

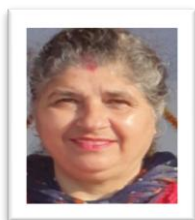
Guru Nanak Dev's Teachings and its Relevance in Modern Era

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Abstract

Sikhism was founded by a first Sikh Guru, Guru Nanak Dev. Sikhism is based on his teachings and those of the nine Sikh Gurus who followed him. Guru Nanak Dev ji as we know was the founder of Sikhism. His teaching provides many solutions regarding matters of life and translated them into action. In the modern era our new generation have already dual of life i.e. they make they living into to fulfil materialistic desires, they make ideal standards for others to follow but not for themselves. At present time the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev ji are more relevant then the Guru ji's time when He was born. In this paper tried to focus on the study of his social, cultural, economic, political and spiritual teachings and its relevance at present time. Guru Nanak ensured that individuals or groups of individuals are not treated differently or less favourably, on the basis of their specific protected characteristic, including areas of race, gender, disability, religion or belief, age and in diversity is reflected the same light of got. It is the same light of god in everyone that makes us equal.

Keywords: Relevance, Teachings, Humanism, Spiritual, Era.

Introduction

Guru Nanak was the founder of Sikhism, one of the youngest religions. Guru Nanak became the first Sikh Guru and his spiritual teachings laid the foundation on which Sikhism was formed. Considered a religious innovator, Guru Nanak travelled across South Asia and Middle East to spread his teachings. He advocated the existence of one God and taught his followers that every human being can reach out to God through meditation and other pious practices. Interestingly, Guru Nanak did not support monasticism and asked his followers to lead the life of honest householder. His teachings were immortalized in the form of 974 hymns, which came to be known as '*Guru Granth Sahib*,' the holy text of Sikhism. He travelled to places far and wide teaching people the message of one God who dwells in every one of God's creations and constitutes the eternal Truth. It is part of Sikh religious belief that the spirit of Guru Nanak's sanctity, divinity and religious authority descended upon each of the nine subsequent Gurus when the Guruship was devolved on to them. Guru Nanak Dev Ji died on September 22, 1539 at the age of 70. At present Sikhism have completed 550 years. The period is comparatively brief as historically but it has been an eventful period. During the five centuries its great existence has known persuction and triumph. It was the period of decadence and reform by his higher spiritual, social and ethical teachings. At that time history begins with Guru Nanak Ji and continuous for two centuries through a line of successors. Each of them representing a decision by a Guru Nanak Dev Ji. He has play a vital role to establish the idealistic society, even in the modern era. Modern era means "*The Modern Age, or Modernity*", It is the postmediaevalera, a wide span of time marked in part by technological innovations, urbanization, scientific discoveries, and globalization, Huge political, social, and economic changes marked the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the late modern period.

The teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji are dispressed throughout his numerous works. The basics of his teachings is a brief in a personal God, the omnipotent creator of the universe, a being beyond time and human comprehensive knowledge with the Timeless one. In this paper we are engaged with in a quest of His teachings. Without some understanding of him and of his teachings one can not understand the Sikh religion, not the Punjab and Punjabiculture and not even the present problems of the

Cotemporary society.His period of time which was different and that it made a mark throughout history and civilization.

Significance of the Study

As we know we have entered into 21st century and facing so many challenges and problems in our lives to very rapid advancement of science and technology.

The study shows that the ongoing societal value system decreased and not of much use of the future and present time deeper probe into Guru Nanak Dev ji's teachings or thoughts will be of greater help and relevance for the idealistic development of the society. It is assumed that all the members of society included rulers and ruled will be benefited by the theology of the Guru Nanak Dev ji's teachings and their relevance to the modern time.

Statement of the Problem

The present study is an directed to find out relevance of great thought of Guru Nanak Dev ji in modern era. The study is titled as : "Guru Nanak 's teachings and its relevance in modern Era".

