

God is Inherent in the Guru

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Whenever there is a terrible decline in the understanding of Truth, God sends a Spiritual guide to help humans to understand Him and follow Truth. In order that people trust and follow the Guru's extraordinary powers or mystique is conferred on the Guru. Yet the Guru always obeys the command of God.

'Sargun and Nirgun' aspects of God according to Gurbani, God is simultaneously 'Sargun and Nirgun'. The 'Sargun and Nirgun' aspects of God are like two sides of the same coin:

'Sargun nirgun nirankaar, sunn samaadhi aap; aapan kiyaa Nanaka, aape hi phir jaap

(SGGS:290; Sukhmani:21.1) and

'Nirgun aap, Sargun bhi ohi (SGGS:287; Sukhmani:18.8)

In His 'nirgun swarup', He is formless, attributeless, beyond description ('agam')

'Roop na rekh na rang kichh, trey gunn te Prabh bhinn'

(SGGS:283; Sukhmani:16)

In his 'sargun swarup', He is all the manifested forms in the universe. This is similar to the concept that all names in the universe belong to God as stated in *Jaap Sahib: "tav sarab naam"*. Further, since God is omni-present and all-pervading, He is present in each and every particle of the universe. In His 'sargun swarup' He combines with 'Maya' and creates the entire universe, as stated.

'Eka maayi jugat viayi, tin chele parvan' (SGGS:7; Japuji:30)

A [true] Guru is different from us: Humans have two components in them, one is the Soul/'aatmaa' and second is the mind/'maya'. The 'maya' creates an illusion in us and makes us feel separate from God. 'Maya' is the cause of our sins/ignorance/errors/birth-and-death.

The exception to the above is a [true] Guru who is 'pure', because He pure Soul – and is not contaminated by 'maya'. Due to this reason, a [true] Guru is equated with God's *sargun swarup*, as:

'Gur parmehar eko jaan (SGGS:868).

Similarly, a [true] Saint/Khalsa can be equated with God's *sargun swarup*.

The [true] Guru transcends ego. Consequently he is able to perceive the inner Consciousness *purely, perfectly, without any distortion and on a continuous* basis. Hence, all His acts are in accordance with the Universal consciousness. None of his acts are tainted with ego/selfishness. This is the crucial difference between him and us. Most of us have some (or more) ego in us. This blocks the Inner Voice from reaching us, causing spiritual ignorance, trapping us in transmigration.

A Guru reinvents words: When a [true] Guru descends on earth he faces a peculiar situation. Most people have forgotten ‘Truth’, because the words used to communicate/ explain ‘Truth’ have lost their original meaning. So, a [true] Guru patiently reminds humans about the correct interpretation of these words. He is forced to indicate the incorrect meanings of the same word – so that humans understands the difference. In order to explain the deterioration of the word, he is forced to describe the incorrect practices/ rituals that are being attributed to this word.

In many cases, the [true] Spiritual Guru reinvents - or coins - a new word to indicate, essentially, the eternal ‘Truth’. For example, Guru Nanak popularized the word ‘Sikh’. Guru Gobind Singhji popularized the word ‘Khalsa’. In ages past Krishna had popularized the word ‘Yogi’.

Let us consider the word ‘yogi’. Since the original meaning got distorted. Sri Guru Granth reminds us not to consider the following acts as those of a [true] Yogi –merely donning a particular mode of dress, carrying a staff, or by smearing ash on the body, or by shaving one’s head and piercing one’s ears. Continuing on the same lines, various other follies/rituals are denounced. Finally the verse explains that a [true] Yogi is he who, remains in the world, but is detached from it:

‘Jog na khintha, jog na dande, jog na bhasam chaddaiye.

Jog na mundi mund mundaiye, jog na singhi vaaiye.

Anjan mahe, niranjan rahiye, jog jugat eiv paiye. Galli jog na hoi....

Nanak jivatiyaa mar rahiye, aisaa jog kamaaiye

(SGGS:730, Amrit Kirtan:742)

An intelligent reader will realise that a similar definition is used for a [true] *Brahmgiani*.

Brahmgiani sadaa nirlep, jaise jal mein kamal alep’ (SGGS:272, Sukhmani 8.1).

Hence the state-of-mind of a [true] Yogi is same as that of a [true] Brahmgiani. Lines from the SGGS quoted before, show that this similarity extends to words such as [true] Sant, Sikh, Khalsa, etc.

