

ALLEGORY: A Tapestry of Guru Nanak's Travels Episode 3: Ruhani Rawangi (Spiritual Departure)

'Ruhani Rawangi', 'Spiritual Departure', presents the onset of the keen beholder's first odyssey to observe, assimilate and disseminate 'Tawheed', Oneness. Guru Nanak intermingles with mystics at the seat of 'Shakarganj'.

jaagahu jaagahu sootih chaliaa vanajaaraa ||
(Raag Asa Kafi, Guru Nanak)

Awaken, Awaken! O people in slumber, the merchant is departing.
(Raag Asa Kafi, Guru Nanak)

In 1504 AD, at the age of 35 years, Guru Nanak embarks on a journey to awaken the soul of society from the slumber of ignorance.

Before leaving Sultanpur Lodhi, Guru Nanak visits his sister Bebe Nanaki, requesting her to look out for his family while he is away. With the concurrence of Bebe Nanaki and his wife, Mata Sulakhni, Guru Nanak, along with Bhai Mardana depart from Sultanpur Lodhi to Saidpur, a city which is now known as Eminabad.

We now travel from Sultanpur Lodhi in India to visit Eminabad in Pakistan to explore Guru Nanak's narrative in this city.

At Eminabad, Bhai Lalo, a humble carpenter, welcomed Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana and invited them to stay at his place. During the stay with Bhai Lalo, Guru Nanak would spend time in an isolated area, laden with pebbles, known as 'Rori'.

Amardeep Singh: His purpose was to prepare himself, spiritually and physically, for the long and arduous journeys to be performed in the years to come. He reduced his diet, spent time in spiritual meditation and slept on pebbles in this place.

This gurdwara is an architectural marvel in which the brickwork has been done in a unique artistic style. The masons who constructed this building were admirably original and innovative. Gurmukhi characters formed by bricks on the arches convey Guru Nanak's profound verses. Undivided Punjab's largest annual Vaisakhi (harvest season) fair would be held on the grounds of this gurdwara, bustling with people of all faiths. This scenario changed after the partition of the subcontinent in 1947 which led to the migration of communities.

Amardeep Singh: This Gurdwara Rori Sahib in Eminabad was made in the memory of Guru Nanak's stay in the outskirts of the village, before he and Bhai Mardana embarked on their journey.

In 1993, the Pakistan Government resurrected the Rori Sahib Gurdwara and opened it for religious services.

We visit Gurdwara Bhai Lalo which is believed to have been built on the site where Bhai Lalo resided. This gurdwara was built during the reign of Maharajah Ranjit Singh. Post partition, its premises were used by migrants till the year 1993.

In Eminabad, a local feudal lord, Malik Bhago organised a 'Brahm Bhoj', the holy feast for the upper class people. Guru Nanak was also invited but he refused to attend the congregation. Malik Bhago's ego was challenged. Infuriated, he asked Guru Nanak the reason for declining the invitation and preferring to be hosted by Bhai Lalo, the low caste carpenter.

Amardeep Singh: Guru Nanak replied. The food he eats at Bhai Lalo's place, tastes like milk because it's been earned through hard work. But the food that he would eat at Malik Bhago's place, would taste like blood because it's been earned by violating the rights of the poor people.

aaise jan virale jag a(n) dhar parakh khajaanai paiaa ||
jaat varan te bhe ateetaa mamataa lobh chukaiaa ||
naam rate teerath se niramal dhukh haumai mail chukaiaa ||
naanak tin ke charan pakhaalai jinaa gurmukh saachaa bhaiaa ||
(Raag Prabhati, Guru Nanak)

In this world, those people are rare who have understood the treasure of self-reflection.
Rising above caste and status, they get rid of worldly attachments and greed.
Immersed in the purity of self-reflection, which is like a pilgrimage, they get rid of pain
and filth of ego.

Nanak says, he sacrifices himself to the spiritually oriented who have realized the Truth.
(Raag Prabhati, Guru Nanak)

In this materialistic world, such people are exceptional who have the wisdom to face the light of knowledge by giving up the darkness of ignorance.