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are as given below:

1. To study the brief history of Sikhism.
2. To study the valuable teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji.
3. To study the idealistic approach of Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

Discussions

The main sources to seek information about Guru Nanak Dev ji are varaan Bhai Gurdas ji, *Janmasakhis* (Birth stories) and scripture of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. It had been cleared out about the complete teachings of Guru Nanak Dev ji. Guru Nanak's writings bear witness to his experience to God, life, religion and believe. A great thinker J.E. carpenter writes about the theology of Guru Nanak Dev ji that the fact that Guru Nanak,s thought is not sent out systematically does not mean that it is necessarily inconsistent. On the contrary, one of the great merits of his thought is its very consistency. The accusation of inconsistency has been levelled against him.¹ But we believe that the system of His teachings outlined in the present paper will constitute a rebuttal of the charge. Different aspects of his teachings create a aesthetic environment on the human mind towards humanity and to the path of Almighty. Nanak's biggest spiritual contribution to mankind was the teaching of Science of the Word (Naam) which unlike other science disciplines is a perfect science which forms the subject matter of the Adi Granth compiled and composed by the Fifth Guru Guru Arjan Dev ji.Guru Nanak Dev ji writes :

Nanak, without the end weilling Name of God
One endures suffering throughout the four ages.²

And further he stated that;

In all lights is his light

the lord supports the weave of the fabric of the universe.³

Guru Nanak introduced an agenda of peace, reconciliation and community cohesion to make an inclusive society and a just world possible. He

believed that integrity, respect and trust between different communities would lead to dignity for all people.Theology is the correct word to define the whole teachings of Guru Nanak Dev ji .His teachings revolves around the understanding of the nature of God. This is not of course set out in any systematic form. He produced a coherent pattern for the society.

He tells about the purpose of human existence is to connection with the divine existence of the God, He who creates, sustains, and destroys. Guru Nanak clarified the misery of this self central cantered life and continued transmigration. By Almighty's divine order(Hukam) God has so created and regulated the world. He who hears and responds to the Guru will through his response begin to comprehend the word (Sabada) the necessary response is that of adoring love expressed through meditation on the Name (Nam)of God. Ascending to higher end yet higher levels of spiritual perception he finally reaches the ultimate, a condition of ineffable union with the Eternal one in which all earthly bonds are dissolved and the cycle of death and rebirth finally brought to an end.⁴

The main concepts of Guru Nanak Dev reveal the internal soul of man. These are the evident of true religious figures. The true essence of religious aesthetics throws a light on His teachings. His most teachings denounced the caste system and taught that every human is equal, regardless of colour, creed or gender. His teachings main attributes are:

1. Naam Japna (Remembering God through meditation)
2. Vand chakkna (Selflessly serving others)
3. Kirat karna (Sharing his own income and resources with others)

His teachings help the every human with everyday life. He started his teaching firstly about the nature of God in Mulmantra

There is one god

Truth is his name, He is the creator

He is without fear, He is without hate

He is timeless and without form

He is beyond birth and death, the enlightened one

He can be known as the Guru's Grace

Meditate on the name

He was true before the creation

He was true when ages commenced

He is true now

He will always be true.⁵

In this context principal Jodh singh paraphrases it as follows:

This being is one. He is eternal. He is immanent in all things and the Sustainer of all things. He is the creator of all things. He is immanent in His creation. He is without fear and without enmity. This being is not subject to time. He is beyond birth and death. He is himself responsible for his own manifestation (He is known) by the Guru's grace.⁶

But on the other hand there is 'duality' (duvidha) which creates the difference between God and human. In his thought 'duality' is to be destroyed but it is to be a swallowing up in mystical union. MostSikh scholars, commentators, however, begin

their translations of this passage with some such words as, it is believed that:

But Thou dost order (the three)

As seems good to thee and (they act)

In accordance with Thy command.⁷

Guru Nanak was a wise statesman and forged peace. At Emnabad he was herded with dozens of innocent people and imprisoned by Babur, the First Mughal Emperor. All the inmates were asked to grind corn. But Nanak's grinding wheel moved by it.

On learning this, Babur summoned Nanak for an audience before him. Nanak advised Babur to act righteously with justice. All the prisoners were released.

The oneness of God unites the whole humanity one human chain. Guru Nanak also prescribed the nature of ingenerate man's nature is changeable and depended upon his affiliation when his affirmation transferred from the world to the divine 'Name'. He will be capable to do everything for the goodness of humanity. Human's pride of self centeredness sin, and so of death and transmigration. To understand the man's nature there have need to understand the man:

The main acts as the man itself dictate.

