

Editorial



A L L HUMEN ARE EQUAL

Religion is an organized collection of beliefs, cultural systems, and world views that relate humanity to an

order of existence. If we go back and study the history of mankind, we find that it started with the worship of nature. Man was scared of rain, thunderstorm and other natural calamities. He did not understand the reasons, why sun shines and how rain occurs. Thus he assumed that this is done by some unknown powers and he named them gods and he started worshipping them by giving different names to them. In Hindu religion Sun, wind and even rivers are revered as gods. Similarly in other part of world, similar pieties are worshiped under different names. For example Greek mythology mentions names of Jupiter, Venus, Mercury and so many deities parallel to Indian Mythology.

With the passage of time, various prophets gave their own version of God and their followers started worshipping them, and different religions came into existence. Basically all religions teach love and service for mankind, and non-violence. Their teachings were spread by their followers and in this process, in some cases teachings of prophets are mis-interpreted by their followers. They started giving their own interpretation of the scriptures and thus imposed their own views and ideology on others and some times use violent techniques.

Fundamentalism and orthodoxy in religion without understanding the basic tenets of it becomes dangerous when combined with modern weaponry. That is how Islam was spread in India in the past, and even it is going on during the present times. This is what whole world is facing now a days by Islamic terrorists like ISIS. This terror is not only against non-Muslims (referred as *qafirs* by them) but also against their own brothers (Shiahs). An attack by Muslim extremists on a cartoon magazine "Charlie Hebdo" which published a cartoon on prophet Mohamad is an example.

Even Sikh religion has also not been spared by people of such extremist views. In a democratic country like India, every one is allowed to profess one's religion in one's own way. Indian constitution allows every one to publicize preaching of their faith, but conversion and imposing one's views, by the use of force as well as by allurements is not allowed.

But first "love jihad" and now "home coming" or *Ghar vaapsi* have become another hot debated topic, after BJP came to power in the center. Muslims

and so called secular parties are calling it as conversion movement started by Vishal Hindu Prishad (VHP), where as Hindu fanatics feel it is to bring back those who left their religion under various circumstances. Why only Hindus get converted to Islam or other religions, is a matter of introspection for the community leaders. As an example, recently there was a news in papers that few so called scheduled caste individuals told VHP that they should be allowed to enter the temples otherwise they will become Muslims. Message is very clear. Even Sikh community is not devoid of this evil of castism.

It is not understood how by the performance of few rituals one can change his faith over night. A global 2012 poll reports 59% of the world's population as "religious" and 36% as not religious, including 13% who are atheists. The typical dictionary definition of religion refers to a "belief in, or the worship of, a god or gods" or the "service and worship of God or the supernatural". Then how one person or community can thrust his faith or belief on other person. Every one should have freedom to think and believe as per his own wisdom and lead truthful living. This is what is the message of Sikh Gurus to the World. When Guru Nanak was asked in Mecca, whether Hindu is higher or Muslim, he replied "without good deeds both will weep".

Hindustan or Bharat was divided into India and Pakistan only on the basis of religion. But later in 1971 Pakistan was further divided based on language and cultural gap. Then what is the more dominating factor. Why people following same religion can not live together? And then there are religions inside religions. Islam has number of sects, Sunni, Shia, Ahmadiyah and Khawarij and so many further subdivisions. Hindu religion is also divided in Sanatani and Arya Samaji sects. There are Shaivik and Vaishnava sects.

Sikhism on the other hand preaches the policy of ਮਾਨਸ ਕੀ ਜਾਤ ਸਭੈ ਏਕੋ ਪਹਿਚਾਨਬੋ (All human being are same in the eyes of Sikh religion.). Any one irrespective of its caste, creed and religion can come to gurdwara and partake in community kitchen (ਲੰਗਰ).

But even Sikh religion, which is quite recent has been divided into number of sects such as Namdharis, Nirankaris, Radha Swamis and now Sarablohiyas. Sikhs also, who follow the tenets of Guru Granth Sahib are divided. One faction does not take water with the hands of other faction on flimsy beliefs. Basic tenets of Sikhism "manas ki jaat sabe eko pehchanbo" by Guru Gobind Singh are ignored. Even gurdwaras are made on caste basis. In Punjab, the land of the Gurus, there are gurdwaras by Ramgarias, Ravidasias and what not. There can be difference of views on certain issues but these should not be imposed on others and basic tenets of religion should not be forgotten. One can preach his views but not impose forcibly.

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