CHAPTER V

SIKH VIEW OF RELATION OF MORALITY AND CONDUCT AND IDEA OF GOD

Any philosophical concern of human life must be based in the belief of the nature of human condition. As we have noted in the earlier chapter the human being has been a micro-cause of the entire cosmos and due to the grace and kindness of God the best of God is known to dwell in each human interior. This truth is patiently underlined by entire sikh scriptures.

"He to whom Thou dost show Thy grace and whom Thou dost bring to Thyself, he it is who meditates on the Name.

He whom Thou dost bring to the Truth, he it is who attains it ". (1)

Human beings often forget their divine father and arrogate a posture of conceit and Haumai, taking great pride in their power, Wealth, beauty or wisdom. The first lesson according to the scripture of the Sikhs in escaping the state to manmukh to burmukh is recognised the natural humility that goes with a pious recognition of oneself as mere emanation of the divine being. This state of humble recognition of one's creaturehood grows on man as he convincingly satisfies himself to the presence of Hukam in all matters concerning world, and our interactions with it both in nature as well as in human society.

"He who cherishes love for God in his heart finds

1. Var Malar, 28, McLeod, P205
all joys and comforts lodged in it. He who submits to his ordinance and walks in His will, gathers all His boons, bounties and blessing." (2) Sikh doctrine of God and man underlines such a cosmic interdependent reciprocity. It also restates the perennial belief of Indian spiritual tradition shared by all ideas of concerning man and nature as given by the Sanatan, Brahmanism, and its several schools best represented in the text of Bhagwad Gita and other religious books as well as in the vast text of Buddhism and Jainism. All of them commonly believe that our present life living in this particular moment of history is not a matter of sheer contingency or chance. We are at the tip of a long cycle of a spiritual evolution, marked by our own continuing thoughts, feelings and actions. We are ourselves responsible to a large extent to what we are born to face in our time. In short while there is no determinism our life is process of continuous interpretation of the course of cosmic existence that will seem to traverse over several births. Like the rest of the Indian religion, we are told by the Sikh scripture that nobody can take away the emergencies of our own pious as well as impious strivings that a human being is open to. This being the condition of a human agent our search must rise above the evil consequences of our unthinking slavery to momentary passions, limitations and ignorances.

2. Raga Guari,
Sikh philosophical ethics looks for their process of weaning our soul from the traps of what passion and desires as well as fear and greed so naturally create in our a state of bodily inclinations. A human being like another animal cannot avoid the weaknesses that characterised his firm bodily conditions. No human being is God, he is open to threats of death, injury, sickness as well as cannot avoid desires for bodily pleasures. But our minds have their meditative competence to see beyond immediate calculus of gains and losses of gratification of our bodily desires. If we cannot control these compulsive desires we are no better than a lower animal. In fact all attempts at seeking material success also necessitates a certain degree of rational prudence that means making a properly thought out plan of action to best realize even once specifically mundane objectives like getting best of satisfaction of power, wealth, honour or physical possession of material, goods. But human being would be less than his spiritual promises if he refuses to listen the still small voice of Nam (3) and the whisper of the Guru (4) beckoning him to go beyond merely the routine of the cycle of worldly, success and pleasures here and now.

In fact mankind alone can see the futility of such great achievements as making an empire, possessing lots of wealth including number of slaves, or children. He must face the facts that one faces God by himself and alone and must be true to that

3. Raga Asa,  P400
4. Raga Prabhati  P1340
enjoined vision of Hukam that his intelligence make him note in all the living and non-living creatures of the God.

If these metaphysical views relating to man are made patient and self-evident in the poetry of Guru Nanak and his successors patshas, Sikh world view and mariada do not make two compartments separate and independent of each other. They are integrated outcome of a united, spiritual, insight into both the heart of human activity as well as the field of performing that activity in the history and society. In the Sikh view a very necessary reconciliation between private virtue and social good has been strived after most unlike other indigenous spiritual condition of the past. There is no escape from the civil virtue, no body need become a monastic wanderer. One cannot absolve the responsibility 'Kirt' which alone sustains human life for dedicating oneself to Hukam by performing Shub Karm, dauntless of threats from the tyrants and the fatigue that comes by doing sewa to the poorest (Na kaho se Dosti, Na kaho se bhair 'none is our foe, none is a stranger to us, we are in accord with one and all (5).

