

Decline & Fall of the Sikh Kingdom: The Assertion of Sikh Identity

*DR. AVTAR SINGH**

* Center for Horizons Research, Cupertino, California, USA. Email: avsingh@alum.mit.edu

WHAT DEFINES OR CONSTITUTES an identity? From a scientific perspective there are three types of identity of a human being. These relate to the body, mind, and consciousness respectively:

1. Bodily or material identity

This is the physical and biological identity of a person that can be described, measured or observed scientifically via normal senses of the body such as eyes, ears, touch of hand or body etc. This also includes bodily configuration, features, hair, nails, or any other outgrowth of the physical body. Outer wearing of clothes, special jewelry, or articles also contributes to the material identity.

2. Personal or worldly identity (social, cultural, religious, professional etc.)

This identity is described by the personality or state of mind of a person as perceived via his/her social, cultural, religious, professional or functional traits. One could be identified as a scholar, an engineer, a priest, or a Hindu, Muslim, or Sikh etc. The personality or state of mind is determined by one's convictions, beliefs, traditions, cultural values, knowledge, personal preferences, and habitual conduct etc.

3. Universal identity (consciousness, true self, spiritual)

The universal identity relates to the ultimate reality (Truth) or the universal consciousness from which everything in the universe gets created and/or dissolved into. This identity is the fundamental self or consciousness of the universe. This is also described as the Zero-point energy in scientific terms, which is the resultant purest form of energy if everything in the universe were transformed into energy as per Einstein's formula – $E = mc^2$. In spiritual terms, such energy is referred to as the supreme soul, God, or super consciousness etc.

The bodily identity is based on a distinct material or physical boundary of the subject entity or person that is separate and distinguishable from the others or environment. Similarly, the personal or worldly identity is based on a distinct set of personal, social, cultural, religious and/or functional traits of the person that are different and distinguishable from others. These boundaries or convictions are more qualitative rather than material or physical. However, both these identities represent restricted realities or ego (*Homei*) rather than the One wholesome non-relative universal identity of the eternal and omnipresent super consciousness or Truth.

The Paradox Resolved by Guru Nanak:

Conventional Sikhism provides and supports religious or worldly identity built upon tradition, code of conduct (*Rehat*). Such identity is considered by some Sikhs as the gift or blessing of the tenth Guru Gobind Singh. However, less emphasized or recognized is the fact that this identity was earned by the very first *Khalsas* following a virtual sacrifice of their heads, which was symbolic of the dissolution of the ego identity rooted in the material

aspects such as caste, color, or creed. Had those five Sikhs not offered to sacrifice their Heads, the tenth Guru would not have baptized them as the Khalsa. Sacrifice of head or *Homei* was a precondition to earn the *Khalsa* identity. Gurbani of all ten Gurus unanimously identifies *Homei* or ego as the disease of the soul that must be eradicated to realize the truth and to be a Sikh. Gurmat emphasizes *Surti*, or total awareness, to experience the root or basic identity of the true self, which represents the universal identity that transcends all boundaries of the body and mind. Ego, on the other hand, is property of an unrealized Sikh:

ਮਨਮੁਖਿ ਹਉਮੈ ਵਿਛੁੜੇ ਮੇਰੀ ਜਿੰਦੁੜੀਏ ਬਿਖ ਬਾਧੇ ਹਉਮੈ ਜਾਲੇ ਰਾਮ ॥ [SGGS: 538]

Through egotism, the self-willed manmukhs are separated, O my soul; bound to poison, they are burnt by egotism.

In-spite of being born in a Hindu family, Nanak realized the falsehood and emptiness of the prevailing rituals of Hindu & Islamic faiths. Nanak's vision of life was scientific (objective) since it was detached from the so-called religious *Maryada* consisting of prevailing religious rituals and traditions. Nanak's detached vision revealed ego (*Homei*), consisting of the bodily and personal identity described above, as the root cause of all delusion and suffering of life, since it covered the eternal truth with the veil of delusion leading to the empty religious rituals. He declared that the true identity could only be revealed by realization of the inner self via dissolving the ego signifying the bodily and personal identities. Consistent with this deep-rooted philosophy of Nanak, the tenth Guru Gobind Singh raised the Khalsa identity based on the precondition of the sacrifice of the head or ego identity.

ਹਉਮੈ ਰੋਗੁ ਗਇਆ ਦੁਖੁ ਲਾਥਾ ਆਪੁ ਆਪੈ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਖਾਧਾ ॥ [SGGS: 78]

The sickness of my ego has been dispelled, and my pain is over and done. Through the Guru's Teachings, self-realization has consumed my ego identity.

