

Guru Nanak's Teachings in Today's World of Conflict*

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Sikhism believes in Guru Nanak to be the incarnation of the Divine Light and Spirit of God. God said to him "All my Holiness and PIETY will be with you and all your doings will be my doings and no blame or stigma will accrue to you. Whomsoever you will bless will be blessed by me". This Divine Light and Spirit was not only manifested in Guru Nanak but continued in Nine successor Gurus, and finally resting in the Holy Guru Granth Sahib - a perpetual source of Enlightenment for all times to come. As all prophets belong to all humanity, SGGS (Sri Guru Granth Sahib) contains, the inspired Word of Saints belonging to other strata of society, making it a universal Enlightner for all mankind.

Clash of Cultures:

The reason for the advent of Guru Nanak was the agony and wailings of sections of humanity who were subjected to untold misery and suffering due to irreconcilable differences between two world cultures of Hinduism and Islam. The very first two sentences uttered by the Guru after receiving the mandate of prophethood from God were:—"There is no Hindu and no Musalman" implying that whole humanity is under One God and man-made divisions have no significance. When asked whether Hindus were better or Muslims? Guru replied that without virtuous deeds both will lament.

By undertaking long and arduous odessys in all four directions, Guru held discourses and discussions with dignitaries of all faiths of the time and gave them a wide conception of God and the path of God realization. He counselled against distorting their faiths for proving their superiority and enforcing their beliefs on unwilling people by abusing political power or with ulterior motives of perpetuating their rule.

According to Guru Nanak, in the very beginning, God existed in a hidden state as 'SHUNYA' when there was complete void and nothing else existed. When God willed He manifested Himself without any form of any kind as *NIRANKAR* as a unique personage beyond any description. However, He spread His own Effulgence in all the directions as *EKANKAR*, which, as the DIVINE LIGHT pervades all over and forms the ground substance of the Creation. This Divine Light is invisible but consists of consciousness of the self of each creature and is the Prime Mover of all creation.

Origin of Universe:

By the Word, *Shabad*, *Dhun*, Sound or *Nada*, God Created rivers of molten matter from which all physical world was created. The Divine Light and the Matter constitute two forces of '*Pursha*' and '*Prakrti*' (Mind and Matter) which act under Divine Order and Laws. God is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent and nothing can happen without His Will. Passing through the stages of mineral, vegetable, and animal, Man is the Crown of all Creation.

God is Absolute, self-existent, uncaused, independent, free from any restrictions or limitations and relations to other things when in His attributeless state, but when wants to manifest in forms, He assumes various physical garbs. He is beginningless, beyond time and space, unborn and deathless. He is incomprehensible, ineffable, indefinable and indestructible. **He cannot be installed in the form of images, idols or icons and has no features, lines, or body parts. He is beyond the conception of human senses and**

intellect. His powers and capacities cannot be comprehended fully. This mystery of God to be without attributes as well as with attributes cannot be resolved without the help and grace of a perfect Guru.

The whole Creation is divided into Temporal and Spiritual domains but human mind is eclipsed by the shadows of the Ego and constantly pre-occupied with the worldly affairs and needs of the body. According to the Holy Koran, God has given to all people a prophet in their own tongue, but all organized religions tend to gravitate to perpetuate their own cultural and socio-political interests. History is replete with interfaith rivalries and conflicts. The modern political philosophies of Democracy and Socialism have made great advances in solving the material needs of men but Secularism has not been able to contain or curb the religious promptings of Man. This proves the fact that man cannot live by bread alone. Guru Nanak was the greatest exponent of the inherent DIVINITY in man and his message is relevant in understanding the spiritual needs of mankind without which no lasting peace can be visualized.

Scientists like Einstein, Newton, Galileo and Darwin have given us laws which maintain the physical world which are inviolable and unimputable, but are unable to show any evidence of any law giver. Guru Nanak's teachings throw a flood of light on both Material and Spiritual laws which operate in the Universe and help us in understanding the Nature of the Ultimate Reality and necessity of ethical and spiritual laws which govern Creation. Guru was the greatest scientist in the field of Spirituality. Being One with the Supreme Reality his message is universal, logical, based on reason and inculcating highest discerning and discriminating intellect.

Modern Scientists have provided a flood of knowledge as to how the Cosmos is being maintained after bursting into something from nothing and behaving as per laws of physics in the form of Gravity, Electromagnetism, weak and strong forces of Atoms exploding into space through supernovas providing all Matter and Energy for billions of years and how the matter and energy are being interconverted and interchanged. With these scientific discoveries we have made modern life more comfortable and enjoyable but without spiritual development we will continue to hate each other and fight each other and continue to live in fear and enemy on the earth endlessly.

When Bertrand Russel stated that if some lucky men survived the onslaught of a third World War of atomic and hydrogen bombs, then the Sikh religion will be the means of guiding them. But when further asked that if that is so why this religion is not capable of guiding them before any war. In reply Russel said, "Yes, it has the capacity but Sikhs have not brought out in the broad day light, the splendid doctrine of the religion which has come into existence for the benefit of the entire mankind. This is their greatest sin and Sikhs cannot be freed from it."

