



## Tracing the Historical and Cultural Connection between Baba Farid and Faridkot District

**Ms. Palwinder Kaur, Research Scholar, <sup>1</sup>, Dr. Harpinder Kaur, <sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Department of Arts and Social Sciences Faculty of Sciences Humanities and Languages Guru Kashi University, Talwandi Sabo, Bathinda

Email- [palwinderchahal833@gmail.com](mailto:palwinderchahal833@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> **Co-Author-** Department of Arts and Social Sciences Faculty of Sciences Humanities and Languages Guru Kashi University, Talwandi Sabo, Bathinda

Email- [harpindersidhu44@gmail.com](mailto:harpindersidhu44@gmail.com)

Doi: <https://doi.org/10.55248/gengpi.07.0826.2528>

### ABSTRACT :

This essay explores the historical, cultural and spiritual connections of Faridkot to Baba Farid-ud-din Ganj-i-Shakar (1173-1266), as well as the origins of the name of this district. Baba Farid was an early Punjabi poet, and a famous saint of the Chishti Order, who had a profound impact on the literary, religious and cultural heritage of the Punjab region. In his teachings he spoke of dedication, modesty and even brotherhood across the globe, which can still be heard today in the Guru Granth Sahib and continue to inspire humans of all faiths. It explores oral traditions, historical accounts and local community testimonies, as well as local and regional folklore, about Baba Farid's relationship with Faridkot. The saint is said to have arrived and blessed the people of this area, and named it "Faridkot". The study also examines the role of cultural practices, shrines and memorial locations in promoting this spiritual and historical connection. It argues that the relationship between Baba Farid and Faridkot is a significant example of the shared spiritual heritage of Punjab, highlighting how history and folklore intertwine to promote interfaith understanding, cultural unity and regional identity.

**Keywords:** Interfaith Harmony, Baba Farid, Chishti Order, Shared Spiritual Heritage, regional folklore.

### Introduction

The district of Faridkot in Malwa area in Punjab, India, is named after, and rich in the culture of Hazrat Baba Farid-ud-din Ganj-e-Shakar, a renowned Sufi saint of thirteenth century. The interaction between Baba Farid and Faridkot is not just a local study of history, but a study of the confluence of interfaith worship, folktales, and medieval Sufism which resulted in a modern socio-cultural landscape.

This relationship has its origins in a mythology from the thirteenth century. It is said that local ruler Bhatti Rajput, Raja Mokalsi, constructed the city, previously called Mokahar. It is believed that Baba Farid and during his trends is said to have been taken prisoner and made to work as a slave during the building of the royal fort, which is today called the Qila Mubarak. Legend has it that the Raja witnessed a miracle, in which Baba Farid's mud basket floated without any help in the air. The king, in great reverence, knelt before the saint, requested his forgiveness and renamed his capital Faridkot.

This historical narrative is guarded and respected at Gurdhwara Sri Tilla Baba Farid in the modern-day Faridkot, where according to local tradition, it is believed that the Sufi had meditated for forty days. A study of this connection uncovers much more inclusive religious and cultural processes in South Asia. Poems of Baba Farid further strengthen the ongoing pluralistic tradition of the region: inclusive, humanistic, and crossing rigid communal boundaries, they eventually found their way into the Sikh sacred text, the Guru Granth Sahib.

### Life and Teachings of Baba Farid

Baba Farid also called Sheikh Fariduddin Masud Ganjshakar (1173-1266 CE) has a key role in the spiritual, intellectual and cultural history of the Indian subcontinent. He grew up in a highly pious environment, guided by his pious mother, Bibi Maryam, who was born in Kothewal, near Multan, Pakistan. She had a deep influence on his spiritual trajectory from early in his life. She told him that acts of worship were like sweets and he was encouraged to develop a habit of prayer and devotion. This symbolic practice ultimately came to make him known as "Ganjshakar" or the "Treasure of Sugar". Farid studied Islam in Multan, and later became a renowned student of Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki in Delhi and was initiated into the Chishti Order. Years of spiritual discipline, fasting, meditation and humanitarianism made him one of the most important Sufi saints in South Asia. He came up

to establish his spiritual base in Pakpattan, which became a pivotal place of devotion and pilgrimage. Baba Farid's teachings are simple, humble, compassion and a realization of the transience of life. He emphasized that true spirituality can only be realized by unselfish service to others, remembrance of God, and inner purity, not just outward practices. His poetry is always a reminder to people that death is a certainty, that moral actions are important, and that pride, monetary greed, attachments should be controlled. Baba Farid advocated love, humility, and patience as essential elements to enlightenment. To propagate a universal message of equality and human brotherhood, he urged people to treat all human beings kindly, irrespective of their caste, religion or socio-economic conditions. His early Punjabi poetry is considered one of the earliest and insightful expressions of popular Punjabi spirituality, and his wisdom resonated with religious groups. The people of all religions have been impressed by the message, and some of his hymns were adopted later, into the Guru Granth Sahib. His simple way of living and messages of extreme humanism inspired Baba Farid a long chain of spiritual seekers and are continuing to raise the level of cultural consciousness in Punjab.

