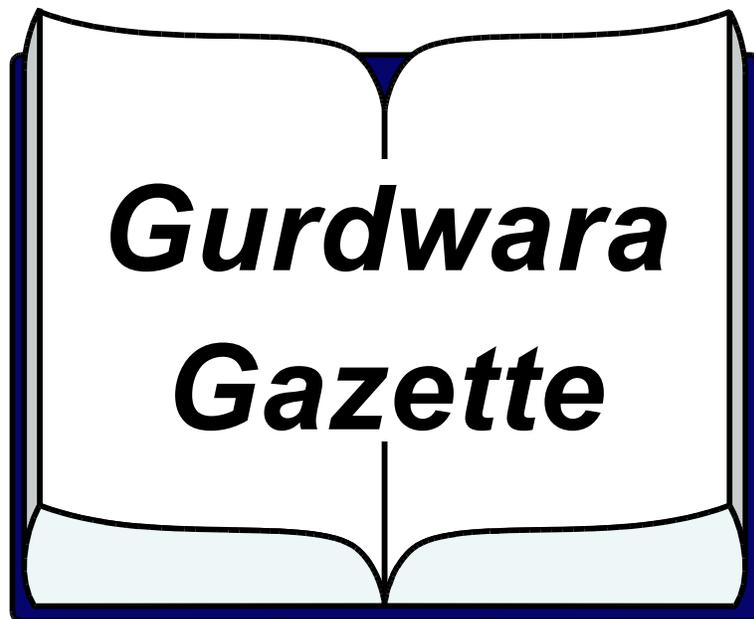


English Section



Editor : Diljit Singh 'Bedi'
Associate Editor : Harbhajan Singh 'Vakta'

DAYS COMMEMORATING HISTORICAL EVENTS
(16th January to 15th February)

16 January	Sri Guru Har Rai Sahib was born at Kiratpur Sahib. (16-1-1630)
17 January	The Govt. accepted Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee as the new name of Central Management Board. (17.1.1927)
18 January	Sher Singh (younger son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh) installed as Maharaja. (18.1.1841)
19 January	The Keys Agitation won by the Sikhs. The Governement handed over the keys to the Sikhs. (19.1.1922)
22 January	Delhi court awarded death sentence to Bhai Satwant Singh, Bhai Kehar Singh and Balbir Singh (In Indira Gandhi murder case). (22.1.1986)
24 January	129 members of SGPC and over one lac Sikhs took a vow before Akal Takht Sahib to lay their lives for Punjabi Suba. (24.1.1960)
25 January	Sikh Jatha reached Tarn Taran Sahib. The hired men of Mahant attacked the Sikhs. Several Sikh including Bhai Hazara Singh and Bhai Hukam Singh seriously wounded. (25.1.1921)
26 January	Baba Deep Singh Shaheed born in Pahuwind (Amritsar). (26-1-1682)
30 January	Martydom of Bhai Haqiqat Rai. (30.1.1742)
31 January	Ban on the Sikh sword withdrawn. A notification declared that Kirpan was not a weapon. (31.1.1936)
4 February	Bhai Hukam Singh of Wajau Kot (Gurdaspur) who had been injured on January 25, 1921 at Tarn Taran, died. (04.02.1921)
10 February	Anglo Sikh battle at Sabhraon. The Sikhs lost the battle due to treason of Lal Sinh, Teja Sinh and Gulab Sinh Dogra. Martydom of Sardar Sham Singh Attariwala. (10.2.1846)
15 February	Akali Dal swept the SGPC elections. (15.2.1939)



In continuation with the last edition:

**SRI GURU GOBIND SINGH JI
(1666-1708)**

-S. Surjit Singh 'Gandhi'

We are taking pleasure while publishing these contents from the book '*History of the Sikh Gurus*' by S. Surjit Singh Gandhi former Head of Sikh History Research Board (SGPC).

Chapter 15

SIKH SOCIAL IDEALS

A close study of the lives of the Gurus, their precepts and the Gurbani would lead us to conclusion that the Sikh social ethics has four pronounced ingredients namely social equality, universal brotherhood, seeking good of all (altruism) and social service. These ingredients are inter-related and interact. Altruism and social service are, in fact practical measures to realize universal-brotherhood, the actualisation of which in its turn, depends on the extent to which the principle of social equality is realized in the conduct of those who form the social fabric.

