

Acceptance of Death: A Basic Precept

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Recently we had a death in the family. The death was at a real ripe age but there were associated health problems preceding the death. I was wondering that I may be in a death-bed like that one day, but I may wish to leave the body without a struggle in medical terms. The old age should not warrant confinement to the hospitals and nursing homes alone. The effort to prolong the life should not get translated into prolonging the suffering. The vagaries of age can make one infirm, weak and also in pain, but it should not result in waiting for death to come and put an end to all the sufferings. Is there any thing that could be done to improve those odds?

When one visits hospitals one can see old patients on life saving devices. The doctors and the family members are working against the clock to save the life of the patient and to prolong life. Death has become a symbol failure against the life. Death has ceased to mean as a final progression of life. Interestingly Dr. Sherwin B. Nuland in his book **How We Die** has also expressed the similar sentiments in these words; "It is also the recognition that the real event at the end of our life is our death, not an attempt to prevent it."

Suddenly I remembered about the last days of Guru Nanak Dev ji. Till the end, he was active in Kartarpur farming his wheat fields and singing hymns in praise of God. The community at Kartarpur drinking in the inspiration of his divine songs and from his personal aura learnt from the master, the art of loving worship of the Lord. At the human level we see from Guru Ji's life that he kept a very active pace of life both physically and mentally. When the call came from heaven, Guru Ji told the crowds that they would make him happy if they rejoiced with him on his return. He sang a song of joy and asked all those around him to join in singing the wedding song. The song is:

"jY Gir kIriq AwKIAY krqy kw hoie blcwro] iqqu Gir gvwHu soihlw isvirhu isrjxhwro]1] qum gvwHu myry inrBau kw soihlw] hau vwrl ijqu soihlY sdw suKu hoie]1] rhwau] inq inq jIAVy smwllAin dyKYgw dyvxhwru] qry dwnY klmiq nw pvY iqsu dwqy kvxu sumwru]2] sMbiq swhw iliKAw imil kir pvwHu qylu] dyhu sjx AslsVIAw ijau hovY swihb isau mylu]3] Gir Gir eyho pwhucw sdVy inq pvMin] sdxhwrw ismrlAY nwnk sy idh AwvMin]4]1]"

"Jai ghar keerat aakhee-ai kartae kaa hoe beechaaro. Tit ghar gaavahu sohila sivarihu sirajanehaaro. 1. Tum gaavahu maerae nirabho kaa sohilaa. Hau vaaree jith sohilai sadhaa sukh ho-e. Rahaao. Nit nit jeearrae samaaleean dhaekhai-gaa devan-haar. Terae daanai keemat naa pavai tis daatae kavan sumaar. 2. Sambat saahaa likhkaa mil kar paavahu tel. Dehu sajan aseesarree-aa jio hovai sahib sio mael. 3. Ghar ghar eaeho paahuchaa sadh-rhe nit pavan. Sadhan-haaraa simareeai Naanak sae deh aavann. 4. 1."

(SGGS: 12)

Meaning: Sing the praises of the Creator from the mind which contemplates his excellences. Sing now my wedding song (of praise), from the mind which dwells on the Universal Creator. Sing, all of you sing, the song of praises of my God, who is above fear. I am sacrifice to the song of Praise that brings everlasting joy. [Pause] He is the bestower who looks after us and takes care of all of us. Even his (bounties) are beyond evaluation, how can we evaluate the bestower of the bounties. [2] The time of departure from this world is fixed, so come together and pour the oil of blessing. Oh my friends bless me that I may unite with my Lord. [3] Every home (in body form) in due time receives these messages (of departure from this world). In fact these messages are delivered every day, every moment. (Nanak says! Oh friends!) Let us dwell on the One who sends out these messages, for the

day of our departure is getting closer every moment. [4].

Now, this Shabad or song is a part of the daily night's prayer before going to bed for a Sikh. Guru Ji, by his death's example has set a tone for us to remember that death is not tragic end of life but a celebration of return to the Creator. He also made us remember death every night before going to bed. In fact there are anecdotes from Guru Ji's life where he asked his companions Bala and Mardana as to how far they could see their lives. Guru Ji, after hearing their answers and being asked by them to share his own insight told them that I am sure of the breath that I have taken in, but am not sure of the next one. This little anecdote tells us that Guru Ji constantly remembered death.

