


CONTAINING AIR POLLUTION

Taking a serious note of increasing air pollution, which has now increased to such an extent that it has become hard for people in areas like NCR and other nearby zones to breath properly, the Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) is regularly reviewing the position with Chief Secretaries of Punjab, NCR State Governments, Agriculture/ Environment Secretaries and Pollution Control Boards (PCBs) to contain the problems arising out of farm fire incidents in the National Capital Region (NCR) and Punjab. The review meetings were also held recently with 23 District Collectors / District Magistrates (DMs) of Punjab, 22 DMs/ DCs of Haryana, and 8 DMs/ DCs of NCR Districts of Uttar Pradesh (UP) regarding the preparedness and implementation of action plan for Prevention and Control of Paddy Straw Burning in 2022.

During the review meetings, the DCs/ DMs briefed about their preparedness and informed that they have conducted meetings at their levels as well as with the nodal officers and will ensure that there is a substantial reduction in the number of stubble burning cases in their respective districts. Further, the DCs elaborated the steps taken regarding utilization of available machinery, IEC activities especially in all hotspot villages, extending assistance to the ex-situ projects in their districts, interaction with the farmer communities and further informed that they are keeping strict vigil on the burning incidences. Haryana, Punjab and U.P. assured that with effective implementation of action plan, utilization of the CRM machinery, effective public campaign and strict enforcement, they would ensure substantial reduction in crop burning incidents this year.

It was noted that about 31,700 Custom Hiring Centers and cooperatives have been set up in Punjab, Haryana and UP (NCR) and more than 2 lakh CRM Machinery is available for utilization in Punjab, Haryana and NCR Districts of UP. The need to intensify IEC activities like educational campaigns, awareness camps and publicity through print, electronic and social media was emphasized. The State Governments were advised that the monitoring/enforcement mechanism as envisaged in the plan of action at the State level/ District level/ Sub-divisional level/ Cluster and Village level must be effectively utilized. The Commission has been actively monitoring paddy residue burning events in the states of Punjab, Haryana and 8 NCR Districts of UP. The current year has so far seen a reduction from 3431 to 1695 fire counts as compared to the corresponding period of last year. The total farm fire incidents reported in Punjab are 1444 as against 2375 incidents in 2021, in Haryana are 244 as compared to 1026 in the previous year; and in UP (NCR) are 5 as against 30 fire incidents during the corresponding period of 2021. In NCT of Delhi, 2 fire incidents have been reported this year. No fire incident has been reported from the two NCR Districts of Rajasthan. During the current harvesting season, the first paddy residue burning incident was reported on September 15 in Punjab, September 18 in Haryana, on September 30 in the NCR Districts of Uttar Pradesh and October 5 in New Delhi.



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UNIVERSAL PHILOSOPHY

The teachings of Guru Nanak are logical and easy to understand. His definition of God is captured in the mool mantra — IkOnkar Satnam Karta Purakh Nirbhau Nirvair Akal Murat Ajuni Saibangh Gurbarsad, which means — ‘One, True Name, Creator; Fearless, Without Vengeance, Beyond Time, Does not Incarnate, Selfexistent, Understood only by Grace.’ Once God is defined, Nanak proceeded to explain that the purpose of life is to become truthful, for which one has to purify actions, listen to the gurus’ words and practise meditation. To attain truth, one has to purify the mind by realising consciousness.

According to Nanak, dharma is a product of compassion, supported by contentment. These two qualities play pivotal role in religion. Nanak said that as we sow so shall we reap and, therefore, encouraged everybody to cultivate virtues. According to the first Sikh guru, serving the needy is an important duty of society. Hence, the first langar, free kitchen, was started by the guru in 1489.

On social issues, Nanak emphasised equality of human race, irrespective of caste, colour, creed, gender or race. For him, creation was from one God and, therefore, no one should claim to be superior or inferior. Consequently, on women, Nanak said, “How can she be called inferior when kings are born of her.” To the sages in the mountains, he said that if all good and pious people retired to mountains to meditate, how will society benefit. So, the message of Nanak, as contained in his various compositions, urged people to lead a householder’s life, work hard and then share something in charity. This message is encapsulated in the three pillars of Sikhism: Naam japo, kirat karo, and vand chakko— ‘Meditate, earn honestly, and share with others.’ He emphasised the dignity of labour, and observed that truth may be the highest virtue, but truthful living is even higher.