Birth of a new religion: After a Spiritual Guru reinvents a new term (such as Sikh), the people following it form a new community. Many times, the Guru popularises a set of new beliefs to be followed. This gives birth to a so-called ‘new’ religion.

Spiritual Guru and his Word indicates the path and goal of human life, but to a variety of audience.

A Spiritual Guru has to play the following roles:

1. To indicate the goal of life.
2. To indicate the path, that is, the positive and negative aspects.
3. He has to address a very wide spectrum of humans.
4. The audience includes a nearly-enlightened person, an average seeker, and abject sinners.
5. To satisfy, each of them, the Text has to indicate successively higher goals to be reached. Each seeker has to interpret the goal, as per his or her current spiritual status and aspirations.
6. This variety in seekers leads to different interpretations.

Example: Suppose a class of students is preparing for their engineering exams. The syllabus for the exam, the exam paper, as well as the examiner are same for all the students. However, each student studies the same syllabus with a different level of commitment/intelligence. The student who tops the class would have studied/ understood the entire syllabus in a meticulous manner. Compared to this, the student who fails the exam, may have omitted various parts of the syllabus, or he would have an imperfect understanding of the syllabus. The understanding/ interpretation of the topper would obviously be vastly different from that of the student who failed.

Example: '*Sach vyapar, karo vyapari, dargeh nibhay khep tumaari*' (SGGS:293; Sukh: 22.6). An average seeker interprets as doing his business/trade in a fair manner, without cheating. But a near-saint understands that only God's Name is '*Saach*'. Also, in the (SGGS, '*Naam*' has been equated with the best '*dhan/vyapar*'. So, a sage interprets this line to mean that he should use/ exchange his time to get/ accumulate '*Naam-dhan*'.

Example: '*Saas saas, simro gobind, man antar ki utre chind*' (SGGS:295: Sukhmani:24.1)

An average seeker does not think about this line seriously. But a near-saint will treat it like a Divine Command to be obeyed. He attempts to practice it.

Example: Consider the concept of '*daswand*'. Apparently, this word does not appear in the SGGS but only in the '*Rehat-namas*'. While an average seeker donates 10% of his income, a near-saint has a different understanding. He is acutely aware that everything, which he has, belongs to God. And that he is supposed to use it for the needy/ downtrodden.

If a seeker aims to be a [true] Khalsa, then his goal is enlightenment/ 'jeevan-mukta'. Therefore, he has to be *more stringent, careful and logical* in interpreting lines from the SGGS. This is an important point while understanding the 'Offences to be avoided by a [true] Khalsa'.

We should avoid generalized criticism or misinterpretation of [true] Guru.

Both, the Spiritual Guru and the holy Text have only one role, which is to help people evolve and reach God. No Guru ever means to hurt any section of society. He only patiently reminds us about the pitfalls to be avoided. If by reading a Spiritual Text, we develop hate (however, subtle) for any person/sect, then we are criticizing God's creation. Gurbani strongly denounces such a criticism or 'nindaa'.

- '*Jaalo aisi reet, jit mein piyara visare, Nanak sai bhali pareet, jis sahib set out rahe*' (SGGS:590). Indicating, we should abandon acts due to which we forget God. While criticizing, we forget God.

- '*Nindaa bhali kise ki naahi manmukh mugadh karan;*

Muh kaale tin nindaka, narake ghor payann (SGGS:755). Implying that it is improper to criticise anybody.

- '*Jan nirvair nindak hankaari; Jan bhal maaneh nindak vekaari*' (SGGS:869). Implying that our ego prompts us to criticise, and that this act is useless.

So while interpreting Gurbani/ philosophy, we should avoid making any generalized criticism. This point is linked to 'Who is True/ Spiritually Right'.

Guru is beyond Error: I suggest that since a Guru is always 'true', all His acts and words are true. He is only describing incorrect practices, which have crept up in any sect. But while describing these mistakes. He has no *selfish interest/ sadist tendency because He has no ego*. Therefore, He is not criticizing.

Further, a [true] Guru = God. And, God is '*nirvair*'. Hence a [true] Guru bears no acrimony. Compared to this, when we describe a mistake, it amounts to criticism; because our ego exists and distorts our intentions. This distortion may be very subtle. But, nevertheless, it exists.

Conclusion: The only aim of a Spiritual Text/ Guru is to connect man to God. In this process, He discourages certain erroneous practices of the past of 'reinvent/ rediscover' a new religion and a Way of Life best representative of the true ideal.

