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CHAPTER III

CONCEPT OF JUSTICE

Ordinarily by justice we mean fairness, impartiality or adherence to truth etc. It is conformity to truth, fact, reason, correctness, and rightfulness. Many time justice and righteousness are used as synonyms. Justice is concerned with law while righteousness is concerned with religion.

According to Reese's *"Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion"* Justice is derived from the Latin 'Jus' ("right" or "law"). Saint Augustine explains the origin of the word 'justice' while explaining one of the dialogues of Cicero, an ancient Roman orator. 'Juris' derived from 'Jus' he interprets as meaning justice—"righteousness" or "justice".¹ Since time immemorial many theories have been put forward to define and describe justice. It will be pertinent to study various perspectives of it.

The Western Perspective

In the West, Greek thought has been the father of various theories of political science. Historical evolution of justice is often started right from Homer, a Greek thinker. He has mentioned both administration of justice and ethics of justice. "Just" and 'God-fearing' are comprehensive categories of all virtue or righteousness for the Homeric *Odysseus*.² For Socrates "...it is love and order and sobriety and justice that hold together gods and men and the whole world, which is therefore a cosmos—an order, not a licentious disorder."³ It is just like *Rta* of Hinduism, which will be discussed later.

Plato dealt with the concept of justice in detail. Justice of Plato is social in nature. In the *Republic* he regards justice in its subjective aspect as entire righteousness, the

harmony, unity, and right functioning in division of labour of all 'parts' or 'faculties' of the soul.

One of the fundamental theories of Plato was the three-fold division of man's mind into Reason, Spirit and Appetite. On the basis of these, three classes of society are inferred, *i.e.*, the Rulers, the Soldiers and the Farmers. His another assumption was that justice was not prevailing at his times. He refuted the prevailing theories of justice. First was "to give every man his due and doing good to one's friends and evil to enemies." Plato refuted it on the ground that it is not easy to recognise true friends and enemies. Secondly it is morally not good to do evil to anyone, may he be an enemy. And thirdly the theory is based on individualistic rather than broader terms.

Another theory was that of Sophists. For them justice weighed more in the interest of the stronger. Therefore they believed that injustice is better than justice is. Again Plato refuted it on the ground of individualism. He wanted commonly agreed concept of justice for the whole society. Another theory described justice as the 'child of fear'. But it seemed to Plato that justice was not something external as described in all the prevalent theories.

For Plato, justice is deep rooted in the human mind. It is as instinct, a virtue. In the *Republic* of Plato Justice is the bond, which holds the society together, a harmonious union of individuals, each of who has found his life work in accordance with his natural fitness and his training. Therefore conception of his social justice or righteousness is that each person should do his appointed work in contentment. And that is the true principle of social life and sense of duty. Proper education to all the three classes of mind also forms part of Plato's concept of justice.

Justice was one of the four virtues for the Greeks, the other three being Wisdom, Courage and Temperance. However, Aristotle explains two types of justice Complete and Particular Justice. Complete justice is like moral virtues. He explains this in his book entitled *Ethics* that it is such "as exists among people who are associated in common life with a view to self-sufficiency and enjoy freedom and equality."⁴ But, for him, it is not possible until people are law-abiding. Particular justice consists 'in the distribution of honour or wealth or any other things which are divided among the members of the Koinonia.'—V. 5.

Cicero, a Roman thinker born in 106 BC found that the state was doing injustice to the people as the rulers were going away from the universal law. Justice, for him meant “conformity of particular laws to universal law.”⁵

For St. Augustine Justice is conformity to the universal order. But if it is taken in respect of duties and obligations then it cannot be an absolute justice. In case of conflict one cannot be just to all. Absolute justice, for Augustine, is possible only in a universal society, which is under the kingship of God and is regulated by Universal order prescribed by the Will of God for all men.⁶ This concept is very close to that of Sikhism, which believes in total submission to the Will of God called ‘Hukam’. The Sikh Gurus also advised to believe the Will of God. Augustine holds that this Will of God is applicable both to the state and the individual.

