



## **ASAMESE ZIKIR AND ZARI**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The most outstanding and sustaining contribution of the Assamese Muslims to the favored literature of Assam are the Zikirs and Zaris. A Zikirs may be a religious or philosophical poem centering on some extent of religion or of philosophy. In several of the songs of this variety a story centering surround the lifetime of Azan Pir or Shah Miran (Milan) to whom these sons are sometimes ascribed is told. A Zari is elegiac in character and content and will be called a kind of marshiya and typically relates itself to the tragic tale of Karbala. A number of the Assamese Zaris could also be called independent ballads giving the stories of Haider Ghazi. These compositions particularly the Zikirs within the ir material resemble the Bargits or devotional songs of Sankardeva and Madhavadeva But unlike the Bargits in the literary Brajabali idiom .they are couched in colloquial homely Assamese .and in their form and expression they're in line with Deh - Vicharar Git, a spread of philosophical songs of the Assamese village minstrels and a few other folksongs. The chief objective of the Zikirs appears to be the reorganization of the society of Assamese Muslims, by regenerating their faith and love for Islam in such how that there'll be no discord in their age old harmonious relation with Hind society, during which the good movement of social reform initiated by Sankardeva seems to possess attained its logical culmination already.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Being bereft of the fertilizing effect of Muslim lifetime of India for hundreds of years by wars and conflicted the Islamic faith arid culture in Assam grew somewhat stale and thus within the seventh century a couple of Muslim Pirs and Alims devoted themselves to its resuscitation. They appear to possess tried to inaugurate a kind of renaissance through songs and lyrics just like the Zikirs. it had been probably this underlying motivation that a number of the Zikirs, while singing the glory of Allan and Islam during a high lyrical vein often decreased partially to the extent of social satire But, it's interesting to notice that they need been ready to score success in ensuring the harmonious relations between Islam and Hinduism particularly with the Vaishnavism preached by Sankaradeva. actually they appear to possess been impressed by some aspects of the Bhakti doctrines preached by this saint poet one among the Zikirs even goes thus far on express admiration for this sect of Hinduism as follows.

Sankardeur jiyari madhavdeur bowari  
Rahpur nagarat ghar  
Rahpur nagarar rasak namai ani  
Diya sakaloke bati.

(She is that the daughter of Sankaradeva and daughter -in- law of Madhavadeva and she or he dwells within the city of Rahpur or land of rasa that's the sentiment of affection and devotion Bring down the rasa from the town of Rahpur and distribute it among us all). This song features a pertaining to the esoteric Ratikhowa school of Vaishnavas, who hold their services in the dark similarly referencing to the relations of the Hindus and Muslims the Zikirs declare:

Hindu ki Musalman ek Allar forman  
gorasthane kabar sari sari  
hinduk puriba mominak gariba ..

(Hindus and Muslims are bounded by a similar set of the divine rules of Allah ... The act of Cremating a Hindu and therefore the entombing of a Mumin only signifies one end - death for all).

Anda ganga jamunae Allar Kalima namar nakare khati  
(The Ganga and therefore the Yamuna sing only the songs of glory of Allah)

Santa mahanta awliya sakale eketi namate khate. (The Sants and Mahantas that's, the Hindu holy men, and therefore the Awliyas also supplicate to at least one name, the name of God) With all sincerity and emotion one of the Zikirs declares:

Mor manat an bhab nai o Allah  
Mor manta nai an bhab  
Hindu musalman ekAHarfarman

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Akherat ek Allar nam

(In my mind, oh Allah, I even have no different thought save that the Hindus and Muslim are under one law the desire of Allah and therefore the final word of all services is Allah). Through being couched within the spirit of Sufism, the Assamese Zikirs sing the glory of Gurus or religious preceptors and urge upon the detachment from mundane pleasure for the sake of the selfless services to God; they seem to be barren of the high poetic ecstasy of Persian Sufi poetry. Even in speaking about the services to God they just like the Vaishnavas vindicate the trail of Dasya Bhakti or loving devotion of a selfless servant to his master. One among these Zikirs also declares:

Ati sukhemali swami bhakati.  
Thakoh ridayate dhari

(The most pleasant is that the path of Swami Bhakti, that's the loving devotion of a servant to his master and that i ever cherish it in my heart). The Vaishnavism preached by Sanaradeva is additionally referred to as Nama Dharma; because it gives utmost importance to Sravana - kirtana or the taking note of and reciting of the name of God with intense love and devotion, An Assamese Vaishnava regards it because the superb mode of worship. The Zikirs also uphold this mode within the same vein:

Namehe parama dhan sun mor bhai  
(Oh my brethren listen; the name of God is that the Greatest of all treasures)

These two lines actually echo two songs of sankaradeva Again  
Mtharo paklo chuli

Pamaru manaiyre- bujiba nowara name he sar katha buli.

(My hair has greyed, yet my sinful mind understands not that praises of the Lord is that the essence of all matter) Similarly, the subsequent remark of Azan pir in one among the Zikirs, against those that practice love and devotion to God only to wia. His mercy on the day of last judge ment reveal how the trail of Niskama Bhakti has been glorifird within the Zikirs:

Makkar duwarat banda anek juguti  
Jap mari par ha'le erile priiti

(In the portals of Mecca the devotes makes many a plan but when he leaps across the last tangle he sets aside the love of God). Islam does not deprestate the value of this world and life as the field of action and the training ground for life the world to come the present world is of great importance to man consequently the conception of Maya (illusion) appears to become repugnant to Islam. In the doctrines preached by sanaradeva we find constant reference to Maya. His idealism can be well compared to Sufi leader Ibn sina's conception of ultimate reality as eternal beauty seeing reflection in the universe mirror In the poem, Veda Stuti, sankaradeva writes.