However, when we look at our lives, we find that we are completely enveloped in trying to get going with our lives. We are concerned about our careers, mortgages, family, house, children, and new cars. In the process our own death appears so remote that we assume that we are invincible. But, when someone close and dear to us dies, we cry as if some untold incident has taken place. Guru Ji portrays this picture as:

“Ehl Ehl ikAw krhu hY hosl soel] qum rovhuGy Es no qum@ kau kauxu roel]”
“*Ooee Ooee kiya karoh, hai ho-see so-ee. Tum rowvohgehi ous noo, tum ko kauan ro-ee.*”
(SGGS: 418)

Meaning: Why do you sob and cry at the death of a close one? That Lord is present now and will be ever present. If you cry at the death of close one, who will wail for you when your time comes?

Because of our preoccupation with becoming successful, we don't step back and look at the big picture to see what is going on. Is this it? Is that all of it? Is that all that I want? Am I missing something? Am I having a feeling of being empty? We need someone to wake us up and make us probe in that direction. That won't happen automatically, therefore Guru Ji has written about it to provoke us to start thinking about it. At present we think that if we gain acceptance of being successful in the eyes of others then we are successful. We have defined our success in terms of material gain; bigger houses, new cars, etc. Because, that is what others can see of us to evaluate if we are successful or not, and then be held in higher esteem. However, the successful life as Guru Ji has defined is the life which is approved and accepted by God. That yardstick is not tangible so it has been pushed to the side and everyone is in a race to become more successful materially than the other. In order to bring the non tangible aspects of life into focus, Guru Ji has described the scenario of the fate after death.

When that scenario plays before our eyes, it will awaken us. It will enkindle a thought about the purpose of life because we will constantly remember that I have to die too. The remembrance of death opens another vista, where we can imagine as to how we would like to be remembered by others at our own funeral. Better still will be if one takes to heart Guru Ji's words and transform them into a mission statement:

“Bel prwpiq mwnuK dyhurlAw] goibMd imlx kl ieh qyrl brlAw] Avir kwj qyrY ikqY n kwM] imlu swDsMgiq Bju kyvl nwm]1] srMjwim lwgu Bvjl qrn kY] jnmU ibRQw jwq rMig mwieAw kY]”
“*Bha-ee parapat maanukh dayhuree-aa. Gobind Milan kee eh tayree bar-ee-aa. Avar kaaj tayrai kitai na kaam. Mil Sadh sangat bhaj kayval naam. Saranjaam lag bhavjal taran kai. Janam britha jaat rang maa-ee-aa kai.*”
(SGGS: 12)

Meaning: Having received the gift of human body, it has bestowed you with a unique opportunity to meet Lord. All other efforts are of no avail, so in the company (guidance of) of the holy, make remembrance of Naam your sole initiative. Prepare and dedicate yourself to crossing the sea of worldliness. Your life is being dissipated in the pursuit of illusion (maya

or material world).

Facing the death, changes the perspective of the way we view ourselves and our world. We will see the world differently and strip it of all the chaff and look at the core, the essential and vital aspects. So what is to be done? In Farid Ji's words:

"Pridw jn@l kMml nwih gux qy kMmVy ivswir] mqu srimMdw Qlvhl sWel dY drbwir]"

"Farida jinee kamee naahe gun tae kamreh visaar. Mut Sarminda theevaee saae da-ae darbar"

(SGGS:1381)

Meaning: Farid says – Abandon those deeds that don't produce any virtues, otherwise you will be put to shame in the Lord's court.

So we can see that Guru's have incorporated Farid Ji's word to tell us that these are compatible with Guru's own thought process and we all need to become virtuous. These words are not just congruent with Guru Ji's thought process, but also worthy of same veneration as they have been included in Guru Granth Sahib by Guru Ji. Guru Ji says that for acquiring virtues, ego has to be removed:

"gurmuiK gux vyhwJIAih mlu haumY kFY Doie]"

"Gurmukh gun wayhaajeeahai mul haumai kadah dhoae."

(SGGS: 311)

Meaning: The virtues are acquired by the seeker through the Guru, and the dirt, sin of egoism is washed off.

Now, how to get rid of the ego is a problem? Guru ji has provided an answer for it.

