

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF GURU TEG BAHADUR SAHIB

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ABSTRACT

The most sacred, meaningful and living philosophy of education is the philosophy of life. Educational philosophy in the real sense is the implementation of the noble and best in life. The expression of the beauty of the mystery of life, nature and truth has been the eternal theme of education. In the other words, the roots of all philosophical and educational wisdom are deeply inherited in the sublime works of ancient spiritual thinkers. The noble sayings of saints like Guru Teg Bahadur are the valuable treasures of knowledge truly meant for transmission to the successive generations. Thus, the present paper focuses on the educational philosophy of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib Ji.

Key Words: Educational Philosophy, Metaphysics, Epistemology, Axiology

Introduction

Ever since the dawn of civilization, the seeds of true education have been planted in the fertile and of the human mind by the great saints, philosophers and spiritual mystics like Guru Teg Bahadur. The educational concept of the works of Guru Teg Bahadur is concentrated around the self-improvement programme of the individual and society. Being a great saint and soldier of his time, he had a unique concept of education. He has expressed his noble views about the philosophy of life in His Shabadas and Slokas. Guru Teg Bahadur has written 59 shabadas in Rag Gauri, Rag Asa, Rag Dev Gandhari, Rag Bihagara, Rag Sorath, Rag Dhanasri, Rag Jaitsari, Rag Todi, Rag Tilang, Rag Bilawal, Rag Ram Kali, Rag Maru, Rag Basant Hindol, Rag Basant, Rag Sarang, and Rag Jaijivanti. Alongwith 59 Shabadas mentioned above, Guru Sahib has written 57 Slokas incorporated in Guru Granth Sahib. His main emphasis is upon the upliftment of the individual through moral and spiritual education. He advocated idealism that is very close to the man of the earth. The main aim of the philosophy of His education is the purification of human life through the transformation and elevation of the individual self. He has further laid down as

to how the belief in God educates the spirit which leads to the education of the heart and ultimately the education of the intellect.

The essence of morality and ethics in the Slokas of Guru Teg Bahadur nourishes the plant of education. He proceeds with the living faith that the real education of life lies in the self-discipline which is the modified behavior and conduct of man. It supports and sustains the totality of life. All His views in the form of Shabadas and Slokas highlight the spirit of sublimity and nobility of human character. His views are more practical, concrete and human than theoretical and conceptual.

Ethics in the works of Guru Sahib has great importance. He has laid stress on the purity of life as the highest object of human endeavor. Loyalty, chastity, honesty, justice, mercy and tolerance are among the other virtues on which vital stress is laid.

Morality is accepted as the basis of spiritual advancement and devotee rises from the moral plane to the spiritual plane. He has proved by His own example of life sacrifice for the noble cause of truth and justice. He has clarified the real path of education i.e. selfless dedication for the elevation of the weak and downtrodden people on earth. He always practiced what he preached. Every word

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uttered by our sacred teacher of mankind proved to be a real message of education. His contribution to philosophy of education is unique and sublime. The philosophy of Guru Sahib may be termed as idealistic philosophy. But the idealism of His philosophy is not the idealism of individualistic type. He is more social, cultural and practical to the psychology of ages. A meaningful understanding of the Bani of Guru Sahib will remain incomplete unless we are able to understand the idealistic nature of His Metaphysics, Epistemology and Axiology. A reading of His Hymns in the form of Shabadas and Shlokas are incorporated in the Guru Granth Sahib, the Holy book of the Sikhs.

METAPHYSICS

Metaphysical problems are those problems which are beyond the physical phenomenon and are related with the supernatural. These problems of metaphysics are the problems of education dealing with the mystery of life, death, nature, God and Universe. This branch of philosophical thinking deals with questions that are closely related with the nature of being and nature of ultimate reality. The solution of every problem is only possible through meditation, contemplation and intuition. The first reference of the metaphysics of the teachings of Guru Sahib is the awareness of the existence of human life. The reference may be found in the writings of Guru Teg Bahadur as under:

ਗੁਰੂਗੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੯ ॥ ਸਾਧੇ ਰਚਨਾ ਰਾਮ ਬਨਾਈ ॥ ਇਕਿ ਬਿਨ ਸੈ ਇਕ ਅਸਥਿਰੁ ਮਾਨੈ ਅਚਰਜੁ ਲਖਿਓ ਨ ਜਾਈ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਕਾਮ ਕ੍ਰੋਧ ਮੋਹ ਬਸਿ ਪ੍ਰਾਨੀ ਹਰਿ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਬਿਸਰਾਈ ॥ ਝੂਠਾ ਤਨੁ ਸਾਚਾ ਕਰਿ ਮਾਨਿਓ ਜਿਉ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਰੈਨਾਈ ॥੧॥ ਜੋ ਦੀਸੈ ਸੋ ਸਗਲ ਬਿਨਾਸੈ ਜਿਉ ਬਾਦਰ ਕੀ ਛਾਈ ॥ ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਗੁ ਜਾਨਿਓ ਮਿਥਿਆ ਰਹਿਓ ਰਾਮ ਸਰਨਾਈ ॥੨॥੨॥

The physical existence of this world is just like a dream. Human life on earth is short lived. Materialistic pleasures are illusions. Man should understand the mystery of life.

What the Guru Ji impresses upon us is that the world is not permanent in the sense that it is a world of time and change where birth, evolution, decay and death are essential. According to the Gurujī, “Only devotion to God is permanent”. Hence the

Gurujī’s exhortation that instead of submitting to the temptations and distractions of the world man should avail of life’s opportunities for self-advancement, for evolving spirituality towards God, the ultimate divine permanent reality.

ਸੋਰਠਿ ਮਹਲਾ ੯ ॥ ਰੇ ਨਰ ਇਹ ਸਾਚੀ ਜੀਅ ਧਾਰਿ ॥ ਸਗਲ ਜਗਤੁ ਹੈ ਜੈਸੇ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਬਿਨਸਤ ਲਗਤ ਨ ਬਾਰ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਬਾਰੂ ਭੀਤਿ ਬਨਾਈ ਰਚਿ ਪਚਿ ਰਹਤ ਨਹੀ ਦਿਨ ਚਾਰਿ ॥ ਤੈਸੇ ਹੀ ਇਹ ਸੁਖ ਮਾਇਆ ਕੇ ਉਰਝਿਓ ਕਹਾ ਗਵਾਰ ॥੧॥ ਅਜਹੂ ਸਮਝਿ ਕਛੁ ਬਿਗਰਿਓ ਨਾਹਿਨਿਭਜਿ ਲੇਨਾਮੁ ਮੁਰਾਰਿ ॥ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਿਜ ਮਤੁ ਸਾਧਨ ਕਉ ਭਾਖਿਓ ਤੋਹਿ ਪੁਕਾਰਿ ॥੨॥੨॥

In the above mentioned Shabad, Guru Sahib desires to lay strong special emphasis in spiritual education which ultimately leads towards the divine path of ultimate truth. The true aim of education lies in attaining holy union with Almighty who is the creator of this universe. To fulfill this dream of attaining God has been the central subject of spiritual and moral education. Guru Teg Bahadur has suggested a rational and practical process to attain God.

EPISTEMOLOGY

The term ‘epistemology’ comes from the Greek word ‘Episteme’ which means knowledge. Guru Teg Bahadur believes in transcendental theory of knowledge. God is the source of all knowledge. The glimpses of knowledge may be visualized in His Saloks as under:

ਬਿਰਧਿ ਭਇਓ ਸੂਝੈ ਨਹੀ ਕਾਲੁ ਪਹੂਚਿਓ ਆਨਿ ॥ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਨੁਰ ਬਾਵਰੇ ਕਿਉ ਨ ਭਜੈ ਭਗਵਾਨੁ ॥ ੪॥ ਧਨੁ ਦਾਰਾ ਸੰਪਤਿ ਸਗਲ ਜਿਨਿ ਅਪੁਨੀ ਕਰਿ ਮਾਨਿ ॥ ਇਨ ਮੈ ਕਛੁ ਸੰਗੀ ਨਹੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਚੀ ਜਾਨਿ ॥੫॥

Guru Sahib Says O afflicted man! Why don’t you chant God’s hymns? See, you are now old, but you still do not understand that death has come on the head. Wealth, wife, all property, do not own it. Understand the truth that none of these can be your partner. Life is short lived. Knowledge is the search for mystery of life. Guru Sahib defines the nature of human life in these words:

ਪਾਂਚ ਤਤ ਕੇ ਤਨੁ ਰਚਿਓ ਜਾਨਹੁ ਚਤੁਰ ਸੁਜਾਨ ॥ ਜਿਹ ਤੇਉਪਜਿਓ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਲੀਨ ਤਾਹਿ ਮੈ ਮਾਨੁ ॥੧੧॥

Guru Sahib Says O clever man! O wise man! You know that (this) body of yours (God) is made of five elements. (Also) be sure that (again) the elements from which (this body) is made will be absorbed in them (then why are you forgetting the Simran of God by falling into the false attachment of this body?)

