

Sikh Issues-Sikh Historical Perspective

chapter 4-16

All the interse and mutual problems including of marriage and divorce can be solved amicably by living in truthful Sikh way of life-

All the human interse and mutual problems arise mostly from egoism and other main evils arising from it, just as wrath, greed, attachment, lust, jealousy etc. Sikh religion provides the effective way to eliminate these vices and inculcate the virtues by abiding the continual presence of the creator in one's mind to enable him to live a truthful way of life, with a sense of individual equality and love between the human beings. Discrimination on the basis of sex, creed and caste has been totally forbidden in Sikh religion, which was visible in the previous religions, faiths and systems in one way or the other and as such no scope is left for the interse disputes on any matter whatsoever. Rather selfless service to others is advocated in Sikh religion considering the brotherhood of mankind. There are some matters which relate to the social system and are dealt with the laws of the countries of their own and with the change of the society the laws are also changed according to the need of the time. It certainly causes the confusion when the laws are some what different from the religious dictums, which are mostly permanent. One of such issues is of marriage and divorce. But in such matters also the difficulty only arises when the dictums of the religion are not strictly followed.

In Sikh religion a great significance has been given to the institution of marriage to be very sacred particularly as it advocates house holders life in the natural way and so there can be no scope of the break down of the marriage and the divorce. The marriage ceremony is solemnised where both the parties to the marriage are Sikhs in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib and under the blessings of the Guru and as such the commitment made there has to be permanent without any scope of backing it out.

The Gurbani, word of God -lawan as contained in Guru Granth Sahib is recited and sung at that solemn occasion, which relates to the stages of uniting the individual soul with the supreme soul, so as to attain that aim by both of the spouses remaining together for that spiritual path. In the Sikh rehat maryada it has been stated that the ideal placed before them is that they should become one in spirit.

"They are not wife and husband who only sit together. Rather they are wife and husband who have one spirit in two bodies." (Suhi ki war 111)

And-

They are asked to mould their conjugal relations on the model laid down in Epithalamium of Guru Ram Dass, which is part of marriage service. In it the Guru mentions four steps in the development of the life of love-Awe, Love, Restraint, and Harmony. At that time it is pointed out to the both of the parties to the marriage about their duties towards each other, towards their families, their society, and their religion and they accept it before Guru Granth Sahib, from which they can not back out later on. There is no provision of breaking down the marriage and divorce in Sikh religion.

However the laws of the different countries have the provisions of their own relating to the marriages and divorce and those provisions are changed in accordance with the change of the norms of the society in these matters, which are applicable to the citizens of those countries as they are governed by those laws.

In the last century the laws in practically all the countries were very strict as to the divorce. Only the grounds of adultery and change of religion were made the grounds for divorce as no marriage could be worked out in the existence of these grounds which were shaking the very foundation and the commitment of marriage. Legal separation for over a year was also essential, which was in a way to give the time to the spouses to live separately and realise its realities so as to come to compromise and actually most of the cases would end in compromise. However now irreconcilable circumstances are being made the ground of divorce in several countries and states. There are special provisions for custody of the children and their best interests. If there is any marital dispute then the children are bound to suffer without any fault of theirs. The parents must make their own adjustments and reconciliation for the sake of the children as the joint guidance, love and affection of both of the parents is a must for the proper raising of their children.

The guidance of the religion play a great part for the reconciliation of the parents. There can be no difficulty at least for Sikh couples as their religion teaches to be above personal egoism, elimination of vices and inculcation of virtues with due regard of individual equality and mutual understanding. More so their commitment to marriage is before their Guru and to have one spirit in two bodies. They must have the understanding of the higher values of their religion and to act upon it, which will never allow them to

break down their marriage. In the Sikh way of life, self awakening and inner realization is a must, by which one is able to recognize his own self. He who recognizes his own self comprehends God and the light of the Name of God comes to him. Awakening of mind by self-realization dispels all the dualities of mind. It is the human mind which gets purified by self-realization and by awareness with the light of God. In most of the cases, the inner consciousness is suppressed by the outer materialistic affects and until it is freed from it, the false wall stands in between and the mind is attracted to the temporary outer glory and allurements to take the pleasures and happiness, instead of its inner joy and bliss. These outer pleasures do not satisfy the mind as being not the real ones. So the mind goes and goes in to the fake worldly entanglements, but these can not provide the real inner bliss. The desires of the mind then go on increasing, taking into such a net, out of which it finds helplessness to come out. Its inner consciousness remains suppressed, keeping it far away from awareness. The human being in fact continues acting as if he is without his own mind, awareness and awakening, while imitating others, not using his own mind that what in reality is good or bad and how can he get the inner happiness and bliss. The mind can only regain the power for inner realization and awakening by following the Divine thought and procedure laid down for humanity by divine hymns of Sikh Gurus as contained in Guru Granth Sahib, in the association of holy persons and in holy congregation relying on the Name of God. The outer false wall is then removed. The outer worldly temptations and allurements cease to have any attraction. The real happiness and inner bliss is attained and the mind becomes abode of God and is enlightened. The mind accepts the will of God to be prevailing everywhere. The ego is burnt, vices are eliminated and virtues are inculcated to lead a truthful living with the continuous feeling of the presence of God in the mind. The Sikh way of life requires the eradication of egoism from which all the other vices erupt and virtues eliminate. Egoism is a chronic disease but it can be cured by the grace of God if the mind is attracted to Gurbani, the Divine word of Sikh Gurus.

The human mind, when comes to understand and identify the ego within it, that it is misleading it, then it gets the realization of the Divine power, as otherwise devoid of Divine knowledge it remains entangled in useless matters and remains miserable.