Gurmat clearly states that the outer or bodily identity has no value without the inner awareness. Without realization of *Naam* or Truth, the outer identity shall just wear off as the body wears out. The true inner identity of a real Sikh cannot be concealed by hiding since the virtues are radiant and could never go unnoticed.

- baahar janaeoo jichar joth hai naal ||

The outer sacred thread is worthwhile only as long as the Divine Light is within.

- bin naavai paaj lehag nidhaan.

Without the Name of the Lord, your thin outer covering shall wear off, you fool.

Gurbani emphasizes *Surti* or awareness and emphasizes inner purity a must for a Sikh. Gurbani points to the uselessness of outer wearing costumes and clothes without cultivating inner virtues in the heart and mind.

ਬਹੁ ਭੇਖ ਕਰਿ ਭਰਮਾਈਐ ਮਨਿ ਹਿਰਦੈ ਕਪਟੁ ਕਮਾਇ ॥

ਹਰਿ ਕਾ ਮਹਲੁ ਨ ਪਾਵਈ ਮਰਿ ਵਿਸਟਾ ਮਾਹਿ ਸਮਾਇ ॥ [SGGS: 26]

People wear all sorts of costumes and wander all around, but in their hearts and minds, they practice deception. They do not attain the Mansion of the Lord's Presence, and after death, they sink into manure. ||1||

Guru Nanak's scientific vision adapted by all later nine Gurus led to the substitution of conventional religious practices and traditions with inner wisdom (*Nij Ghar*), awareness

(*Surti*), cosmic law (*Hukum*), and consciousness (*Sehaj Dharam*). These form the fundamental and universal essence of the wisdom of *Gurmat* (*Gurbani*) that can provide the true identity and salvation to a Sikh from the suffering and cycles of birth/death. Gurmat provides an eternal identity (Ek Onkar) that does not change or cannot be changed in time and space. The identity that changes or can be changed, voluntarily or by force, is only temporal worldly identity and not a true identity of the self. An identity that is subject to the fear of the other (*Dooja*) is not the root (*Mool*) identity. All ten Gurus consciously reinforced this message explaining the root inner identity of a Sikh.

ਮਨ ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰੂਪੁ ਹੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੂਲੁ ਪਛਾਣੁ ॥ [SGGS: 441]

O mind, realize your true identity of the eternal and omnipresent divine light or consciousness of the universe.

Scientific Validation of Guru Nanak's Philosophy:

The Role of Science

Religious scriptures have countless interpretations coming from various people, sects, and religions. Often these many interpretations of scriptures, including the Guru Granth Sahibji, are conflicting and confusing to the followers. Hence, there is a need to find the true one universal message of Gurmat. A complete wholesome science integrated with Gurmat can play the role to discriminate the truth from multiple realities or myths. Since the conventional science provides an objective tool to represent material reality and Gurmat provides the inner working of consciousness, their integrated model provides a universal tool for representing the truth or total wholesome and universal reality. The conventional religions such as Sikhism, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity etc. do not provide all the answers, since they get bogged down in blind beliefs, dogmas, and sectarian traditions ignoring consciousness or awakening. Guru Nanak's philosophy and Wisdom as compiled in Gurmat answers the key questions of life since it dissolves the key barrier – Ego (*Home*), to the realization of the ultimate truth. Gurmat restores the one eternal and omnipresent truth by integrating consciousness (*Surti*) into the approaches of conventional science and conventional religion.

ਸਚੁ ਤਾ ਪਰੁ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਜਾ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਜਾਣੈ ਜੀਉ ॥ [SGGS: 468]

The universal truth can be known only via wholesome unity of consciousness.

The Guru Nanak Model:

An Integrated Scientific Model - the Gravity Nullification Model (GNM, also known as Guru Nanak Model) described in references [1], [2], and [3] has been developed by the author that supports the following revelations of Gurmat:

According to Gurmat, the mool-mantar - *Ek Onkar Sat Naam* is the fundamental law that governs the universe and life.

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੇ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥ [SGGS: 1]

There is but one God. True is His Name, creative His personality and immortal His form. He is without fear sans enmity, unborn and self-illuminated. By the Guru's grace He is obtained.

Similarly, according to the cosmic law, the law of conservation is the most fundamental law what governs the universe and everything and process within it. According to this law

the one that exists, always existed in the past and will always exist in future. The existence is the truth that is self-existent (spontaneous), beyond space (omnipresent) and time (eternal), and beyond the governance of any other laws. All other laws are corollaries of this fundamental law.

According to Gurmat, when *Homei* is dissolved into consciousness, eternal truth is realized eliminating time, birth, and death.