This incident brings out the significant precept in Guru Nanak's philosophy about social justice, human rights and integrity. He further expounded that a person is inferior or noble through deeds and not by simply being born in a family of a particular caste or religion.

hak paraiaa naanakaa us soar us gai ||
gur peer haamaa taa bhare jaa muradhaar na khai ||
(Raag Majh, Guru Nanak)

Nanak says, to take what rightly belongs to others equates to Muslim eating pork and Hindu eating beef.

Spiritual masters stand by those who do not eat the carcass of depriving others of their rights.

(Raag Majh, Guru Nanak)

In the strongest words, Guru Nanak says, depriving anyone of their due right is comparable to eating carcass. Emancipation can only be obtained by truthful living. Immoral acts cannot be justified or nullified by performing religious rituals.

Bhai Mardana expressed his wish to visit the shrine of Baba Sheikh Farid Shakarganj at Pakpattan.

From Eminabad Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana travelled through the cities of Makhdoom Pur Pahoran, Harappa, Burewala to reach Pakpattan.

Proceeding by foot and boat Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana halted at Tulamba, a town close to the banks of the River Ravi. This place is now known as Makhdoom Pur Pahoran.

We travel to Makhdoom Pur Pahoran to explore the memories of Guru Nanak's visit to this town.

Amardeep Singh: On the trade route from Lahore to Multan, Makhdoom Pur Pahoran was an important transit hub. Out here lived a person by the name of Sajjan who ran a guest house. Succumbing under materialistic temptations, he would rob and even kill his guests for their valuables.

We visit the erstwhile gurdwara, which is believed to have been built at the site where Sajjan ran his guest house. Presently, it is operating as the Govt. Higher Secondary School.

The name 'Sajjan' means, the noble one. Projecting himself as a pious man, Sajjan would dress like a Saint to hide his devious intentions. To attract commuters of all faiths, he had constructed a temple for Hindus and a mosque for the Muslims. To lure travellers he would provide free meals and accommodation. Guru Nanak, however, could see beyond Sajjan's external appearances.

Amardeep Singh: Guru Nanak would beautifully transform people through the power of his verses. To make Sajjan Thug realize his mistake, he asked Bhai Mardana to play the Rabab, and the two sang,

chaakareeaa cha(n)giaaieeaa avar siaanap kit ||
naanak naam samaal too(n) badhaa chhuTeh jit ||
(Raag Suhi, Guru Nanak)

What is the worth of performing service, doing good and having intellect without proper conduct?

Nanak says, contemplate to free the mind bound by negativities.
(Raag Suhi, Guru Nanak)

A noble person is the one who takes directions from the inner consciousness. Through the practice of introspection, the mind can be freed from the shackles of worldly desires.

Hearing these words, Sajjan Thug realized his misdeeds and began to conduct himself in accordance to the true meaning of his name, Sajjan, the noble one.

Amardeep Singh: This gurdwara was built in the memory of the transformation of Sajjan Thug.

Reflecting on the transformation of Sajjan, I wonder, what are misdeeds?

manmukh kee mat kooR viaapee ||
bin har simaran paap sa(n)taapee ||
(Raag Asa, Guru Nanak)

The wayward mind's intellect is engrossed in falsehood.
Without contemplation it is tormented by misdeeds.
(Raag Asa, Guru Nanak)

Influenced by ego and greed, internal transgressions of moral values disturb the spiritual, emotional & physical equilibrium of oneself and that of the others. These transgressions are misdeeds.

Amardeep Singh: In the outer periphery of this gurdwara, I am sitting in the classroom of a school that was built in the year 1917. Even though the founding community departed from these lands in the year 1947, it is so heartening to see that this school continues to run. The legacy of Guru Nanak to impart knowledge and wisdom continues to thrive.

kabeer meraa mujh meh kichh nahee jo kichh hai so teraa ||
teraa tujh kau saupate kiasa laagai meraa ||
(Bhagat Kabir)

Nothing is mine. All is Yours.
Having surrendered to You what is Yours, then what is mine?
(Bhagat Kabir)

What a profound saying by Bhagat Kabir. "Nothing belongs to me. All that is, is Yours. And I submit it to you." Look at the Will of the Almighty. The community that made this

infrastructure for imparting wisdom and knowledge, has submitted it for the benefit of mankind.