---

### **Historical Background of Faridkot District**

Faridkot District holds an important place in the historical and cultural scenario of Malwa region of Punjab. The district's name is given in honor of the famous Sufi saint who has touched the lives of people all over South Asia, Baba Farid. Local legend has it that this area, which was formerly called Mokhar or Mokhalpur, was established by Raja Mokalsi of Bhatti Rajput. It is believed Baba Farid once visited this city during his travels. Raja Mokalsi had seen a miracle related to the saint and decided to call the town "Faridkot" (Fort of Farid) by merging the name of the saint, Farid, with the word "kot" (fort or fortified settlement). Although it is rooted in oral tradition, this story is still significant to the district's culture and history.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Sidhu-Brar Jat monarchs of the Brar dynasty established political power in the area, and Faridkot became a significant princely state. The princely state gained importance during the rule of kings like Raj Hamir Singh and later the Maharaja Balbir Singh who contributed to the administration and architectural development of the state. During the British paramountcy period Faridkot maintained treaty relations with the British government, but had internal autonomy. After the Independence of India in 1947, the princely kingdom was integrated into Indian Union and in 1948 it came under the Patiala and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU). Faridkot was established as district after reorganization of Punjab and later it was the parent district of the districts of Muktsar and Moga. Faridkot District has a rich spiritual legacy with Baba Farid which remains strong and visible in its educational institutions, cultural identity, and customs, in addition to its political and administrative history.

### ***Association between Baba Farid and Faridkot***

The relation between Baba Farid and Faridkot plays an important role in the foundation of the historical and cultural identity of the district. According to local history, Raja Mokalsi ruled the area, which was originally called Mokhar. It is said that Baba Farid visited this community during his travels across Punjab, where he meditated and introspected. Folklore has it that the king assigned him manual labour, thinking he couldn't be great. As Baba Farid humbly obeyed anoral traditions narrate a miraculous event, the dirt basket that he was carrying remained suspended over his head, without any physical support. This extraordinary event convinced Raja Mokalsi of Baba Farid's holiness and he requested his blessings and named the village "Faridkot", in his honor. Despite being mostly based on oral tradition rather than written records, this story has been passed down through the centuries and is still ingrained in the local historical awareness.

In addition to this story, the religious institutions, place names and cultural practices of the district demonstrate the relationship of Baba Farid with Faridkot. His supposed visit is marked at holy places such as Tilla Baba Farid and Gurdwara Godari Sahib where followers of all religions visit. In addition, the region also hosts an annual festival celebrating the birthday of Baba Farid Agman, including Baba Farid Agman Purb, a religious gathering, poetry recitations, and cultural events. This bond is further reinforced by the educational institution Baba Farid University of Health Sciences keeping his name alive. Baba Farid's reverence among Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus, as well as his inclusion in the Guru Granth Sahib, have further highlighted his role in embodying the shared spiritual heritage of Punjab. So, the relation between Baba Farid and Faridkot is still strong, irrespective of the historical view or the linguistic identity or the current cultural practice.

### ***Religious and Cultural Heritage in Faridkot***

The distinctive religious and cultural heritage of Faridkot can be attributed to the syncretic religious and cultural heritage of Punjab as well as the spiritual legacy of Baba Farid. Apart from the memory and the folklore, the region's association with Baba Farid is preserved by a series of sacred sites, commemorative events, schools and communal traditions which continue to shape the face of the region. All of these elements illustrate the ways in which the spiritual traditions can become woven into the social and cultural fabric of a community and thus a living legacy of the past.

The legendary story of Baba Farid's visit to the area is closely linked with two of the most important religious sites of Faridkot, namely Tilla Baba Farid and Gurdwara Godari Sahib. The saint was believed to have meditated and thought spiritually at Tilla Baba Farid. The Holy Site is a place of intimate encounters with the Divine, a place of monastic discipline, and a place of freedom from worldly cares for those who follow. Many of Baba Farid's

lyrics are present in the Guru Granth Sahib and Gurdwara Godari Sahib was established in his honor and it represents his reverence in Sikhism. These are places which are visited by people from all faiths including Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus and others, reflecting the long tradition of interfaith veneration culture within the district and the inclusive nature of Baba Farid's legacy. The popularity of these and their continued upkeep demonstrates Faridkot's efforts at spiritual memory through material spaces that combine tradition with contemporary religious practice.

