

EGO

Dr Jit Singh Chandan, PhD
137-74 75, Road, Flushing, N. Y. 11367, USA

ABSTRACT

Since the dawn of time, mankind has been looking within to understand the meaning and purpose of life as is. Sikh religion has defined the ultimate purpose of life to merge and be one with God (The Eternal Entity) and has given some guidelines to achieve such goal. Some prescribed guidelines as per Gurbani in Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS), relate to our code of conduct with emphasis on ethical and decent living and for such ethical and decent living, we have to adopt some principles and discard some others. Out of the five major evil characteristics, namely, Kaam (Lust), Krodh (Anger), Lobh (Greed), Moh (Excessive attachment), and Hankar (Ego), our Gurus have been more emphatic about getting rid of ego. Ego is the root of all evils and is the source of all conflicts at all levels and it must be fully discarded. Gurbani also specifies as to how to discard this evil and the benefits that ensue from such discard in terms of productive and peaceful life.

INTRODUCTION

Few characteristics of human nature have been responsible for disturbing the social order and human stability and perhaps the most destructive characteristic of all is EGO (*Haumey*). Ego has been identified as being responsible for religious wars, national and geographical conflicts and for individual prejudices. Ego is the destructive extension of pride and begins where pride ends. Pride is known as “*swaimaan*” and ego is known as “*swaiabhimaan*”. While pride has some redeemable value in terms of motivation and self-actualization, ego has none.

WHAT IS EGO?

Ego is a concept, which emphasizes importance of self to such a degree where self becomes the center of a person’s universe and attention. It is gradual but progressive enlargement of self until the distinction between the self and the world becomes blurred and at its ultimate, the self becomes the world. This importance of self creates a vacuum between the self and others and the self considers itself higher than others. This distance becomes the cause of hatred and conflict, which ultimately drives a wedge among humans as well as between a human and the Supreme Being.

From our religious point of view, a self-centered person is known as “*manmukh*”, which indicates the state of man in which his self-will and animal propensities dominate as against the concept of “*gurmukh*”, a God-centered person who has achieved the highest level of consciousness. Ego is also equated with “*Maya*”, where *Maya* is an illusion which significantly deviates from reality and this illusion becomes a part of ego and the true purpose of life becomes totally distorted. Guru Ji says:

ਹਉ ਵਿਚਿ ਮਾਇਾ ਹਉ ਵਿਚਿ ਛਾਇਆ ॥

AGGS, M 1, p 466. [1]

In ego there is Maya.

Gurbani specifically advises us that ego or *Maya* is the root of all evils and the source of all troubles. All our frustrations and insecurity spring from ego. In fact ego may be nurtured by an egotist to camouflage his insecurity by claiming to be bigger and secure when actually he is not. While ego is a natural characteristic of every animal including human being, animals are constitutionally incapable of rising above it. However, the man has the consciousness to rise above it and the need for rising above it has been emphasized by all religions. A self-centered man has not risen above the level of the animal and his failure to understand the unity of life or the true purpose of life has led to all the personal, social and political problems, including the greatest modern problems of wars and poverty.

Since the evil side of man is the cause of all problems, it will be reasonable to justify ego as evil. This evil is not beyond repair. The man is definitely capable of transcending this state of constitution and our Gurus clearly show us the path to transcend this evil imperfection.

PURPOSE OF LIFE

Since the dawn of time, mankind has been looking within to understand the meaning and purpose of life as is. The question that has always claimed our attention is whether life happened by chance as a part of evolution

(Continued on page 42)

(Continued from page 39)

when the right mixture of life sustaining elements such as air, water, hospitable environment and so on emerged as a biological process, so that we are born, spend time on earth and then die as an end to the process or whether the life came into being as a part of spiritual process initiated by God when It created the universe and created man in Its own image for the specific purpose of eventual unification with Itself.

Whatever the evolutionary theorists or religious promoters believe in and whatever the purpose of life may be, one thing is definite and that is that we all want to have a peaceful life, a stable society, mental satisfaction and spiritual enhancement. All religions have suggested various ways to achieve these goals and practically all the routes suggested are through spiritual understanding of our being. Some religions have emphasized rewards for good behavior (heaven) and punishment for bad behavior (hell) and invariably good behavior is linked with love for God and acceptance of Its Will.

