

RELIGIOUS WARS AND NEW CONSCIOUSNESS IN NANAKIAN PHILOSOPHY

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*The real aim of a religion is spirituality, which is the final product!
When religion is used as a shield to protect our insecurities, then it becomes a religious war!*

ABSTRACT

The real aim of a religion is spirituality, which is the realization of spirit that exists in each and every person. The racial and religious ego is the root cause of religious wars because every religion is about absolute belief in its own superiority and the divine right to impose its version of truth upon others. For the first time in the whole history of humanity, a few people are becoming aware that the way we have existed up to now is somehow wrong; something basically is missing in our very foundation. Our consciousness has to be cleaned so that we can become like a pure mirror reflecting reality. To be able to reflect reality is to know God. God is just another name for reality - another name for ultimate truth. And a man is really sane when he knows the truth. Once we accept the universal nature of Nanakian Philosophy, then the new consciousness will arise - man will become very calm and quiet. All this continuous violence and aggression will disappear. The iron curtain of ego that separates us from each other and from Universal Spirit or God will disappear. Our collective survival lies in recognizing new realities about religion, and its positive relationship to science and spirituality. We must recognize the path of secular humanism, based upon the principles of logic and reason. This alone offers the hope of providing everybody on this globe with the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

INTRODUCTION

The religions of the world fall in two categories: Prayer-oriented religions and meditation-oriented religions. Christianity, Islam, Hindus, Sikhs and other popular religions of the world are prayer-oriented. To pray, we need some higher power to which we can pray. That higher power is God. The meditation-oriented religions are Buddhism, Taoism, and Jainism. These are not prayer-oriented since there is no direct use of God as in other religions. Whether, through meditation or prayer to God, the real aim of a religion is spirituality, which is the realization of spirit that exists in each and every person. That is what is the realization of God, the realization of ultimate truth.

However, one cannot remember a time in human history when people were not destroying each other either in the name of religion or in the name of God or even in the name of peace, humanity, or universal brotherhood. Great words are hiding ugly realities!

Religion is not about peace. Nor is it about war. Every religion is about absolute belief in its own superiority and the divine right to impose its version of truth upon others. In medieval times, both the Crusades and the Jihads were soaked in blood. Today, there are Christian

fundamentalists who attack abortion clinics in the United States and kill doctors; Muslim fundamentalists who wage their sectarian wars against each other; Jewish settlers who, holding the Old Testament in one hand and weapons in the other, drive Palestinians off their ancestral land; Hindus in India who demolish ancient mosques and burn down churches; and Buddhists in Sri Lanka who slaughter Tamil-separatists [9]. Political ideologies, religious ideologies, philosophical ideologies are often facades for murder - to murder in a justified way.

All the religions had been promising the people, "If you die in a religious war, your heaven is absolutely certain." This was part of the reason when terrorists hit world trade center in New York and pentagon in Washington D.C. on September 11, 2001. All in the name of religion when thousands of innocent lives were lost. Something is terribly wrong when *jihads* and wars develop in the name of God. Killing in war is not sin; being killed in war is a great virtue. This is insane in today's world of awareness. But ten thousand years of conditioning has seeped deep into the blood, into the bones, in the very marrow of humanity. Each religion, each country, each race had been claiming, "We are the chosen people of God. We are the highest; everyone is lower than us." This is insanity, and everybody has suffered because of it.

Once we have the idea that we are the chosen people of God, and then others cannot forgive us because they are also the chosen people of God. How to decide who are the chosen people? No argument can be conclusive, and these chosen people with their attitude don't know where God is hiding so they cannot ask him either. Then only the sword is going to decide. Whosoever is mighty is going to be right since 'Might is right'.

It is not to say that religion is bad. As, for example, Professor Pervez Amir Ali Hoodbhoy states: Maulana Abdus Sattar Edhi, Pakistan's preeminent social worker, and the Taliban's Mohammad Omar are both followers of Islam, but the former is overdue for a Nobel Peace Prize while the latter is an ignorant, psychotic fiend [9]. Every religion holds very different meaning for different people.

The violence is not only so with the Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs; it is exactly the same with all the people that have existed up to now. The racial ego, the religious ego, the spiritual ego is far more dangerous than the individual ego, because the individual ego is gross. You can see it - everybody can see it, it is so visible on the surface. But when the ego becomes racial or religious - we don't think we are claiming anything for our self. Indirectly we are claiming, "I am great because I belong to a particular race or religion which is great." That's how the ego functions: the other is always reduced to the lowest possible; and compared to the other, one raises oneself higher. Once we accept the universal nature of Nanakian Philosophy, then there are no nations and races to compare. The new consciousness will arise - man will become very calm and quiet. All this continuous violence and aggression will disappear.