For Kant, rights to freedom must be enforced by the state, is justice. Hegel calls obedience to state laws as justice. In the *Man versus the State* Herbert Spencer holds that Justice means that every man shall be free to do what he wills, provided he infringes not the equal freedom of any other man. According to the *Bible* justice is to obey the Lord's commandments—Mat. 5.19

The Indian Perspective

In Hinduism justice is expressed in the terms of righteousness. It is found right from the *Rg Veda* in the expression of the term *Rta*. Primarily *Rta* means cosmic order. It denotes order of the moral law also. In the words of Radhakrishnan, “*Rta* originally meant the ‘established route of the world, of the sun, moon and stars, morning and evening, day and night’. Gradually it becomes the path of morality to be followed by man and the law of righteousness observed even by gods.”⁷

The guardian of *Rta*, in the *Rg Veda*, is god Varuna the great guardian of morality. The Law of which Varuna is the custodian is called *Rta*. “*Rta* literally means ‘the course of things’. It stands for the law in general and immanence of justice. Later *Rta* also came to be interpreted as the right path. In the *Rg Veda* there is a prayer to god Indra ‘to lead us to right path, the path of *Rta*’—X. 330.6.

Meaning of the word *dharma* is multi-dimensional. *Dharma* denotes ‘duty’ also. According to Radhakrishnan, “The conception of *dharma* is a development of the idea

of Rta, which stands for the cosmic and moral order and expresses 'the reasonableness and law abidingness of nature' and includes law and convention, etiquette and moral principles. There is a continuity from the Vedic Rta, to the Upanisadic and later *dharma*, and this continuity is facilitated by the notion of *satya*.⁸ The idea of justice or righteousness is expressed in this meaning of the term *dharma*. In *Vaisesika-sutra* *dharma* is "the consummation of the process of spiritual development which is at once the condition of all goodness and the good."—I . 1.2

According to the *Gita* man's *dharma* is to carry out the duties without the desire for reward. Lord Krishna said to Arjuna:

Thy business is with action only, never with its fruits:
so let not fruit of action be thy motive, nor be thou to inaction attached."—I I . 47.

The *Gita* holds that justice is in *svadharma*—*doing* one's own duty. If on the contrary we allow ourselves to be subjected by the mechanical determination of *pradharmā*—doing others' duty, which, in the eyes of the *Gita*, is a sin. —XVI I I . 47.

The Upanisads hold that the meditation is the higher path, which can bring about the realisation of eternal righteousness. So they condemned the ritualistic ethics, particularly the sacrificial cult. The *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* asserts that he who worships a divinity other than the self is treated to be as no other than a more domestic animal of gods—I . iv.10. The *Chhandogya Upanisad* severely condemns sacrificial act—I . xii.5. It holds that those whose conduct here has been good, will quickly attain a good birth (literally womb), the birth of a *Brahmin*, the birth of a *Kshatriya* or the birth of a *Vaisya*. But those *vaisya* conduct here has been evil, will quickly attain an evil birth, the birth of a dog, the birth of a hog, or the birth of a *Candala*—V. 10.8. For *Manu*, justice is in performing duties, assigned separately to four classes by God. *Brahmins* are to study and teach the *Veda*, give and accept alms; the *Kshatriya* to protect the people, to give alms, to study the *Veda*, to offer sacrifices; the *Vaisya* to do the trade and to lend money, to give alms, to offer sacrifices and to study the *Veda*; the *Sudra* to serve meekly even these other three classes.⁹

In Zoroastrianism *Asha* is the principle of righteousness. It is equivalent to *Rta* of the *Rg Veda*. In Zoroastrianism God Himself is righteous. So one can achieve Him through righteousness. It (righteousness) makes us one with Him. He who seeks Truth and righteousness seeks God; he who finds those finds the whole universe in His hand. 'Through Righteousness God Himself advanced the furthest'—Yasna 57:4. In the *Avesta*, *Asha* (Righteousness) is praised very much because through it we can approach Him:

"...and accompanied by *Asha Vahishta* (who is Righteousness the Best), and the most beautiful! And may we see Thee, and may we, approaching, come around about Thee, and attain to entire companionship with Thee! And we sacrifice to the Righteous Order, the best, the most beautiful, the bounteous Immortal!"

Yasna Lv: 12.

Man finds place nearer to God (*Ahura Mazda*) only on the basis of his good actions. He must have good thoughts, words, and deeds.