Some religions have introduced the concept of soul, which will merge with God (*Atma* merging into *Parmatma*) for good behavior and reincarnation into various forms of life and consequent suffering for bad behavior. In this approach also, good and bad behaviors are defined in terms of guidelines set by such religions. (See the articles on Soul in this issue)

The Sikh religion emphasizes our goal of life to be eventual immersion with God, the Infinite, to avoid coming into the cycle of life and death, such cycle consisting of four categories:

1. life through eggs as for birds,
2. life through the body of the female, as for all mammals,
3. life of plants coming out of earth, and
4. life of bacteria and viruses self generated through sweat and filth. (**Editorial Note:** *Bacteria and viruses are not self-generated. Bacteria come from spores. Viruses come from Viruses and multiply only in living cells. For more information on this topic of chare khanyia.* (please see Ref # 2)

All these categories are considered to be the life of suffering and hence the need for getting out of this cycle and be one with God for eternal happiness and no suffering. It is debatable whether the goal is merging with God, which can only be achieved by being a good person or whether the goal is being a good person, which can easily be achieved by being a God-fearing person. Whatever the case may be, being a good person is necessary irrespective of whether it is a goal or a path

to the goal.

Since being a good or God-fearing person requires that human behavior comprise of certain characteristics, which are integral to the human code of conduct and these characteristics are to be adopted and certain other opposite characteristics which are to be discarded. Gurbani is very clear about such characteristics, which takes us away from God and hence away from human decency. These characteristics are associated with some of the evils, which must be kept in check. These evils are the temptations succumbing to which always produces negative effects on the body and the soul.

THE FIVE EVILS

Our Gurus enumerate five principle classes of vices. These are: *Kaam* (Lust), *Krodh* (Anger), *Lobh* (Greed), *Moh* (Obsessive attachment), and *Haumey* (Ego). All these evils generate negative energy and are detrimental to goodness and decency. All of these evils when taken to excess influence deterioration of body and mind and take us farther away from the direction of our purpose of life. No matter what measure we use, the ultimate goal of life is decent and truthful living.

ਸਚਹੁ ਓਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਆਚਾਰੁ ॥

AGGS, M 1, p 62. [1]

Above all is the Truth but higher still is the Truthful living.

It must be understood that while all evils hinder the spiritual growth of the individual, it is the fifth evil, namely, ego (*Haumey*), which is the most problematic and the first four evils can also be considered as aggressive manifestations of ego which results in the inability of man to see others as his equals and to consider the other's point of view with understanding and respect. For example, lust is just the satisfaction of one's own passions at the cost of others. Anger is the reaction symptom of frustration of one's base motives when things do not go in the desired way. Greed is one's sense of possessiveness in conflict with interests of others. Attachment when taken to extreme, results in possessiveness, which violates the rights and well being of others. Ego is an ugly and sadistic satisfaction in feeling superior to others which causes them humiliation, and that is undesirable in a stable society.

Our Guru Ji has brandished these evils as five thieves and thieves only take away what is dear to us.

ਇਸੁ ਦੇਹੀ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਪੰਚ ਚੋਰ ਵਸਹਿ ਕਾਮੁ ਕ੍ਰੋਧੁ ਲੋਭੁ ਮੋਹੁ ਅਹੰਕਾਰਾ ॥

AGGS, M 3, p 600.

There are five thieves (evils) residing in our self and these are: lust, anger, greed, excessive attachment and ego.

A true Sikh asks the blessings of God in getting rid of these vices.

ਕਾਮ ਕ੍ਰੋਧ ਅਰੁ ਲੋਭ ਮੋਹ ਬਿਨਸਿ ਜਾਇ ਅਹੰਮੇਵ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਸਰਣਾਗਤੀ ਕਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦੁ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ॥੧॥

AGGS, M 1, p 269.

I have come to you for your blessings and protection, my Lord, be merciful and help me in getting rid of lust, anger, greed, excessive attachment and ego.