From Makhdoom Pur Pahoran, Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana proceeded to Harappa.

We now travel to this historic town, famous for the excavated sites of the Indus Valley Civilization, dating back to 2000 BC. We visit the erstwhile Nanaksar Gurdwara, which is now being used as the premises for the Government Higher Secondary School.

Amardeep Singh: From Tulamba, which is now known as Makhdoom Pur. Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana travelled northwards, along the River Ravi, either by boat or by foot and they reached the town of Harappa. This gurdwara was made in the memory of their arrival in Harappa.

ikOankaar sat gur prasaadh ||
Abchal Neev Dhari Gur Nanak, Nit Nit Charey Sawaye ||

One Omnipresent. The Truth. Realized through the Grace of Guidance.
The unwavering foundation has been laid by Guru Nanak. Daily it grows manifold.

This foundation stone was laid by Sriman Sant Sangat Singh Ji Maharaj of Kamalia village.

After the partition of 1947, which resulted in the migration of communities, this site remained abandoned for years and was later put to good use, to impart education.

As I look at the students writing exams, I wonder if today's competitive system, which instills fear, is beneficial for the long-term welfare of society?

agam agochar alakh apaaraa chi(n)taa karahu hamaaree ||
jal thal maheeral bharipur leenaa ghaT ghaT jot tum(h)aaree ||
(Raag Bilawal, Guru Nanak)

Inaccessible, Incomprehensible, Inexpressible and Infinite take care of my
apprehensions.

Within oceans, deserts and spaces resides the all-pervading, whose divinity is in every
soul.

(Raag Bilawal, Guru Nanak)

Irrespective of the situation, one should make sincere efforts and not be influenced by the fear of uncertainty of outcomes.

As per local tradition, from Harappa, Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana visited Hazrat Baba Haji Sher's Mausoleum in the outskirts of Burewala.

Amardeep Singh: We are on our way to Burewala, where we will be meeting Baba Rafeeq Dukhi. He has been kind enough to agree to show us the sites of Baba Haji Sher and the gurdwara at Burewala.

Azaan ke bagair ||
Aashiq namaaz padhde hai ||
Is ishq namaaz de vich sajnaa ||
Hath banne chadne nahi painde ||
Jado baitha saamne laal hove ||
Phir mathdhe banne nahi painde ||

Without a call for prayer,
devotees recite within.
In love for the beloved, they remain in prayers.
They need not adhere to ritualistic protocols
when the beloved is present within.
Then physical bowing is not needed.

Amardeep Singh: Salaam (Islamic greeting) Baba Ji. How are you?

Baba Rafeeq Dukhi: Are you fine?

Amardeep Singh: How about you?

Baba Rafeeq Dukhi: All good.

Aashiq namaaz padhde, Azaan ke bagair ||
Yeh raaz teri samajh me, shaayad naa aegaa ||

Devotees recite within, without a call for prayer.
This secret may not be understood by you.

Hazrat Baba Haji Sher was one of the earliest Muslim Saint in the subcontinent. He spent his life immersed in mysticism at this village where he lived till 730 AD.

Koi peer milaa mainun ||
Ali paak Muhammad da koi peer milaa mainun ||
Peeraan vichon peer mera iko hai vali ||
Panj naara panj tani iko naara Haidari ||

Grace me with a spiritual guide.
The pure Ali and Prophet Muhammad, grace me with a spiritual guide.
Amongst all spiritual guides, I only have one mentor.

Five slogans and five spiritualists belong to only One.