Tumi satya brahma tomata prakase jagata ito ananta jagatato sadatumio prakasa antaryami bhagawanta etekese jnanigane awasesa jagatake bole hari (Thou art the eternal and absolute Truth . this unreal world appears to be real only in thee and thou manifestest Thyself in the universe as its inner controller. It is for this that the wise people regard this universe as Hari) The Assamese Zikirs also seem to have brought in a similar conception. It is not possible to ascertain whether their authors were directly inspired by the conception of Ibn Sina , which is believed to have found an echo in the thoughts of kabir, or whether they received such ideas from the doctrine preached

by Sankaradeva. It may however be presumed that they were inspired by the latter. In order to prove this contention the following illustration would be perhaps helpful. In one of the Bargits Sankaradeva says:

Narayana lila janaba koi  
Jata dekhu kaya suta vise jays  
Mayako sava dhandha,

(Who can understand the divine sport of Narayana ?) All that you see - the body children wealth and wife are vagaries of Maya. A similar view is found expressed in some Zikirs:

Dhan jan puttra bharya sabe akaran  
Ehaya muthe beri ache mayar karan

(The wealth friends as well as wives and children are all futile. They are only shadows that surround you on account of Maya). The first line is a clear echo from sankaradevas Bhagavata, Book X. Again.

Tumijalpata tumi pahu chanda  
Tumi hai mafarak dham  
Haria rupe chari eibanesomai  
Vyaghra rupe dhari howa  
Srajan palan ytomare hatat  
Tumi ji lage kara.  
Tumi hai Khuala tumi hai buala  
Tumi hai lagala mat  
Hate bajaran tumi hai furala  
Matila amatar mat.

(Thou spreads the net and ambush a deer and trap pest a Mafar: As a deer Thou interest forest this and Thou as tiger devours Thyself the power of creation and preservation are in Thy hands and Thou acutest in whatever way thou pleased. It is Thou who feeds me and give me a bath and lewdest me through the fares and markets of the world and tend me with the sweetest words). Such expressions appear to be clear echoes of that Vaishnava conception of the relation of God and the world, which we have illustrated above with a quotation from the Veda Stuti. The spirit of complete surrender as a servant to God and the earnest longing for His Kindness as reward per meats through the Vsishnava literature of Assam . The Zikirs are also found to be completely with such spirit. To cite only a few illustrations, we may quote the following lines from the Bargits of Madhavadeva and the Zikirs Madhavadeva entreats:

Moke dekhiyo na kene ahe jagannath  
Mai bar papera papi  
Dayar rhakur hari yadumani ai ram  
Adhame tomar nam dake

(Why hast Thou not turned to me oh jagannath , I am the worst of all sinners ...O Hari Thou art the embodiment of love and this vile person called mouthy name). The Zikirs appear to have greatly influenced by such sentiments and expressions. Majnudil Fakir sings: dinar dayal swami bahu pape papi ami heyday maje karibaha days:

Guruji ai adhame tomar nam dake  
(Oh lord Thou art kind to the poor  
And I am sinner with diverse sins  
Withhold not thin love to me)  
(Oh my master this vile person called out thy name)  
Bigotry was positively repulsive to these  
Muslim holy men of Assam.

They sing the glory of the Vedas as much as  
They do of the Qoran:  
Sari veda giyanake kai ai Allah  
(The four Vedas also speak out knowledge  
O Allah)

## CONCLUSION

Beside such utterances most of the Zikirs not only reveal a sense of high esteem for Hinduisim but also clearly show the sincerest endeavor of these holy men to strengthen amity and respect. The reference to Allah as Niranjana or the comparisons of the effect of the recitation of the name of God to pious ablutions in the Ganges or to the value of the holy water of the Ganges are illustrations of such endeavour on the part of these men of Assam. It was perhaps for such persistent endeavors on their part that many of the Zikirs look like attempts at a synthesis of Hindu and Islamic thoughts and ideals. It is again on this account that many of the Zikirs tend to be the property of both Hindus and Muslims and to become complements to the popular philosophical songs of the Hindu mendicants (baragi) called *deh - vicharar git*. The imageries employed in some of the Zikirs have a Hindu impress when they refer to the harp of Kailasa so sacred to Lord Siva (Kone saji diba kailasar tokari) or to Sankaradeva and Madhavadeva.

Then again what is most fascinating is the fine blending of these elements with vocables of Perso-Arabic origin. A few of the expressions coined by these popular poets may perhaps be cited here: *ilimar batha* (the oars of enlightenment), *duniyar swami* (the Lord of the Universe), *tripani ajur ghat* (the place of ablution on the triveni, the juncture of three holy rivers), *nirajan purushe khela gulistan* (the flower garden where the spotless lord plays), *savemar bandegi* (the golden salutations), *ei tanu fana* (this perishable body). Such expressions while being rooted to the soil bestowed the proper colour and atmosphere on these Islamic compositions. It is interesting how the Muslim *fakir Azan* is referred to in the body of the text of Zikir as *Ajan deva Fakir* in the same style as *sankradeva* and *Madhavadeva* are mentioned. It may be noted in this connection how the Hindu *baragi* was attracted by Perso-Arabic words and sang in one voice with the Muslim *fakir* as it were. *duniyai ediner duniyai dudiner*, *duniya phulanibari* in a few Zikirs there are curious references to the use of vermilion marks on the forehead and of conch-shell bangles on the hands as symbols.

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