

GURU GOBIND SINGH

Problems concerned with Hindus

1. The Hindus had discarded the worship of one God and had supplanted Him by numerous gods, avatars, animals, vegetation and metals. The obvious result with the disintegration of their nation. Beset with physical and spiritual slavery they were out to obliterate their very existence. How to wean them from the worship of His creatures and the pull of the Vedas and restore the worship of one God, was the first problem.
2. How to check the downward slide of the Hindus in physical, mental, spiritual, moral and educational sphere and give it an ascending?
3. What were the causes of disunion, animosity. Bickering and weakness among the Hindus, which should be removed to bring them on a common platform brotherhood and nationalism?
4. How to weaken the dominance of Islam and free Hindus from bondage?

In short; how bring about the worship of **one** God, brotherhood and nationalism among the Hindus and how to deliver them from the clutches of degrading slavery.

It goes without saying that others before Guru Gobind Singh had deliberated upon this theme but without any tangible results. All such efforts at reformation had resulted in the widening of the gulf of differences. All reformers had pointed in newer directions; thus leading to further separations and ramifications. A veritable jungle of pathways was created making more and more new sects who took pleasure in the discomfiture of others. They never thought of working unitedly despite religious and political differences, against the common bloodthirsty enemy. Owing to mental slavery they had strayed far from the Vedic religion, The Muslims trampled upon them one by one (in turn). The only difference being that those who enjoyed the discomfiture of others had their moment of humiliation slightly later.

They were united in not a single thing about religion. All of them boasted of deriving their own brand directly from the Vedas and looked askance at others. They were responsible for the slide downward from mental slavery to political enslavement, And political bondage had brought them to the brink of annihilation. Their religion and nationality was about to lose their identity. Their religion had no strength to bind the numerous sects together. They had no power, wealth and manhood left to fight

back. Wide-ranging reforms were needed in moral, religious and social fields. The last question perplexing Guru Gobind Singh was that the material at his disposal was nil. He was hard put to find a solution to the complicated problem.

He surveyed the field before him, There were impediments in the way of religious and social reforms. The political reality was fraught with dangers and pitfalls. Despite all this he steeled himself for this Herculean task. He decided to inject new vigour into the frigid Hindu blood which had lost all sense of honour, shame, brotherhood and valour. He took the field all alone like a true warrior.

To put things in their true perspective, it is proper to view the scene. Guru Gobind Singh was a recluse sans wealth, power and possessions but possessed of one thing which despite everything added to his courage and impelled him towards success. It was the spark of nationalism and the fighting instinct of a Kashatri. The exploits of Ramachandra are remembered with reverence and pride. But in Ramachandra's time the whole of India was under the Hindu Kings. Neither the country nor the Dharma was threatened. He himself was a king, enjoying great wealth and power. The neighboring Kings sided with him. No one can aver that patriotism or nationalism of any kind was involved in his war against Lanka. Undoubtedly he proved a true Kashatri warrior and killed Ravana who had forcibly taken away his wife. A great deed of personal revenge.

On the other hand Guru Gobind Singh took up the cudgels for the betterment of others, grieved at the forcible abduction of lakhs of wives of his countrymen. He undertook this tough task under extremely difficult conditions. All exploits of Krishna were motivated by personal revenge. He killed Kansa because the latter wanted to obliterate his dynasty alongwith Krishna. He took to the sword in self-defense and wielded it well. Conspiring with the Pandavas and with their active support he defeated king Jarasindh, who had attacked him fifteen times to avenge the killing of Kansa. Jarasindh had forced Krishna to leave his Kingdom and found a new Kingdom in Gujrat with Dwarka as its capital.

It was pure and simple revenge that prompted these exploits. No patriotism of any kind was involved. There is no doubt that Jarasindh and Kansa were both cruel despots. And it was the duty of a Kashatri to take up the sword for the extermination of such persons. Even if we admit that some patriotic feelings were lying at the back of all this, contrary to the facts, his exploits should be assessed in the light of his being a king with great resources at his command, with many kings at his side and the great Pandavas backing him up. His actions appear not beyond any ordinary king of his time. No foreign power was ruling the country, which was under Kashatris and the people were prosperous.

But the task before Guru Gobind Singh was comparatively far more stupendous, important and critical. In patriotic fervour he leaves Krishna far behind. Similarly his deeds far excel those of Shankaracharya. The latter was helped by Kashatri kings in his bid to browbeat the Buddhist Scholars with his intellect and scholasticism. Had he not been backed by the Kashatri might he would have failed in his mission. Guru Gobind Singh stood all alone without friends and helpers. The emperor of his time was dead set against him.

Prophet Mohammad had to contend with a small tribe of Quareshi sect. Guru Gobind Singh was faced with a situation far more difficult and critical than any of these great persons had met. It required greater courage and determination. His (own) Hindu brethren were against him, he himself was a penniless recluse. True his father had been martyred. *But millions before him had been butchered by the Muslims emperors. Why so far no one had ever thought of taking revenge during all these centuries? Why it occurred only to Guru Gobind Singh that the Muslims power should be weakened? Why no one had stood up against the tyranny of the Muslim rule?*

The most surprising thing is that the very Hindus for whose welfare Guru Gobind Singh was bearing all kinds of hardships were not only fighting shy of helping him, but were adding to his cup of miseries by fighting against him. The Hindus were so much consumed by selfishness that there was no hope of their ever rallying under the banner of nationalism. In the heart of Guru Gobind Singh was lit the spark of nationalism which all earlier Hindu reformers including Krishna, Ramachandra, Shankaracharya and Ramanuja had lacked.

The spark was there but material needed for stoking it was lacking. The Guru was only fifteen and had this Herculean task before him. No fierce wind of fear and danger, no cyclone of cowardice, no hurricane of hurry and selfishness, no currents of carelessness could extinguish this spark. Great wisdom, patient, awaiting of opportune time and the knack of feeling the pulse of the time were needed for such a task. So Guru Gobind Singh retired to the hills in order to nurse the spark of nationalism into a blaze and devise means to utilize it to good effect. Another reason of his seclusion could be his desire thereby to cool the opposition of Ram Rai, a strong contender for Guruship. It is said that the Guru stayed in the hills for many years and the hill chieftains did all they could to harass him.

During this sojourn, he added a lot to his knowledge. He learnt Persian thoroughly, acquired some understanding of Arabic and attained proficiency in Sanskrit. He heard and went through the chronicles of great kings and warriors of India and studied the lives and philosophies of great reformers and leaders of other religions. He ruminated over the ups and downs of his country and listened raptly to the ballads on the bold exploits of the doughty warriors of India, sung by the bards.

When his Sikhs gathered around him, such recitals were a regular feature. The idea was to infuse valour into them. He spent some of his time in hunting tigers and other wild animals. All along, his mind dwelt on the task before him, devising ways and means to be put into practice in the times to come. During this period the claim of Ram Rai to the Guruship proved hollow and lost bite. In due course the Sikhs started rallying round Guru Gobind Singh. He would daily listen to the tales of woe inflicted by Aurangzeb which steeled him further in his resolve and kept the spark burning in his heart.

The might of the Mughals was evident as also the helplessness, sad plight and inherent weakness of the Hindus. He fixed his priorities and decided first of all to remove the causes responsible for disunity, despondency and debility among Hindus. This required sweeping reforms in the religious field, alongwith social reforms like eradication of caste – system and unsociability. Needed also was the inculcation of upward looking among the shudras. And last of all he was to political reform. All these involved considerable difficulties.