"haumY dlrG rogu hY dwrU BI iesu mwih] ikrpw kry jy Awpxl qw gur kw sbdu kmwih]"

"Haumai deerag rog hai daaroo bhee is mahe. Kirpaa Karae je aapnee ta gur ka shabad kama-hae."

(SGGS: 466)

Meaning: Ego is a chronic disease but the cure for it is also within the human body. If the Lord bestows his grace, then one transforms his life according to Guru's teachings.

Once the life transformation process is initiated, then ego's grip will start weakening. Slowly and slowly its grip will loosen, then one can rid oneself of the false self, or ego. Ego has continual appetite for all there is, and it is never satisfied. In Hazrat Inyat Khan's words:

"It is the realization of innumerable fault which makes one humble and effaces the little self from one's consciousness. And it is in the effacement of the self that real spiritual attainment lies."

(Hazrat Inyat Khan; Mastery: Page 135)

So our earnest effort will be to efface this ego. When ego is effaced under Guru's guidance then *naam* fills in there.

Guru Ji has defined how *naam* can be acquired in these words:

"Awpu mwry qw pwey nwau]"

"Aap maareh taa paae naao."

(SGGS: 153)

Meaning: If one effaces ego then only he obtains *naam*.

Then, Guru ji has clarified that polar opposite relationship of *naam* and ego:

"haumY nwwY nwil ivroDu hY duie n vsih iek Twie]"

"Haumai naavai naal virodh hai, doae na Vasai ik dhaae."

(SGGS: 580)

Meaning: Ego is enemy of *naam*. The two cannot stay together in one place.

So, what effort has to be made to attain *naam*?

"sqqur kw Bwxw mMin lel ivchu Awpu gvwie] eyhw syvw cwkrl nwmu vsY min Awie] nwmY hl qy

suKu pwelAY scY sbid suhwie j”

“*Satgur ka bhana mun laee vichon aap gavaae. Ehaa seva chakaree naam vassai mun aa-ae. Nammai he teh sukh paeai, sachai shabad suhaaae.*”

(SGGS: 34)

Meaning: Submission to the Will of God is the way to get rid of ego. This is the service by which *naam* dwells in the mind. Remembrance of *naam* provides bliss and it makes the life beautiful.

No wonder Guru Ji has laid great emphasis on the remembrance of *naam*. Because with *naam* ego has to be displaced, therefore Guru Ji wants us to make optimal use of this opportunity to remember *naam*. *Naam* will be the harbinger of bliss. So, Guru Ji is trying to inspire us with these words to embark on remembrance:

“elhw Kwit clhu hir lwhw AwgY bsnu suhylw j”

“*Eehaan khaatt chalaho har laahaa, aagai basan suhaelaa.*”

(SGGS: 13)

Meaning: Earn the profit of *naam* here (in this world) and depart with it, so that you will live blissfully hereafter.

One who learns how to die while alive learns how to kill ego, this in turn develops the intrinsic motivation. By developing intrinsic motivation one does not depend upon external approval or recognition for measuring one’s own success in life. Their motivation is fuelled by knowing the purpose of life. Those who depend on external motivation for their drive cannot stand up to tough challenges nor have a long-term commitment. But internal motivation provides them that fuel that helps them weather setbacks and maintain focus and have a strong mental attitude. It is because of their commitment, and understanding of the ego traits they completely purge their ego.

Once ego is completely purged and grace is obtained, one’s life becomes richer with the inner wealth. Because knowing the purpose of life, one has set a lofty ideal for himself/herself and in setting that ideal, one can soar from Earth to Heaven. When one soars mentally in the heavens then old age will come, but the effects of old age will be obliterated. The aging process is part of nature’s working, but the side effects of sickness can be avoided. It is for this reason Guru Ji has declared that *naam* is cure for all the diseases. Guru Ji is guaranteeing it with these words:

“srb rog kw AauKdu nwmu j”

“*Sarab rog kaa aoukhadh naam.*”

(SGGS: 274)

Meaning: The *naam* is the panacea, the remedy to cure all ills.

In addition it has been said that the person will not be affected by the vagaries of the old age as in these words:

“jrw mrw kCu dUKu n ibAwpY AwgY drgh pUrn kwm j”

“*Jaraa maraa kachh dhookh na biyapeh, aagai dhargai pooran kaam.*”

(SGGS: 824)

Meaning: The pains of old age and death shall not make one miserable. After death in the court of the Lord the success is assured.

