

NEWS & VIEWS

IS THERE A PLACE FOR GOD IN CONSTITUTION

In general, religious beliefs are not as widespread in modern society as they were once. The population of atheists is increasing with the increase in scientific information, because many religious concepts cannot stand the test of science and logic. Therefore, people are losing faith in religions. Now the atheists have attacked the Canadian constitution to remove God from it. Decreasing morality; increase in number of divorces, teenage mothers, children without parents; shooting sprees by young students in schools and indiscriminate shooting by grown-up persons in institutions, restaurants, and other public places will force the humanity to think seriously to find solution to these serious problems. It appears that there is going to be tough argument about the place of God and morality in personal lives of the next generations during the 21st century.

Svend Robinson caused a stir in the House of Commons when he delivered a petition from about 1,000 of his BC (British Columbia) constituents calling for removal of reference to God from the constitution. The only New Democrat present, Robinson listened to taunts from other MPs while he read the petition urging Ottawa to amend the Charter of Rights and Freedom, which states *"Canada is founded upon principles that the supremacy of God and the rule of law."* The petition suggested changing the reference to *"the supremacy of intellectual freedom and the rule of law."*[1].

The Humanist Association of Canada, which drafted the petition and protested quietly outside, and said it is a *"discriminatory reference and offensive to millions of Canadians who are non-Christian and non-religious."* The atheists believe that *"A Person Without God Is Like a Fish Without a Bicycle."* On the other hand Rev. Tony Van Hee, Roman Catholic priest says, *"With the best intentions and the best will in the world, without God we self-destruct."*[1].

The Federal Government has shelved the proposal to usher God out of Canadian constitution and Canadian courtrooms. *"Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?"* while keeping a hand on the Bible, will stay. However, the Canadians have a choice to take any other oath without Bible [2].

The Editorial of the Gazette says, *"Dropping the reference to God would in no way infringe on the freedom of individual Canadians - quite likely the majority of us - to go on acknowledging God's paramountcy. It would not change how we conduct our affairs one iota, either in public forums or in our private lives. It would simply remove an unnecessary and unseemly intrusion of religion into the body politic. The pity is that, as with the monarchy, there are far more important issues on the constitutional agenda to be dealt with first [3]."* Francesco Furfard said [4]: *"The formation of a nation's constitution is a political matter, not to be clouded by references to supernatural agencies and other non-participants. This should be obvious. Svend Robinson's petitioners merely suggested that our national document be trimmed of a little fat. This could enhance its attractiveness and credibility to our increasingly multicultural population."*

Across the boarder in the United States of America, the Government firmly believes in God as shown by printing the following phrase on the back of their currency bills: IN GOD WE TRUST.

According to the Nanakian Philosophy (Sikhism), incorporated in the *Aad Guru Granth Sahib* (AGGS), the Holy Scriptures of the Sikhs, God (the One and Only) is Ineffable, Incomprehensible, Infinite, Eternal and Exists everywhere.

The following questions will arise for serious discussion during the 21st century, although it has been discussed many times before:

Will belief in God and/or developing certain type of morality solve the above mentioned problems?
What is a morality? How to teach morality?

D.S. Chahal

References

1. The Gazette, Montreal, June 9, 1999, Page A 8. MP tables petition to drop God from constitution.
2. The Gazette, Montreal, June 10, 1999, Page A 8. Feds drop plan to usher God from constitution.
3. The Gazette, Montreal, June 10, 1999, Editorial, Page B 2. Leave God out of it.
4. The Gazette, Montreal, July 10, 1999, A Letter to the Editor, Page B 6. Constitution is political, God isn't.

TENSION BETWEEN REASON AND FAITH

Many preachers and scholars put a lot of emphasis to have full faith, without any reasoning, on all the concepts of a religion. They forget the fact that the present generation of humanity is living in the Science Age / Space Age / Communication Age and new scientific information is accumulating at such a high speed that it is even becoming difficult for most of the scientists to keep pace with the progress. If a concept that cannot stand the test of science and logic, is taught in any religion it will not be able to hold its ground when its truth is exposed by science. It first happened in Christianity and now is happening in other religions. The following report is the best example to explain the whole truth that a wrong concept in a faith cannot stand for a long:

Nearly four centuries after the Vatican condemned Nicholas Copernicus's discovery that the earth revolved around the sun, another Pope - Pope John Paul - visited the astronomer's birthplace on June 7, 1999 and praised his scientific achievements. But the Pope noted that science and religion are still grappling to find common ground in the "service of truth." In 1992, the Pope formally proclaimed that the church erred when it condemned Galileo for supporting Copernicus's theory, which had been denounced in 1616 as dangerous for the faith. It remained on the church's index of prohibited books until 1822. "The discovery made by Copernicus, and its importance for the history of science, remind us of the ever-present tension between reason and faith," John Paul told officials of the university in Torun, Poland, named after the astronomer [1].

NOW QUESTION ARISES:

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you, You didn't make a thundering overture though, just a hush, hush, un-announced inauguration at the Gurdwara. It certainly requires a true champion to do it and you've done it again, my friend. . . You gave Sikhs a beautiful web site and now you've given us another journal with a different dimension and flare.

Good luck for your journal. Congrats.... well earned!!! Way to go.

Hindé Thind. Montreal, Quebec

I am glad you are involved in a very worthy cause. I commend you whole heartedly.

Darshan Padda, USA

First of all let me congratulate you and your team for

If a wrong decision taken by the church or the Pope in 1616 CE can be reversed in 1992 by another Pope, then why cannot the Jathedar of the Akal Takht reverse the wrong decisions taken by his predecessor/s? The irony is that some Sikh politicians and scholars consider the position of the Jathedar of the Akal Takht equivalent to that of the Pope. Even then they are not ready to follow the good gesture of the Pope shown towards Copernicus and Galileo, who challenged the wrong concept of the church - the sun revolves around the earth. Moreover, Nanakian Philosophy, incorporated in the *Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS)*, does not support the position of priesthood of any type in Sikhism (*Sikhi or Gurmat*). Consequently, there is no such position in the Gurdwara Act of 1925 even then some theologians and Sikhs are creating a highest priest class with full political and religious powers in Sikhism. There is another lesson from the above report that the clergy should not formulate any concept or code in the future that cannot stand the test of Gurbani, science and logic - the touchstones of truth.

REFERENCE:

1. The Gazette, Montreal, June 8, 1999, Page B 6. Copernicus praised: Pope visits birthplace of astronomer once condemned by church recall 'tension between reason and faith.'

successfully bringing out the first issue of your journal. The format and the contents make for easy reading and hopefully it will maintain its high standards. There is no reason why it should not become the pre-eminent journal on Sikhism.

Dr. Sarjeet Singh Sidhu, Malaysia