On environment, Guru Nanak said that the earth has to be treated like mother; water like father, and air like

-Charan Singh

Deliberately Disruptive Analogy

■ M R LALU

Senior Congress leader Shivraj Patil’s discovery of Jihad in Bhagavad Gita was not in tune with what his party understands about the holy text. This was probably visible when his party distanced itself from his statement and agreed to term his assertion on the Hindu holy text as unwarranted and baseless. It is improper to cross check the Congress sentiments on what the Gita professes. But the party’s sensibility to outrightly reject its leader’s senseless clamour on the Hindu religious text should be seen as an approach it began to feel appropriate and secular. Patil served as Union Minister in Manmohan Singh-led UPA government from 2004 to 2008. The statement of the veteran that caught the ire of the moment was obviously an ill-equipped assertion deliberately meant to stir the hornet’s nest. “The concept of Jihad is not limited to the Quran but also the Bhagavad Gita, which is part of Mahabharat,” he declared at a book releasing event. To emphasize his view further, he claimed that Lord Krishna taught Arjuna about Jihad in the battlefield; therefore, essentially the Gita accentuates the authority of Jihad. His insinuation did not stop with his reference to Hinduism and Islam. But he was vocal about elements of Jihad in Christianity as well. For him, Lord Krishna, in essence and practice justified war and promoted use of weapons and appreciated bloodshed when threatened.

A comparison of Islamic Jihad with the Kurukshetra war by the Congress veteran was a balancing act to cover up terrorism. This was almost in line with the Hindu terror

narrative that the Congress had unsuccessfully launched during the UPA regime. The party thought that such a narrative could be an effortless makeover presenting Jihad and terror in a dim light. The saffron terror jargon by the Congress turned out to be a sharp weapon that the BJP met the 2014 National Elections with. The Congress had this remark haunting it throughout the elections and the result of 2014 was a culmination of the discontent that the majority in India registered against the party vigorously. The prospects of the Congress began to dispel with the party sensing its significance being terribly cap-sized.

The Bhagavad Gita is known to have been delivered amid a terrible war that was fought for eighteen days between two groups in the same family. The principal reason that pushed the Pandavas and Kauravas into a ruthless bloodshed was the dispute on the share of a rightful portion of the country that the Panadavas had a genuine stake on and when the Kauravas refused to concede. Krishna’s arbitration for a peaceful settlement failed though he attempted multiple times amicably trying to dissuade the war-mongering sons of the blind king. Throughout the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna seems to be playing the role of a friend and a mentor and his efforts to enlighten the warrior prince Arjuna was mainly by tutoring him on the elements of dharma or duty based on righteousness. Therefore, the philosophy of Bhagavad Gita unequivocally parades the reader through the essential principles of dharma and the importance of being Dharmic. Despite his being the divine, Lord

Krishna, the benign friend of the Pandavas, had to undergo remorseful moments and the imprecations by the blindfolded mother Gandhari in the battlefield had brought disaster in his life. His clan was totally wiped out and his kingdom got submerged in water. The Mahabharata epic, through the battle portion, is obviously suggesting the need of following one’s own dharma and the deliberations of Krishna is a solid proof of the great Indian philosophy that advocates liberal co-existence of multiplicity. For Islam, Jihad is one of the most pious duties that the religion has authenticated. And whoever stands in the opposite of the edifice of Islam is a Kaffir and Jihad is a divinely ordained struggle that every devout Muslim is supposed to live for. Jihad or ‘Holy war’ gives license to a Muslim to spread his religion among the non-believers through all possible means, including violence. Who should be the Islamic Jihad declared against? The clear answer is that the holy war should be fought against the non-believers. Those who express views against the supremacy of Allah deserve to be exterminated or punished and the war declared against them is a holy manoeuvre which is seen in various forms and fashions. Islamic scriptures depicting bloodthirsty remarks on non-believers and the action plans to consolidate power for an Islamic globe are part of a long cherished dream and unsurprisingly there are young men and women ready to explode for a heaven that they would be rewarded, once they perish.