We can see that Guru Ji has clearly defined that if the objective of life is clearly understood and one has worked toward its fulfillment, then neither the old age nor death can impair the quality of life at the later age. This is again amply demonstrated from the life of Guru Amar Das Ji who lived to the ripe old age of ninety five (95) years.

Guru Ji’s teaching is unique in the sense that it is asking us to prepare for our death. We plan for our children’s education, their wedding, and our own retirements but we fail to plan

for our own death. Here is some flavoring of some current thinking on the issues of death.

“Our expectations as a culture for end-of-life care are too low.” – Dr. Ira Byock;
Dying Well

“When it comes to dying, pain comes in many flavors.” – Robert Wrenn

Octavio Paz the famous Mexican poet reminds us that the civilization that denies death ends by denying life. Our Gurus have written about life and have written about death as well. We have failed to embrace that aspect as it creates a fear. But Guru’s teaching tells to die while one is alive so that fear of death is eliminated and every moment of life becomes celebration and then Guru Ji says even life after death also becomes a celebration.

We have seen that Guru Ji is not a taker of life but he is a giver of life. Even when Guru Gobind Singh Ji asked for heads in Anandpur Sahib, he bestowed a new life in the five who offered their heads. He gave them eternal life and made them his beloved Sikhs. Every Sikh, everyday, everywhere when they offer their prayers, immortalize the saga of five beloved by remembering them as an integral part of the prayer. By invoking their names in our prayers we are not only immortalizing their saga alone, but it also serves as an inspiration for us that we can be transformed too. When we offer our head to our Guru, we can join the elite whom we honor daily in our prayers. By dying the death of ego we can live an eternal life. That is the role and message of Guru Ji; that we can transform death to life. The death is not a physical death but the death of ego. Because with our mind we have associated ourselves with our body, but Guru Ji wants to change it to association with the Immortal God.

Even if the sickness and hospitalization becomes a reality with the old age still the end does not have to be in defiance fighting for life. Again I would like to quote from Dr. Sherwin Nuland:

“The medical training makes doctors treat old age as an adversary, but it does not have to be treated as that.”

Instead Gurus and Bhagats have shown that death should not be a cause of mourning but of celebration. Here are few quotes that reflect this view point.

“sPI sPI Bel sPI jwqRw J”

“*Safal safal bhaee safal jaatraa*” (SGGS: 687)

Meaning: My life journey has become fruitful, fruitful, and fruitful.

By saying it thrice Guru Arjan Dev Ji has underscored its significance and relevance. Now let us see what Namdev Ji says:

“sPI jnmu mo kau gur klnw J”

“*Safal janam mo kau gur keena*” (SGGS: 857)

Meaning: The Guru has made my life fruitful (successful).

The death of a close one is a call that reminds us that our turn is coming too. Guru Ji has shown that potential and the reach of human beings. If the death and the knowledge can galvanize us to explore our true potential, soar and then experience the soul, it will change our perspective too. When one is clear that one has accomplished what is there to accomplish, makes one free from the rat race of the world. One has understood and experienced that being is not a body but the soul thus the fear of death also departs. Kabir has expressed that feeling in these words:

“kblr ijsu mrny qy jgu frY myry min Awnpdu J mrny hl qy pwelAY pUrnu prmwnpdu J”

“Kabir jis maranae thae jag ddarai maerae mun anand. Maranae hee thae paaeeai pooran paramaanand.

(SGGS:1365)

Meaning: Kabir, the world is afraid of death - that death fills my mind with bliss. It is only by

death that perfect, supreme bliss is obtained.

Let us pray to Guru Ji that it may become our experience too. It will not just eliminate the fear of death but it will take us to the new heights where it is anticipated as final end in the physical form and becoming one with God living for ever.

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Sikhism and Buddhism: A Comparative View

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Buddhism is a missionary religion with a universal appeal. Buddha commanded the first batch of sixty-one disciples at Varanasi in the following words, "Walk monks, on your tour for the blessing of the many, for the happiness of the world, for the welfare, the blessing, the happiness of gods and men."

Like Sikhism, the message of Buddha transcends the barriers of caste, creed, country and nation. Its spirit of reason, tolerance ethics of love, purity, gospel of peace and spirituality have penetrated deep into the veins of Indian civilization. "Gautam the Buddha," remarks Dr. Radhakrishnan "is the voice of Asia. He is the conscience of the world".