The concept of social equality is rooted in the belief that the whole matter is a unity and the moral world is that where this principle is crystallised is work-a-day life. The cravings for this unity became compulsive as it was baffled by the already established social institutions which did not aim at unification of mankind in terms of social equality. This being so, the Sikh Gurus had to comment upon the contemporary historical conditions prevalent in India and the problem of social equality had to be examined in the referential context of historical as also in terms of the social ideals. No wonder the problem of social equality has been discussed and analysed vis-a-vis (1) the view of caste stratification, (2) relations among economic classes, (3) Preceptor-disciple Relations, (4) relations among men of different religions and nationalities, (5) relations between sexes in society, (6) professions and occupations.

The Social organisation of the Hindus, in term of the castes, which is described by Sh. S.K. Maitra as the objective morality of the Hindus is completely rejected in Sikhism. "Complete equality among men is declared by the Sikh Gurus to be the fundamental moral principle required to regulate the social relations and communication." In Sikh

scriptures, the '*Rahit Namas*' and in the utterances of the Gurus, one can trace the following flash-points which invalidate the caste philosophy and dismantle the social edifice built thereon.

There is no fundamental difference among men in terms of physical constitution. In a polemical discussion with the Brahmins Kabir enquires: "How are you Brahmin and I a low caste? Is it that I have blood in my veins and you have milk?"¹ Thus exposing the hollowness and absurdity of the superior claims of the so-called superior castes over inferior castes in terms of differences in physical constitution. There is another reference in Guru Granth Sahib which conveys that if the Brahmins are different from others why they did not appear in the world by means other than the biological process.

The second point of criticism against the caste system is on empirical ground, Guru Nanak dev ji points out that laws of nature do not react differently in respect of higher-caste men. God makes no discrimination in favour of those who call themselves twice-born and hence the myth of caste-superiority is clearly to be seen as man-made. Guru Nanak Dev ji, vehemently contends 'what merit is the caste?' and he himself answers 'this is the real truth that he who lasteth the prison will die.'² This evidence is adduced by other Gurus also. Guru Amar Das ji regards caste as an abnormality, social perversity and unnecessary soul accretions. He points out with his characteristic argumentative vigour mixed with sweet flavour of his diction, 'Every one says, there are four castes but it is from God that everyone comes. The same is the clay which fashions the whole world; the same clay the potter moulds into vessels of all kinds. The five elements make up the body's firm and who can say who has less of these or more?'³

The third point of criticism against the caste system is that men have emanated from the primordial being. According to Guru Nanak Dev ji, 'There is one God who is all light and from it has emanated the world. None is inferior to anyone. God of the Sikhs is self-extent - all hearts are illumined by the light of Lord.'⁴ At another place in Guru Granth Sahib, Guru Nanak Dev ji declares, "You ought to see the light within all, and not look up for caste as the caste is of no consequence."

Sikhism does not harbour the belief that caste has been prevalent since the beginning. In the primordial state 'no men of caste or birth, high or low could be seen- there was no distinction of colour or coat or of the Brahmin and the Kshtriya,' The view that different parts of the Primordial Being gave rise to different castes has been repudiated by the Sikh Guru Sahibs, and Sikhism in harmony with its universalism, refuses to accredit the caste institution in social ethics and its seers, on the basis of their direct intuitive experience deny God having favoured a few by bringing them out from the higher parts of His body.

Finally Sikhism holds that caste is of no consequences in respect of the realisation

of the highest ideal. Men of the so-called low caste need not wait to be born again in the next higher caste for the attainment of liberation and spiritual realization. Not birth but deeds must determine the purity of life. Kabir ji declares, 'I am a weaver by caste but a patient in mind. And so I utter the Lord's praise in a state of utterpoise.' Guru Nanak Dev ji, in order to bear witness to the vivacity of the statement identifies himself with "the lowest of the low, the humblest of the humble." Addressing himself to God he says, "Thy mercy falls on the spots wherein the meek and the humble are cherished." Speaking elsewhere on caste as the accepted channel of spiritual merit, the Guru expresses the view that not caste, which is only an accident of birth but deeds determine purity or merit. Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji says:

"Caste is condemnable notion; pride of name is low and mean.
All beings have their sole support in God."

