

Extremism Vs Sikhism

Recently the Sikh community in New Zealand have come out to help the victims' families of terrorist attack on two mosques in central Christchurch, New Zealand. Guru Nanak Community Kitchen, an Auckland based NGO, asked the people from the community to come forward to volunteer help transportation of families to the cemetery and organise food (*langar*) for those attending funerals in addition to helping with key funerary services and sewa. It is not first time, Sikhs following their religious beliefs, come forward to help victims of natural or man made disasters towards any community irrespective of caste, creed or religion. They arranged langar at Myanmar Dosh border to help Rohangiya, who were thrown out of Myanmar because of their terrorist activities.

Sikhism came about eight hundred years after Islam and is considered to be a bridge between Hinduism and Islam. But very soon path of two missions diverged. What are the reasons?

Islam from the very beginning was based on violence where as Guru Nanak gave message of love and peace to whole humanity.

Why Islam is so aggressive and can not survive in co-existence? It is well known that it is not possible for non-Muslims to survive in countries where Islam dominates where as they migrate to non-Islamic countries to avail peaceful life.

According to a prophecy by a Kashmiri Sufi sage made 900 years ago, Muslims believe that one day whole Indian subcontinent including China will become Islamic and all non-believers (qafirs as per koran) will perish. This concept they call *Gazwa-e-Hind (a barbaric war of conquering India . After this war all idol worshipers will be eliminated by the winning Islamic army.)* Arabs (Islam originated in Arab) along with their Maulvis, started coming to India for trade right from 7th century CE onwards. Along with bussiness their aim was to spread Islam in India. Islam first came to the western coast of India when Arab traders as early as the 7th century CE came to coastal Malabar and Konkan-Gujarat. *Cheraman Juma Mosque* in Kerala is thought to be the first mosque in India, built in 629 CE by Malik Deenar, who first known Muslim to have come to India in order to propagate Islam in South Asia. Following an expedition by the governor of Bahrain to Bharuch (Gujrat) in the 7th century CE, immigrant Arab and Persian trading communities from South Arabia and the Persian Gulf began settling in coastal Gujarat. Ismaili Shia Islam (*Ismailis have been led by a living, hereditary Imam*) was introduced to Gujarat in the second half of the 11th century, when Fatimid Imam Al-Mustansir Billah sent missionaries to Gujarat in 1073 CE. Islam arrived in North India in the 12th century via the Turkic invasions and has since

become a part of India's religious and cultural heritage. In the early 11th century, Mahmud of Ghazni launched seventeen expeditions into South Asia. In 1001CE, he defeated Raja Jayapala of the Hindu Shahi Dynasty of Gandhara (in modern Afghanistan), the Battle of Peshawar and marched further into Peshawar (in modern Pakistan) and, in 1005, made it the center for his forces. These invasions continued till Mughals (In 1526, Babur won the Battle of Panipat against Ibrahim Lodi) established their rule and started forcible conversion of Hindus. Rana Sanga was the ruler of Rajasthan during those days. Sikh Gurus (Guru Nanak born on November 1469) were contemporary of Mughals and were target of Islamic tyranny during their reign. When Babur attacked Punjab in 1519, Guru Nanak was arrested and then released. Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth incarnation of Guru Nanak, was contemporary of Mughal ruler Jahangir and was under the scanner of his fanatic ideology. He arrested Guru Arjan Dev on flimsy grounds and tortured him by boiling in water and then making him sit on hot plate. Sixth Sikh Guru, Guru Hargobind took to arms and there were few skirmish with Mughal forces and things subsided after his demise.

For next few years Sikhs were living peacefully during the time of Guru Har Rai and Guru Harkishan. When Aurangzeb acceded to throne by killing all his brothers, wanted to bring whole India under Islam. Kashmiri Pandits when forced to accept Islam came for help to 9th incarnation of Guru Nanak, Guru Tegh Bahadur who was based in Anandpur at that time. On hearing their plight, the Guru asked Pandits to go to Aurangzeb and tell him that Guru Tegh Bahadur is our guru and he may first convert him if possible. If he accepts Islam, we all will become accept Islam. Guru Tegh Bahadur was summoned to Agra along with three of his disciples and tortured. When Aurangzeb could not persuade Guru Tegh Bahadur to accept Islam, he was martyred in Chandni Chowk Delhi. Sikh religion which started with peaceful mission of Guru Nanak had to fight the tyranny of Mughals for about two hundred years. A mission which wished good for all (*sarbat ka bhalla*), was forced to pick up weapon to protect dharma (faith).