ਜਿਹਿ ਪ੍ਰਾਨੀ ਹਉਮੈ ਤਜੀ ਕਰਤਾ ਰਾਮੁ ਪਛਾਨਿ ॥ [SGGS: 1427]

The one who dissolves the ego realizes the God or truth. Such a person is liberated from the suffering and cycles of life/death. Take this as the true law of nature.

Similarly, according to the cosmic law, the dissolving of mass in stars and particles provides the energy for expansion of the universe and saving it from the cycle of collapsing by gravity and rebirth.

'*Gurmat*' ends relativity or duality between conflicting realities such as birth/death, happiness/suffering, wealth/poverty etc. by dissolving ego or *Homei*. This transforms the five sins of lust, anger, greed, attachment, and pride into the five virtues of *Surti* - truthfulness, contentment, compassion, awareness, and patience.

A very important insight provided by the scientific model is that the visible or measurable matter in the universe consists of only 4% of the total energy of the universe. The remaining 96% of the universe is immeasurable dark matter and dark energy. That means the outer visible material or bodily identity of the universe is insignificant compared to the non-material (consciousness) identity. This is consistent with the message of Gurmat, wherein the importance and value of self-realization (*Nij-Ghar*) is emphasized over the outer or worldly identity of a Sikh. The blessing of the inner identity lies in the eternity and omnipresence that is free from the cycle of birth/death and suffering.

Conclusion:

The root cause of the identity crisis of Sikhism is its departure from the universal scientific message of Guru Nanak that was further emphasized by all later nine Gurus including the tenth Guru Gobind Singh. Gurmat provides inner (spiritual) or universal identity. The outer or worldly identity alone without dissolution of the ego creates relativity, competition, and evolutionary struggle for survival against competing sects and ideologies. The outer, unique, and often confused identity also creates an easy target for the misinformed zealots and bigots.

Guru Nanak and Gurmat expect Sikhs to cultivate the eternal spiritual identity (*Nij Ghar*) that provides a total liberation from the temporality and crisis of outer identities. The outer identity, howsoever utilitarian in the external world, is only secondary to the inner identity. Any identity that separates or distinguishes one from the one whole (*Ek Onkar*) is fragmentary and dualistic. Gurmat uplifts the temporal worldly (social, political, economic, and religious) or physical identity (outer bodily wearings, color, creed, or sex) of a Sikh into the one universal identity. Gurmat provides to the Sikh a fearless (*Nirbhau*), enemy-less (*Nirvair*), and eternal (*Akal Murat Ajuni Saibhang*) identity of truth by eliminating the relative and temporal bodily identity (*Homei*) that is afflicted with the fear of change, reprisal, discrimination, and destined with suffering and death. Gurmat provides the identity to the Sikh that liberates him/her from the bondage of sectarian/religious beliefs (misconstrued as

faith), rituals, dogmas and traditions that divide mankind against one another and have led to wars, death, and suffering.

The eternal blessings of the Gurus are further vindicated by modern science revealing that the dominant (96%) reality or identity of the universe is in the form of the consciousness (dark energy) and not the visible material or bodily identity (only 4%).

A *Sant-Sipahi* must be a saint before being a soldier. A soldier without the virtues of sainthood can only kill indiscriminately without knowing the truth. Professor Darshan Singh elaborated on Sikh identity in his own words below:

“Without the five virtues (truth, contentment, compassion, consciousness, and patience), a person having only an outer Sikh identity is like a Gurdwara with only *Nishan Sahib* but without the *Guru Granth Sahibji's Prakash* in it.”



References

VIDEOS AND ARTICLES AVAILABLE ON INTERNET

The philosophical and spiritual revelations of the scientific approach described above are based on the book – “The Hidden Factor: An Approach for Resolving Paradoxes of Science, Cosmology, and Universal Reality” [1] and available at internet in a series of videos at YouTube.com at the following link:

http://youtube.com/profile_videos?user=allisone00&p=r

The author has also published a series of science-spirituality articles at Intentblog.com with the following link:

<http://www.intentblog.com/author.php?author=Avtar%20Singh>

1. A. Singh, *The Hidden Factor: An Approach for Resolving Paradoxes of Science, Cosmology and Universal Reality*, AuthorHouse, 2003.
2. A. Singh, *A Solution to the Cosmological Constant, Dark Matter, and Dark Energy Problems*, Physics Essays Vol. 20 No. 3, 2008.
3. A. Singh, In Search of the Universal Reality and Purpose – A Scientific Investigation, presented at ‘Science and Religion: Global Perspectives’, June 4-8, 2005, in Philadelphia, PA, USA, a program of the Metanexus Institute (http://www.metanexus.net/conference2005/pdf/avtar_singh.pdf).