The sites are not only religious in the sense of personal piety, but are of religious significance. They are places for the community to remember together and affirm shared values of service, selflessness and caring. Those who pilgrimage these sites make their legacy an active moral practice through prayer, meditation and acts of charity. By educating newer generations to Baba Farid's life and teachings, these hallowed places also serve educational functions. In this sense, Faridkot's religious sites are dynamic establishments that uphold moral principles and foster ties among the community.

Faridkot is enriched with its cultural heritage by festivals and celebrations of Baba Farid every year. The most significant of them is Baba Farid Agman Purb marking the saint's usual visit to the area. This festival is marked by religious ceremonies, recitations of his poetry, kirtan, qawwali, academic discourses, cultural programs and community service activities such as langar. Baba Farid's teachings are universal, as it brings people together from various socio-economic and religious backgrounds. By combining literature and cultural expression with religious practice, the festival brings together the concepts of spirituality, art and public life in the context of local tradition. Moreover, it provides an important forum for the study of the message of Baba Farid's relevance to contemporary society by academics and cultural professionals.

Institutions, public recognition, which takes place, emphasize Faridkot's cultural identity. Baba Farid University of Health Sciences is the most prominent instance of the combination of spiritual symbolism with current education and public service. The district acknowledges that the saint's virtues of kindness, service, and the welfare of man are still pertinent today and hence named one of its educational institutions after him. He has also been remembered in public sculptures, memorials, literary events and scholarly conferences in the field of Punjabi literature and spirituality.

Official institutions are not the sole way in which Faridkot's legacy is preserved, as folk customs, oral history, and common cultural practices also play a role. The tales of Baba Farid's miracles and his presence form the district's collective memory and are passed down from generation to generation. His wisdom and moral teachings continue to be celebrated in local songs, sayings and literature. The architectural monuments, traditional architecture and the culture of the people of the district also point to the idea that the district has a composite culture where religion and culture are interwoven.

Faridkot is deeply rooted in tradition, and one of its most significant features is its spirit of interfaith harmony and communal coexistence. Baba Farid's writings transcend all religious boundaries and emphasize moral discipline, respect for all humanity and love for the world. The commitment to social harmony and understanding found in his legacy is reflected in the participation of Muslims, Sikhs, and the Hindu community as well as others in remembrance ceremonies and visits to sites of related interest. Faridkot is a case in point of how people can communicate, tolerate and live together with peace and harmony in a time when such communalism is a common problem.

Therefore, monuments and festivals are not the only aspects of Faridkot's religious and cultural legacy. History, legend, spirituality, education and communal life are all engaged in a broad and dynamic process to perpetuate the legacy of Baba Farid. Today the region maintains and promotes the spiritual and humanistic legacy associated with him in the places of his worship, the annual events, educational institutions, folk traditions, and through interfaith relations. Given this history, Faridkot today is more than just a name of a saint; it's a living cultural landscape, reflecting the universal brotherhood, humility and compassion that is the core of Baba Farid's teachings.

---

### Contemporary Relevance and Legacy

The importance and significance of Baba Farid's life have now transcended the period of his life and continues to shape the religious, cultural, educational, and moral life of Punjab, especially the Faridkot District. Although Baba Farid lived in the thirteenth Century, his principles of humility, patience, compassion, abstinence from worldly desires, remembrance of God and devotion to humanity are still very relevant in the twenty-first Century. He wrote poems on human problems such as suffering, death, good behavior, and the quest for inner peace. Baba Farid's teaching offers a moral compass in the midst of the complex social shifts, materialism, and emerging interpersonal challenges of this day and age. His emphasis on the need for all people to be loved and given dignity in spite of their caste, religion, and socioeconomic status is relevant today in the areas of pluralism, social justice and peace in the communities.

Baba Farid's influence continues to be felt in the literary and theological heritage of South Asian traditions. As one of the first poets to write in Punjabi, he helped develop the language to a powerful medium for the expression of ideas of the mind and the spirit. His couplets are easily understood by both scholars and ordinary people, as they are both ethical and poetic. He has a special place as a Muslim Sufi saint because his teachings are preserved in Sikh scripture as his hymns will be read daily in the Sikh religious practice, it is guaranteed. This interreligious recognition reflects the shared cultural heritage of Punjab and also illustrates the universal nature of his teachings. The writings have great linguistic value, a high level of mysticism, and a role in devotional traditions in the region and are still studied by scholars of literature, religion, and history.

