

Existence of God

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IT IS OFTEN SAID THAT WE ARE IN the world to eat, drink and be merry. As long as one enjoys life, in comfort and contentment, what else is required? No one has seen God. He cannot be proved scientifically or experienced and one does not know whether He exists or not. Even if He exists why should one pray or remember Him? Why does God like to be praised or flattered? There is so much pain and suffering in the world, He should be accountable, not loved.

Against all such nihilist negative argument, the existence of God has been proved by the testimony of prophets and Gurus, like Guru Nanak, who see Him visible and manifest. Prophets and gurus are our spiritual guides and what they have experienced through direct communion with God is contained in the scriptures dictated or written by them. All the texts, Veds, Puranas and the semitic scriptures unanimously assert that God exists. He alone is TRUE and abiding while the rest is transient.

The atheist and apostate insist: Why should we believe the prophets and Gurus? We should, for the same reason that we believe in scientists who describe phenomena that are not accessible to the senses. Who has seen an atom or a particle with naked eye; who has touched gravity, or heard the sound of galaxies as they wheel in space? A large percentage of our knowledge about the universe and its working is second hand, learnt from teachers and books, and there is little that we know through direct experience. We have to develop conviction and trust those who know.

Although He is beyond the reach of the five senses (taste, smell, sight, hearing and the touch), and His existence cannot be demonstrated, yet it can be inferred. Our world is full of electro-magnetic waves of various kinds and frequencies but we are not aware of them. Electronics, like television, telephone or radar, is required to intercept and interpret these waves. Likewise, God is immanent in His creation but we do not feel His presence as we are not tuned to Him. Thus, to most of us, He remains an unknown, distant and a nebulous entity. Like fat in milk, fire in stones and wood, lightning in the clouds, fragrance in flowers, God is invisible and immanent in every soul and in all inert matter.

The existence of God can also be proved by circumstantial evidence. Looking at the universe, its design, pattern, order, regularity, one wonders how it is maintained and sustained. All this cannot just happen. Philosophers who believe in the existence of God call this "The Argument of design." They say that if you find a clock and its mechanism within, you would probably think that this intricate mechanism cannot be the outcome of mere chance, that it has been designed. Now look at the universe: is it possible that such an intricate mechanism, from the orbits of planets round the sun to the marvelous working of our body, could all have happened by chance? Surely, this enormously complex mechanism has been designed, and the being that designed it is God.

A question rises: do we need to worship or remember God? Guru Nanak says " God grows not more if we sing His praises, nor doth he grow less if we sing Him

not". It's like our going to the Himalayas to enjoy the cool climate during the summer months and going to warm areas like the sea shores to obtain warmth during the winter. The Himalayas and the sea are least concerned whether one visits them or not. We go there of our own accord for personal comfort. The sun does not need candlelight. The same way; God does not need praise or flattery of men. Through His contemplation we not only get physical comforts but also imbibe godly qualities. *Gurbani* says that our fear shall disappear if we remember the Fearless; sorrow and sin are destroyed and a man blossoms in high spirit by hearing His Name.

Undoubtedly, the world is full of pain and suffering. Baba Farid, the great Indian mystic of the twelfth century, felt the fire of pain pervading the whole earth. Guru Arjun Dev while including his hymns in the *Adi Granth* added that there are thorny gardens in the world but not even a flame touches the ones who remember Him. Death and destruction seem to be inherent in the nature of life itself. Presence of carnivorous animals, birds and big fish eating small fish is one such example. Most of the pain and suffering is the result of our negative thought and action. We reap what we sow. Egoism is the greatest cause of human suffering. Some calamities, like wars, communal clashes, famines, and floods are man-made, born out of greed, and mistaken idea of progress, intolerance, negligence, hatred, and superiority complexes.

Guru Nanak takes a philosophical view of pain by saying " Pain is a remedy while pleasure is a disease ". Pain is considered as a test to assess man's conviction and is taken as a ladder for further progress. Like Sophocles says, "suffering makes us wise." Almost all prophets say that death is not destruction but only a fundamental change. In death nothing is destroyed as all the five elements of the body like water, fire, earth, and ether merge into their basic substances.

So even though God pervades everything that exists, including ourselves, we fail to perceive Him. Reasons for our failure to perceive God are twofold. One: we think ourselves as merely temporal and not spiritual. To meet our worldly demands we indulge in immoral acts to satiate our hunger for transient pleasure. This has blurred and soiled our mind. Secondly, we stray away from the divine purpose of human life, which is to become a true person with god-like qualities. Human life is a grand opportunity to meet the Lord.

The potent detergent to cleanse the mind is *Ram Naam* and undertaking selfless service of His creation "When the dirt of sins makes our mind dark, the love of His name restores it to its fair transparency". Along with contemplation, cultivation of godly qualities like truthfulness, compassion, contentment, would accelerate the process of cleansing the mind. Only a cleansed, pure and stilled mind can absorb and radiate divine waves and reflections.

The picture of the persons who do not believe in the existence of God, is drawn by Guru Nanak in his *Asa-di-Var* as under:

"They shall be like spurious sesame left desolate in the field with no master to own them. They flourish in bloom and fruit, but all the same, they bear ashes in their bodies."

God's existence cannot be described. All the world's scriptures after attempting to describe Him have concluded with the words "*Neti, Neti*" (not this, not this). As we believe what physicists say about the working of the universe, so should we have

faith in what the spiritual scientists i.e., the prophets and gurus, say about God and the spiritual world as a result of their personal encounter with Him. God's presence cannot either be demonstrated, it could only be inferred from how the universe is maintained and sustained with perfect balance and equilibrium. Man made machines are prone to accidents but not the numerous worlds and constellations moving in the universe.

God exists. He is immanent in His creation and within us. Whosoever wants to realize His presence should seek Him within by contemplating on His name or *shabad*. After succinctly spelling out the attributes and characterizes of God in just eight words in the credo statement, the Sikh scripture begins the text with the following invocation:

“He existed before the beginning of the universe,
He existed at the advent of the creation,
He exist now, says Nanak, He shall exist evermore.”

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