In the strife torn world of today where nations are competing with one another in military armament, the gospel of love, compassion, non-violence, peace brings light and hope to the distressed mankind where hatred, materialism and terrorism is the order of the day. It is panacea for terrorism, violence plaguing the modern world. Mahatma Gandhi, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Ambedkar have been influenced by his cult of peace, live and let love. The western thinkers are being influenced by Buddha's message of wisdom, love, faith and reason. Recently on Dr. Ambedkar's birthday, forty lakhs Dalits embraced Buddhism (Times of India, New Delhi dated Nov. 10, 2006)

The research scholar has written in detail fifteen chapters on Buddhism, i.e. introduction, conception of God, soul, man, world, nature, Karmic theory, ethical aspect, conception and role of knowledge, Trishna Mar, Nirvana, Meditation, social welfare, conception of women and family life, cult of non-violence compared with cult of saint soldier of Sikhism, concept of True Brahamin and Ahrat, Rituals and casteism, differences between both the religions.

Buddhism does not believe in a Creator of the world and permanent soul, like Sikhism. There is no place for belief in God, prophet incarnation of God revelation of spiritual message from God from time to time. According to Sikhism, world or nature has been created by God and he has installed himself in it and is watching his play of creation happily. The world is the outward manifestation of Nirguna God. Buddha believes in the theory of evolution. There is evolution of the world without any divine powers.

Buddhism does not believe in eternal soul. According to Sikhism, body is the temple of God in which are revealed precious pearls of knowledge. It is light illumined. There is divine spark in all of us. The main source of origin of all of us is one God. Buddhism believes that body is the temple of mind. Reincarnation is continuation of mind. While in Sikhism it is continuation of soul. Death is a change of garment. The body dies, the soul is eternal like the eternal Lord. The drop is contained in the ocean, the ocean in the drop. According to Buddhism, there is continuity of the mind from one life to another. Mind takes birth again and again. Mind does not die, it is the body that dies.

There is the Buddha Nature, the seed of enlightenment in all of us which developed manifests as knowledge, good thoughts and good actions. We all have the potential Tathagarbha for attaining enlightenment. Man is to carve out his own destiny. He is to

achieve Nirvana or become enlightened through his own efforts. Like Sikhism there is no place for grace of God in Buddhism. Man has to become his own light house (ytw =vtu CJ) says Lord Buddha.

Like Sikhism, Buddhism also believes in the theory of Karma; we reap the fruit of our actions. Imprints of our actions are left on our minds which become our Karma and we take birth accordingly. As a pitcher is filled drop by drop, in the same way the pitcher of our life is filled drop by drop by our good or bad actions and we take birth accordingly. As we sow, so shall we reap. Ideas seem to be the same. There is difference of words. Instead of soul, Buddha gives importance to mind. Buddhism emphasizes, the training of mind through meditation and inculcation of positive values in life. Sikhism also emphasizes meditation of God's name and inculcation of higher values in life. Leading a pure life, like a lotus makes a man Brahmgyani. Like Buddhism training and controlling the mind is equally emphasized in Sikhism. "One who conquers the mind conquers the world", says Guru Nanak. According to Buddhism mind is the origin of our thoughts. And our thoughts shape our actions.

According to Sikhism God has created man in his own image. The human body is coveted by Gods even. The all-round development of spiritual, mental, ethical powers help us to achieve salvation which is Nirvana according to Buddhism. While Sikhism considers the body as sacred temple of God, Buddhism considers this human body also a dirty machine producing filth and garbage. Why to protect and guard an unclean machine for making impurity. But it also believes that we are to take advantage of this human boat to gather merit and ferry across the ocean of life.