Sikh Perspective

In Sikhism words *Niyaye*, *Niyam*, *Tapavas*, *Adal*, *Sach*, *Dharam*, etc. have been used for justice. Though the last two have other meanings also at various places yet these have been used for 'justice' also. For example *Dharam* has been used for religion, faith, honesty, duty etc. in addition to justice.¹⁰

Justice as an attribute of God: In Sikhism justice is one of the attributes of God. This is indicated in the *Mul Mantra*, the primal creed of the Sikh thought where justice is referred to as *Satt*. Though *Satt* refers to permanent existence of God, who is out of the limits of time and space, to creation, which is relative truth, last of all it refers to ethical truth (*Sach*)¹¹ and this truth includes justice. Guru *Nanak* tells that He (God) is true so is His justice (AG. 723). The fourth Guru supports this when he writes that God is true—His justice is true and the persons who realise it within them become one with Him:

When Thou alone art True, when Thy Justice too is True, whom shall then we fear?

Nanak: they who Realised the Truth, became one with the Lord's Truth. A.G., p. 84

Injustice has no place in Gods order because He is absolutely just:

Into the Court of the True One, *enters* not the False (unjust). A.G., p. 146

For the fifth Nanak God is absolutely just:

Perfect is the justice of the Creator Lord. A.G., p. 199

Guru Nanak, while describing Him all in all, tells that He Himself is the true Judge, so none is to fear about it:

Himself He sits on the Throne to Judge with Justice. A.G., p. 1022

Justice of God: According to Sikhism God is only true judge. His justice is true. His justice is not like justice of human beings. Herein our justice the person who is actually virtuous is not rewarded properly, And in most cases a culprit can escape punishment from the court of law because of our procedural methods or any other reason. But in the Court of God none can escape the true judgement. According to the fourth Guru:

One can run away from the man's court;

but where is one to go if one runs away from the Lord? A.G., p. 591

Characteristics of His Justice: (i) God does not practise any partiality while delivering justice. In His Court there is neither high nor low nor rich nor poor. His justice is true to the meaning of the Word. He does not show any partiality on the basis of caste or other considerations. Guru Nanak writes:

Hereafter in the Lord's court high caste and power are of no account.

For one is to face new persons (who do not hear or care the castes or power).

Only those are honoured who have done good deeds in the world. A.G., p. 469

The third Guru writes:

Hereafter goes not caste nor colour with us
One becomes as per deeds.

A.G., p. 363

Here one thing is to be made clear that the term 'good deeds' should not be taken to mean the *Karma* philosophy of Hinduism. 'Good deeds' include *Nam-Simran* also. The third Guru makes it clear when he says:

Hereafter, no one asks one's caste, For, Good (only) is the Practice of the Word...
Nanak: They, who are Imbued with the Name,
are Emancipated through the infinite Love of the Guru.

A.G., p. 1094

This is evident from the examples of Ravidas, who was a cobbler and Namdev, a weaver. Both of them were emancipated. Another example is that of Bidar, son of a slave girl, in whose house Lord Krishna chose to take meals, leaving the delicious food for King Duryodhna. The fourth Guru writes:

Contemplating the Lord, men of low caste attained a high Station:
Pray, ask thou Vidura, the son of the slave-girl, with whom Krishna chose to abide...
Ravidas, the tanner, praised his Lord for a brief time. And he from a low-caste
Wretch was Purified, and all the four castes repaired to his feet.
Namdev Loved his Lord, though people called him a calicoprinter.
Yet, the Lord turned his back upon the high castes,
and Hugged him, His Devotee, to His Bosom.

A.G., p. 733

Similarly in His Court masters and servants are dealt with equally, without any distinction on the basis of their stature. The fifth Guru writes:

There (in the Lord's Court) the Adjudication is based upon
Truth: and the Master and the Servant are deemed equal
(before the Lord).

A.G., p. 621

(ii) Justice of God is based on the deeds of the persons. As we sow here so shall we reap in His Court. Guru Nanak makes it clear in *Japuji* (stanza 20), his very first composition. He says in *Asa ki Var* (Pauri 10) also that man is rewarded according to his deeds. The fourth Guru makes it further clear that mere hollow talks will not be considered in His Court, while delivering justice, one may speak in beautiful and flattering language. It is the deeds, which are to be considered. He says:

The Lord's Justice is not upon mere talk:

if one takes poison, one dies.

