A. GURU NANAK (1469-1539)

Ardaas has been discussed under the following topics according to Nanakian philosophy:
1. Hukm (Laws of Nature),
2. Accessibility of God, and
3. Type of Ardaas of Guru Nanak

1. Hukm (Laws of Nature)

It is important to understand Guru Nanak’s philosophy about ‘Hukm’ (Laws of Nature/Universe) before discussing his philosophy on ‘Ardaas’ (Prayer). Hukm has been discussed in detailed by Guru Nanak throughout his Bani. In fact it is so important topic for him that he had started to talk about it in JAP (The Essence of Nanakian Philosophy) [2] which is found right in the beginning of the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) [1]. The Sikhs have been advised to obey the Hukm (Laws of Nature) of the Eternal Entity:


Guru Nanak further explains that every action and reaction going on in this universe and all the living organism is governed under these laws (Laws of Nature) and nothing happens out of these laws:


In the above two stanzas Guru Nanak has very clearly mentioned that every action and reaction is going on according to the Laws of the Eternal Entity (God) or the Laws of Nature according to the scientists, therefore, one cannot boast about that one has power to change them. Therefore, nobody has any power to perform any miracle by changing the course of Laws of Nature.

2. Accessibility of God

In Nanakian philosophy the God is Agam (Agm) meaning inaccessibile, unapproachable, or inscrutable as explained in the following phrases:


Nanak says:


In this article I have tried to discuss Ardaas according to the philosophy of Guru Nanak of 15th century and that of Albert Einstein, a Nobel Laureate, of 20th century.
Guru Nanak explains in the following phrase that if God is inaccessible and unapproachable then which is that method to reach God?

Guru Nanak explains in the following phrase that God provides us even without asking for:

The Inaccessible and Infinite God will give (everything) without asking for.

This means that God has already provided all resources on this earth needed by the humanity and other living beings.

Then Guru Nanak says: Should we pray to him to taking care of us?

Agm Agocr AIK Apwru icMqw kruh hmwr1]

The Inaccessible, Unfathomable, Invisible and Infinite Entity takes care of us (under the Laws of Nature).

If God takes care for us and provides everything without asking for then Guru Nanak pose a question. Should we praise the God?

ikAw swlwhl Agm Apwry]

Should we praise the Inaccessible and Infinite God?

3. Type of Ardaas of Guru Nanak

There is no demand in the Ardaas of Guru Nanak as is evident in the following phrases from his Bani:

Nanak says his prayer that Nanak surrenders his life and body completely to God.

Guru Nanak is not demanding any material thing.

Although all the living beings are already under Your laws (Laws of Nature), and they understand that it is Your worry (to provide everything).

Nanak’s prayer is that what is happening (under these Laws of Nature) is good since it is happening under Your laws (Laws of Nature) and that pleases You. 4.2.

In the above two stanzas Guru Nanak has not said his prayer to demand anything for his personal use from God or wanted any power to enable him to perform any miracle to convince people that he is a great Guru or Prophet. He is repeating the same principle as mentioned in some of the earlier phrases.

Moreover, according to Nanakian philosophy God cannot be pleased:

The Almighty exists forever and so are Its Laws of Universe and systems of communication and love for God are beyond any limit.

Will the Almighty give me when requested, since (the Almighty) is bounteous?

Since all the bounties are of the Almighty then what should be placed before the Almighty so that I could see Its court; and

What words (of praise) shall I utter with my mouth that on listening of which the Almighty starts loving me?

Answer:

During any time of exalted state (or feel-like) deliberate on the philosophy of Ever-Existing Entity (Almighty).

The robe of honor is bestowed only when good deeds are performed. Consequently, one reaches the gateway to salvation.

The theme is that God exists forever and so are Its Laws of Universe. Neither any offering of any material article nor of any food nor by repeating of any particular word/s can please God. Only one's good deeds will help to reach to the gateway of salvation.
The above stanza clearly indicates the principle of ‘Hukm’ (Laws of Nature) are working everywhere as discussed previously. Guru Nanak says that all the living beings are already under the Laws of Nature and still they are seeking the protection from God. Guru Nanak further says that since every action and reaction is going on under these laws and it pleases him:

The Ever-Existing Entity (God) Is full of praises (attributes).