"The Name of God and ego both can never remain together at one place." GG 560.

"It is due to ego that God is not known, though it is within the body and soul" GG 205

"God and soul live together but the wall of ego separates them." GG 1263.

"It is with the fear of God in mind that one loses egoism. GG 777.

"Where there is egoism, God is not, where there is God, there cannot be egoism." GG 1092.

"The man comes to grief for forgetting the name of God, though He created him in individuation. GG 946."

Ego comes in human mind by forgetting the Name of God and it can be burnt by the meditation in the Name of God and reciting Gurbani where by God abides in the mind getting rid of ego and consequently of all the vices which are the outcome of ego and giving place to virtues. The self-centered mind of narrow egoistic tendencies is converted to God tuned of higher consciousness. One will remain in the world but above the materialistic entanglements to worldly desires, just as a lotus flower remains in water but not drenched by it. Just as a duck remains in water floating but not drowned in it.

The Sikh way of life requires the eradication of vices and acquiring of virtues. There can be no Truthful living without virtues. To do pious deeds is the message of Sikhism. In Sikhism the vices and virtues have been described elaborately. The meticulous methodology has been provided to eradicate the vices and acquire the virtues. The Name of God if continually meditated as to make the mind abode of God, purifies the mind, driving out the vices and inculcating the virtues as God is virtuous. "In human mind five master thieves have their abode; lust, anger, attachment, greed and pride, who rob the nectar and merits but self-centered mind does not understand this and no one hears the cries." GG 600.

If the mind is awakened, then with self realization and remembrance of God these thieves run away and do not enter again. They cannot steal or rob in the enlightened mind as they operate only in darkness (ignorance).

"The power, authority wealth, possessions, beauty, caste factors and youth are all cheats and robbers also as they create egoism and diminish the real objects and merits of human life and make the human mind unstable and infirm. These robbers have robbed the world and they not spared anyone's honor." GG 1288.

"Evil, intellect is the drummer, heartlessness, the butcheress, slander in heart sweepress, deceitful warth, pariah woman. (Such contemptuous words have been used for these evils.)" GG 76.

"Desire, slander of others, jealousy are all evils. The mind has to be washed off from such evils and vices and other impurities. Impurity of mind is avarice, impurity of tongue is falsehood, impurity of eyes is to covet others' women, wealth and beauty, impurity of ears is to hear slander of others." GG472

All the evils and impurities flourish in the mind and these have to be washed off from the mind by the mind itself, which can be so done by meditation of the Name of God, by the recitation of Gurbani, the word of God continually as to make the mind abode of God. "Those who are imbued with the love of the Name of God have no load of evils and impurities in their mind." GG 22.

"To weed out evil wickedness and sins one has to meditate on the Name of God." GG 22.

"When God's arduous service and control of evil passions become guides, then does the heart lotus bloom and honey trickles." GG 23.

"Vanish evils from the mind, God, the true one shall grant Truth." GG 22.

"Renouncing lust, wrath, deceit, moral sins, clash the true Name of God in heart." GG 436.

"Truth is the medicine for all. It removes and washes away the sins." GG 468.

"If instead of washing the stone God, one washes his mind, his filth shall be removed, his soul shall be cleansed and he will get deliverance." GG 474.

"By heartily repeating the Name of God, man's mind receives the treasure of real divine knowledge and supreme bliss." GG 505.

The five wandering thieves are held, mind's egoism is stilled. Sinful seeing and evil intellect flee away from God's divine knowledge and after the elimination of the vices, virtues flourish. The main virtues are truthfulness, contentment, righteousness, mercy, kindness, modesty, sincerity, good deeds, pure intent and mind, faith in God, service of humanity, God's admiration, surrender to God, wisdom- share virtues, as have elaborately been defined in Sikhism. Purity of mind is attachment to the true Guru, Purity of eyes is to see not another without God; purity of tongue is to taste and drink the Lord's elixir. The organs of the human body should be used in the way of God, who has provided them. All these virtues and purities are inculcated with the meditation in the Name of God and abide in God's Name in one's mind. The virtuous life is indeed Truthful life, which Sikhism presents to the humanity to adopt it. Human mind, which has been made an abode of God, would remain under the will of God and would opt for virtuous and pious deeds. The conscience will distinguish the evils and virtues. The vices and impurities can never enter the mind which stands enlightened. However, these may again try to enter it if they find the enlightenment of the mind dim. It is a regular process to keep the mind shining with God's light. However, once the mind is set in the frame of awareness, then it would itself try to remain so due to its inner happiness and bliss. Truthful living in the Sikh way of life, with pious deeds would continue during one's life span. The mind, body and soul would be the permanent abode of God, enabling the soul to unite with the creator. The message of Sikhism, of truth, the Name of God and pious deeds, if earnestly acted upon would be the sure guarantee to lead the virtuous and truthful life throughout, in the way of God, with the inner happiness and the bliss.

The Sikh way of life requires the simple living and high thinking under the higher moral and ethical values of Sikhism which elevate one spiritually, morally and socially, and are considered to have something of special value to the rest of the world, and its Divine message of love and peace rather to be conveyed to the world, being for the present space age, capable to solve the problems of the modern man, surrounding the humanity to day, as commented by most of the

eminent scholars of world religions and history. If Sikhs really understand and act upon the Divine dictums of their religion as contained in Guru Granth Sahib and observe the Sikh code of conduct and live in the true Sikh way of life, then there can be no reason for not solving their problems themselves amicably in all matters including of marriage and divorce with mutual understanding and regard to the sentiments of each other.