See friends, the Justness of my Lord's Regime,
that one is awarded justly for what one does.

A.G., p. 308

The fifth Guru writes that the *Kali*-age is the best one because in this age one reaps according to his own deeds. Bhai Gurdas tells us that in other three ages—*Satyug*, *Treta* and *Duapar* one was not to reap his own sowing but the whole country, city and genealogy, respectively, had to suffer for the misdeeds of one individual. But in *Kali*-age His justice is in its best form as the person concerned himself only suffers for his misdeeds—*Var* 1:13. The fifth Guru writes:

People look upon the three past Ages,

Satyayuga, Treta and Duapar, as great,

But for me, the present, is the greatest of them all.

For in this *Kali*-age, only the who sows the seeds reaps the
fruit and no one is made answerable for another.

A.G., p. 406

In conclusion, Guru Nanak tells that God, after creating the creatures, installed the righteous judge to record their deeds. And there is only true judgement and nothing else. The righteous ones are rewarded properly and the false are punished. He says:

Creating the beings, God has installed the Righteous Judge
to record their accounts.

There, only the truth is adjudged true and the sinners

are picked up and separated out.

The false find no place there and they go to hell
with blackened faces.

They who are imbued with Thy Name win, O Lord.

They who are cheats they lost the day.

God has installed Dharamraj to record the accounts.

A.G., p. 463

(iii) He punishes the wicked. His punishment comes in many forms. Sometimes it comes in the form of diseases. The secret cause of our diseases is our evil actions—of this birth or of the previous births. The fifth Guru writes:

Ailments afflict those who commit sins

The Lord Himself sits as the Judge.

A.G., p. 199

In His Court a sinner always loses the game. Especially such a person 'who does evil deed in actual practice but pretends to be pure, is bound to be treated like a thief and punished'—A.G., p. 194. Persons who torment the poor or weak punished severely. Such an act is never tolerated. Even to misrepresent someone is taken as a crime in His Court. That person is disrespected in both the worlds. He has to suffer for his misdeeds. The fifth Guru says:

Whoever over the humble and the meek vows to tyrannize,

The Supreme Lord in flames burns him.

The Creator perfect justice dispenses

The traducer is destroyed, afflicted with a great malady.

He is destroyed by Him, against whom, no saviour exists.

Of such here and hereafter, evil is the repute.

A.G., p. 199

(iv) He always saves the honour of his true devotees (*Bhagats*). It is His innate Nature and lie is very conscious about it. He always gives higher seat and respect to them. While giving his *Bhagats* respect and honour, God goes to the extent to declare:

Him, whom I Bind down, My Devotee can Deliver but he,
 who is Bound by My Devotee, him I can't:
 Yea, if at a time the Devotee chains me too (with the Cord of Love),
 I cannot but submit. A.G. pp. 1252-3

It is His self-assumed duty to protect the honour of His *Bhagats* and to punish those practising falsehood—this is His justice. The fourth Guru says:

The Devotees by Him are Blest, while the False ones are by Him, Cursed.
 True, True is the Master. True His Justice;
 O, dust be on the heads of His traducers. A.G., p. 851

The reason behind is that His true devotees or *Bhagats* are in tune with Him. They have all the Godly qualities. They never do wrong things. Only that person is a true *Bhagat* or *Sant* who moves every inch in His Will. Such a *Sant* is not different from God. The fifth Guru says:

The Saint is he, with whom the Lord is pleased.
 The Saint does only what the Lord does. A.G., p. 867

The ninth Guru writes:

He, who Dwells ever on God, he and God are one.
 For, he is the Embodiment of God, and there is no distinction
 between the two, nay none. A.G., p. 1421

So, because of this reason God ever abides by His devotee and punishes those who try to trouble him, The fourth Guru tells that throughout history also God has been protecting the honour of His *Bhagats* and punishing the guilty. He says:

In every age, God created His Devotees, and He Himself saved their Honour.
 The wicked Harnakashyapa was slain by the Lord,

and Prehlad, the Devotee, was Blest.