But the most glaring aspect of Buddhism is its moral ethical aspect which brings Buddhism closer to Sikhism. The daily prayer of a Buddhist is, "Abandon evil doing, practice virtue well." Shantideva a renowned Buddhist scholar says, "In the wealth of virtue I rejoice. May all beings be happy" is similar to 'Sarbat Ka Bhalla.' The vices are the chains around our neck. They can be cut by the development of virtues in life which are our real friends, says Gurbani. Sikhism like Buddhism lays great emphasis on virtuous conduct. Without the development of virtues one cannot become a real Saint. Buddhism lays great stress on the development of positive values thus replacing the negative ones. Negative emotions like lust, anger, avarice bring suffering and grief. Positive actions help in enlightenment. For the development of positive values and right conduct 'eight-fold path' and six *paramitas* are recommended which are patience, love, non-violence, right endeavour, right conduct, meditation, concentration and wisdom. Buddhism emphasizes 'three jewels' which are *Buddham Sharnam Gacchami, Sangham Sharnam Gacchami, Dhamam Sharnam Gacchami*. 'Buddham' stands for wisdom, enlightenment, removal of ignorance. 'Dhamam' stands for good conduct and inculcation of eternal values in life. 'Sangham' stands for the holy company of scholars or in the words of Gurbani, *Sadhsangat*. But with *sadhsangat, Pangat*, community dining, singing of Gurbani and *Katha* are plus points in Sikhism.

Maitreya a great Buddhist scholar recommends four wheels of dharma for inculcation of good values in life. They are guidance of the Guru, living our lives according to the principles of Buddhism, third wheel is virtuous conduct, fourth wheel is profound aspiration towards enlightenment. The aim of Buddhism is to achieve Nirvana, to become Buddha, the enlightened one or Brahmgyani in the words of Gurbani, by developing Bodhichitta and Bodhisatva. Even the enlightenment is to be achieved for the welfare of all. Like Sikhism, Buddhism also believes in the service of humanity at large. The ultimate goal of Buddhism is enlightenment for each and everyone. The aim of Buddhist ethics is the regeneration of humanity at large. Buddha stands for the awakening of all. Like Sikhism he wrote his message in the language of the masses, to take it to the doors of people.

But there are certain glaring differences between both the religions. Buddhism says that there is great suffering in this world. It takes a pessimistic view of life and to escape from these sufferings it advises meditation, life of a monk in solitude, abandoning family life just with a begging bowl and a few belongings, dressed in garments coveted by no body. Sikhism does not believe in escapism. The example of Banda Bahadur is before us. The tenth Guru brought about his transformation and from Madho Dass vairagi converted him into a valiant hero, Banda Bahadur whose name is written in golden words in the annals of history. The Gurus stand for a life of action, earning one's livelihood through the sweat of his brow. Never fall on the feet of a Guru who goes begging. The philosophy of Sikhism can be summed up in the words of Guru Arjun in the following words.

“You live your life making earnest efforts,
And make your life happy through rightful earnings.
Meet thy Lord through contemplation,
And your anxieties will be dispelled.

(M. V. P-522)

According to Buddhism family life is a pit of burning coal. Sikhism holds family life and women in great esteem. There is no need of renouncing the world or the responsibility of a householder. God, for the True One is within all of us 'like the fragrance in the flower.' Buddhism believes in peace and non-violence. Sikhism does believe in it but emphasizes to take up the sword, as a last resort when all other means have failed, in self-defence. It is a religion of Saint Soldiers. The real hero is one who dies for the defence of Dharma. Though cut to pieces limb by limb, yet never leaves the battle field. One should be a hero in the strife of life.

Guru Gobind Singh's prayer to God is, "From righteous deeds I may never refrain, Fearlessly May I fight all the battles of life. With confident courage claiming the victory, Fearlessly may I fight all the battles of life, May I die fighting with limitless courage, in the battle of life.

(Guru Gobind Singh: Dasam Granth, P – 99)

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Baba Sheikh Farid – A Paradigm of Altruism

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Though Baba Sheikh Farid composed his verses in chaste Punjabi yet these are beyond the comprehension of a present day layman since the poetic verses are based on metaphysics. The late Prof. Gurbachan Singh Talib rendered his verses into English with a view to making the readers' understand the intrinsic meaning, in India and abroad. Basically, it is a part of wizardry inherent in his translation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib into English. The outstanding feature of Baba Farid's verses is that these were written in the people's *lingua-franca*, thus making it convenient for the contemporary readers and scholars to understand the underlying mystic message. Translation is in simple terminology within the parameters of the original text without altering the main thought of the great Sufi-Saint which is the need of the time.