Guru Nanak gave a much higher vision of the Reality – appropriate and necessary for the present age. Loyalty to one's own faith as the only truth can lead to misgivings. Religiously motivated violence can be traced to misconceptions for exploitation of religious sentiments for political purposes. Sikhism vehemently rejects violence in the name of religion. It is justified only in self-defense and protection of the holy, weak or innocent, when all other means of peaceful persuasion have failed. A wider concept of God abrogates all petty differences of creed, sect or dogma. Spirituality, being an esoteric subject, very few discerning and discriminating minds with higher wisdom can distinguish between Truth and Falsehood, between Ephemeral and Eternal, between Temporal and Spiritual. A vast section of ignorant and blind public can easily be exploited by the politicians and the clergy.

Word and Guru are one. When mind gets tuned with the word God is revealed.

Chronic Malady:

Man is made up of Mind and the Body. The Wall of Ego splits the mind into two channels of worldly life and spiritual life which cannot be abridged easily. Ego is the chronic malady put by God in the mind of the man. Attachment to the world keeps man preoccupied with the world and blinds him from the spirit which is the source of his existence. Man remains afflicted with doubts, misgivings, illusions and delusions caused by the Ego and this duality. Guru's word is capable of enlightening the mind to conquer the five evils of lust, anger, greed, attachment and Pride and replace them with the enlightened spiritual path of Truth, Contentment, Compassion, Noble deeds and Fortitude. Guru's teachings are available but we have yet to live them in our life.

The World is undergoing an EXISTENTIAL anguish because of the mystery of life, its meaning, purpose and goal. Speculations about the Nature of Reality and methods of propiations in order to achieve peace, tranquility and freedom from pain and suffering are countless. Beliefs and faith based systems have been current in every culture from antiquity. Human mind is constantly in flux, never under rest or peace. **But mind is the only force to reckon with all existential problems and peace and wars begin and end in the mind only. There has been no period of time when the world was not on the verge of chaos not only by natural calamities but also due to Interfaith and Intrafaith conflicts, rivalries, disputes etc. which have divided humanity and brought untold misery and suffering giving rise and fall to many cultures and civilizations.** The present situation is in no way different. Historically we know that there have been mainly two regions of great source of mystical knowledge in the East and West, in the subcontinent of India and Mid-West, where they flourished independently but produced in the fifteenth century AD an intolerable situation of a mass scale not only in the ideological fields but also at the socio-political levels. The source of unrest was due to irreconcilable ideologies between revelations from the age old Vedas and the new dispensations of the Holy Koran. Therefore the advent of Guru Nanak with entirely new dispensations to bring peace and harmony became necessary and has to be interpreted in this context. Peace between nations can be contingent upon peace between religions and this depends upon exchange of beliefs people deem important and dynamics that feed them.

Time has come for dissemination of Guru's ideas widely to bring harmony and peace in the world.

Universal Appeal:

All religions are a source of spiritual knowledge but differ on the nature of the Supreme Being. Many believe in the existence of God but only as per revealed in their own faiths. These differences can lead to conflicts and divisions. Guru Nanak's views transcended all narrow and sectarian views and the concept of one Ultimate Reality he gave, takes us from a world of time to a world of eternity, full of wonder and ecstasy. He made this possible by revealing the mystery which underlies the whole cosmic process.

Mankind has stemmed from one root, though it is split up in different communities. Striving for the recovery of its basic unity and reconciliation of differences and reverence for all is needed. All saints with higher wisdom and virtues belong to one family. Due to modern means of transport and communications with advances in scientific inventions, world has become a global village necessitating quest for one spirit. Old rivalries based on self-aggrandisements must give way to an attitude of harmony and goodwill for all.

Guru Nanak preached to experience the inner reality by glorifying the Name of God and establishing an inner relationship with the DIETY whose spark exists in all of us. This methodology removes the quandary of dualism between the inner life of the spirit and outer

life of temporal existence, through annihilation of the Ego or individual self. The conceptions of the Ultimate-Reality may remain different but why our moral actions should not acquire the status of a higher spirituality. Our noblest action should be to surrender to the Will of the Lord and goodwill of all. We all belong to one Lord and we all should strive for the victory of that Supreme Reality.

Conclusion:

The world is undergoing an existential anguish because of Egoistic living, forgetting the Creator Lord of the Universe. Ego is the chronic malady in the mind of each man which keeps him attached to the world, blinding him from the spirit of the Lord which is the source of all existence. Man is afflicted with all kinds of doubts, misgivings, illusions and delusions due to his own Ego and duality between inner and external worlds, leading to evils of Lust, Anger, Greed, Attachments and false Pride. Guru Nanak gave mankind an enlightened spiritual path of Truth, Contentment, Compassion, Noble deeds and Fortitude, to bring peace in the world.