Guru Ji further states that these thieves can be disarmed by the blessings of the Guru.

ਨਿਹਤੋ ਪੰਜਿ ਜੁਆਨ ਮੈ ਗੁਰ ਬਾਪੀ ਦਿਤੀ ਕੰਡਿ ਜੀਉ ॥

AGGS, M 5, p 74.

With your grace, my Lord, I have made these five evils powerless.

I had stated earlier that the first four vices have some redeemable value and are necessary to some degree to lead a practical and normal life and our religion recognizes that aspect, only in excess, these vices become destructive. It will be useful to comment briefly with these vices and deal with ego in more detail.

1. Kaam (Lust). Kaam is sometimes equated with sex. It is not. It is the lust, which is obsession and addiction to sex. Sex itself is a healthy activity and our religion promotes sex between husband and wife in a loving and bonding relationship.

The AGGS gives the highest spiritual and religious significance to the sanctity of marriage.

ਧਨ ਪਿਰੁ ਏਹਿ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਨਿ ਬਹਨਿ ਇਕਠੇ ਹੋਇ ॥

ਏਕ ਜੋਤਿ ਦੁਇ ਮੂਰਤੀ ਧਨ ਪਿਰੁ ਕਹੀਐ ਸੋਇ ॥

AGGS, M 3, p 788.

Simply getting together is not enough for marriage of true minds; Real marriage is the bondage so that there is one soul in two bodies.

While sex within the domain of marriage is condoned by our religion, sex outside of marriage is condemned for that constitutes lust and it disrupts the social and moral order. Our Guru Jis are very explicit about their disapproval of lust for it takes us away not only from the stability of our family life but also away from Godliness. Guru Ji says:

ਬਿਨੁ ਪਿਰ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨ ਜਾਣਈ ਸਾਚੇ ਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਹੋਤਿ ਪਿਆਰਿ ॥

AGGS, M 1, p 54.

I recognize no one other than my husband (God) and he is my true love.

And

ਘਰ ਕੀ ਨਾਰਿ ਤਿਆਗੈ ਅੰਧਾ ॥ ਪਰ ਨਾਰੀ ਸਿਉ ਘਾਲੈ ਧੰਧਾ॥

AGGS, Nam Dev, p 1165.

Some one who ignores his own beloved and indulges with others is blind to what is right.

Such lust is detrimental to our health.

ਕਾਮੁ ਕ੍ਰੋਧੁ ਕਾਇਆ ਕਉ ਗਾਲੈ ॥

ਜਿਉ ਕੰਚਨ ਸੋਹਗਾ ਢਾਲੈ ॥

AGGS, M 1, p 932.

The evils of lust and anger affect your health negatively, just as gold when mixed with the chemical "suhaga" does not remain solid any more.

It is quite easy to observe that preoccupation with sex results in diseases and crimes including rape and murder and these acts destroy the balance in society. Accordingly the difference between *kaam* as unbridled lust and *kaam* as sexual energy must be understood and acknowledged.

2. Krodh (Anger): Anger at its extreme is a sure sign of insecurity and may be a function of inferiority complex. It is one of the manifestations of ego in the sense that when you get angry with some one it is to express your superiority over him. It is a reflection of your assessment about yourself as bigger, more powerful, more knowledgeable and so on because you can only get angry with some one who is not up to your expectations. Anger is one of the causes of tension which quite often results in heart attacks and strokes and hence the saying “anger kills”. Anger control and anger management are the buzzwords of today’s organizational environments and hence extreme and continuous anger must be controlled and eliminated.

Occasional anger to some degree is essential for today’s practical living and interaction with misbehavior. When a child misbehaves anger is a remedy to teach him that bad behavior gets punished. Anger against injustice has been a corner stone of Sikh martiality.

Our musical singers (Minstrels - *Dhadi Jatha*) most often sing hymns of bravery and anger against tyranny. Transitory anger is a useful indicator of disapproval in strong terms when a loved one goes outside the boundaries of social decency. Sometimes anger at yourself for your mistakes can be a positive attribute. It is the obsessive anger as an integral part of our nature against which our Gurus spoke and the society condemns.