Every child is born sane, and then, slowly, we civilize him - we call it the process of civilization. We prepare him to become part of the great culture, the great religion, and the great state to which we belong. Religious wars are because of various self-made reasons, which have nothing to do with spiritual aspect of a religion. For the first time in the whole history of humanity, a few people are becoming aware that the way we have existed up to now is somehow wrong; something basically is missing in our very foundation.

Our consciousness has to be cleaned so that we can become like a pure mirror reflecting reality. To be able to reflect reality is to know God. God is just another name for reality - another name for ultimate truth [1] (*Ad sach jugad sach...*). And a man is really sane when he knows the truth.

Truth brings liberation, truth brings sanity.

Truth brings intelligence, Truth brings innocence.

Truth brings bliss, Truth brings celebration.

How do we realize the truth?

In *Jap*, Guru Nanak raised the same question "Kiv sachiara hoviai kiv kurai tutae pal" [3].

His answer "hukm rajai chalna, Nanak likhia naal" [4].

Accepting the "Will of God" was the basic philosophy of religious prophets. Nanak called "*Hukm*" to His will. Taoism called "*non-interference*", Zen called "*let-go*", Christianity called "*surrendering to the will of God*."

Religion is law religion is order. Nature functions in perfect order. We have seasons because of order. We have day and night because of order. Planets revolve around the sun because of order. The galaxies and solar systems are balanced in space because of order. Protons and electrons are balanced in an atom because of order. Photosynthesis in plants and plankton in the ocean produce oxygen that we breathe, because of order. The grass grows, the trees flower because of order. Our heart beats; our food digests and produces energy all because of order, because of law, because of organization that exists in nature. And acceptance of the laws of nature is acceptance of "Will of God."

Understanding the 'Divine' (The knowledge of the "Divine Will") means the destruction of the ego - whether it is the racial ego, the religious ego, the spiritual ego, or the individual ego. (*Nanak hukme je bujhe ta haumai kahi na koe*) [5]. The racial and religious ego, which is the root cause of religious wars, is far more dangerous than the individual ego. But the individual ego is the building block of any kind of ego. The iron curtain of individual ego separates us from each other and from understanding God. *An Enlightened person sees not only himself in the world, but the whole world in himself.*

Absence of ego means that we all are actually the one humanity regardless of our color, caste, creed, and sex.

A universal mind or one mind or one God of which we are part of is universal energy, because "the universe is all energy and the energy is all universe." The atoms and subunits such as electrons, protons, and neutron are units of universal energy. The energy can convert into matter and matter can convert into energy. So everything is nothing but manifestation of energy. The atoms and subatomic particles that form molecules, and cells, and tissues, and organs, and individuals, are our common origin. The atoms and subatomic charged particles do not grow old and are ageless and timeless. The atoms in a child or a seedling are no younger than that of a wrinkled person or a yellowing leaf. It's only when we look at life in a specific form, we fall victims to our separation from rest of things. That separation is called the ego. The ego is a false self that we made up to compete with God based on

the thought that we're separate. That iron curtain of selfish ego separates us from Universal Spirit or God. Once we accept the God within and realize that it's not possible to be separate from God and that we are one with God, then we know that we are love and we are peace and we are joy and we are happiness and we are eternal.

We are like the spokes on a wheel, all radiating out from the same center. If we define ourselves according to our position on the rim, we seem separate and distinct from one another. But if we define ourselves according to the center of the wheel, we are a shared identity with the same universal mind. Just as a sunbeam cannot separate itself from the sun, and a wave cannot separate itself from the ocean, we cannot separate one mind from another. Our individual spirit and grades, credentials, jobs, cars, and homes are like a spoke at the rim, a sunbeam, and a wave, all with characteristics of their own but a part of the same source, the wheel, the sun and the ocean. We are all part of one indivisible divine mind or the universal mind or God (*Parmatma*). And the same mind or one mind is the same as one God.

The universal message in Nanakian Philosophy contains two words: compassion (*daya*) and contentment (*santokh*). The righteousness is born out of compassion and contentment upholds the order of nature (*Dhaul dharam daya ka poot; santokh thap rakhiya jin soot*) [6]. The implication is that "Be compassionate to others; and be content within yourself."