Guru Nanak had described the rulers of his time as tigers and dogs. That situation did not change in 200 years. The policy of non-violence submission and surrender had produced no effect upon these ferocious tigers and mad dogs.

After this martyrdom, the young Gobind Rai was installed by the Sikhs as the tenth Sikh Guru on

Vaisakhi on 29 March 1676. Guru Gobind Rai the tenth incarnation of Nanak and son of Guru Tegh Bahadur was only nine year old at the time of martyrdom of his father. The education of Guru Gobind Singh continued after he became the 10th Guru, both in reading and writing as well as martial arts such as horse riding and archery. He started maintaining an army there after.

After the most determined meditation on this sad state of affairs, Guru Gobind Singh came to the conclusion that to tyrannize was bad, but to bear tyranny patiently was worse (*bhai kahoo ko det naahin, na bhai manat aan*). Guru Gobind Singh decided to create a national awakening in Panjab. The time chosen was opportune. Aurungzeb was involved in life and death struggle in the Deccan with the Marathas. Panjab was in charge of Prince Muazzam who lived in Kabul. Guru first tried to plant his ideas in the mind of the warrior class of Rajputs of the Shivalik hills. He soon discovered that the caste ridden and class dominated feudal lords would not respond to his appeals and they would not fit in his ideology of casteless society. He therefore turned his attention to down-trodden masses who were oppressed and had no voice.

The Guru wanted to create a strong self-respecting community. He inspired the Sikhs with courage and heroism and a life of simplicity and hard work. He started an arms factory at Anandpur in order to manufacture swords and lances needed for his soldiers.

The Guru thus established direct relationship with his Sikhs. The institution of the Khalsa was given concrete form on 30 March 1699 when Sikhs had gathered at Anandpur in large numbers for the annual festival of Baisakhi. He addressed the congregation and explained them the tyranny of Mughals to others, and asked for a volunteer from those who gathered, someone willing to sacrifice his head to Guru. Every one was spellbound in crown but then one offered his head to Guru. He took him inside a tent. The Guru returned to the crowd without the volunteer, but with a bloody sword. He asked for another volunteer, and repeated the same process of returning from the tent without anyone and with a bloodied sword four more times. After the fifth volunteer went with him into the tent, the Guru returned with all five volunteers, all safe. He called them the Panj Pyare and the first Khalsa in the Sikh tradition. These five volunteers were : Daya Ram (Bhai Daya Singh), Dharam Das (Bhai Dharam Singh), Himmat Rai (Bhai Himmat Singh), Mohkam Chand (Bhai Mohkam Singh), and Sahib Chand (Bhai Sahib Singh).

Guru Gobind Singh then prepared Amrit and

administered this to the Panj Pyare, accompanied with recitations from the Adi Granth, thus founding the khande ka pahul (baptization ceremony) of a Khalsa, a warrior community. Guru also gave them a new surname "Singh" (lion). After the first five had been baptized, the Guru asked the five to baptize him as a Khalsa. This made the Guru the sixth Khalsa, and his name changed from Gobind Rai to Guru Gobind Singh. Creation of Khalsa marked the culmination of about 240 years of training given by the ten Gurus to their Sikhs. The Guru wanted to create ideal people who should be perfect in all respects, that is a combination of devotion (Bhakti) and strength (Shakti). He combined charity (Deg) with the sword (Tegh) in the image of his Sikh.

Mughals could not tolerate Guru Gobind Singh keeping an army. First resistance he got from hill rulers who did not like Guru treating low caste people equal to high caste. Khalsa did not have any caste. Aurangzeb issued an order to exterminate Guru Gobind Singh and his family.

Guru Gobind Singh saw the war conduct of Aurangzeb and his army against his family and his people as unethical, unjust and impious. The period following the execution of Guru Tegh Bahadurngh, was a period where the Mughal Empire under Aurangzeb was an increasingly hostile enemy of the Sikh people. The Sikh resisted, led by Gobind Singh, and the Muslim-Sikh conflicts peaked during this period. Aurangzeb issued an order to exterminate Guru Gobind Singh and his family.

Guru Gobind Singh believed in a Dharam Yudh (war in defence of righteousness), something that is fought as a last resort, neither out of a wish for revenge nor for greed nor for any destructive goals. To Guru Gobind Singh, one must be prepared to die to stop tyranny, end persecution and to defend one's own religious values. He led fourteen wars with these objectives.