Sometimes it expresses virtue,

Sometimes sin.⁸

Pride (Haumai) is the main distraction for every man on the path of his divine life. Haumai epitomizes the condition of unregenerate:

In haumai he comes and in haumai he goes;

In haumai he is born and in haumai he dies;

In haumai he gives and in haumai he takes;

In haumai he acquires and in haumai he casts away;

In haumai he is truthful and in haumai he lies;

In haumai he pays regards, sometimes to

Virtue and sometimes to evil⁹

Guru Nanak Dev ji clearly shared a common tradition which offers the understanding of humanity. His all teachings are milestone for whole humanity for the all ages. He was the one who passed on the Guru Gadi (Guruship) to the second Guru in old age and created the institution of Guruship and also goes on till the tenth Guru Gobind Singh ji. So adult education and non - formal education already conceived, practised and emphasised by Guru Nanak are being advocated by the educationists in the present era.¹⁰ and "Guru nanak followed by those of the other gurus in chronological order since all the guru used the same poetic signature nanak their composition are distinguished by the .Mahala."¹¹

To know clearly what he contributed towards the people one has go through his history, only then he can understand this.

Findings

Guru Nanak is one of the most important religious figures to have contributed to women empowerment in India. Guru Nanak appealed to his followers to respect women and to treat them as their equal. He said a man is always bound to women and that without women there would be no creation on earth. He also restored the faith in God by saying that the Creator is deeply involved in what man is trying to achieve on earth. While most of the major religions

including the sects of Hinduism and Buddhism advocated monasticism in order to achieve salvation, Guru Nanak came up with a religion that supports the lifestyle of an average householder. Most importantly, he also taught his followers the methods to attain salvation while leading a normal life within the society. He, in fact, stressed on the importance of leading life with one's family members. Not only did he teach his ideals, but he also served as a living example. When Guru Nanak left for the heavenly abode, nine other Gurus followed his teachings and continued to spread his message.

Through his teachings, Guru Nanak had become extremely popular among both the Hindus and the Muslims. His ideals were such that both communities found it ideal. They both claimed Guru Nanak to be one of their own and needless to say, Guru Nanak's ardent followers who called themselves the Sikhs (disciples) were also in the race along with the Hindus and the Muslims. According to the legend, when Guru Nanak approached his final few days, a debate between Hindus, Muslims, and the Sikhs arose as to who should be given the honour to perform the last rites. While Hindus and Sikhs wanted to cremate the mortal remains of their Guru as per their custom, the Muslims wanted to perform the last rites according to their beliefs. When the debate failed to conclude amicably, they decided to ask Guru Nanak himself as to what needs to be done. When they all approached him, Guru Nanak asked them to bring flowers and lay them next to his mortal remains. He asked the Hindus and the Sikhs to place their flowers on the right side of his body and the Muslims to place theirs on the left. He said that the honour of performing the last rites would go to the party whose flowers remain fresh for a night. When Guru Nanak breathed his last, the religious communities followed his instructions. When they came back the next morning to see whose flowers remained fresh, they were surprised to see that none of the flowers had wilted, but the biggest surprise was that Guru Nanak's mortal remains had disappeared and all they could see in place of his body were fresh flowers. It is said that the Hindus and the Sikhs picked up their flowers and buried it, while the Muslims did the same with their flowers.

Guru nanak discovered that the Root cause of all the ills of the society steeped in ignorance and corruption nothing could be done for them .He preached against idol worship and caste distinctions both by percept and example .He choose to dine with persons of low castes and classes .

Conclusion

On the basis of Guru Nanak Dev's ideology we can say that Guru does not talk of sermons of sentimental humanism .He always stressed upon the good conduct of life. He always insists on renouncing mental pride. The study may be conclusively summarised at the end in the terms of ideology of humanity its social implications. It is lively, humanistic and practical philosophy which teaches us a realistic approach towards social and divine life. He practiced and preached brotherhood and selfless service (Sangat and Pangat). This ethic of service can be

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seen all over Punjab even today. Guru Nanak's teachings resonate with especial relevance today, as an antidote to the intolerance, fanaticism, and inequality we see all over World. Guru Nanak Dev Ji lived by example. Whatever He preached, He lived by that. It teaches us that we should be role models for others. We should live the life we want others to live. That is true for we as parents and as leaders in the society.

If the human race is not divided on the basis of caste, creed, color, religion and gender and there is equality of all human beings; if we can give up ego, pride, haumai and be humble as taught by Guru Nanak dev Ji, many mental health problems can be prevented. We should respect other cultures and deliver services in culturally sensitive way as prescribed by Guru Nanak Dev Ji. If everyone practiced his teachings all problems could have been prevented.

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