At times mystical experiences cause spontaneous ecstatic moments in which experiencers lose control over themselves.

so kaheeaai dhevaanaa aap na pachhaanee ||
(Raag Maajh, Guru Nanak)

Call them insane, who don't understand themselves.
(Raag Maajh, Guru Nanak)

'Deewana' (insane) in Indic spiritual traditions is akin to insanity, a total loss of control over oneself. For Guru Nanak, the state of insanity is when one fails to recognize the Truth of self. The moment of ecstasy is when one experiences personal transformation.

Baba Rafeeq Dukhi: Diwan Baba Haji Sher is the first Saint of 'Bar-e-Sagheer' (land of rivers). Guru Nanak visited this site to impart the message of universal fellowship. The message of Guru Nanak, which I admire, is to earn honestly and share generously. Our Saints also imparted this message. It is applicable in present times and will remain so in the future too.

Baba Rafeeq Dukhi walked us to the gurdwara, which was abandoned in the partition of 1947.

Amardeep Singh: This gurdwara in the close proximity to the shrine of Hazrat Baba Haji Sher in Burewala was made in the memory of Guru Nanak's visit.

Amardeep Singh: Salaam (Islamic greeting) Baba Ji.

Badar Dewan: Wasalaam (Islamic greeting).

Amardeep Singh: Hope you are well.

Badar Dewan: I am good. You tell about yourself and your family.

Amardeep Singh: All well Baba Ji. It is a pleasure to meet you. Since when are you staying in Burewala?

Badar Dewan: I am 85-86 years old. Our ancestors have been staying here. We have a memory of Baba Nanak at this place. When Nanak Sahib visited this place, he travelled the entire area. Before partition, 4-5 Sikh families lived here with us. Bhai Chettar Singh, Gurbaksh Singh, Datar Singh and Harnam Singh. They all used to stay here like our brothers. During the partition of 1947, they moved to Panipat & Karnal.

Amardeep Singh: What do you think? Why did Guru Nanak visit this place?

Badar Dewan: When he visited from Talwandi (Nankana Sahib) in district Sheikhpura. Where there is Nankana Sahib Darbar now in district Sheikhpura. When he arrived here, a question was posed to him. The Master has two ends. Which end should one catch and which end should one leave? Nanak Sahib says, hold truth and leave falsehood.

Trailing Guru Nanak's journey, we now travel from Burewala to Nanak Tibba village in the outskirts of Pakpattan.

Amardeep Singh: From Burewala, Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana travelled eastwards to Ajodhan, which is now known as Pakpattan. They stayed at this area, which was then a jungle and is now known as the village Nanak Tibba.

Sheikh Kamal, a disciple of Sheikh Ibrahim Farid Sani, was collecting wood in the forest when he heard Guru Nanak sing a hymn while Bhai Mardana played the Rabab.

too(n) aape aap varatadhaa aap banat banaiee ||
tudh bin dhoojaa ko nahee too rahiaa samaiee ||
(Raag Malar, Guru Nanak)

You yourself are all pervading and the Creator of the creation.
Without you, there is no other. You permeate everywhere.
(Raag Malar, Guru Nanak)

Understanding the essence of the verse which implied that the entire world is a manifestation of one Omnipresent, Sheikh Kamal rushed to his master, Sheikh Ibrahim, to inform him about his experience of hearing Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana.

Sheikh Ibrahim, also known as Sheikh Brahm, was the 12th successor of Baba Sheikh Farid's spiritual seat.

Sheikh Ibrahim warmly welcomed and hosted Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana, who thereafter stayed at Pakpattan for a few days.

We now visit the Mausoleum of Baba Farid within the city centre of Pakpattan.

Ganj-e-Shakkar Waliya Da Raja ||

Ganj-e-Shakkar (Baba Farid) is the King of Saints.

The city attracts a large number of devotees who visit to pay respect to the revered Chisti Saint.

Baba Mera Sabh Waliya Da Raja ||

My Baba (Farid) is the King of Saints.

Baba Sheikh Farid, the 13th century Sufi Saint of the Chisti order, is a towering figure of reverence. The ineffable sweetness of his words, kindness of his actions, warmth of unbiased service and generosity of an ocean, endowed him with the title of Ganj-e-Shakkar, meaning a treasure of sweetness.