He turned His back upon the Egoistic and the Slanderers
and Namdev He ushered into His Presence.

A.G., p. 451

(v) Besides the above characteristics of God's Justice, Compassion forms an important important aspect. Forgiveness is strongly recommended by the Sikh Gurus. God is infinitely Gracious. He, while delivering Justice, may forgive also. It is also His innate Nature. He pardons any body, who really repents over his misdeeds and makes up his mind strongly not to repeat the same. The fifth Guru says:

For the Lord, our Spouse, is Infinite and Beneficent, the
Master of Maya, the Support of the earth, and the Purifier of Sinners...
Whosoever seeks the Lord's Refuge, him He Hugs to His
Bosom: this is the innate Nature of the Lord.

A.G., p. 544

The fifth Guru further writes that if His own devotee sometimes errs or makes some mistake unwittingly or unconsciously, God in His Compassion warns him about his mistake and sometimes admonishes him but ultimately forgives him and shows him the right path:

As the child, in his innocence, commits a myriad errors,
And the father instructs and reprimands him,
but then hugs him to his bosom,
So does the Lord forgive us our past Sins and
shows us the Path for the future.

A.G., pp. 624-5

Here the only pre-condition is that the person seeking mercy must be genuine. It is not like this that one repeats that very mistake many times and seeks mercy and will be pardoned. One must be sincere in seeking apology and His Mercy, only then it is granted.

Justice as the Duty of the Ruler: The ruler is the representative of God on this earth to deliver justice to the people. God has created this image government in the world only for the sake of delivering justice—A.G., p. 580. So it is the most sacred duty of

the ruler to deliver justice.

God punishes such rulers, who don't deliver justice, rather tyrannize the poor. The fifth Guru writes:

Whoever over the humble and the meek vows to tyrannize,
The Supreme Lord in flames burns him.
The Creator perfect justice dispenses.

A.G., p. 199

Bhagat Kabir strongly condemns tyranny and the use of force. He says:

Whosoever wrongs another by force, he has to answer for it before his God,
And be Struck in the Face: for, how by such a one can God he faced?

A.G., p. 1375

Justice as a duty of the ruler has already been discussed in detail in the chapter entitled Concept of Ruler.

Social Justice: In Sikhism justice at many places is referred to in terms of social equality. At the time of Guru Nanak there were inequalities amongst the people. There were many divisions and sub-divisions in the society. Caste system was predominant. The lower-caste people were looked down upon and were treated as untouchables. Very rough treatment was given to them.

In the medieval society the poor suffered economic disparities and disabilities and were denied justice. Thirdly, there were division on the basis of religion. People with religious beliefs different from the ruling class were looked down upon. There was no justice for them; They were at the mercy of the people belonging to the dominant group. Fourthly, injustice was being done to women also. The Sikh Gurus believed in universal equality. Caste-system was outrightly rejected. This will be discussed in the chapter of 'Human Rights'.

The Sikh Gurus preached equal justice for various classes based on economic divisions. They attached no importance to wealth. For them God is dwelling in the hearts of the rich as well as the poor. In the Court of God there is no difference between the rich and the poor, the master or the servant, the king or the subjects. The Gurus believe that these statures of this world are not for ever. These are not true. Therefore while doing justice these things must not be taken into consideration,

as Guru Nanak tells us:

Neither the kings, nor the subjects, nor the chiefs will remain.
The fool thinks the solid and beautiful mansions will remain his.
(But know ye that) treasures, full of wealth, are emptied in
a moment.

A.G., p. 141

In his *Varan*, Bhai Gurdas tells that Guru Nanak wiped out the difference between the high and the low, the king and the poor person—1: 23. The fifth Guru says in a similar manner:

The knower of God looks on all with equal eyes
like the wind that blows alike on the kings and the poor.

A.G., p. 272

This can be seen in any great personality. Lord Rama accepted tasted 'Her' fruit from a low-caste poor woman Bhilni. Lord Krishna preferred to take meals with the poor man Bidar who was a truthful person, while rejecting the offer of the unrighteous king Duryodhna. Similarly Guru Nanak preferred to go to Bhai Lalo, a poor carpenter and refused to accept the delicious dishes of Malik Bhago who had collected money not through rightful means.

