

RENUNCIATION

Renunciation is an important factor to turn our thinking and actions in the right direction. Without renunciation our thoughts and actions are prone to be self-oriented, and selfish. Whatever the origin, the shape it adopted, at the time when Sikhism was founded, renunciation just meant giving up of one's hearths and home, family and responsibilities. Sikhism is against this idea. It regards such a step as an expression of human weakness and cowardice. It preaches that every living thing is a manifestation of the Supreme Being who resides in us and can be realised while performing our worldly duties as well. In *Rag Dhanasri*, the ninth Nanak says :

Why repair to the wilderness to seek Him;

ਕਾਹੇ ਰੇ ਬਨ ਖੋਜਨ ਜਾਈ ॥

The Omnipresent, the Detached, is always within Thee.

ਸਰਬ ਨਿਵਾਸੀ ਸਦਾ ਅਲੇਪਾ ਤੋਹੀ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਮਾਈ ॥

As fragrance is in flower and reflection in mirror :

ਪੁਰਖ ਮਧਿ ਜਿਉ ਬਾਸੁ ਬਸਤੁ ਹੈ ਮੁਕਰ ਮਾਹਿ ਜੈਸੇ ਛਾਈ ॥

So He is within thee; seek Him within.

ਤੈਸੇ ਹੀ ਹਰਿ ਬਸੇ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ ਘਟ ਹੀ ਖੋਜਹੁ ਭਾਈ ॥

The purpose of the Sikh life is service, *sewa*, which cannot be fulfilled by such kind of renunciation. A person who has taken to such renunciation will, on the other hand, look upon and expect others to serve him, being entirely dependent on others.

Sikhism advocates renunciation, but of such things as, desire for ownership with regard to all objects and activities, that is, attachment for all these. It preaches renunciation of ego and pride,

and of idleness, indolence, inertia and inactivity. The fifth Satguru in *Rag Maru* says :

Renunciation is noble if lust, anger, and greed are renounced.

ਤਿਆਗਨਾ ਤਿਆਗਨੁ ਨੀਕਾ ਕਾਮੁ ਕ੍ਰੋਧੁ ਲੋਭੁ ਤਿਆਗਨਾ ॥

If not properly studied and understood, mere reading of *Gurbani* takes us to the brink from where we observe the total insignificance and helplessness of the human being before the Infinite, Fathomless Almighty. From this point of the cross-roads, one is liable to take the easier route and become a fatalist. But Sikhism takes the other route which lifts one higher in values and virtues. For a Sikh, the arena of action begins from this point. Being emancipated from all terrors of superstitious dogmas or of the priest or the ruler and above all the fear of death, the Sikh takes this route with the life-giving and exhilarating words of the ninth Guru :

Worry only about what is unlikely to happen.

ਚਿੰਤਾ ਤਾਕੀ ਕੀਜੀਐ ਜੋ ਅਨਹੋਨੀ ਹੋਇ ॥

(It is useless to worry about what is inevitable).

He marches forward, ever fresh and progressing without any hitch and hesitation, as the fifth Satguru in *Var Maru* says :

Forward ho ! and turn not to look back.

ਆਗਾਹਾ ਕੂ ਤ੍ਰਾਘਿ ਪਿਛਾ ਵੇਰਿ ਨ ਮੁਹਤੜਾ ॥

With composure, unswervingly, and with confidence, according to the ninth Satguru's guidance :

Frighten no one, nor be afraid of any one.

ਭੈ ਕਾਹੂ ਕਉ ਦੇਤ ਨਹਿ ਨਹਿ ਭੈ ਮਾਨਤ ਆਨ ॥