At Baba Farid's shrine, we were received by Diwan Shahbuddin Bakhtiyar Chisty.

Diwan Shahbuddin Bakhtiyar Chisty: Bismillah-e-Rehman-e-Raheem (Islamic greeting). My name is Diwan Shahbuddin Bakhtiyar Chisty. I am from the progeny of Hazrat Baba Farid-ud-Din Masood Ganj-e-Shakkar. I am the 27th generation of the Sufi Saint. The era of Hazrat Baba Farid-ud-din, it starts from 1173 to 1266. The Sufi philosophy of the Saint is all about the Oneness of creation.

Amardeep Singh: And that exactly is the philosophy of Guru Nanak also because when he writes in his verse in Japji Sahib, he starts it with 'Ik Ongkar' (Guru Nanak's doctrine). The numeral 1 signifies Oneness. And Baba Farid's verses are also enshrined in the 'Guru Granth Sahib' (Sikh scripture), and as I am standing on his Mausoleum, I can read in Urdu. It is written,

fareedhaa khaalak khalak meh khalak vasai rab maeh ||
ma(n)dhaa kis no aakheeaai jaa(n) tis bin koiee naeh ||
(Sheikh Farid)

Farid says, Creator is within creation, and the creation resides within the Creator. Who can be called negative when nothing is outside of the Creator's manifestation.
(Sheikh Farid)

Amardeep Singh: It is exactly the same.

Tera Pakpattan Subhan Allah ||
Baba Mera Sabh Waliya Da Raja ||

Your abode at Pakpattan is praiseworthy. The one who sees is blessed.
My Baba (Farid) is the King of Saints.

Diwan Shahbuddin Bakhtiyar Chisty: That is the shrine of Hazrat Baba Farid-ud-Din Masood Ganj-e-Shakkar.

Baba Mera Sabh Waliya Da Raja ||

My Baba (Farid) is the King of Saints.

Diwan Shahbuddin Bakhtiyar Chisty: That is the shrine of Hazrat Baba Farid-ud-Din and that is the first 'Shahzada Nasheen' (son), Hazrat Badar-ud-Deen Sulaiman. That was his son.

fareedhaa sakar kha(n)dd nivaat guR maakhio maa(n)jhaa dhudh ||
sabhe vasatoo miTheeaa(n) rab na pujaan tudh ||
fareedhaa roTee meree kaaTh kee laavan meree bhukh ||
jinaa khaadhee choparee ghane sahanige dhukh ||
(Sheikh Farid)

Farid says, grounded sugar, refined sugar, rock sugar, jaggery, honey and buffalo's milk.

All are sweet but yet not equivalent to the sweetness of divinity.

Farid says, though my bread is coarse, it satiates my hunger.

Those who are engrossed in materialism, suffer in internal pain.

(Sheikh Farid)

True to his demeanour, Baba Sheikh Farid advises, if you have the power, stay humble. Share, even if you are a pauper. Do not utter even a word of harshness as the Divine resides in all.

Food is the intangible manifestation of love. The practice and institution of free food, 'Langar' (free community kitchen), was the fundamental constitutional principle of Baba Farid's way of life, which became the hallmark of the culture of Punjab. Even today in Pakpattan, at every nook and corner, one can witness the tradition of 'Langar' (free community kitchen) institutionalized by him.

Amardeep Singh: The tradition of 'Langar' (free community kitchen), the concept of 'Wand Chakna', to share amongst communities, is common amongst the saints of spiritual disposition. At Pakpattan, at Baba Farid's 'Darbar' (shrine), I am humbled to be having 'Langar' (free community kitchen) amongst everyone here.

Baba Farid's other important contribution is to the Punjabi literature. He used vernacular Punjabi as a language for his spiritual poetry, so the message could reach the masses.

This shrine resonates with renditions of Qawwals (Sufi Singers), who for generations have been transmitting the message of Sufi Masters to the masses through oral traditions.