This was practically adopted by institutionalising *Langar*— the community kitchen where the rich and the poor could sit together in the rows (*Pangat*) and eat common food prepared by the persons from all classes and castes. This was to give a lasting blow to such differences. This system is prevalent today also.

Bhagat Kabir remarked that God creates both the rich and the poor equally. But the rich persons do not care at all for the poor while the latter pay full respect to the former. For Kabir the actual rich is he who is in tune with God. To quote him:

No one shows consideration to the poor,
For, howsoever, the poor one tries, the man of riches cares not.
If the poor one goes to the man of riches,
Lo, he turns his back upon him.

But if the man of riches goes to the poor one,
 He honours him and welcomes him.
 The rich and the poor are but brothers
 They are the Manifestation of the Lord's Power.
 Says Kabir The poor one is he alone,
 In whose heart God is not.

A.G., p. 1159

The Sikh Gurus believed in universal brotherhood and preached against sectarian thoughts. According to them all religions lead to the same goal. One may profess any religion but basically he/she is a human being. This line of thinking started right from Guru Nanak. He preached that there should be no discrimination on the basis of religion. God has no religion and the tenth Guru also says so while paying obeisance to God: I salute God, Who has no religion—Jaap, 2: 17. He does not consider any particular religion good or bad. It is the deeds, which make man good or bad. He was of the opinion that liberation or the Goal of man is achieved not by following any particular faith or religion or sect. He prayed to God to liberate those, who sincerely want it, may he profess any religion or even no particular religion of this world. He says:

The world is on fire: O God, Save it Thou in Thy Mercy:
 Through whichever Door it comes unto Thee, Save it that wise, pray.

A.G., p. 853

The very first words that Guru Nanak uttered when he reappeared after *Veni* episode, were: 'there is no Hindu no Mussalman', indicating that to him all were human beings and worldly labels of *Hindus* and Muslim had no meaning. The fifth Guru reiterated the same while quoting Kabir. He refused to accept any religious order. The only thing he accepted was that he is the child of God only. To quote him:

I am neither Hindu, nor a Muslim,
 For my body and the vital breath belong to Allah and Ram both.

A.G., p. 1136

The tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, very strongly condemned discrimination or injustice on

the basis of sect, religion and even nationality. There is a true spirit of internationalism in his compositions. He said that one may be a *Hindu* or a Muslim or belongs to any of the sects, basically he is a man. He says:

One man by shaving his head is accepted as a Sanyasi,
 another as a Jogi or a Brahmachari, third as a Jati.
 Some men are Hindus and other Musalmans;
 among the latter are Rafazis, Imams, and Shafais
 know that all men are of the same caste.
 Karta (the Creator) and Karim (the Beneficent) are the same;
 Razak (the Provider) and Rahim (the Merciful) are the same;
 let no man even by mistake suppose there is a difference. *Akal Ustati*, 15:85

There is a strong feeling, in his compositions, that all men are made up of same material *i.e.* five elements; and the physical differences are due to the different environments. All the holy scriptures talk about a universal God. Only God is the common parent of all human beings. As the sparks rise from fire and fall back into it, dust particles rise from *dust* and go back to it, waves are nothing but water, similarly all sentient and non-sentient beings emanate from God and will go back and merge with Him. —16/86, 17/87. Such is Guru's sense of equality and equal justice to all. He sees God dwelling in all whether one belongs to any country or any part of it. In his composition, *Akal-Ustati*, he talks of many countries and their parts and areas such as: Hingal (in east), ranges of Himalayas, Iran, Ghazni, Arabic countries, France, England, Kandhar, Bengal, Delhi, Rohelkhand, Magadh, Bundelkhand, Nepal, China, Manchuria, Tibet etc. He sees God dwelling in all people living anywhere in the world. He feels that all are singing His Praise only. Hence they all are one. He says that God is so much just that He hears the (meek) ant first and (the mighty) elephant afterwards—4/256.