(Guru Granth Sahib, p. 83)

Bhai Gurdas ji illustrates clearly the aforesaid stand-point of Sikhism in one of his compositions, he says "as the nature of the utensil has no bearing on the purity of the butter-fat, in the same way castes have no meaning for the holy men," He then enumerates the cases of those saints who were born in the so-called low castes and yet reached the highest stage of perfection. The type of slant in favour of the low castes is seen in the utterances of all the Gurus. Guru Nanak Dev ji says:

"One who serves the higher castes is of great merit indeed.
But one who serves those of humble castes
He may indeed wear shoes made from my body."

(Guru Granth Sahib, p.1256)

There are numerous other pronouncements of the same nature, strongly repudiating all that the institution of caste had come to stand for.

The tenth Guru subscribes to the writings of Guru Nanak Dev ji and other Gurus and to all those saints or Bhatts whose compositions are enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib. Convinced of the invalidity of the Caste system, he decries of the caste system and declares caste a taboo in the order of the Khalsa created and consolidated by him. Guru Gobind Singh ji says in categorical terms "There is no consideration of caste or membership of Varnas. He is all sympathy for the low, the down-trodden and the low caste people." He hints out:

"True service is the service of these people, I am not inclined to serve others of higher castes; charity will bear fruit, in this and the next world, if given to such worthy people as these. All other sacrifices and charities are profitless. From top to toe whatever I call my own, all I possess or carry I dedicate to these people."

The first five Sikhs baptised into the order of the Khalsa belonged to the so-called low-caste but were given, the enviable status of 'Piyaras' - the dearest of the dear. The theory of separate ideas for different castes was replaced by the same ethical and religious ethos for all men.

EQUALITY AMONG CLASSES IN SIKHISM

In the society contemporary to Guru Nanak Dev ji and other Sikh Gurus, wealth and rank were also the causes of its divisions as much as the birth as it was in the case of caste system, though the nature of the divisions in both the cases was different because in the former case the classification could not be rigid because wealth is concrete and separable whereas in the later case, the classification based on birth which was an inseparable accident was rigid and inflexible.

Sikhism rejects the notion of superiority of the economically better placed class over the others. Bhai Gurdas while hailing the advent of Guru Nanak Dev ji in this world exclaims that Guru ji taught "equality of a king and a commoner (Raja-runk Brabari)." The age-old superstitions that the poor are poor because of their past Karmas and hence poverty is ordained by God is repudiated in Sikhism, which avers that the higher classes are not governed by any separate code of ethics. The kind and the poorest of the poor are governed by the same set of ethical and social rules and ideas. S. Kapur Singh in his book 'Baisakhi of the Sikhs' remarks, 'though men are not equal in ability, they are entitled to equal judgement and value and social equality.' The Gurus appear to presume that the notion of the superiority of man over man on the basis of wealth or rank is preposterous and arises when one forgets that one's life is rather short and death would level the so-called superiority of the classes. Thus 'the ephemeral nature of human life is sought to be made the postulate of the declaration that any pride in the superiority of classes is futile.' The classification of the society on the basis of wealth or rank is also rejected in terms of the ultimate objectives of Sikhism which is that one should be *Brahm Gyani* -moral person- one who looks upon creation alike. Their moral is exemplified from an anecdote from Guru Nanak Dev ji's biography.

Guru Nanak Dev ji is reported to have refused the partaking of the Brahm Bhoj of Malik Bhago in favour of the coarse food of Bhai Lalo. When asked by Malik for the reason Guru Nanak Dev ji replied that he thought it prudent and advisable to have food with Bhai Lalo because he earned his livelihood through honest means and was bereft of any pride-sense while his methods of earning money were objectionable and he was filled with pride. In fact, the Guru wanted to impress upon the people that all ought to be treated as equals irrespective of the material. The superiority claimed on the basis of

rank is also not recognized by the Sikh Gurus. In the vision which Guru Nanak Dev ji brought to the people, contempt was cast on earthly potentates, whose power stemmed from aggression. The rule of God alone is eternal. "Thy kingdom is indestructable." (p. 567). As he sang in Sri Rag, no form of earthly glory, the splendour of royal power even was worth-having as against devotion to God, the fountain of all true values. Earthly monarchs and chiefs, as he was expressed in numerous contexts and with deep passion in the hymns Babar's invasions, rule as long as God is on their side- in other words, if they have some moral principle to sustain them. Virtue and truthfulness alone is the prop of power. 'Mighty things', says the Guru in the Jap, 'hold not the worth of a worm in whom is lodged the love of God.' And where dwells the love of God arrogance is automatically obliterated because if the human body is filled with ambrosia of love of God, no other thing can have any room in it.