Baba Farid's impact on Faridkot's public institutions, memorial ceremonies and sense of community remain apparent. The district is itself a reminder of the traditional association of the district with the saint. Baba Farid University of Health Sciences is one of the best Universities of Punjab that are named his honor due to his contribution towards the above. Annual events like Baba Farid Agman Purb enable us to celebrate religious observance, engage in intellectual debate, listen to music, and communicate interfaith. These meetings enabled people to know they had a common ancestry, and helped to reinforce his teachings. These sites around his supposed presence continue to attract pilgrims and tourists, thereby fostering cultural tourism and maintaining local history. Thus, Faridkot is playing an active role in the preservation and revival of Baba Farid's memory through these cultural, religious and educational forms.

Baba Farid's legacy extends beyond the realm of his personal teachings and experiences, and continues to have a broader social impact, inspiring moral reflection and human unity. Through his poetry people are encouraged to embrace the fleeting nature of life and learn to possess qualities such as honesty, self-control, forgiveness and compassion. Such concepts continue to be applicable to current problems such as lack of unity or intolerance in the society and social injustice. By emphasizing the equality of all souls, he offers an example of inclusive spirituality that transcends all sectarian divides, and that respects all individuals. His impact on literature, scripture, educational institutions, and public memory highlights that his legacy extends beyond just the past, demonstrating his enduring influence on cultural identity and moral consciousness. The connection between Baba Farid and Faridkot is not just historical, but ongoing too, enabling the district to embody and carry on Baba Farid's global message to present and future generations.

---

## Conclusion

To put it simply, the tie between Baba Farid and the Faridkot District represents a unique intersection of mythology, spirituality, hereditary and regional culture. While much of the evidence of Baba Farid's actual visit to the region is relies on oral history, these stories have played a crucial role in creating a communal memory and historical awareness of the district. In fact, settlement was renamed from Mokahar to Faridkot and holy sites relating to the saint have remained intact, as well as ongoing festivals of remembrance that are celebrated annually.

It also suggests that Baba Farid's impact was beyond the boundaries of the region or the local name. His teachings of humility, compassion, patience, and devotion to God have had a long-lasting influence on Punjab's literary and spiritual traditions. He was the one of the first Punjabi Sufi poets and was prominent in the Chishti Order. His teachings manifest universal appeal and although his verses are a part of the Guru Granth Sahib, Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus revere him for his message of peace and understanding.

The Faridkot District preserves and celebrates this legacy through religious pilgrages, schools including that of Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, and artistic celebrations of his legacy, namely the cultural festival. These organizations and methods guarantee that Baba Farid's teachings are still applicable in today's world and continue to uphold moral principles, social justice, and intercommunal harmony. Consequently, the relationship between Baba Farid and Faridkot can be seen as a continuing cultural tradition that connects the reality of today and that of yesterday, and a strong symbol of the common spiritual heritage of Punjab.

---

## REFERENCES

- K. A. Nizami (1994). *The Life and Times of Shaikh Farid-ud-Din Ganj-i-Shakar*. New Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli
- Parihaar, Subash. *History of Faridkot*. Faridkot: Local Publication, various editions.
- Sra, Karnal Balvir Singh. *Faridkot da Itihas* [History of Faridkot]. Punjab: Local Publication, various editions.
- Singh, Fauja. *History of Punjab*. Patiala: Punjabi University, 1972.
- S. A. A. Rizvi (1978). *A History of Sufism in India, Vol. I*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal.
- Rattan Singh Jaggi (1984). *Baba Farid: Personality and Poetry*. Patiala: Punjabi University Press.
- Guru Granth Sahib. Amritsar: Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (various editions).
- Khushwant Singh (2004). *A History of the Sikhs, Volume I: 1469–1839*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- J. S. Grewal (1998). *The Sikhs of the Punjab*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Harbans Singh (Ed.). (1992). *The Encyclopedia of Sikhism* (Vols. 1–4). Patiala: Punjabi University.

- 
- Tara Chand (1963). *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*. Allahabad: The Indian Press.
  - Journal of Punjab Studies. Selected articles on Punjabi Sufism and interfaith traditions.
  - Mohammad Habib & Khaliq Ahmad Nizami (1970). *A Comprehensive History of India, Vol. V: The Delhi Sultanate*. New Delhi: People's Publishing House.
  - Ganda Singh (1976). *Punjab Past and Present: Essays in Honour of Dr. Ganda Singh*. Patiala: Punjabi University Press.
  - Ishwar Dayal Gaur (2009). *Punjab Through the Ages*. Chandigarh: Publication Bureau, Panjab University.