Kaagaa sab tan khaaeeyo, moraa chun chun khaeeyo maas ||
Par do nainaa mat khaaeeyo, inhe piyaa milan ki aas ||

O crow, you may eat my entire body by pecking my flesh,

but please leave the two eyes as they long to see the Divine.

Mehboob Fareed Khan: We belong to the Jalandhar House of musicians. For over 700 years, our ancestors have been singing 'Qawwali' (Sufi rendition). When Pakistan was created, our elders came to Pakistan from India. As they had a soulful connection with Baba Farid. Our grandfather came here. At the Mausoleum of Baba Farid, there is no discrimination amongst people. The message of Oneness is for everyone. Seven hundred years have passed in imparting the message of humanity. People are still receiving the same guidance at this Mausoleum.

Farida turiaa turiaa jaa ||
Man vich val na paa ||

Farid says, keep moving towards unity.
Farid says, do not keep any doubt in your heart.

Mehboob Fareed Khan: Baba Farid and Baba Guru Nanak had a soulful connection. Baba Guru Nanak received this fragrance of love, peace and fellowship from Baba Farid. They both said humanity is the highest religion. Both promoted the same. So deep was Baba Farid-ud-Din 'Sarkar' (Master) and Baba Guru Nanak's mutual love that Baba Farid's verses were included in the 'Guru Granth Sahib' (Sikh scripture). I present to you one of the verses.

fareedhaa khaak na ni(n)dheeaai khaakoo jedd na koi ||
jeevadhiaa pairaa talai muiaa upar hoi ||
(Sheikh Farid)

Farid says, do not slander dust. Nothing is as great as the humble dust.
When we are alive, it remains under our feet. When we are dead, it covers our head.
(Sheikh Farid)

Farida turiaa turiaa jaa ||
fareedhaa kaale maidde kapaRe kaalaa maddaa ves ||
gunahee bhariaa mai firaa lok kahai dharaves ||
Farida turiaa turiaa jaa ||
(Sheikh Farid)

Farid says, keep moving towards unity.
Farid says, my clothes are filthy and my conduct is filthy.
Full of sins, I wander around. Yet people call me pious.
Farid says, keep moving towards unity.
(Sheikh Farid)

Amardeep Singh: For over 200 years, Baba Farid's verses were transmitted through an oral tradition. When Guru Nanak was staying in Pakpattan, he collated his verses, which later on were enshrined in the 'Guru Granth Sahib' (Sikh scripture). The community later built this gurdwara at the Nanak Tibba village in Pakpattan, in the memory of Guru Nanak's visit.

In departing from Pakpattan, what have I gathered from the lives Baba Farid and Guru Nanak?

tere dharasan kau ketee bilalai ||
viralaa ko cheenas gur sabadh milai ||
(Raag Basant, Guru Nanak)

To experience a glimpse of the Omnipresent many people lament.
Rare are the ones who realize, it is through wisdom the all-pervading can be
experienced.
(Raag Basant, Guru Nanak)

Many aspire to achieve the realization of Oneness but only a rare few walk the path.

Discussion Pointers

ALLEGORY: A Tapestry of Guru Nanak's Travels Episode 3: Ruhani Rawangi (Spiritual Departure)

The episode serves as a valuable resource for delving into the historical and philosophical dimensions of Guru Nanak's journey through Punjab. It highlights his meaningful interactions with various spiritual traditions, particularly the Sufi order exemplified by Baba Farid's successors. These discussion points illuminate the interfaith dialogue and spiritual exchange that defined Guru Nanak's pursuit. Furthermore, they reveal the profound philosophical insights that transcend religious boundaries. Through this journey, Guru Nanak emerges as a spiritual teacher, social reformer, and spearhead of preserving and synthesizing wisdom across diverse traditions. His perspectives consistently emphasize the universal values of unity, honesty, generosity, and devotion, advocating for depth over the mere practice of ritualism.