Morality: Baba Farid is said to be the phoenix of Islamic Sufism. Idolatry has no place in his thought; Idealism is the keynote of his philosophy. His verses are virtually a code of conduct, do's and don'ts that remain valid today. In simple words, the pursuit of rules of conduct that make life noble, respect for truth and detachment from worldly possessions sum up three truths: True conduct, True knowledge, and Right conduct. Compassion and

harmony are two cardinal points of Baba Farid's philosophy. Essentials of secularism and universal brotherhood are the other salient features. Farid says: that death defies the calendar, so it is essential to set one's house in order well in time. Dualism has no place in Farid thought. To remain un-ruffled during adversity is paramount for human beings. 'Tit for tat' attitude is unethical. So is the case with affluence which leads to greed, for greed is an impediment to humanism. The people of Punjab – indeed India – owe it to him (and themselves) to remember him for ushering in the message of purity and leading a pious way of life.

A Vanity Fair: The prevalent theme of Baba Farid's teachings is the evanescence of human life and its false vanities. He says: those people who are indifferent to the existence of God are a burden on earth. Frisking desires were condemned by him. Time is fleeting, so accomplishment of good deeds needs early initiative. Scepter and crown must tumble down: was his serene message. In a way, he warned the present generation to beware of the impending holocaust due to nuclear war. In one of his verse, he clearly mentions: "tomorrow is today, you're worried about yesterday, living in the present is a must". He enunciated, in an allegorical way, that consider life a bride and death as the bridegroom, which will carry you away in wedlock. All else is frivolous in the ephemeral world. He thought that worldliness is a hidden fire clouding human thought and vision. In the present day world, the medical science has established that death is a disease which slowly consumes the human body. For Sheikh Farid human life is an ongoing process and death is the real verity. In one of his verses he writes: "The end is approaching the past far behind." In a simpler way, it can be said that time once gone cannot be recalled. Our life, sweet as sugar, is thus turned into slow poison. The hidden message is not pessimist, but reminds man to work for the welfare of humanity lest we should repent afterwards. Mere exhortation to do good is not fruitful. Good deeds must be accomplished so that Satan may not lead you astray. Farid taught us to be bold even in misery and asked us to observe grass under our feet which is cut and trampled, but has the power to regenerate itself. The present world is bent upon degenerating itself through egoistic methods which needs an immediate check.

Relevance Today: It can be said with ease that Farid's message is a prelude to the then and the present state of affairs. In the name of Master i.e. the eternal God, Farid sought mercy for the suffering people. The United Nations has been singing the same sermons of saving human rights. Abolition of war is the timely need; as Farid had said, "Cursed is the life of those who have sought other than Him." The path of human love is very difficult to attain, but in Farid's verses, "Hard will be the lot of those seeking to indulge their palate with delicacies." Baba Farid taught through his verses to toil till until our last breath, to reap the benefits of life. An idle life is a wasted opportunity. He exhorts us to show compassion on the downtrodden. Farid says that worldly pleasures are like sugar-coated capsules full of poison. So, it is better to turn to piety. Sheikh Farid had set certain principles for the amelioration of the people in a welfare state. The best development model enunciated by him is the betterment of the masses, i.e. propagation of equality, fraternity and liberty. Corroborating Baba Farid's thought, Guru Arjun Dev Says: "As fire purifies base metal, so does fear of God consume impurities of negative thinking."

An Egalitarian Society: God has created the human race so that they should promote overall welfare. All races, tribes, sects and classes should be allowed to share equally in the Bounty of their Heavenly Father. It can be concluded that those who love mankind serve God. For it is they to whom God will say these words, "Well done, My good and faithful servant", irrespective of race, colour or religion.

Farid was acclaimed a Darvesh despite his black gown. Not the appearances but the inner

insight makes a man great. Worldly wealth is deceptive. Farid was a great lover of nature. By his words, "Gone are the birds which brought life to the pools", laments the human indifference to the fauna and flora. In a way, Baba Farid advocated the stoppage of cruelty to animals and birds and thus saving the rare species on the verge of extinction. He also warned against environmental degradation. Guru Arjun Dev, in this continued theme, says, "Farid, the Creator is manifest in His creation, the creation is in Him." Sheikh Farid also warned, "Behold the entire world is by suffering gripped". The world is divided in power blocks by these standards and no solution is visible for mitigating human sufferings. The developed nations are dictating their terms both militarily and economically to deprive the underdeveloped countries of their rights.

Compassion: Such is the fibre of Farid's sayings' so as to salvage human beings from suffering. Baba Farid said, "Each heart is a shining jewel, it is sin to break any; shouldst thou seek to find the Beloved, break no one's heart".

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