

GURU NANAK, APOSTLE OF LOVE, AND A SADHU AND A FAKIR BOTH

The Full-Moon Day of November, Kartik Purnima, is traditionally celebrated as the birthday of Guru Nanak, the Prophet of that valiant community of India, the Shikhs. He was born in 1469 A.D. and died in 1539. For 69 years, 10 months and 10 days, this holy land of Bharata and this Mother-Earth emanated the divine fragrance of his bodily presence. His Message was like a small and simple drop of Nectar extracted from a thousand flowers of deep spiritual knowledge. **"Omkar" (God) is one. Truth is His Name. He is in every particle. How will you reach Him? You are like a pilgrim-beggar passing through this life on earth. Let contentment be your earnings, humility your begging bowl: smear your body with the ashes of His meditation, wear the thought of death as your patched up coat; let your body be chaste and clean; let Faith in Him be your staff to lean on; join the brotherhood of all humans on earth; if you conquer your mind, you have conquered the world Let divine knowledge be your food and mercy your storekeeper; listen to His Music which vibrates in every particle. Union and separation both are His work wheels; you get what your destiny has written.**

Such is Baba Nanak Shah's summary of all spiritual knowledge. Take the doctrines and teachings of any Religion, Guru Nanak's song will confirm them with sweetness and devotion. It is as if Nanak Shah had come as the last star in the cluster of the great Prophets, to remove the dark clouds of ignorance surrounding their messages.

Guru Nanak's life long companion was a muslim by name Mardana, a Sarangi player. Once he suddenly stopped playing his music and said, "I want to see the holy Kabah". Nanak Shah immediately stood up and started for Kabah with Mardana and another devoted companion Lalo. They traveled all over Sindh and reached Mecca via Baluchistan. Nanak Shah was dressed in the traditional green robe of a Muslim Fakir and had a vessel called "Kamandal" traditionally carried by Hindu saints. He also had a mat for praying Namaz. They stayed in the near-by Masjid and went to sleep. In the morning, when the priest in charge arrived, he saw Nanak Shah's feet pointing towards Kabah - and shouted "Eh Kafir! Why are you lying with your feet toward's Allah's house?" Nanak Shah at once expressed his apology and asked for forgiveness. But the priest was not appeased and continued his shouting. Suddenly Nanak Shah looked at him with his shining eyes and said, "Brother! would you please show me the place where there is no dwelling of Allah where I can turn my feet?" The priest was astounded to the core. The people around were amazed to hear the question sweetly flowing out of Nanak Shah's mouth. There was something so intense and so sincere that even the angry priest cooled down to ice. Surely, this is a great 'Olia' (Saint), they thought.

That was the miracle of Guru Nanak's personality and power. His melodious voice and loving words could instantaneously disarm the haughtiest person.

A gentlemanly Muslim then came to him and asked, "You seem to be a Fakir. Which is your Religion?" "I belong to the Religion of my Eternal Supreme Commander," Nanak's music flew out. "Oh! Then you must be a Muslim believing in one Allah," the man said. "Veda's also talk of one Ishvar. Why should I then not call myself a Hindu?" Nanak said. "Is this Masjid an only place where Allah resides? If you are a real Muslim, you'll feel Allah everywhere. Why don't you consider the followers of other Religions as your brothers?"

The priest of the Masjid who by then had realised the stature of Nanak Shah joined in the conversation. The ultimate question that came up was: how could the soul attain eternal peace. Nanak replied, **"Strive hard to keep your heart pure and to stick to the truth; discard ego and pride; look to everybody as a fellow traveler on the path of Allah; and remember Him at every breath - that is the way to reach at the foot of Allah's throne".**

Vah! Subahan Allah! Is this not the ultimate elixir of all Religions and all Mysticisms?

Nanak shah, Fakir and Sadhu at the same time, had traveled all over India with his Message of love, compassion, devotion and truth. Everybody who saw him and heard him experienced an intense shock of love towards God and all His Creation. His very presence dissolved all hostilities between different groups. An unseen field around him magnetised everybody to God. **What is the sense in quarreling and inviting hell, when the heaven of love is located in our own hearts?** That was the question which shot up in the thoughts of every person passing by Nanak Shah. He was like a fountain of love sprinkling everybody around. Guru Nanak had a way of imparting the deepest truths in the simplest words. The story of his life is full of

such electrifying dialogues. Here is one.

After visiting Kabah, Nanak Shah went to Bagdad. The Khalif (i.e. the ruler) was oppressive towards his subjects. His greatest fault was his greed for wealth. He would resort to any tyranny to amass wealth. When he heard that Nanak Shah has entered his city, he came out to receive him. Nanak Shah took out 100 small sand pebbles from his pocket, "What is this Saheb?" Khalif asked.

"Oh I want to give these 100 pebbles to you for keeping in your safe custody", Nanak Said.

"Oh!" Khalif had a great smile on his face, "When would you take back this valuable treasure from me?"

"I am not in any hurry," Nanak Shah said serenely, "but bring them with you on the day of judgment". ('Roz-e-Kyamat' is the last day on which everybody is brought to judgment after death). "I will be there to receive them".

