

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF-SIKHS AND CURRENT SIKH ISSUES

Chapter—3 (I)

Guru Granth Sahib-Divine Source Of Present Age Jurisprudence And Laws- 1.

Guru Granth Sahib has so far been mostly considered to be the Divine guidance for spiritual matters, but it is also a Divine source of the present age jurisprudence and the laws.

The preambles of the constitutions of all the civilized countries of the world now ensure to all their citizens the democratic rules-

Governments, to be of the people, by the people and for the people, elected by them. The fundamental rights of the citizens, secularism and socialism are to be the guidelines for the enactment of other laws, just as-

.Justice-political, social and economic. Freedom of religion, expression and thought .individual equality and liberty in all respects equal protection of laws for every one .no discrimination or exploitation on any ground .social responsibility and service of mankind .inculcating virtues and discarding evils All these fundamental rights, duties and responsibilities based on the basic concept of brotherhood of mankind and truthful living with selfless service to humanity by inculcating virtues and eliminating vices, while totally discarding every type of discrimination and exploitation on any ground whatsoever and rather layig stress on human individual equality as all belonging to one human race being the creation of one and the only one God, the Almighty, have been emphasised in the Divine teachings of Guru Granth Sahib for the last over five centuries, though at that time there were autocratic rules, violating all the democratic norms and basic human rights. These were not only ceremoniously advocated in Guru Granth Sahib, but were practically ensured by the Sikh Gurus, by their supreme sacrifices in the exemplary peaceful manner, by some, while by exhibiting the excellent heroism in battle fields by some of them, followed by thousands of their Sikhs, whatever was the need of the day. In fact, The fatherhood of God, automatically leads to the brotherhood of mankind. The entire creation is the creation of the same one God, the Almighty; His light shines in all. The creator has created all the human beings with the same stuff as the builder of vessels makes all vessels from the same clay. The entire mankind is from the same fatherhood with His same light. There is only one God and all the human beings equally belong to Him. The entire creation is of one creator, so there can be no distinction between them as good or bad. The doctrine of Sikhism of Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Mankind and truthful living is the Divine source of the present age laws. Guru Gobind Singh proclaimed in his Divine hymns:

"Recognize the entire humanity as one race;" Akal Ustat) Guru Granth Sahib preaches-

"The entire mankind is partner in God's grace, who sees alien to none, being the creator of all (GGS 91)

"By Guru's grace, see all with one eye, as in every one the same light of God is contained." GGS 599

"Gathering the body of five elements, God infuses in it His immaculate light. God is all pervading and has created the creation. There is no other second. God is contained amongst all." GGS 1297.

"The creation is in the power of one creator, who by His might sustains" GGS 1410)

"All that the perfect Lord does is perfect. There is no deficiency or excess in it. One merges in perfect Lord by His Grace." GGS 1412. SAME INNER CONSCIENCE IN ALL "There is the same inner consciousness amongst all the human beings. Without inner consciousness God has created none." GGS 24.

SAME SOUL IN ALL

"The same light of the creator God, the soul, is in all human beings, which enlightens all." GGS 685.

"Entire humanity is of the same form brotherhood. It is due to different faiths and system that they look different. Someone by sharing his head becomes a Sanyasi and another Yogi yet another poses for a monk or ascetic; some call themselves Hindus, others claim to be Muslims; among them are Shias and Sunnis; Recognize all as belonging to one race of humanity; God as the Creator for Hindus, God as good for Muslims, God as sustainer and as merciful in all the same god. Recognize not another even in error or in doubt; worship that one alone as He is the supreme Lord of as all. It is only His form, His light that is diffused in one and all." (Guru Gobind Singh , Akal Ustat 15/85) "Temples, Mosques, Hindu worship and Muslim prayers are the same; all men are the same and it is through error that they are seen different; all men are endowed with the same eyes, same ears, same body and the compound of same elements; the Aulakh of Hindus, and Allah of Muslims mean the same Supreme one; The Purans and the Quran being of the same God. They are all of one form; One god made them all." (Guru Gobind Singh , Akal Ustat.)

THE DENOUNCEMENT OF CLASS and discrimination SYSTEM

It was proclaimed in Sikhism that sex is no ground for discrimination and the women are entitled to the equal status with men in all matters. "Why to lower the status of women, when there can be no life without her as only God, the Almighty is self created without woman. All the kings are born from women they why to denigrate her." (Asa di Var) The Hindu society had been miserably divided on caste and creed system in four castes, giving the superiority to Brahmans and untouchability to Shudras, with the dictum of their sage Manu that if their division is interfered with, Dharma, itself shall stand polluted. No one dared to challenge such inhuman system. In Hindu Gita sermons, even no voice was raised against such anti human slur. In Muslim scriptures Quran, women faced discrimination in several aspects in to comparison to man though it is free from caste and creed systems. In Sikhism all such discriminations have been outrightly rejected. Effective steps were taken in Sikhism to eradicate such discriminatory system. Sikh Gurdwaras were made open to each and every one conferring the equal status without any discriminations, whatsoever. Sikh congregations and community Kitchen were set up (Sangat and Pangat) to eliminate the distinctions of all sorts, where there was total equality in man and man and woman. The initiation of Sikh ceremony, Amrit of double- edged sword, obligatory for Sikhs is administered without any distinction of caste and creed, from the same vessel. Everyone at that time has to abandon his previous caste and creed to become member of Khalsa Panth with equal status. Sikhism has created a distinct classless society with full equality in every respect in total contradiction to Hinduism. As remarked by Dr. Gokal Chand Narang, author of History of Sikhs:

"Under the influence and guidance of Guru Gobind Singh, those persons become brave warriors, who had not touched the sword earlier and not even had placed any gun on their shoulders. Wahsermen, Barbars, Mehras (considered to be of lower caste) had become the generals , before whom, Kings and Nawabs were afraid of to come." Hari Ram Gupta in his book "History of Sikhs" remarked at page 189: "In Sikhism at the time of Amrit or baptism, the Sikhs gained five freedoms: 1. Deliverance from the bonds and prejudices of all previous religions, customs and practices. 2. Obliteration of and deliverance from the effect of past deeds. 3. Freedom from the influence of the previous race, caste or family lineage.