The Sikh Gurus gave equal status to women also. Justice must not be denied to them on the basis of sex. Position of women in Sikhism will be discussed in detail in the chapter of 'Human Rights'. According to Sikh thought justice must be given to all the

people without any distinction or discrimination based on inequality. For the Gurus, to deprive others of their rights amounts to injustice. Even to have an eye over the thing or another's right is sin. Guru Nanak says:

To grab what is another's is evil,
As pig's flesh to the Muslim and cow's flesh to the Hindu. A.G., p. 141

Guru Nanak further says that even the Guru stands by those who do not usurp others due:

The Guru-teacher stands by us, if we usurp not another's due.
By mere talk none goes to Heavens: for,
Emancipation is by living the Truth. A.G., p. 141

Guru Nanak is of the opinion that justice is the fundamental right of a person. To deprive him of this right is sinful. He condemns the unjust ways of the *Kazis*:

Becoming a judge he sits to administer justice.
He tells rosary and mutters God's Name.
Taking bribe he does injustice (grab the right of the other),
If someone asks him, then he quotes and reads out some aphorism.
A.G., p. 951

Justice to Self: After social justice we come to another aspect of justice, *i.e.*, justice to one's self. As the human form is given as a chance to the creature to realise the Truth, so to work for this ideal sincerely is justice to one's self. To waste this opportunity and spend the whole of life in enjoying the worldly pleasures and remain occupied with immoral deeds is injustice to our human birth. Guru Nanak tells that the bride (human being) does justice when she destroys her sins and intunes herself to her Spouse:

She destroys her sins, abides as master of herself
and becoming the Discriminating Mind,
She adjudges (does full justice). A.G., p. 765

Again the Guru says:

In the City of the body, the Mind is the King,
and the five knowing-faculties abide within it.
And, the Mind, seated on the Throne of heart
ministers Justice, becoming Wise, uttering the Word. A.G., p. 907

Therefore justice to one's self is the self-conquest and meditating on Lord's Name for which one has taken birth.

Place of Grace and Forgiveness: While discussing the justice and its application we have already studied that in God's Justice there is place of Grace and Forgiveness too. Similarly man should also have this sense of forgiveness. There is a strong idea of forgiving the persons who harm us, forgiving the enemies even. Sheikh Farid even goes to the extent that if one slaps you, turn your face to receive another— A.G., p. 1378. This is a psychological reformation of the person. One realises one's mistake and repents on one's folly of harming such a nice person who, instead of slapping him in turn, is ready to receive another blow. Further Farid advises to do good even to the wicked and not to lose one's temper—A.G., pp. 1381-2. The spirit of forgiveness and benevolence is best conveyed in the following maxim:

Generally a bad person is paid back in his own coin,
It is only the noble souls who forgive the wicked.

However only a great man like Guru Nanak alone can return good for the [evil](#).¹²

Guru Nanak says that only that person who has the qualities of truthfulness, contentment, wisdom, compassion and forgiveness alone attains supreme position. He says:

Or Truth be one's Fasting, Contentment the Pilgrim-station and
Wisdom and cognition the Bath, And Compassion the god,
Forgiveness the Rosary; then, one is sublime being. A.G., p. 1245

Kabir goes to the extent of saying that God dwells in the hearts of those who have

forgiveness or compassion for others in their hearts

Where there is Wisdom, there is Righteousness;

where there is falsehood, there is Sin,

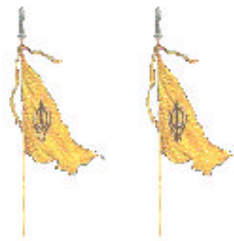
Where there is greed, there is death:

Where there is compassion, there is God.

A.G., p. 1372

Notes And References

1. St. Augustine, *City of God*, XI X, 21.
2. James Hastings (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. 10, p. 801.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 802.
4. Aristotle, *Ethics*, V. 10.
5. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory*, p. 150.
6. St. Augustine, *op. cit.*
7. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. 1, p. 79.
8. Aloysius Michael, *Radhakrishnan on Hindu Moral Life and Action*, p. 130.
9. *The Laws of Manu*, 1: 87-9 1, trans. Max Muller, *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXV, p. 24.
10. Maya Singh (ed.), *The Punjabi Dictionary*, p. 301.
11. Jagjit Singh Saluja, *Mul Mantra: Sankalop Ate Vivechan*, pp. 72-76.
12. *Bure Nal Sabh Bura Karde, Maaf Karan Kai Siane Bure Nal Phir Neki Kami, Eh Guru Nanak Jane.*



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