

Guru Gobind Singh Ji and his message

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Guru Gobind Singh Ji was born at Patna in the year 1666 A.D. He came to office as the tenth Guru of the Sikhs in the year 1675 and lived as such for a short space of thirty three years. This brief duration is packed with incidents of extreme intensity. Situations arose, each with its peculiar poignancy pressing for immediate decision. Each succeeding moment came like a folded thrill and carried with it the compressed burden of excitement, torment, provocation and exhilaration. It was a critical period of history. Destiny itself stood breathless at delicate juncture. The fate of Aurangzeb's oppressive empire was hanging in balance.

Guru Gobind Singh was 9 years of age when his father Guru Tegh Bahadur was beheaded in Delhi, as an outcome of religious persecution. The remains lay exposed. This was to strike terror and add humiliation. But fate willed it otherwise. Some daring persons belonging to the low caste, however, managed to take the head to Guru Gobind Singh, while the body was removed at night by another Lobana Sikh and secretly cremated.

The above incident happened during the seventeenth year of the reign of Aurangzeb when the Moghal power in India was at its zenith and had also become the instrument of barbarity to implement its proselytising programme.

The cremation of the head was duly performed. But this went deep and stirred the soul of Guru Gobind Singh at its profoundest depth. He retired to the Himalayan forest and remained in obscurity for a period

and then took abode at the bank of Jumna River at Paonta in the Hill State of Nahan. It was a period of self-searching, self-education, self-enlightenment and arriving at the ideals to be striven after. It was also the time of grim decision to determine the course of action, whatever be the hazards. The rest of his life is the unfoldment of this deep reflection on the foregrounds of the field of activity which has left a deep mark on the Indian History.

The greatest task which the Guru set himself was the reshaping of the Hindu Community. There was the evil of the caste system which like a canker worm was working from within. It was a stupendous programme and he persistently worked for it till it reached its culmination point in 1699.

There is hardly any parallel in the Indian history how Guru Gobind Singh elevated the low caste. He exalted them by placing the real power in their hands. Under his command they wielded the sword and acquired the dignity that goes with the office of army men. After taking 'baptism' as originated by the Guru all became equal in spirit, mind and body.

The untouchables shed their inborn inhibition; the men of low origin put aside their innate repression. They stood liberated. This transformation was verily a psychological miracle. He opened the gateway for all to come in. He welcomed the Pariah, the castaways, the excluded, the estranged. This original baptismal ceremony consisted of five men, four of whom belong to the

various categories of the low born groups denied in perpetuity the privileges of men bred from pedigree stock

The ceremony of baptism was to make an abrupt break with the past. It was to usher in a new era of emancipation; The Guru himself got baptised, the ritual of it was performed by the very original five chosen ones thus forging a fraternal link of veritable brotherhood. This released a wave of enthusiasm. Many people forthwith came forward to receive the baptism.

All told the Guru fought about 16 battles in different fields, the first being at Bhangani (about 1686) and the last at Mukhsar (1705).

(Deccan) in 1708, the death resulting out of a wound inflicted as an act of treachery. These battles had no personal ambitions or territorial aims. They were all defensive combats. They depict man's inner struggle against tyrannies, religious, social and otherwise. They vividly portray that spirit ultimately triumphs against all impediments.

Guru Gobind Singh's career consists of incessant exertion, yet it is not travail of sweat and tears" Inspire of defeats, set-backs and desertions his life shines as a vital flame glowing brighter with the background glowing darker. His life displays the resolute will whose iron determination emits sparks of fervour as it strikes the impediments. Hi literature furnishes the belief that all his out-door activity was like a spontaneous flow of action arising from the innate freedom of soul. While acting in time he is in

tune with the timeless that he calls 'Akal', he has thus the intuitive grasp of the source from where time impulse takes its origin. He himself is a part of the universal movement which is an unfoldment of the great moral urge.

The Guru was a humanist. He laid added emphasis on the ethical standards and decried the sectarian divisions which put humanity into compartments of isolated denominations; he proclaimed Hindus and Muslims are one. They are all made of same stuff composed of Earth, Fire, Air and Water. There is no different between Allah (of Mohammadans) and the supreme God (of Hindus). He declared the essential unity of the Puran (the Hindu scripture) and Quran (the Mohammadan holy book). In his eyes all such distinctions were misleading. As a humanist he looked into the ancient lore of epics and mythology and encouraged their translation into Hindi, spending large sums of money. He is thus the pioneer in initiating what is virtually a renaissance of Indian literature. If we remember that in Europe humanism was originally a movement of literary culture which revived the study of Greek and Latin and in addition assigned a proper place to man with strong ethical element, we can then objectively assess the work of Guru Gobind Singh. Yet there was a difference. His humanism was dynamic. It was a movement of great vitality. The object was not to relish the languid aesthetics of classicism. It was, on the other hand, to raise man to his normal

ethical level and subject his rectitude to trial at the actual field of action. For himself he claimed no divinity. On the other hand he admonished those that identified him with the Deity. He affirmed that he is a man, and only an obedient servant of the Lord. Even for his achievements he gave sincere praise to his fellow workers and attributed his glory to all those who stood by him.

Guru Gobind Singh's humanism was action oriented. According to him all learning must ultimately cut a channel and ramify to vitalise the field of performance, under his inspiration the recluse sadhus came forward to have the taste of death on the battlefield. This was to get out of the web of inertia into which they had been enmeshed by the fallacies of abstract speculation.

It may be remembered that the great German Philosopher Fichte (1762-1814) came to the view that idealistic thought cannot help creating distinction between the subject and object and this artificial bifurcation leads to illusory dualism from which rescue is not possible through the help of theoretical reason. He opined that action alone can free men from quandary of this dualism which is the inevitable product of thought.

The ideals present by Guru Nanak were thus realized in action. For religion is the orientation of the individual to his capacity to penetrate inside himself and put forth into action what was there.

The formation of the 'Khalsa' was not merely the creation of a military machine. Literally 'Khalsa'

denotes the 'purified'. Hence, it signifies the organization of men that have risen above the mire of class distinctions where in the individual is best fulfilled by serving the others for the good for all. Hence the daily prayer of each Sikh invoking the aid of the Providence for the protection of the 'Khalsa'. The individual has those to live in vital contact with the whole and fulfil himself for the good of the all (Panth). The philosophy of Bergson leads to the inference that the value of life lies in its intensity and activity.

Guru Gobind Singh's life in this respect acquired the highest value.

The conception of the ultimate reality remains nebulous. No sooner the effort of thought begins to hold it, it escapes unless it is embodied in action. That is how moral action acquires the stature of the highest spirituality. Guru Gobind Singh's life is the one great illustration of penetration inside and putting forth into 1 action which lay in the interior.

His message is rise above superstitions. Grow out of your individual self. Stand liberated, all united as one and each one equal to all. Honour one God, feeling His living glow within your heart and His moral warmth in your blood. Keep ready. Do not wink. God manifests Himself in his will. Realise it in action. The noblest action is sacrifice in self-surrender to His will. All what you achieve goes to His glory. The victory is His. You belong to the whole and the whole belongs to Him. He is the whole and victory is His.