4. Freedom from the stigma attached to a previous calling or hereditary profession.

5. Deliverance from all previous rituals, prejudices and inhibitions. There was thus a complete break from the earlier religious practices, useless rites and rituals and the caste creed and class distinctions and divisions of Hinduism. Sikhism created totally classless nation, free from any discrimination or distinction, with dignity and honor for everyone in every respect.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The natural outcome of Brotherhood of Mankind is the social responsibility. Sikhism is distinct in this regard to emphasize the responsibility to society in all respects. All the other faiths and system previously at that time in the Eastern side of the world were laying stress on individual Moksha, Nirwan, and salvation, preaching no moral and social responsibility to the society. Rather involvement in the worldly pursuits in society was considered to be a distractions, impeding the spiritual progress. The world itself was considered to illusion and negation leading to disassociation from society. Sikhism discarded these traditional systems . It took altogether different approach that entire mankind being the creation of the same creator and of one brotherhood requires each one to serve the other. Every one is to seek Justice (Political, religious, social and economic) not for himself alone but for all others who are victims of injustice. A person who is to lead a life of normal way as householder has to show the due regards and services to all others of the society in which he is to operate and help them with the best of his capability to challenge the problems unitedly, which the society faces. Rather selfless service of humanity was made the cardinal rule than the selfish and vested individual interests to lead the life more harmoniously with the moral ethics. In Sikhism so much importance was given to the selfless service of mankind, that it leads to the unity with God. "He who serves humanity selflessly, gets united with God." GGS 286.

Selfless service of humanity earns the grace of God. (GGS 26)

"Whosoever serves God and humanity gets salvation and whosoever meditates in the Name of God , gets contentment and serves the humanity . He who gives in charity and alms to the needy out of his earnings is the pure householder." GGS 952.

"He who earns through honest means and gives in charity to the needy member of the society, alone knows the true way of life." GG 1245.

No religion or religious leader came forward to raise the voice against the brutalities, oppression And injustice committed on the innocent masses by the autocratic cruel rulers, against the exploitation of innocent masses in the name of religion and against the unjust social systems, and rather fled away to mountains and forests to save their skin. It was Guru Nanak who called upon the Sidh yogis at the time of his divine discussion with them that they should go back to suffering humanity to serve them and

import the divine knowledge which they openly claimed to be learned having the supernatural powers. It was Guru Nanak who condemned Babar, the Mughal invader on his face for committing cruelties on the innocent masses and gave his arrest, though he was released along with other innocents, when Babur came to know of his godly personality. It was Guru Nanak who condemned the kings as ferocious Tigers and their officers as dogs to harass the innocent masses. It was Guru Nanak who exposed the then so called religious leaders to exploit the innocent masses in the name of religion, alleging the Qazis (The Muslim Preachers) to be corrupt and fake Brahmins (the Hindu preachers) to be sucking the blood of the helpless, the Yogis knowing not the path of God, and those three responsible for the miseries of the public at large. It was Guru Nanak who criticized the social set up of that time to have been overpowered by sin, falsehood, lust, and evil designs to the innocent masses to be devoid of any Divine knowledge. It was Guru Nanak who with his divine message of truth, Name of God and pious deeds, preached the responsibility to society to get rid of the humanity of these impediments. His successors, the other Sikh Gurus paid a special attention to this aspect. All these teachings of Sikh Gurus are contained in Guru Granth Sahib. It was with this sense of social responsibility and selfless service to humanity that the hundreds of thousands of Sikhs sacrificed their lives to save and serve others, irrespective of the faiths and systems, they followed. It is a historical fact that Sikhs at the cost of their lives rescued thousands of captive Hindu womenfolk from the caravans of Ahmed Shah Abdali, each time in the area of Punjab, when they were forcibly abducting them from Delhi to their country (Afghanistan) without any resistance from any one else and then they would safely with honor take them to their homes. What a high standard of responsibility to society and service of mankind selflessly, to the suffering public had been infused in them by their religion which was altogether absent in the previous systems. Rightly remarked, eminent American world historian, Prof. Toynbee - "The Sikh movement was fore runner of Lenin's socialism by about 200 years, on ethical grounds."

Eminent British historian, J.D. Cunningham -

"It was reserved for Guru Nanak to perceive the true principles of reform and to lay those broad foundations which enabled his successor Guru Gobind Singh to fire the minds of his countrymen with a new nationality to give practical effect to the doctrine that the lowest is equal to the highest in race as in creed, in political rights as in religious hopes." (History of Sikhs) Eminent world British scholar, M.A. Macauliff -

"Guru Granth Sahib contains the sublime truths, the study of which can not but elevate the reader spiritually, morally and socially. They teach the highest and purest principles that serve to bind the man to man and inspire the believer with an ambition to serve his fellowmen and to sacrifice all and to die for their sake." (The Sikh Religion)