Historical Discussion Pointers:

1. What was the historical significance of Guru Nanak's departure from Sultanpur Lodhi in 1504 AD?

The episode states that in 1504 AD, at the age of 35 years, Guru Nanak embarked on a journey to awaken the soul of society from the slumber of ignorance. Before departing, he visited his sister Bebe Nanaki, requesting her to look after his family while he was away. This journey marks the beginning of his spiritual odyssey to observe, assimilate, and disseminate the concept of 'Tawheed' or Oneness. How might this represent a pivotal moment that motivated Guru Nanak to embark on a spiritual quest?

2. What insights does the Malik Bhago incident provide about social dynamics in 16th-century Punjab?

The episode describes a significant incident in Eminabad where a local feudal lord, Malik Bhago, organised a 'Brahm Bhoj', a holy feast for the upper-class people. Guru Nanak was also invited, but he refused to attend the congregation. When questioned about his preference for staying with the low caste carpenter Bhai Lalo, Guru Nanak replied that he preferred simple food earned through hard work, like that provided by Bhai Lalo, which tastes as sweet as milk, over a lavish feast obtained by violating the rights of the underprivileged, such as the food served by Malik Bhago, which tastes like blood. How does this incident illuminate the social stratification, economic exploitation, and religious hypocrisy prevalent during Guru Nanak's time?

3. What historical significance does the transformation of Sajjan Thug hold in understanding Guru Nanak's approach to social reform?

In Makhdoom Pur Pahoran (Tulamba), Guru Nanak encountered Sajjan, who ran a guest house but would rob and even kill his guests for their valuables. Despite projecting himself as pious and having constructed both a temple and a mosque to attract travelers, Sajjan's true nature was recognized by Guru Nanak, who transformed him through the power of his verses. How does this historical account demonstrate Guru Nanak's method of inspiring a positive change through spiritual awakening rather than reprimanding?

4. How did Guru Nanak's interaction with the Sufi tradition at Pakpattan reflect interfaith dialogues in medieval India?

The episode describes Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana's visit to Pakpattan, where they met Sheikh Kamal and Sheikh Ibrahim (the 12th successor of Baba Sheikh Farid). Sheikh Ibrahim warmly welcomed and hosted Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana, who thereafter stayed at Pakpattan for a few days. This interaction with the Chisti Sufi order demonstrates the open communication between different spiritual traditions. How did these interfaith interactions contribute to Guru Nanak's understanding and articulation of universal principles?

5. What role did Guru Nanak play in preserving and disseminating Baba Farid's philosophical views?

Mehboob Fareed Khan, a descendant of traditional Qawwali musicians, notes that Baba Farid and Baba Guru Nanak had a soulful connection and so deep was Baba Farid's mutual love that Baba Farid's verses were included in the 'Guru Granth Sahib' (Sikh scripture). The episode further states that for over 200 years, Baba Farid's verses were transmitted through an oral tradition. When Guru Nanak was staying in Pakpattan, he collated his verses, which later on were enshrined in the 'Guru Granth Sahib'. How significant was Guru Nanak's role in preserving these spiritual insights, and what does this tell us about his approach to religious inclusivity?

6. How did the historical practice of Langar influence Guru Nanak's community-building approach?

The episode describes the practice of Langar (free community kitchen) as the intangible manifestation of love and the fundamental constitutional principle of Baba Farid's way of life, which became the hallmark of the culture of Punjab. It notes that even today, at every nook and corner, one can witness the tradition of 'Langar' institutionalized by him. How did this pre-existing tradition influence Guru Nanak's approach to building inclusive spiritual communities, and how did it come to be associated so strongly with Sikh identity in later periods?

Philosophical Discussion Pointers:

1. How does Guru Nanak's response to Malik Bhago reflect his philosophy on honest work versus exploitation?

Guru Nanak's statement that food earned through hard work tastes like milk, while food earned through exploitation tastes like blood encapsulates a profound philosophical stance. This is reinforced by the verse: Nanak says, to take what rightly belongs to others equates to Muslim eating pork and Hindu eating beef. Spiritual masters stand by those who do not eat the carcass of depriving others of their rights. How does this powerful metaphor express Guru Nanak's ethical philosophy regarding honest labor, exploitation, and the moral status of ill-gotten wealth?