Quite often it has been noted that religious and spiritual perfections fights of combating evil and oppression by declaring like Catholic Christians that your's is not the kingdom of this world and give on to saesars. This pessimistic fatalism has been equally present in medieval India when Guru Nanak

5.Raga Kanra P1299
the Khalsa was supposed to follow. As Guru himself gave the criterion that Gurmatta, five true Sikhs give their opinion after liberating themselves from any private affections, their moral truth naturally emerges from their consenses. The Sikh text of Moral truth that it represents not only the good of the persons who join in the Gurmatta but it also takes note of the good of even those persons who are not present or not are even born and the one who pronounces Gurmata to be followed by the Sangat must act responsibly towards the entire universe (Sarbat ka Bhalla) ‘Nanak Nam chardi kala tere bahan Sarbat ka Bhalla’ (7). There can be no compartmentalisation in one’s Sewa on one’s concern for the happiness of some who are one’s peers only, one must of necessity act in history and time but while acting like this, one should be for all the ages past and future and all those who have already lived and who are likely to come later. According to Sikhs one’s life hear now is a brief episode in time but that is no reason, that it bears relevance only to that moment or location. It has necessarily trans-temporal and trans-locational significance implying a timeless encounter with the divinity.

So Gurus argue that we should never give up our historical moorings and immediate obligations to which a human existence is obliged but while discharging such immediate duties we should keep equally our meditation and reflection fully
suffused to all the reality of divine beings that our consciousness also reveals to us. Sikhism as such merges human action to its deepest spiritual foundations unlike other spiritualism. Sikh saint does not see any anti-thesis between concrete life of domestic labour, political solidering, other collective responsibilities from the obligation to contemplate and Simran on the eternal Hukam of Vah Gregu around oneself.

Sikh doctrine of spiritualisation marks a new departure in history of moral ideals both eastern and western. It is not at all entirely secular or rationalistic unrelated to ideas of Dharma and Parmatma. But the transcendental ideal of Godly living does not militate against the duty of citizen and the warrior. The 'Piri' never shies of the duties of battling for justice to the weak and the helpless and the oppressed, but this is not merely combat for political power. It is also a parallel struggle to disclose a spiritual universe of divine presence that makes one forget hatred and greed which often characterises the passionate warriors for power and territory. A Khalsa is not supposed to fight for gaining material advantage, power or sovereignty over goods, property and lives of other men and women. What he seeks is wholly to overcome not only embodiments of Haumai in society as exemplified by injustice and tyranny but also one's own unsuppressed desires for gain and domination. To that extent 'Sant Sipahi' is like bodhi Sattva or a Yogi in
Such an idea of course is very difficult to follow for men and women with weaknesses to follow. As such they are supposed to put themselves in the company of Sadh, Sangat or a moral community. Contemplation and utterance of God's name in the company of the Saints, is the true ritual performance, the highest deed, our dharma, and the essence of wisdom and enlightenment. In this novelty of organising concrete Sangats around Gurdwaras or Dharamsalas, the Sikh Gurus took extraordinary care to translate their spiritual vision of a worthwhile human life, a genuinely concrete blueprint for a faithful to live a life of piety. The moral life was not accordingly in their mind a purely private or personal affair of a single seeker. The seeker must re-enforce collective piety by overcoming all conceit by sharing Sewa, in the Gurdwara and feeling one-in-service high or low as embodiment of Prabhu. Nothing brings solidarity of sharing truth while serving under those who are decidedly not socially and historically superior to oneself as Maharaja Ranjit Singh used to do 'Tohli and Sewa' at the bidding of the Akali Phula Singh.

In that sense the idea of a spirit being higher than a might of the septrre of the tyrant. In fact it is only

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embodiment of the command of the Hukam 'Men should live as God
wills' (9) that septre reigns over the kingdoms and territories.
The rulers are to be made conscious of their subordinate role to
the imminent presence of 'Hukam' that they are supposed to enact
in their day to day administrative conduct. This is how Khalsa
Raj is the embodiment of the eternal principle of dharma and all
must contribute in its maintenance. Whenever a tyrant or a ruler
transgresses any of the foundational principles of Dharma, it is
the duty of all Gurmukhs to repudiate such 'At' and be prepare
to 'Wage' a war of resistance to ensure the might of Hukam.

The last point of collective Sikh doctrine of action is
revolutionary, is highly radical and revolutionary unlike most
medieval, spiritual, doctrines of Bhagtas, Sufis and Sants who has
generally preached, withdrawl and other worldliness in the phase
of operressive autocracies of their age. The Sikhism not only
preaches Shub Karma and Sewa for everybody, but also enjoins a
relentless battle by the community against proven dushakrana, no
matter what sacrifice one what has to made in order to ensure the
sovereignty of Hukam. As the short history of Sikh Martyers from
the days of 5th Guru Arjan to four Sahibjadas of Guru Gobind and
Banda Singh Bahadur and his children amply illustrates In the
word of Guru Gobind while laying the foundation of Khalsa in
1699 in Anandpur, the doves which are possessed of truth shall
fight an whole army of falcons and hawks and each Singh himself will be an army of (Sawa Lakh) Such optimistic activism has been simultaneously the source of both moral purity, ethical uprightness and quest for justice for all in the brief period of the birth of sikh mode of living.