

GURU TEGH BAHADUR'S LIFE, WORK AND VISION

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ABSTRACT

Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth guru, was a prophet-martyr whose ennobling spirit, transcendental vision, and humanistic outlook, are reflected in his life and poetical compositions. He disapproved of the theocratic nature of Aurangzeb's regime. In the present paper the author tried to conclude the vision of ninth Sikh guru keeping in mind the shining messages, Man's aim of life, fearless state of mind, morality, spirituality, sacrifice, creative role of divine, sublimation of desire and new model of spiritual perfection.

Keywords: Ennobling spirit, Transcendental vision, Morality, Spirituality, Sacrifice.

The Guru's life has a shining message for us. In times of deep distress and acute difficulties we should not break out of contemporary crisis and return to purely private life, but let the sense of moral and social duty rise in us to face the crisis and to control the catastrophe. To serve others at the risk of our own lives is a great moral and spiritual act, for true morality and spirituality are not divorced from social duty. Self-transcendence, for the Guru, is not merely reaching into the chamber of the Divine within, but it is also reaching out to other human beings through selfless service and sacrifice. God-centeredness, the Guru's life reveals, is the fulfilment of manliness and not its negation. Man's aim is not to liberate him but to liberate others, to work, to act in complete accord with the cosmic order, not for one's personal ends. We should care not for our own private good but for the good of our fellow-beings. His life reminds us that the spirit of man cannot be overcome by perils. It highlights the fact that external forces may imprison the body but cannot assail the soul of a man who is anchored in God and devoted to the Cause of righteousness and freedom. The Guru's life-history further teaches us that we should not look vainly for miraculous interventions in life but should build inner strength to accept all sufferings cheerfully.

Fearlessness State: Prejudices and passions are as prevalent to-day as they were in seventeenth century, only the garbs have changed. Real progress demands a commitment to honest living. A life of Self-discipline and the development of our essential

human nature which is divine in its essence. Material standards are not a yardstick for creative living. The cult of greed and acquisitiveness of lust and violence betrays the symptoms of a sick society. Our ills are due to the fact that our modern life has become divorced from the moral and spiritual life. Man is more than a mere pleasure-hunting and money-mining animal. Mere dissatisfaction with the surface consciousness, as is seen in Existentialist philosophy, is not enough. We should look more deeply into the meaning of existence and move towards its higher purposes. The modern world flaunts the philosophy of meaninglessness of despair. This is due to man's identification with the transient, lower self. Its cure lies in turning to God, the Divine within. To reach the divine is to reach the pinnacle of human evolution, liberation from fear that is caused by the inexorable phenomena of change and flux. The Guru emphatically states that for a man who is anchored in God, there is no fear. Thanks to modern science which, taking a circuitous route via knowledge, has disclosed the spiritual dimension to the modern man. As such a new consciousness is rising in west that not only our surface consciousness but the structure of the universe in which it works is to be realized. Atomic physics has brought us to the threshold of spiritual vision.

Creative Role of The Divine: To the modern world the Guru's message is that neither individual nor social uplift is possible unless the creative role of the divine in man is recognised and actively

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brought into operation. That is the only panacea to purify the spheres of private, family, social and political relationships. The Guru's emphasis to shun calumny and acquisitive passion is also relevant to our present needs in our democratic and social setup. Irresponsible criticism is dangerous to the growth of an individual as well as to democracy. Acquisitive passions only breed the excessive worship of mammon and an indifference to values. And this leads to hoards of gold and vulgar display of wealth acquired by dubious means, blackmoney rackets which plague the land with corruption and servitude.

Sublimation of Desire: Man, according to the Guru, is more than a belly-filling, lust-gratifying and calumniating animal. He has to sublimate his desires to enter the plane of higher consciousness. Nor is man simply the outcome of "chance collocations of atoms," as modern scientific humanist considers him to be. Human birth is precious for it affords opportunities for self-refinement and self-enlightenment. The mystery of human existence is solved by the Guru when he points out that man is the victim of his inner urges and drives and at the same time he is rooted in the Reality out of which a galaxy of realities have sprung. What the world needs is a spiritual regeneration, founded on an enlightened understanding of the phenomenal world and the resultant discovery of the eternal Reality that underlies it.

Reconcile The Spiritual and The Historical For Humanity: All talks about Vedanta and Yoga are futile when the sword of the tyrant hangs on the head. The Guru teaches us that fear cannot be shaken off by drugging ourselves with myths and illusions but by willingness to offer sacrifice for the sake of truth and freedom. To the present age the Guru's message is to reconcile the spiritual and the historical for the good of the humanity. He urges us not to flee from horrors of history but to stand up to aggression by drawing power from the resources of inwardness.

Spiritual Perfection: The achievement of the Guru lies in offering a new model of spiritual

perfection at the time of great historical crisis. It is generally believed that "the mystical perfection is not realizable in history". But Guru Tegh Bahadur by bringing into operation His soul force-his amazing self-discipline and self-surrender to the cosmic will- showed that spiritual values, generally considered to be extra-historical values, too were rooted in history. The call of martyrdom came and he rose equal to the occasion. How urgent was the call of sacrifice! No less urgent than the call was the pulsation of human love and spiritual robustness that the Guru threw into that call. His martyrdom is unique in itself because it reveals that spirituality is a dynamic, progressive process; it enables one to reach the spiritual stage of fearlessness where the God-centredman, rising above the historical situation, projects his vision into the future, into a new dimension of progress. The Gurus sacrifice is, in fact, a remarkable case of spiritual perfection responding to the crying need of the hour. This is a living example of fusing the timeless spirit with the spirit of history, of harmonising self-enlightenment with the urgent demands of the world without.

Conclusion: By taking a total view of Guru Tegh Bahadur's life, work and vision, we find that His martyrdom is the crown and culmination of an evolutionary process in which morality, creativity and purpose are central. In his personal life and choice of sacrifice he reflects the highest values of Indian spiritual idealism linked with historical reality. He is indeed an embodiment of India's best self. His greatness shines forth from the holiness of the will-to-sacrifice.

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