Whereas, the mega epic the Mahabharata elucidates on the difference between Dharma and Adharma and the battle that the epic is

vocal about is the one that was fought for the establishment of dharma or righteousness. This was probably the reason that India, as a country has always been upholding values of nonaggression and it never thought of capturing another land. Bhagavad Gita for that matter has never justified a war for the establishment of the power of any particular God. Interestingly, Lord Krishna shares his wisdom with Arjuna and in a later period suggests him to follow his words if he found them genuine and wise. Krishna’s persistence on Arjuna was to follow his righteous duty as a warrior prince and war was a tool to establish that genuine morality in his kingdom. In the beginning, Arjuna was intellectually incapable to delve into the philosophy that Krishna elaborated for him and the teachings of Gita were discovered to be life fulfilling theories and master plans to live life with its fullest potential. The war that was fought in the Mahabharata was between two branches of the same family while Jihad is a war declared against those who refuse to acknowledge Islamic religious ethos. Its aggressive invasion had toppled religious monuments of Hindus and other religions and forget not, the division of this subcontinent into two distorted pieces in 1947 was also the result of a mindset that propelled discontent and disregard for other religions. Overwhelmed by unethical political appeasement, political parties in India had almost forgotten the values that the essential Indian-ness is built on. Bhagavad Gita has contributed so much so that the cultural edifice of India is rock solid while many civilizations disappeared from the face of the earth.

God: Judge of all beings

■ ARUN KUMAR GUPTA

This whole world is the creation of God and all beings have been created by God. It is attributed to the good and bad deeds that we were born into as human beings. God also brings death to all beings, in order to complete the whole cycle which is solely based on the theory of karma of our current life as well as previous births. God has given us this birth to enjoy the fruits of the deeds we have done in our previous lives. We must have done mostly good and sporadically some bad deeds which is why we were blessed enough to possess this human form. The human Yoni is a double Yoni because the actions we perform in this human birth are of two categories - the past karma and the future of us via rebirth. Other than human beings; we have the life forms of animals, birds, insects, etc. which are termed Bhog Yonis. The reason for birth in these Yonis is that while accounting for their deeds; more than half of the deeds are inauspicious and sinful deeds, therefore instead of getting a human birth, they got the form of some other species. If we talk about the jails of the country, then human beings are in the best jail, where there are many amenities as well, it can be called A-class jail. Others like animals, birds, insects, etc., are in B and C category prisons, where souls are suffering according to their deeds. Grief in such a way that they have neither been given the intelligence to think nor speak like human beings. They don’t even have hands like us. They are usually shorter than humans. God has done this law based on omnipresence, omnipotent, omniscient, witness to all, and based on His Ayamaie.e. the form of Judge and Shakti. God has infinite qualities and deeds. According to the attributes God has many relative names. One of the names of God is ‘Arthama’. Sage Dayanand writes in the first series of his Satyarth Prakash book that the one who accepts those who do justice to the truth and is the true ruler of the fruits of sin and virtue to those who do sin and virtue, is why the name of that Supreme God is ‘Arthama’. From this, it is known that God is the just and sole judge of the infinite beings of the universe. No creature or living being can escape from the true justice of the Supreme Soul. If anyone commits any evil deed, injustice, exploitation, tyranny, or sin, then they cannot hide from God and that person should receive the appropriate fruit of good deeds according to the law of God. The reward for a good deed and punishment for a bad deed is given in due course of time. There is a natural question in the mind of everyone - Who made this planet, us, and subsequently when it came into being and why? Its satisfactory answer is found in Vedic religion and in the literature of Rishi

Dayanand, which gives a complete solution. A human is a conscious, little-knowledgeable, perishable, mortal, finite soul. God is the form of truth, formless, omnipotent, omnipresent, eternal, infinite, formless, unique, and the giver of the actions of living beings and the creator.

The human body is inert and is made up of the five material elements and substances of the universe. The body is perishable, but the conscious soul within it is eternal and immortal, and the body keeps on changing according to karma, receiving birth and death. The transformation of the body is under the control of God and it meets the Supreme Soul according to the actions carried out by us. All the souls have been born in almost all the Yonis according to karma infinite times before this birth and that cycle and tradition are endless and will continue forever. The catastrophe and origin of the universe will continue and our soul will continue to take birth according to its good and bad deeds by the grace of God, justice, and mercy and in this way, the process of creation-dissolution and birth-death will continue till eternity.