ਓਨਾ ਪਾਸਿ ਦੁਆਸਿ ਨ ਭਿਟੀਐ ਜਿਨ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਕ੍ਰੋਧੁ ਚੰਡਾਲ ॥੩॥

AGGS, M 4, p 40.

Do not even come near to those who have extreme anger in their very blood.

3. Lobh (Greed): Greed is just one sense of a person’s personal possessions in conflict with the interests of

others. It is an obsession with collecting materials and hoarding money. Greed is not associated with honest earnings, no matter how much it may be but with the total obsession with it whatever the cost or consequences. Money and material things are necessary for a comfortable living and must be a focus of working hard. With honest earnings we can enjoy all the comforts and amenities of life including a big house, a car, clothes, jewelry and so on.

ਮੋਤੀ ਤ ਮੰਦਰ ਉਸਰਹਿ ਰਤਨੀ ਤ ਹੋਹਿ ਜੜਾਉ ॥
ਕਸਤੂਰਿ ਕੁੰਗੁ ਅਗਰਿ ਚੰਦਨਿ ਲੀਪਿ ਆਵੈ ਚਾਉ ॥

AGGS, M 1, p 14.

Enjoy life to the fullest. Have the best house to live in and decorate the house with diamonds and pearls. Have all the best amenities for the house.

The only condition is that in this process, we do not forget God, the Giver of all these benefits:

ਮਤੁ ਦੇਖਿ ਭੁਲਾ ਵੀਸਰੈ ਤੇਰਾ ਚਿਤਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਨਾਉ ॥

AGGS, M 1, p 14.

Since being greedy and having God's *naam* in our mind continuously are not compatible with each other, greed is inconsistent with our religious teachings. It is for this reason our Gurus have advised us to understand that greed is a spiritually destructive and socially disruptive force.

ਲਾਲਚੁ ਛੋਡਹੁ ਅੰਧਿਹੋ ਲਾਲਚਿ ਦੁਖੁ ਭਾਰੀ ॥

AGGS, M 1, p 419.

Get rid of greed, you spiritually blind people, greed creates nothing but misery.

ਲਬੁ ਵਿਣਾਹੇ ਮਾਣਸਾ ਜਿਉ ਪਾਣੀ ਬੁਰੁ ॥

AGGS, Balwand Satta, p 967.

Greed makes a human being useless, just as saw dust in water makes the water unusable.

ਲਬੁ ਅਧੇਰਾ ਬੰਦੀਖਾਨਾ ਅਉਗਣ ਪੈਰਿ ਲੁਹਾਰੀ ॥੩॥

AGGS, M 1, p 1191.

Greed is like being in a dark prison with feet shackled.

ਲੋਭੀ ਕਾ ਵੇਸਾਹੁ ਨ ਕੀਜੈ ਜੇ ਕਾ ਪਾਰਿ ਵਸਾਇ ॥
ਅੰਤਿ ਕਾਲਿ ਤਿਥੈ ਧੁਰੈ ਜਿਥੈ ਹਬੁ ਨ ਪਾਇ ॥

AGGS, M 3, p 1417

Do not trust a greedy person, for surely he will cheat you in the end.

5. Moh (Excessive attachment): *Moh* defines attachment with materials or people to such a degree that they become “mine” rather than a gift from God. Even knowing that we came into this world naked and we will leave this world naked and during our life time we

simply play with the toys we are given to play with, we still cling to what we believe belongs to us and the attachment becomes so deep that we become miserable when we lose some of our possessions. Even though “*moh*” or simply attachment is God created and without it human beings and even animals cannot survive such as a mother's love for her child so that this *moh* is necessary to some degree and hence not evil.

A true believer knows that every thing is God created and exists as per Its Will and accepts the situation with grace. Bhagat Kabir says:

ਕਬੀਰ ਮੇਰਾ ਮੁਝ ਮਹਿ ਕਿਛੁ ਨਹੀ ਜੇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹੈ ਸੇ ਤੇਰਾ ॥
ਤੇਰਾ ਤੁਝ ਕਉ ਸਉਪਤੇ ਕਿਆ ਲਾਗੈ ਮੇਰਾ ॥੨੦੩॥

AGGS, Kabir, p 1375.

