

Eco-Philosophy of Guru Granth Sahib

Dr. N. Muthu Mohan*

* Prof. & Head, Dept. of Guru Nanak Studies, Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai. Tamilnadu. Email: m_thumohan@yahoo.co.in

Based on the author's recent presentation

the philosophy of guru granth sahib emerged in the socio-historical context of 15th to 17th centuries in the North Western part of Indian subcontinent. During the period referred, the ecological and environmental problems were not as acute as we experience them today. As popularly known, the 'ecological crisis' came to the forefront only along with the Industrial age particularly in the Western hemisphere. However, it is astonishing to find that Guru Granth Sahib contains a very well articulated eco-philosophy that can meet the challenges posed by the modern age. The ecological and environmental concerns of Sikhism are not something external or incidental to the philosophy of Sikhism. On the other hand, Sikh philosophy as it is found in the hymns of the Gurus or in Guru Granth Sahib contains in its very basis an eco-philosophy. The presentation is an attempt to elucidate this concept and to show that a sound eco-philosophy is in-built in the philosophy of Guru Granth Sahib.

The Principle of Hukam:

The opening paragraph of Japuji Sahib formulates, in unequivocal terms, the basic postulate of the entire philosophy of Guru Granth Sahib: “

“How to become true (Sachiar) to the Creator?

How to demolish the wall of illusion?

It is through obedience to His Ordinance and Will”.

(SGGS: 1)

The positive concept expressed here is Hukam, or the Divine Ordinance. Guru Granth Sahib holds the view that by obedience to the Hukam, the Divine Ordinance, a human being becomes loyal to God.

The concept of *Hukam* is formulated in Japuji Sahib and elsewhere in terms of a perfectly coordinated Cosmic Order. Nature, i.e. the ecological system, is the paradigm in which the principle of Hukam is formulated. This does not mean to say that Hukam is the pure objectivity of Nature, as it has been postulated in the Western scientific thinking. Hukam organically combines the moments of objectivity and subjectivity; in other words, objectivity and subjectivity divided and counter-posed are unknown to Sikh thought. The Subjectivity involved in the concept of Hukam is the Subjectivity of God, or the Will of the Creator. The Subjectivity of God that is involved in the making of the concept of Hukam is the Design and Command of God. Thus, with the introduction of the concept of Hukam, the Gurus have 'spiritualized' the otherwise raw and objective Nature.

The principle of Hukam informs that God has bestowed abundance of wealth to Nature, and therefore to Mankind, indeed to all creation:

“Infinitely the creation receives from Him sustenance

He is the Ordainer

By His Ordinance the Universe He runs.

All creation seeks boons of Him

Endlessly does He confer these”

(SGGS: 2)

Countless are God's attributes,
Endless their count -
Innumerable His doings, His bounty"

(SGGS:5)

Hukam does not perceive the Cosmic Order as Mayaic - or as passive. It is true and holy, full of varieties, dynamism and wonder of beauty. A long hymn in *Asa-di-Var* celebrates the variety and wonder of the cosmic order.

"All creation on one thread has He strung".

(SGGS: 1108)

Creation is permeated with a symphony of Divine Shabda; all God's creation plays astral music:

"Endless the instruments, the notes, the players who laud Thee"
Innumerable the musical measures and the symphonies
The musicians orchestrating Thy praises:
Air, water and fire laud Thee"

(SGGS: 6)

According to the order of Hukam, the social or the human world is a part of the cosmic world. The human world is the extension of the spiritualized cosmic existence and is the law of Hukam:

"Air is the vital force; Water the progenitor
The vast Earth the Mother of all
Day and Night are nurses, fondling all creation in their lap
Of all, the righteous Judge weighs the merit and demerit Himself"

(SGGS: 8)

"He created Night and Day, seasons and occasion
So also Air, Water, Fire and the Nether Regions
Amidst these has He fixed the earth, the place for Righteous Action"

(SGGS:7)

With moral and just actions, the human world completes realizing the law of Hukam. By not forgetting and remembering the Name of God, the human world apprehends the law of Hukam. By being dynamic, inter-related and mutually supportive the divine music reverberates in the universe.