In the following stanzas Guru Nanak quotes an example that prayers performed by many Pir (Muslim religious persons) could not defend from the onslaught of Babur on Pathan rulers:

The strong holds, palaces and other buildings were burned down to ashes and the princes were cut into pieces by the army of Babur. But there was no effect of performance of prayers by the Pir's and their prayers blinded not even a single Mogul... Nanak says: Nothing happens by performance of prayers since every action and reaction is going on in this universe and in every living being according to the Laws of Nature as ordained by God and God is satisfied with this system.

What should be the Ardaas According to Nanakian Philosophy?

Keeping in view the Nanakian philosophy in the above stanzas of Guru Nanak, Guru Arjan formulated Ardaas as follows:

Guru Arjan has composed this Ardaas keeping in view all the basic principles of Nanakian philosophy discussed above. Here again it is very clear that Guru Arjan has not demanded any thing from God. The irony is that this Ardaas is sung while getting up and stretching the bodies before the Ardaas composed by the Sikh theologians during 1930s and 1940s. This Ardaas of SGPC is reproduced at pages 6-8. There is another irony that there is not even a single phrase in that Ardaas from the Gurbani, incorporated in the AGGS.

(Continued on page 8)
Now it is the prayer of the whole Khalsa, May the conscience of the whole Khalsa be informed by Waheguru, Waheguru, Waheguru and, in consequence of such remembrance, may total well-being obtain. Wherever there are communities of the Khalsa, may there be Divine protection and grace, the ascendance of the supply of needs and of the holy sword, Protection of the tradition of grace, victory of the panth, the succour of the holy sword, ascendance of the Khalsa. Say, O Khalsa, "Wondrous Destroyer of darkness."

Unto the Sikhs the gift of the Sikh faith, the gift of the untrimmed hair, the gift of the discipline of their faith, the gift of sense of discrimination, the gift of trust, the gift of confidence, above all, the gift of meditation on the Divine and bath in Amritsar (holy tank at Amritsar). May hymns-singing missionary parties, the flags, the hostels, abide from age to age. May righteousness reign supreme. Say, "Wondrous Destroyer of darkness."

May the Khalsa be imbued with humility and high wisdom! May Waheguru guard its understanding!

O Immortal Being, eternal helper of Thy panth, benevolent Lord, bestow on the Khalsa the beneficence of unobstructed visit to and free management of Nankana Sahib and other shrines and places of the Guru from which the Panth has been separated.

O Thou, the honour of the humble, the strength of the weak, aid unto those who have none to reply on, True Father, Wondrous Destroyer of darkness, we humbly render to you ........ (Mention here the name of the scriptural composition that has been recited or, in appropriate terms, the object for which the congregation has been held.) Pardon any impermissable accretions, omissions, errors, mistakes. Fulfil the purposes of all.

Grant us the association of those dear ones, on meeting whom one is reminded of Your name. O Nanak, may the Nam (Holy) be ever in ascendance! in Thy will may the good of all prevail!

b) On the conclusion of the Ardas, the entire congregation participating in the Ardas should respectfully genuflect before the revered Guru Granth, then stand up and call out, "The Khalsa is of the Wondrous Destroyer of darkness: victory also is His." The Congregation should, thereafter, raise the loud spirited chant of Sat Sri Akal (True is the timeless Being).

c) While the Ardas is being performed, all men and women in congregation should stand with hands folded. The person in attendance of the Guru Granth should keep aving the whisk standing.

d) The person who performs the Ardas should stand facing the Guru Granth with hands folded. If the Guru Granth is not there, the performing the Ardas facing any direction is acceptable.

e) When any special Ardas for and on behalf of one or more persons is offered, it is not necessary for persons in the congregation other than that person or those persons to stand up.

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B. ALBERT EINSTEIN (1879-1955)

A child in the sixth grade in a Sunday School in New York City, with the encouragement of her teacher, wrote to Einstein in Princeton on 19 January 1936 asking him whether scientists pray, and if so what they pray for.

Einstein replied as follows on 24 January 1936: I have tried to respond to your question as simply as I could. Here is my answer. Scientific research is based on the idea that everything that takes place is determined by laws of nature, and therefore this holds for the actions of people. For this reason, a research scientist will hardly be inclined to believe that events could be influenced by a prayer, i.e. by a wish addressed to a supernatural Being.

Is Einstein not saying the same thing about prayer as said by Guru Nanak about 467 years before him?

REFERENCES