Says Kabir everything I am or I have, belongs to you, my Lord, and if I give it all back to you, I have not lost anything.

What a “*mohi*” does not understand is that God's Will is superior to our will and it is with Its grace that we enjoy the amenities of life and if God takes away some or all of the amenities, we are helpless.

ਏਕ ਭੀ ਨ ਦੇਇ ਦਸ ਭੀ ਹਿਰਿ ਲੇਇ ॥

ਤਉ ਮੁਝਾ ਕਹੁ ਕਹਾ ਕਰੇਇ ॥

AGGS, M 5, p 268.

What we have is God's gift. If He does not give any gift and takes away the other gifts he has given us, there is nothing we can do about it.

It is with this thought in mind that Guru Ji advises us not to be attached with material things, which are transitory and be attached to God who is permanent. Material things can break or be stolen and a loved one can die, but God is ever-existing. Then, why not get attached to God, who will always be there. In this respect Guru Ji says:

ਮੋਹੁ ਅਰੁ ਭਰਮੁ ਤਜਹੁ ਤੁਮ੍ ਬੀਰ ॥

ਸਾਚੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਚਿਦੇ ਰਵੈ ਸਰੀਰ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

AGGS, M 1, p 356.

Get rid of the feeling of excessive attachment, O brother, and put the nectar of True Naam within yourself. The whole world is drowning in this ocean of attachment and only the true believers will cross this ocean.

And

ਜੇਤਾ ਮੋਹੁ ਪਰੀਤਿ ਸੁਆਦ ॥

ਸਭਾ ਕਾਲਖ ਦਾਗਾ ਦਾਗ ॥

ਦਾਗ ਦੋਸ ਮੁਹਿ ਚਲਿਆ ਲਾਇ ॥

ਦਰਗਹ ਬੈਸਣ ਨਾਹੀ ਜਾਇ ॥੩॥

AGGS, M 1, p 662.

All the attachments are false. They are like a blot on the

purity of heart. If the heart is not pure, there will be no place in Sachkhand for such a being.

5. Hankaar/Haumeey (Ego): As has been stated earlier. Ego (*Haumeey*) has no redeemable value and is a reflection of acute insecurity. On the other hand “pride” is an estimation and proclamation of self-achievement, self-esteem and self-actualization. It does not reflect any complex of superiority over others which ego does. When I say that I am proud to be a Sikh, it is a sense of pride and a conscious expression of identification with a proud community and does not disrespect members of other communities. An individual enjoys the respect and confidence of others simply by virtue of his being a member of such a respectable community. Such pride is justified and spiritually acceptable. It is only when this pride enters the domain of ego that humility and respectability vanish and negative forces take over.

Gurbani is very clear about the ill effects of ego on the egotist in particular and on society in general. Ego is equated with serious and severe illness and in order to get well, this illness has to be removed from its roots. Guru Ji has clearly identified ego as a “*deeragh rog*”.

ਹਉਮੈ ਦੀਰਘ ਰੋਗੁ ਹੈ ਦਾਰੂ ਭੀ ਇਸੁ ਮਾਹਿ ॥
ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰੇ ਜੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਤਾ ਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਸਬਦੁ ਕਮਾਹਿ ॥
AGGS, M 2, p 466.

Ego is an unfathomable disease. However, if God be merciful and you devote yourself to God's Naam, you can find the cure within the disease. (Getting rid of ego, with God's grace will become the cure).

And
ਹਉਮੈ ਰੋਗੁ ਮਹਾ ਦੁਖੁ ਲਾਗਾ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਲੇਵਹੁ ਰੋਗੁ ਗਇਆ ॥੬॥
AGGS, M 1, p 906.
The disease of ego is very worrisome. Listen to and adopt the advice of the Guru to cure the disease.

Just as a serious physical illness disrupts the normal living pattern, similarly, ego, as a severe mental disease disrupts the orderly, decent and ethical living.

