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# SIKHS Celebrate Birth Of GURU NANAK

## THE APOSTLE OF PEACE

### Guru Nanak - Sarbatt Da Bhalaa -

The whole of India was fragmented by petty kingdoms, from north to south, from east to west.

RAJAS of these numerous kingdoms perennially fought against each other.

Expansionism was the norm of the day.

A weak RAJA would succumb to the atrocities of a powerful one.

And the common man knew nothing else than great suffering. Hardworking poor masses perished at the hands of these ruthless RAJAS.

Fifteenth century India was still ruled by these politico-religious rulers.

In the name of religion, masses were persecuted, misled indoctrinated in useless rituals.

Strident caste system prevailed.

Inter-caste rivalries banished all sense of peace and tranquillity.

Men of God like Namdev, Kabir and Ravidas were called *Shudras* (untouchables) and were despised.

Division in a religious community created mistrust, animosity and hatred amongst the members.

This led members of each division to install their own religious leaders- Jogis, Kazis, Rishis, Sants

The ignorant masses followed these Rishis and Kazis blindly and forgot the Creator.

Social and religious turmoil reigned.

This was the scenario when the apostle of peace - Guru Nanak - appeared on the scene in 1469.

Like a thoughtful doctor, Guru Nanak first sought to make a perfect diagnosis of the ills of the society and then prescribe the remedy.

Malcom writes in the "Sketch Of The Sikhs": "Guru Nanak showed the path of human fulfillment by force of reason.

He kindled in the minds of the people the ultimate importance of remembering the Creator and the sense of brotherhood of mankind."

In "The Short History Of Sikhs", C. H. Payne writes, "Guru Nanak

clearly understood what the other religious leaders of the time failed to grasp.

"Guru Nanak was practical in his approach.

"He insisted that people must not run away from themselves; they must look within to find God.

"He told the world not to run away from evil but face it head-on and defeat it."

Cunningham writes: "Guru Nanak saved the Sikhs from falling into the horrendous pitfalls of social evils that existed before his time and showed the true path of the aims of human life - with easy, clear, independent and harmonious approach and formulated a concept of total peace and universal brother-

There are two ways to accomplish this.

One is *Karam (Yog)*, the other is *Knowledge (Gyan)*.

This could be realised in congregational worship, which again means that *Saadh Sangat* perpetuates the concept of universal brotherhood of mankind.

• **Guru:** At the end of *Mool - Mantar*, there is *Gur-Prasaadh*, which means that all awareness all knowledge is derived from Guru - all is bestowal of GOD through the Guru.

Guru awakens your sleeping mind and leads you to Truth, Sacrifice and Worship.

*Prakash* (enlightenment) descends.

And that is the ultimate fulfilment of the purpose of human life. All other kinds of fulfilment are a waste.

• **Equality and Harmony:** In order to co-exist in peace, equality in all its aspects and harmony in purpose is essential.

Guru Nanak emphasised the cultivation of sense of tolerance and contentment. Said He!

"All have the same fame  
 That has been kindled by Him"  
 That is equality.

And the grace of GOD brings harmony

• **Caste-System** Guru Nanak raised a strong and condemning voice against caste-system that plagued India for centuries before him.

Sir Charles Guff wrote: "The divisions created by caste-system had blocked all progress.

"Only Guru Nanak underscored the importance of eliminating it."

In the eyes of GOD, all are equal.

• **Womenfolk** Guru Nanak not only condemned caste-system, inequality and disharmony in birth and body, but also talked about social stigmas pertaining to womenfolk.

The Western thought of the time proclaimed women as "an agreeable blunder" Aristotle too, claimed that a woman was an "erroneous development".

In India poets like Tulsi Das

expressed the idea that a woman was half poison, half nectar.

Buddha said that women did not possess soul.

Guru Nanak however not only preached that the woman was an ornament for a man, but added:

"Why Say Ill Of Those  
 Who Giveth Birth To Kings"

• **Oppression And Truth.** Moral, intellectual and spiritual oppression was an anathema to all human development.

Guru Nanak vehemently opposed all kind of oppression.

He taught to absorb truth, say truth, live with truth, nurture truth:

"Truth Is The Highest,  
 But Truthful Living Is Sublime."

• **Simplicity And Purity:** Guru Nanak emphasised on a life lived in simplicity and purity of action and thought.

Payne commented: "Guru Nanak's religion was a practical religion."

These faculties bring forth peace and tranquillity in mind and in body.

• **His Travels:** The apostle of peace, Guru Nanak, took his message of peace far and wide.

He travelled from 1507 to 1515 with Bala and Mardana, one Hindu and one Muslim, his life-long companions, not only all over India, but also to Sri Lanka (at that time known as Lanka) through Rameshvaram.

During 1517 and 1518, Guru Nanak travelled to Nepal, Sikkim, Tibet and through Yarkand to Kashmir. And from 1518 to 1521, "Baba Then Went To Mecca".

Guru Nanak travelled to Mecca, Medina and Baghdad.

Wherever he went, he took with him abundance of flowers of peace, which he showered upon human beings, low or high, rich or poor, Hindu or Muslim.

Let us endeavour to imbibe Guru Nanak message of peace and truth.

Let us pick up a little petal of Guru Nanak's flower of peace and garnish our soul with it.

That would be the most beautiful act on our part on his birthday today.

**By: Sudarshan Singh Dadyalla**  
 Honorary Secretary Siri  
 Guru Singh Sabha Mombasa

hood of mankind."

The entire religious philosophy of Guru Nanak could be expressed in four words:

**Unity; Equality; Faith and Love.**

The First Two - Unity and Equality - concern the relation between God and Man.

The other two help manifest that relation.

Briefly, Guru Nanak's message of peace could be construed this way:

• **Unity / Oneness Of God:** the first word of our *Mool - Mantar - Ik-On-Kar*

(ੴ: ॴ, ॴ, ॴ, ॴ)

i.e. one powers that continues - *Sarb Shaktiman* - perpetual and indestructible - is all expressive.

This concept brings the whole human race under one umbrella implying Oneness Of God and Brotherhood of mankind.

• **Congregational Worship** - *Saadh Sangat*: Guru Nanak laid great emphasis on the idea of purpose of human life on earth.

The aim of human life is to see GOD within. Human life, in fact, is the reason to realise HIM within.

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