The two words, compassion (*daya*) and contentment (*santokh*) combines the philosophy of whole world: Christianity in the west and all the eastern religions.

The message "Be compassionate to others!" is a basic tenet in Christianity. A Christmas Message says: *"The best part of a person's life is not fame, wealth or ability. The best part of a good person's life is the little acts of kindness and love given to others. You are remembered and respected for the good you do for others."*

It is due to this philosophy that we see Christians doing great deeds of compassion whether it's adopting a child or feeding the hungry of the world. Mother Teresa was a good example of someone who is compassionate to others taking care of the poor of the poorest in Kolkata. Bhagat Puran Singh of Pingalwara in Amritsar was another example who took care of the poor and sick. That is compassion Guru Nanak is asking us to have in our lives.

The second part of the message "Be content within yourself" is the basic philosophy of eastern religions,

suggesting that happiness comes from within. Buddhism believes in it, Jainism believes in it, and other eastern religions believe in it. The purpose of every person's life is to realize triple nature of the self, called *sat-chit-ananda* (existence or being conscious, and bliss). It means finding happiness within yourself. When we are content within, we are on our way to bliss or ultimate happiness. When we blame others for our happiness, we are actually misdiagnosing the cause of it. The cause lies within. When we feel upset or unhappy because someone got a raise, made more money or got a big house or an expensive car or a private jet, we overlook the real cause of unhappiness. The cause is: *not* attending to our inner self, *not* trying to know the spiritual self that we are, *not* communicating or communing with our soul.

If we could practice this universal message, not only we control the ego that creates enemies and wars, but imagine the satisfaction and happiness it would bring.

In everyday living, seeing ourselves as separate, we create chaos and disorder between things, "out there" and ourselves. We war with other people and destroy the environment. Being separate from other people, things, and events, we want to force them to be what we want. In harmony there is no violence. Instead of futilely trying to control the uncontrollable, a person in unity learns acceptance, not because he has to but because there actually is peace and orderliness in himself and his extended body.

If we see ourselves in others

Then whom can we hurt?

What harm can we do?

The Buddha

The possibility of experiencing unity has tremendous implications in life, because when there is harmonious interaction between our extended body, and us we feel joyful, healthy, and youthful. "Fear is born of separation." The transformation from separation to unity, from conflict to peace, is the goal of all spiritual traditions. "Don't we live in the same objective world?" a disciple once asked his guru. "Yes," his master replied, "but you see yourself in the world, I see the world in myself. This minor perceptual shift makes all the difference between freedom and bondage."

We have to raise ourselves to new reality about science, religion and spirituality, which is needed to transform this earth into a paradise [7].

In modern times we are finding some changes in religious belief, as Tom Harpur, a Christian theologian of the Toronto Star, observes in his book, *For Christ's*

Sake, he states [8]:

“Secular humanism is fast becoming the prevailing religion of the western world. For instance, it is no longer true to describe either Canada or England as a Christian country, since the vast majority of their respected populations have no traditional ties with any religious body. The Church of England alone has closed over nine hundred churches since 1974. Harpur holds science and technology responsible for indifference towards the Christian Faith.”

CONCLUSIONS

Not only the western world, but also younger generation, in this modern era of science and technology, believes secular humanism as a spiritual and healing force, and religion as a possessive and destructive force even though real purpose of a religion is spirituality. Those who make distinction between religion and spirituality feel possessed by a religion, which teaches that people deserve to suffer, they are sinners, and disease is an appropriate punishment. With spirituality they find no rules related to God's love and God's ability to sustain us. Our collective survival lies in recognizing new realities about religion, and its positive relationship to science and spirituality. We must recognize the path of secular humanism, based upon the principles of logic and

reason. This alone offers the hope of providing everybody on this globe with the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

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3. AGGS, Jap 1, p 1 : *kiv sachiara hoviai kiv kurai tutae pal.*
4. AGGS, Jap 1, p 1: *hukam rajai chalna, Nanak likhia naal.*
5. AGGS, Jap 2, p 1: *Nanak hukamai je bujhe ta haume kahi na koe.*
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P.S. The article is part of a recent Book Manuscript "SCIENCE, RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY: In Search of God" by S.S. Dhillon.

ARDAS (PRAYER)

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AGGS, M 5, P 268 (Sukhmani Sahib)