name, reflecting his deep devotion and spiritual insight.

XIV-Bhagat Beni

Birth of Saint Beni remain unknown, but is believed that he lived during the era of Saint Namdev and hailed from North India. Saint Beni is renowned for his deep devotion to the Lord, and according to Bhai Gurdas's *Vaars*, he was a soul deeply committed to meditation and solitude, seeking out remote places to focus on his devotion. His works were collected by Guru Nanak Dev, who recognized his spiritual depth. His hymns, known for their profound devotion and spiritual messages, are in the *Adi Granth* at three distinct locations: Page 93,974 and 1351. Sri Raag Bhagat Beni, Ang.93,²⁵

Baenee Jaachai Thaeraa NaamII9II1II

Baunee longs for Your Name, Lord.II9II1II

Rag Raamkali Bhagat Beni²⁶

Guru Arjan Dev, who compiled the Guru Granth Sahib, praised Saint Beni for his unwavering devotion to the lord, acknowledging him as a great devotee. His composition continues to be respected for their clarity in expressing deep spiritual truths and devotion.

Explicit legacy of Bhagat Bani

The **Bhagat Bani** within the *Adi Granth* is indeed a profound embodiment of peace, both personal and social. It weaves together a spiritual tapestry that emphasizes unity, love, and devotion to the divine, transcending regional and religious boundaries. The hymns of the Bhaktas (devotees) offer a beautiful harmony with the structure of ragas, creating a symphony that resonates with the message of oneness and interconnectedness. This sacred text stresses the importance of direct, sincere communion with God, underscoring a deep, internal connection rather than external rituals or formal practices. The idea of remembering God's Name (Naam) is transformative, encouraging a mindfulness that permeates every moment and every action, leading to an ongoing awareness of the divine presence. The focus is not on mechanical repetition but on an authentic, heartfelt remembrance that aligns the individual with the divine will and fosters inner peace.

Conclusion

To conclude, the inclusion of **Bhagat Bani** in the *Adi Granth* exemplifies the spiritual ideal that one should uphold their own commitment to oneness while simultaneously respecting the distinct, yet equally valid, commitments of others. This sacred text champions the notion that diverse religious beliefs, when approached with mutual respect and dignity, can coexist harmoniously, contributing to the greater good of society. True spiritual progress requires open-minded interfaith dialogues, where individuals engage with one another in a spirit of understanding, allowing for deeper insights into other religious traditions. In this way, the Bhagat Bani offers a profound spiritual path, blending mysticism with practical wisdom. It invites individuals to live in harmony with themselves, others, and the universe, through love, humility, and devotion to God. This ideal of peace is not passive; rather, it is a dynamic, active process of inner awakening that also has a social and collective dimension, fostering peace and harmony in society.

The **Bhagat Bani**, as found in the *Adi Granth*, is a shining example of how scripture can transcend cultural and religious boundaries, offering a model for cross-cultural studies and practical application in a diverse world. Its global impact is profound, fostering unity and spiritual awakening by proving the timeless relevance of respect, love, and shared humanity.

²⁴ SGGs, Ang,659

²⁵ SGGs, Ang.93

²⁶ SGGs, Ang.974