The world and creation we are living in were started by God 1.96 billion years ago. They created this entire universe and gave birth to all beings and this sequence is going on continuously since time immemorial. How the universe was created, the answer is that God is omniscient and omnipresent. Like a scientist, they have complete and proper knowledge of the origin of the universe. Before creating this world, they created the same universe for an infinite number of times and will continue to do so. If we write an article every day, then it is inferred that we will continue to do this work in the future also. We are writing articles today, so the reason for this is that we have had to practice in the past. According to this law, God has created and is running this universe. From this, it is known that they have created such creations many times before and will continue to do so. Therefore, this creation originated from God because of its cause. The Supreme Soul has created it from the subtle material nature with the qualities of Sattva, Raja, and Tama, which remains under the control of God. We are not the body but the soul. The body has been given to us by God as a means and tool for performing auspicious and virtuous deeds. We have to make good use of it according to the feelings and expectations of God. God is our master and we are the servants. There is a pervasive relationship between the soul and God. God is our mother, father, teacher, king, and judge.

The stages of a child, adolescence, youth, old age, etc. are coming into our bodies. All these are God’s gifts

PROGRESSING J&K

GI-certification boosts prominence of Kashmiri Saffron in International market

Safeguards economic interests of Saffron growers

As the farmers are happy with the bumper saffron crop this year, the GI Certification of Kashmiri Saffron by Geographical Indications Registry would also cease the adulteration of it and will put an end to the marketing of Saffron cultivated in other countries under the garb of being produced in Kashmir. The adulteration of saffron was earlier affecting the economic interests of the farmers associated with this crop. To give a boost to saffron production in Kashmir, J&K Government

has launched new initiatives including the introduction of GI-tagging. GI sign is used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.

Saffron growers are hopeful that they will now get a better price for their produce after the introduction of GI tag to the saffron grown here. Kashmiri Saffron is grown at an altitude of 1,600 m to 1,800 m above mean sea level, which adds to its uniqueness and differentiates it from other saffron varieties available

across the world. Saffron is cultivated and harvested in the Karewas (highlands) of Jammu and Kashmir and has been assigned Geographical Indication (GI) tag by the Geographical Indications Registry. The spice is grown in Pulwama, Budgam, Kishtwar and Srinagar regions of Jammu & Kashmir.

Iran is the largest producer of saffron in the world and India is a close competitor. However, with the GI tag of Kashmir saffron, India becomes the only Saffron producing Country for which GI has been

assigned which will result in more prominence in the export market thereby boosting exports as well as helping the farmers to get the best remunerative price for economic sustainability. Kashmir is having distinction of producing one of the best saffron in the world, therefore it should be our individual/collective and moral responsibility to preserve this golden spice not only for a large number of families directly associated with the cultivation of saffron but for generations to come.

YOUR COLUMN

Parachuters in political parties

Dear Editor,
The life of even a giant tree depends upon its soft and threadlike roots which manage moisture and food for the tree and the trunk which keeps the tree stand upright. Deeper the root, the stronger is the tree. The fruit of the trees are always eaten away by the birds which sit on it and fly away after the season is over. There are two ways to save the tree, first water and care for its roots properly and second protect its fruit from the migratory birds. Similar is the case of some political parties which lost their legislative seats, dur-

ing the recent legislative assembly elections in the five states of the country, where the voters showed the exit to the parachuters who swiped the grass rooters with the consent of the covetous politicians, by a single click of the EVM only. The voters belied the old belief and concept of 'Aaya Ram Gaya Ram' and turncoat culture prevalent in political parties to grab power lock stock and barrel. Not to talk of other states of the country, the gross root workers of the largest national party of the Jammu region have been watching the down pour of the political deserters in their party offices through parachutes. They are either tempted by the miraculous performance of our visionary and nationalist Prime Minister or to escape from the sword of ED and IT looming over their heads. There can be other reasons

also linked with the inter relationships between the leaders of the party they are joining or mere a lust for power which the grass rooter is not bothered about. Such swarm of deserters is like those migratory birds which are always in search of some wet land to feed upon and leave when no water is left there. If our political leaders are honest they should at once discourage such political culture which is proving detrimental for the democratic set up of the largest democracy of the world. Accepting deserters devoid of political ideology of the party they join, is a great threat to both political party and the nation.

Yours faithfully,

Shiv Kumar Padha, Basohli.