EQUALITY IN TERMS OF PRECEPTOR-DISCIPLE RELATIONS

On March 30, A.D. 1699, on the Baisakhi day, the tenth Guru ji established the order of the Khalsa. After administering 'Amrit' to the five Piyaras-dear ones, he himself partook of the same 'Amrit' which was administered by the five dear ones to him, thereby affixing his seal to the dictum that the Guru was Guru and disciple both rolled in himself. In this way, Guru-disciple relationship was proclaimed to be based on equality.

Reference:

1. *Guru Granth Sahib, Gaudi Kabir ji p. 324.*
2. *Guru Granth Sahib Var Majh Slok M. 1 (Paudi)*
3. *Rag Bhairon M. 3, Chaupade (1 to 4-1) p. 1128.*
4. *Sorath M. 1, p. 597.*

Conti...

Appeal

The devotees are requested to bring the 'PAVAN BIRS' of Sri Guru Granth Sahib (Old ones for SANSKAR) to Sri Guru Granth Sahib Bhawan, Gurdwara Ramsar Sahib complex near Gurdwara Shaheed Ganj Baba Deep Singh Ji 'Shaheed' Sri Amritsar Sahib only instead of Sri Akal Takhat Sahib. This has been decided to facilitate the 'SANGAT' for the Holy Sri Guru Granth Sahib (Newly published) are available at the same venue.

-Guru Panth Da Das-

**Secretary,
Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee,
Sri Amritsar Sahib**



ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੇ 550 ਸਾਲਾ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਪੂਰਬ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਰਪਿਤ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਭਰ 'ਚ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋਈ 'ਸ਼ਬਦ-ਗੁਰੂ ਯਾਤਰਾ' ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਬੋਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸੁਲਤਾਨਪੁਰ ਲੋਧੀ ਤੋਂ ਆਰੰਭ ਕਰਨ ਸਮੇਂ ਪੰਜ ਪਿਆਰਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਅਗਵਾਈ 'ਚ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਪਾਵਨ ਸਰੂਪ ਪਾਲਕੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਚ ਸੁਸ਼ੋਭਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਲਿਜਾਂਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਭਾਈ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਲੌਗੋਵਾਲ ਅਤੇ ਯਾਤਰਾ 'ਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖ ਸ਼ਖ਼ਸੀਅਤਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ। (07 ਜਨਵਰੀ)



'ਸ਼ਬਦ-ਗੁਰੂ ਯਾਤਰਾ' ਦੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਬੋਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸੁਲਤਾਨਪੁਰ ਲੋਧੀ ਤੋਂ ਆਰੰਭਤਾ ਸਮੇਂ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਪੰਜ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ, ਯਾਤਰਾ 'ਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਭਾਈ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਲੌਗੋਵਾਲ, ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ, ਹੋਰ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖ ਸ਼ਖ਼ਸੀਅਤਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ। (07 ਜਨਵਰੀ)

Regd. with the Registrar of Newspapers of India at No. 88/57.

Postal Registration No. ASR/0323/2018-20

Without Pre-payment of Postage under License No. PB/R-002/2018-20 Valid upto 31-12-2020

Monthly **GURDWARA GAZETTE** January 2019

Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Sri Amritsar.



ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਮੁਕਤਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ

ਗੋਲਡਨ ਆਵੇਨਿਊ ਪ੍ਰੈਸ, ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਰਾਮਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਤੋਂ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਲਈ
ਦਿਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ 'ਬੇੜੀ' ਪ੍ਰਿੰਟਰ ਤੋਂ ਪਬਲਿਸ਼ਰ ਨੇ ਫਪਵਾ ਕੇ ਦਫਤਰ, ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਤੋਂ ਜਾਰੀ ਕੀਤਾ।

ਡਿਜ਼ਾਈਨ : ਮਨਜ਼ੂਰ ਸਿੰਘ
ਤਸਵੀਰਾਂ : ਜਰਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ (ਲਾਲੀ)

ਮਿਸ਼ਨ 15-01-2019