2. What does Guru Nanak's verse to Sajjan Thug reveal about his understanding of true service and introspection?

When confronting Sajjan Thug, Guru Nanak sang: What is the worth of performing service, doing good and having intellect without proper conduct? Nanak says, contemplate to free the mind bound by negativities. The episode explains that a noble person is one who takes direction from the inner consciousness. Through the practice of introspection, the mind can be freed from the shackles of worldly desires. How does this philosophical position challenge superficial religiosity and emphasize authentic inner transformation?

3. How does the concept of "Deewana" (insane) in Guru Nanak's philosophy provide insights into spiritual consciousness?

The episode mentions that at times mystical experiences cause spontaneous ecstatic moments in which experiencers lose control over themselves and quotes Guru Nanak: Call them insane, who don't understand themselves. It further explains that 'Deewana' (insane) in Indic spiritual traditions is akin to insanity, a total loss of control over oneself. For Guru Nanak, the state of insanity is when one fails to recognize the Truth of self. The moment of ecstasy is when one experiences personal transformation. How does this reconceptualization of "insanity" challenge conventional understanding of spiritual awareness?

4. How do the messages of Baba Farid and Guru Nanak converge on the concept of universal fellowship and Oneness?

Diwan Shahbuddin Bakhtiyar Chisty, a 27th generation descendant of Baba Farid, explains that the Sufi philosophy of the Saint is all about the Oneness of creation. The narrator responds by noting that exactly is the philosophy of Guru Nanak also because when he writes in his verse in Japji Sahib, he starts it with 'Ik Ongkar' (Guru Nanak's doctrine). The numeral 1 signifies Oneness. How does this shared emphasis on Oneness transcend religious boundaries and provide a foundation for universal fellowship?

5. What philosophical significance does the practice of "Wand Chakna" (sharing) hold in both Sufi and Sikh traditions?

The episode quotes Baba Rafeeq Dukhi saying that the message of Guru Nanak, which he admires, is to earn honestly and share generously. Later, the narrator notes that the tradition of 'Langar' (free community kitchen), the concept of 'Wand Chakna', to share amongst communities, is common amongst the saints of spiritual disposition. How does this shared ethical principle of generous sharing reflect deeper philosophical understandings about human interconnectedness and the proper relationship with material wealth?

6. How does Baba Farid's verse about dust reflect the philosophical principle of humility shared by both traditions?

The episode includes Baba Farid's verse, which highlights not to slander dust, as nothing is as great as the humble dust. When we are alive, it remains under our feet; when we are dead, it covers our head. This powerful metaphor uses the common element of dust to impart profound lessons about humility and the human condition. How does this philosophical perspective on humility align with Guru Nanak's philosophy, and what does it reveal about the shared ethical values between these spiritual traditions?

7. What insights does the episode provide about Guru Nanak's approach to religious orthodoxy and ritualism?

Throughout his journey, Guru Nanak encounters and challenges various forms of ritualistic practice, from Malik Bhago's 'holy feast' to Sajjan's superficial piety. The episode also quotes verses emphasizing that immoral acts cannot be justified or nullified by performing religious rituals. Similarly, it includes a Sufi exposition that without a call for prayer, devotees recite within. In love for the beloved, they remain in prayers. They need not adhere to ritualistic protocols when the beloved is present within. How do these perspectives reflect a shared critique of empty ritualism in favor of authentic spiritual connection?

8. How does the episode articulate the relationship between spiritual wisdom and the realization of Oneness?

The episode concludes with Guru Nanak's verse: To experience a glimpse of the Omnipresent, many people lament. Rare are the ones who realize that it is through wisdom that the all-pervading can be experienced. It then observes: Many aspire to achieve the realization of Oneness, but only a rare few walk the path. What does this suggest about the philosophical relationship between intellectual understanding, spiritual practice, and the ultimate realization of Oneness that lies at the heart of both Guru Nanak's and Baba Farid's philosophy?