Aurangzeb sent a large army with two generals, Wazir Khan and Zaberdest Khan in May 1704, to destroy the Sikh resistance at Anandpur. The approach the Islamic army took in this battle was to lay a protracted siege against Anandpur, cutting off all food and other supplies moving in and out, along with repeated battles. Towards the end, the Guru, his family and followers accepted an offer by Aurangzeb of safe passage out of Anandpur. However, as they left Anandpur in two batches, they were attacked, and one of the batches with Mata Gujari and Guru's two sons - Zorawar Singh aged 8 and Fateh Singh aged 5 - were taken captive by the Mughal army. Both his children were executed by burying them alive into a wall. The grandmother Mata Gujari died there as well. In the battle of Chamkor Sahib, two elder sons, Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh laid their life while fighting large army.

The official successor was Bahadur Shah invited Guru Gobind Singh with his army to meet him in person in the Deccan region of India, for a reconciliation but Bahadur Shah then delayed any discussions for months.

While at Nander, Guru Gobind Singh was attacked by two pathans. He died of his wounds a few days later on 7 October 1708. His death fueled a long and bitter war of the Sikhs with the Mughals. After that the struggle continued by Banda Singh Bahadur. Banda Singh armed with the blessing and authority of Guru Gobind Singh, came to Sonapat and assembled a fighting force and led the struggle against the Mughal Empire. Guru Gobind Singh had also appointed five Sikhs (Baj Singh, Binod Singh, Ram Singh, Daya Singh, Kahan Singh) to assist him.

After long bloody struggle of about hundred years between Sikhs and Mughals ultimately Sikhs captured Punjab and established their own rule under Maharaja Ranjeet Singh in 1801. All Ranjeet Singh's conquests were achieved by Punjabi armies composed of Sikhs, Muslims, and Hindus. The modernized Punjabi army fought well in campaigns in the North-West Frontier (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan, on the Afghanistan border), including quelling an uprising by tribesmen there in 1831 and repulsing an Afghan counterattack on Peshawar in 1837. After the demise of Maharaja Sikhs lost their kingdom to Britishers, treason by Dogra Sikhs.

British ruled India for about two hundred years by dividing the country on caste and religion basis. After Britishers left the country, it was divided into three pieces, India, West Pakistan and East Pakistan. Even after division of India, conflict between Hindus and Muslim did not reduce. Britishers created Kashmir Problem as a bone of contention between two nations.

Due to the mistakes of our leaders, who took over from Britishers, part of Kashmir, was taken over by Pakistan using force. Although India was divided based on two nation theory, still good chunk of Muslims stayed in India, thanks to Mahatama Gandhi, and Pandit Nehru who always had soft corner for Muslims. As a result Muslim population in India become number one amongst all the countries of the world.

Even after partition, Pakistan was not satisfied with half of Kashmir captured by force, and continued aggression on India and Indian Muslims gave silent approval.

On the top of it, conversion remained undeterred and money was being poured from Arabian countries for making mosques in India. In Kashmir each road has a mosque. Slowly and secretly groups like Muslim Majlis, SIMI and PFI increased their activities of subversion and terrorist activities with the help of Pakistan increased. This resulted in attack on Reserve Police in Pulwama and hell of other terrorist activities

in Kashmir as well as in India, with the silent support of many political parties. Money also poured from European countries to convert Hindus to Christianity.

Muslim population also speedily grew in India as compared to other religions and on the top of it illegal migration from Bangla Desh and Rohangia from Myanmar also came to India and is continuously entering India, helped by many parties just for the sake of vote bank.

Kartarpur shrine which is only two kilometer from Punjab border went to Pakistan due to negligence of our Hindu leaders. Now it is being used by Pakistan for promoting Khalistan issue in India. Khalistan issue raised by few misguided Sikhs is a dead issue. Punjab has already suffered a lot in the past by the issues created by few misguided Sikh youths and fanned by others.

Religion is a private issue and individual's belief. It is advisable for all in India should live peacefully and worship their Gods in their private life. Religion should not be brought on roads and it should not be imposed on others, the way Muslims and Christians are doing.

Unlike Koran, no religion teaches violence. No religious book says that you kill all those who do not believe your doctrine. Concept of Jihad has to be abolished from the minds of Indian Muslims and they have to co-exist with their Hindu brethren by keeping their identity intact but totally in a personalized way.

With the advent of Wahabism, Kashmir which was once dominated by Sufism, has now taken weapons in their hand. Violence in Kashmir is backed by Pakistan and terrorists are being exported to India across the border. Life of peaceful people of Kashmir has become hell. Not only Jammu and Kashmir, whole world is now suffering from Islamic terrorism.

Sikhs through the message of Guru Nanak, spreading good will in the world by their langar and sewa. It is a war between evil and good. God only know, where it will end?