The true aim of knowledge is to taste the fruits of truth. Truth is knowledge and knowledge is truth. Physical temptations are great hindrances in the way of attaining true knowledge. To get rid of all these unhealthy possessions is the path of knowledge. Guru sahib expresses His concern in the following Shlokas:

ਉਸਤਤਿ ਨਿੰਦਿਆ ਨਾਹਿ ਜਿਹਿ ਕੰਚਨ ਲੋਹ ਸਮਾਨਿ ॥ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨਿ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਤਾਹਿ ਤੈ ਜਾਨਿ ॥੧੪॥

He further educates us about the path of truth in the following Sloka:

ਹਰਖੁ ਸੋਗੁ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਨਹੀ ਬੈਰੀ ਮੀਤ ਸਮਾਨਿ ॥ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨਿ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਤਾਹਿ ਤੈ ਜਾਨਿ ॥੧੫॥

To know, analyze, investigate and realize about the meaning and purpose of human life is the epistemological aspect of Guru sahib's Shabadas and Slokas.

AXIOLOGY

The term 'axiology' is derived from the Greek word 'axios', which means value or worth. Guru Teg Bahadur was practical idealist of His times. He has constituted an ethical code which insists on modesty, forbearance, tolerance and sacrifice of life. His views are primarily based on the philosophy of universal humanitarianism. He has assigned meaning to the concept of 'Karma' and 'Dharma' of the Indian philosophical tradition. The man of good moral character remains non-attacked and non-offended in the terrible situations of life. It is futile and vain to seek riches, accumulate goods of luxury, aspire after earthly honours and devote all our energy to narrow selfish ends. Man wastes his life indulging in adultery and sinful deeds, but he never thinks of the path of liberation. Right conduct and right thinking is only possible if we detach ourselves from the lower type of belongings. Guru Sahib educates us in the following Salok:

ਮਨੁ ਮਾਇਆ ਮੈ ਫਧਿ ਰਹਿਓ ਬਿਸਰਿਓ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਨਾਮੁ ॥ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਬਿਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਭਜਨ ਜੀਵਨ ਕਉਨੇ ਕਾਮ ॥੩੦॥ ਪ੍ਰਾਨੀ ਰਾਮੁ ਨ ਚੇਤਈ ਮਦਿ ਮਾਇਆ ਕੈ ਅੰਧੁ ॥ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹਰਿ ਭਜਨ ਬਿਨੁ ਪਰਤ ਤਾਹਿ ਜਮ ਫੰਧ ॥੩੧॥

The joys and sorrows of life are the ups and downs of life. Man remains stable, balanced and calm in the storms of difficulties. This is the true knowledge of life. He explains His views in these words;

ਸੋਰਠਿ ਮਹਲਾ ੯ ॥ ਜੇ ਨਹੁ ਦੁਖ ਮੈ ਦੁਖੁ ਨਹੀ ਮਾਨੁ ॥ ਸੁਖ ਸਨੇਹੁ ਅਰੁ ਭੈ ਨਹੀ ਜਾ ਕੈ ਕੰਚਨ ਮਾਟੀ ਮਾਨੈ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਨਹ ਨਿੰਦਿਆ ਨਹ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਜਾ ਕੈ ਲੋਭੁ ਮੋਹੁ ਅਭਿਮਾਨਾ ॥ ਹਰਖ ਸੋਗ ਤੇ ਰਹੈ ਨਿਆਰ ਉਨਾਹਿ ਮਾਨ ਅਪਮਾਨਾ ॥੧॥ ਆਸਾ ਮਨਸਾ ਸਗਲ ਤਿਆਗੈ ਜਗਤੇ ਰਹੈ ਨਿਰਾਸਾ ॥ ਕਾਮੁ ਕ੍ਰੋਧੁ ਜਿਹ ਪਰਸੈ ਨਾਹ ਨਿਤਿਹ ਘਟਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਨਿਵਾਸਾ ॥੨॥ ਗੁਰ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਜਿਹ ਨਰ ਕਉਕੀ ਨੀਤਿਹ ਇਹ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਪਛਾਨੀ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਲੀਨ ਭਇਓ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿਉ ਜਿਉ ਪਾਨੀ ਸੰਗਿ ਪਾਨੀ ॥੩॥੧੧॥