ਜਬ ਇਹੁ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਕਰਤ ਗੁਮਾਨਾ ॥
ਤਬ ਇਹੁ ਬਾਵਰੁ ਫਿਰਤ ਬਿਗਾਨਾ ॥
AGGS, M 5, p 235.
When a person has become an extreme egotist and focuses only on himself, then he acts like a mad man.

Similarly Guru Ji says,

ਮਨ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਹਉਮੈ ਰੋਗੁ ਹੈ ਭੁਮਿ ਭੂਲੇ ਮਨਮੁਖ ਦੁਰਜਨਾ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਰੋਗੁ ਗਵਾਇ ਮਿਲਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸਾਧੂ ਸਜਨਾ ॥੧॥
AGGS, M 4, p 301.

Ego is a disease within and it makes us follow exclusively our own interests. Says, Nanak, be cured of this disease by being close to Satguru.

Ego is the disease of the mind.

Gurbani has further made it clear that being a good human being and being an egotist are not compatible with each other. In fact, even if you are a very good person, all this goodness has no value if such goodness is tainted with ego, especially, if you have ego about your goodness.

ਤੀਰਥ ਬਰਤ ਅਰੁ ਦਾਨ ਕਰਿ ਮਨ ਮੈ ਧਰੈ ਗੁਮਾਨੁ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਨਿਹਫਲ ਜਾਤ ਤਿਹ ਜਿਉ ਕੁੰਚਰ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ॥੪੬॥
AGGS, M 9, p 1428.
Giving alms and bathing in holy places is all worthless if ego comes to your mind. It is similar to an elephant taking a bath because soon after it rolls in mud.

Guru Arjan says:
ਚਤੁਰ ਸਿਆਣਾ ਸੁਖੜੁ ਸੋਇ ਜਿਨਿ ਤਜਿਆ ਅਭਿਮਾਨੁ ॥
AGGS, M 5, p 297.
Not only is the person who has killed ego is wise but also mentally and spiritually healthy.

ਖੁਦੀ ਮਿਟੀ ਤਬ ਸੁਖ ਭਏ ਮਨ ਤਨ ਭਏ ਅਰੋਗੁ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਦੁਸਟੀ ਆਇਆ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਕਰਨੈ ਜੋਗੁ ॥੧॥
AGGS, M 5, p 260.
By getting rid of ego you can obtain and maintain physical and mental health. Then you will be worthy of praise and appreciation.

Guru Amardas gave so much importance to humility that he declared any one who killed ego as the greatest soldier and defender of decency in the entire world.

ਨਾਨਕ ਸੋ ਸੂਰਾ ਵਰੀਆਮੁ ਜਿਨਿ ਵਿਚਹੁ ਦੁਸਟੁ ਅਹੰਕਰਣੁ ਮਾਰਿਆ ॥
AGGS, M 3, p 86.
Says Nanak, he is the brave one who has killed ego from within.

Having discovered and diagnosed the disease, the pertinent question now is how this ego can be eliminated? Gurbani has suggested three ways, each way culminating in replacing ego with the “non-ego”

First, Gurbani says that the cure lies within the disease.

ਹਉਮੈ ਦੀਰਘ ਰੋਗੁ ਹੈ ਦਾਰੂ ਭੀ ਇਸੁ ਮਾਹਿ ॥
ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰੇ ਜੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਤਾ ਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਸਬਦੁ ਕਮਾਹਿ ॥
AGGS, M 2, p 466.
Ego is an unfathomable disease. However, if God be merciful and you devote yourself to God's Naam, you

can find the cure within the disease. (Getting rid of ego, with God's grace will become the cure).

The main emphasis is on how to evolve one's self to transcend the ego. When a person looks critically at ego and how it destroys the self, which is a part of God, he learns to transcend from self-centeredness to God-centeredness and to identify his individual consciousness with the cosmic consciousness. We further observe a number of situations where “ego hath a fall”. When such a fall occurs, the person suddenly wakes up and changes his behavior.

The second route to eliminating ego is to understand the benefits of humility. Egotists are never humble and truly humble people are not egotistical. Guru Arjan states that more humble a person is, the higher is his status.