Khalif had a hearty laugh "Baba! Talk sense. How can one take this to the day of judgment?"

"You are right, Sir. You can't take anything to that day. But when you exert so much labour in amassing large wealth, you would not like to leave it here. So I thought you would bring my hundred sand pebbles along with all your gold and diamonds and jewels; my pebbles would not add any weight to your already heavy treasure".

Khalif was shocked as if his heart was pierced with 100 needles. Nanak Baba's words had shaken him head to foot. Baba's magnetic field had already swung the needle of Khalif's psyche from greed to repentance. "Yes! what is the use? I have to leave all this here. On the day of my death what will be the difference between my gold and Baba's pebbles?" The stream of compassion gushed out from his heart. "Oh I have oppressed my people for satisfying my greed." His eyes became wet. From that day he went on distributing his wealth to the poor and needy and discarded all his previous greedy ways.

Like all mystical Teachers, Guru Nanak taught the profoundest truths sometimes by metaphors and sometimes by some symbolic presentation.

Once he arrived in Multan, where there were quite a number of genuine Hindu and Muslim saints. As Nanak Shah entered the town, they sent to him a vessel filled with milk to the brim. They were telling Nanak Shah that the town was already full of Sadhus and Fakirs and his presence would result in a spill over. Nanak Shah caught the message. He dropped a lump of sugar in the vessel and floated a light small flower of Chameli on the milk. There was no spill over. The saints were so pleased that they themselves came to receive Baba.

(Sounds a bell? Yes, the Parsi Ashavan Nairyosang Dahval did something similar to Jadi Rana when he brought our ancestors at Sanjan, about six centuries before Nanak Shah).

Once Nanak Shah was tried to be tested by a Sadhu sect called "Gorakh-panthi." They gave him a 'til', a very small corn, sesame, and asked him to distribute it to the several people present there. With a serene smile Nanak Shah asked his companion Bala to crush and dissolve the til into water, and give a drop to everybody.

The Sadhus were extremely happy to hear this and said Nanak Shah had passed their test. But I have a feeling that this was not just a test of Nanak Shah's intelligence. They must have carried out some mystical dialogue amongst themselves; because mystics sometimes refer to a 'til' when they sing about God. **The great Marathi Sant Tukaram** has sung:

"The Lord of the Universe builds a house as tiny as a til and dwells in it. Imagine! The Master and the Emperor of the whole universe lives in such point sized space".

The Saints were perhaps referring to how the gigantic whole is contained in a point like part; how a small seed contains within it a whole forest; how a human heart houses in it the great God; how a small particle contains all the energy of the universe. My friend Scientix of Parsi Pukar showed me the following words of an eminent quantum physicist: -

"Using reasonable assumptions, **the energy of one cubic centimeter of space is far greater than would be available from the nuclear disintegration of all the matter in the known universe.** Matter is therefore a "small ripple" on this ocean of energy. But since we, are constituted of this matter, we no more see the "ocean" than probably does a fish swimming in the ocean see water". (**Science, Order and Creativity by David Bohm and F. David Peat** page 199 - Bantam 1987).

So, what mystical physics or spiritual science these Gorakh-panthi Sadhus discussed with Nanak Shah in that 'til' episode, we do not know.

Nanak Shah as Scripture writer

A Scripture emanating from the holy Prophets and Men of God is not a piece of literature. It is the word of God transmitted through His divine Messengers. It is therefore a Mantra structure, the very recitation of which generates certain spiritual effects within the reciter as also outside him or her. Such Mantra Prayers can be even in a commonly spoken language. Nanak Shah's "Granth Sahib" is such a holy Scripture. It carries a spiritual field around it; Nanak Shah's presence is woven in the atmosphere surrounding it. Most of it was spoken after Nanak Shah had disappeared in a river on the full moon night of August 1507 and reappeared after three days.

"Jaisi mai avai Khasam ki Bani

Taisi da kari Gyan ve Lalo !"

"The voice of the Lord came to me. What it told me I shall tell you O Lalo!" The Shikhs keep Granth Saheb with great reverence; they fan the Holy Book. Here is God's Word spoken through the Guru; may we follow the Word in our life. Through fanning the Sacred Book, the Shikhs serve God's harbinger, Nanak Shah, promise Him to practise His teachings in life, and spread the fragrant air of the Book throughout the universe.

- *Dosu Baba*

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Who is the Lord?

"The Lord is the Truth Absolute,
True is His Name.

His language is love infinite;
His creatures ever cry to Him;

"Give us more, Oh Lord, give more;
The Bounteous One gives unwearingly.

**What then should we offer
That we might see His Court above?**

With what language, might we
His love attain?

**In the ambrosial hours of fragrant dawn
Think upon and glorify
His Name and greatness."**

- **Guru Nanak Shah**
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"Recite Five Ahoonvar's at this Dawn-time".

- **Hoshbaam Prayer**

(Parsi Pukar – NOVEMBER 1996 Vol. 2; No.5)