The philosophy of Guru Teg Bahadur may be called as idealistic philosophy. It is very much natural to talk about values like truth, forbearance, tolerance, sacrifice and self-less devotion towards mankind on the part of Guru Sahib. The nature of the educational aims oriented by Guru Teg Bahadur is the personification of nobility of spiritual type. He wants to cultivate a man who is noble, true, selfless and a saintly character. Thus like a true Indian philosopher, Guru Teg Bahadur thinks of education as liberation from bondage of ignorance. According to Him, the true aim of education lies in the inculcation of the concept of God in the form of noble deeds. According to Guruji:

ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੯ ॥ ਸਾਧੋ ਰਾਮ ਸਰਨਿ ਬਿਸਰਾਮਾ ॥ ਬੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਪੜੇ ਕੇ ਇਹ ਗੁਨ ਸਿਮਰੇ ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਨਾਮਾ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਲੋਭ ਮੋਹ ਮਾਇਆ ਮਮਤਾ ਫੁਨਿ ਅਉ ਬਿਖਿਅਨ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ ॥ ਹਰਖ ਸੋਗ ਪਰਸੈ ਜਿਹ ਨਾਹਨਿ ਸੋ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਹੈ ਦੇਵਾ ॥੧॥ ਸੁਰਗ ਨਰਕ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਬਿਖੁ ਏ ਸਭ ਤਿਉ ਕੰਚਨ ਅਰੁ ਪੈਸਾ ॥ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਏ ਸਮ ਜਾ ਕੈ ਲੋਭੁ ਮੋਹੁ ਫੁਨਿ ਤੈਸਾ ॥੨॥ ਦੁਖੁ ਸੁਖੁ ਏ ਬਾਧੇ ਜਿਹ ਨਾਹਨਿ ਤਿਹ ਤੁਮ ਜਾਨਉ ਗਿਆਨੀ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਤਾਹਿ ਤੁਮ ਮਾਨਉ ਇਹ ਬਿਧਿ ਕੇ ਜੋ ਪ੍ਰਾਨੀ ॥੩॥੧੨॥

Guru Sahib Says O Saints! rest and peace are in the sanctuary of the Lord. This is the blessing of studying the Vedas and the Puraanas that you may

meditate on the name of the Lord. Greed, emotional attachment to Maya, possessiveness, the service of evil, pleasure and pain - Those who are not touched by these, are the very embodiment of the Divine Lord.

That person is the form of God to whom heaven and hell, Amrit and poison seem to be the same, to whom gold and copper seem to be the same, in whose Hirda praise and condemnation are also the same some of them Praise be to Him, let someone condemn Him . He is the same, in whose Hirda even greed cannot have an effect, even Moh cannot have an effect. Think of the human being as having a deep communion with God, whom no sorrow and no pleasure can bind under his influence and helps to get rid of greed, attachments, sorrows, pleasures, etc.

As per the philosophy of Guru Teg Bahadur the aims of education is not the collection of bookish knowledge. It should be rather to uplift the earthly man philosophically, mentally, morally and spiritually. Mostly, Guru Sahib is more concerned with the moral and spiritual development of man as regards the aims of education. He always talked of what is practical, human and educative to the condition of His times. His approach is very much rational and critical towards metaphysical, ethical and social problems of a man on earth. For the purification of heart, education of the mind and the elevation of spirit, remembrance of the Name is the only remedy. That is why, self-realization and God realization should be the central aims of education.

CONCLUSION

Thus, Guru Sahib's creative vision is not mere a concept. As a man of finely awakened moral sensibility, He had a wider understanding and tolerance which is rare among religious leaders. The nobility of His moral outlook and the serenity of His soul reflected in His different Shabads and Saloks have a meaningful example to our present age which is marked by doubt, ignorance violence and non-cooperation. An attempt to separate values from facts has never been the theme of His philosophy. The philosophy of Guru Sahib is in fact a philosophy of action, of resistance to evil for the protection of suffering humanity. There is a long process of inner discipline, a career of humanistic and spiritual urges to guide people of every age along the path of virtue, moral purity and spiritual fearlessness. Viewed in its totality, the philosophy of Guru Sahib, presents both the problems and their solutions to the people of every age.

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