ਆਪਸ ਕਉ ਜੋ ਜਾਣੈ ਨੀਚਾ ॥
ਸੋਊ ਗਨੀਐ ਸਭ ਤੇ ਉਚਾ ॥

AGGS, M 5, p 266.

Any one with humility is actually very high on spiritual ladder.

Similarly Guru Nanak:

ਜੇ ਲੋੜਹਿ ਚੰਗਾ ਆਪਣਾ ਕਰਿ ਪੁੰਨਹੁ ਨੀਚੁ ਸਦਾਈਐ ॥

AGGS, M 1, p 465.

If you want to be good to yourself, then do good deeds and adopt humility.

Accordingly, humility breeds respect and decency and slowly destroys ego.

The third route to get rid of ego is to find the enemy of ego and make this enemy as your friend. This is true in practical life also. Suppose that you have a friend who has become a nuisance and you want to get rid of him and in a manner, which is not rude and hostile. You find out as to who is the enemy of your friend and make this enemy as your friend and invite him to your house on a regular basis. When your first friend hears about it, he will not come to your house because he will not sit next to his enemy in your house. Now we have to find the enemy of ego so that we can befriend this enemy to get rid of the ego. We do not have to look far this enemy. Guru Ji has already found it for us. The enemy of ego is NAAM:

ਹਉਮੈ ਨਾਵੈ ਨਾਲਿ ਵਿਰੋਧੁ ਹੈ ਦੁਇ ਨ ਵਸਹਿ ਇਕ ਠਾਇ ॥

AGGS, M 3, p 560.

Ego and God's Naam are not compatible. They cannot be together. If you adopt Naam, ego will go away.

The more we become friends with Naam, the less we

will see ego, until it completely disappears. Once Naam becomes completely integrated within our life and mind, the door for ego to enter will be permanently closed. The presence of Naam in our hearts is the presence of God and God does not like ego.

ਹਰਿ ਜੀਉ ਅਹੰਕਾਰੁ ਨ ਭਾਵਈ ਵੇਦ ਕੂਕਿ ਸੁਣਾਵਹਿ ॥
ਅਹੰਕਾਰਿ ਮੁਏ ਸੇ ਵਿਗਤੀ ਗਏ ਮਰਿ ਜਨਮਹਿ ਫਿਰਿ ਆਵਹਿ ॥੯॥

AGGS, M 3, p 1078.

The Vedas and holy books say it loudly that God does not like ego. The egotists do not get salvation and come through the cycle of birth and death

As has been explained, ego is not to be embraced, because God does not approve of it and Guru Ji explains that the person with humility is higher than all others and a person with ego is lower than all others. But what, if any, is the practical advantage to us in our worldly living if we get rid of ego. Yes, there is a realistic and practical benefit.

One thing that we all desire, above all, is respect and appreciation by others, even behind our back. No matter how high we are in financial and social status, we are not happy if others have a poor opinion of us. Guru Arjan specifies that if we want praise from others, which we do, then we must get rid of ego and keep company of good people.

ਜੇ ਕੇ ਅਪੁਨੀ ਸੋਭਾ ਲੋਚੈ ॥

ਸਾਧਸੰਗਿ ਇਹ ਹਉਮੈ ਛੋਰੈ ॥

AGGS, M 5, p 266.

If you really want praise from others, then keep the company of good people and get rid of haumey.

CONCLUSIONS

Let us pledge with our mind and soul today, that such destructive forces as ego will not be allowed to enter our mind and it will not enter our mind if our mind is already filled with Naam and there is absolutely no room left for ego to enter and settle in.

(Please also see Resolution at page 76.)

REFERENCE

1. AGGS = Aad Guru Granth Sahib. 1983 (reprint). Publishers: Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar. (M = Mahala, i.e., succession number of Sikh Gurus to the House of Guru Nanak, P = page number of the AGGS. M is replaced with the name of Bhagat or Bhatt)
2. Bindra, Onkar Singh. 2003. Perspiration, lice, and spontaneous generation. *Understanding Sikhism Res. J.* 5 (1): 67-68.