

GOD

The Sikh conception of God is as simple as it is comprehensible. At that time the Aryan and Semitic cultures and schools of thought were in conflict in India. The Aryan thought conceived God as immanent only, pervading, discernibly in the creation. While the Semitic conception was of a God sitting above in the seventh heaven and issuing writs and controlling the working of the whole of His creation from there. Satguru told both of them that there was nothing to quarrel about. Both were telling the Truth. He invited them to proceed further and think deeper, and they will find God as both, Absolute as well as Immanent. This he explained in the following words :

Some say He is beyond, outside, while others say He pervadeth all.

ਕੋ ਕਹਤੋ ਸਭ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਕੋ ਕਹਤੋ ਸਭ ਮਹੀਅਉ ॥

His colour is not seen, nor His sign known, His beloved ones, describe them to me.

ਬਰਨੁ ਨ ਦੀਸੈ ਚਿਹਨੁ ਨ ਲਖੀਐ ਸੁਹਾਗਨਿ ਸਾਤਿ ਬੁਝਹੀਅਉ ॥

He pervadeth all, lives in every heart, and yet is uncontaminated and unattached.

ਸਰਬ ਨਿਵਾਸੀ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਵਾਸੀ ਲੇਪੁ ਨਹੀ ਅਲਪਹੀਅਉ ॥ (ਜੈਤਸਰੀ ਮ: ੫)

Know the One Supreme Being alone who is within as well as without. This is the Knowledge imparted by the Guru.

ਬਾਹਰਿ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਏਕੋ ਜਾਨਹੁ ਇਹੁ ਗੁਰ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਬਤਾਈ ॥ (ਧਨਾਸਰੀ ਮ: ੯)

He manifests in many ways and forms and still keeps aloof and detached from all.

ਨਾਨਾ ਰੂਪ ਧਰੇ ਬਹੁ ਰੰਗੀ ਸਭ ਤੇ ਰਹੈ ਨਿਆਰਾ ॥ (ਬਿਹਾਗੜਾ ਮ: ੯)

Satguru sums up the conception of God in these words of the first *shlok* of the Holy Granth :

True in the beginning, True in the primeval age.

ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ ॥

True He is, and True He shall ever be.

ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥

The tenth Guru in 33 *Swayyiyay* (ਸਵੈਯੇ) says :

Who was and is

ਜੋ ਥਾ ਅਬ ਹੈ ।

and shall ever be.

ਅਰ ਆਗੈ ਊ ਹਵੈ ਹੈ ।

This means that the Sikh doctrine of the Name (of God) is a trenchant, pure, and unadulterated monotheism. In the very beginning of the Holy Granth, Guru Nanak defines God as the highest Unity, in which the Absolute and the Personal are reconciled. He gives the Sikh conception of God as follows :

The One Supreme Being (absolute, personal, immanent (ੴ) whose name is eternal All-Pervading Verity (ਸਤਿਨਾਮ), the Master Creator (ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖ), without fear (ਨਿਰਭਉ), without enmity (ਨਿਰਵੈਰ), Immortal Being (ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ), non-incarnated, unborn (ਅਜੂਨੀ), Self-existent (ਸੋਭੈ), the Enlightener and the Grace (ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ).

We find that the figure 'One' appended to '*Onkar*' besides signifying God's Unity, also depicts His being a Personality and not merely a Void (ਸੁੰਨ). '*Oung*' (ਓ) means transcendent and '*Kar*' (ਕਾਰ) means immanent. God, revealed to us by Guru Nanak is, therefore, both a transcendent and immanent God, and also above and beyond any conception. He is not like an impotent mechanic fashioning existing matter into the universe. He includes matter and transcends it. He is the Uncreated Creator, the Eternal, the Supreme, the Truth, and a God of Grace : a Personal God who resembles more the monotheistic God of the Semitic religions than any of the gods connected with the pantheistic Hindu conception. He is the Fountain-head of Life and also the Ultimate End of all. The Sikh God is, therefore, Infinite, Formless, Timeless, Uncreated, Self-existent Being (*Nirankar*).