

PHILOSOPHY & MODERNISATION - SAINT JNANESHWAR & SREE NARAYANA GURU**Jyoti O'Neill Shahapurkar,*** Research Scholar, D.T.S.S. College, Malad (East)***Abstract:**

Today's age is known as 'Age of Crisis'. Therefore, in such a critical situation there is an attempt to find a Pathway to Life. 21st century is dealing with the turbulent pull between Good and bad, values and virtues, natural calamities and Socio-political survival. Man's comfort-oriented outlook has been by sowing the seeds of self-destruction in the name of development. This has marginalized him to his own self. The best example is the grim situation caused by the Covid-19 that has for the first time in the history of mankind set a threat to the existence of the human race much beyond destruction caused by wars among Nations. Post Covid Modernization questions have been raised on values of Human existences World over. This is a sincere and an honest attempt to bring two profound Philosophers, Spiritual and Social reformists on one platform with a common goal of upliftment of humanity in terms of Modernization. Though centuries apart they both have made prolific changes in the literary, historic and the social map of India. My honest attempt is to apply their teachings together universally.

Keywords: Change, Happiness, Experience, Saint Jnaneshwar, Sree Narayana Guru, Social reforms, One world one Religion

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Motivation:

Who am I? What is life for? What is the secret of this Universe? Why do people suffer? How do we attain perfect happiness and eternal bliss? How can we adapt to modern changes in peace? Basic questions like this haunted me through my earlier profession as a Television News Correspondent - Journalist. This inspired me to turn to Philosophy. What started as a spiritual journey lead into enquiring on various aspects of Being and Environment? In later years joining Philosophy as formal education gave momentum into this enquiry. Adapting to Modernity with basic values of Humanity was the core of my enquiry. Reading Saint Jnaneshwar's and Sree Narayan Guru's works during my course work, my answers started coming. Saint Jnaneshwar's basic concept of liberation is based on equanimity. Saint Jnaneshwar expresses in one of his abanga, "*he Vishavachi maze Gharaha*" which means 'this world is my home'. On similar lines Sree Narayan Guru leads this with simple concept of '*ONE WORLD ONE RELIGION*'. Here the concepts are studied to see the relevance and application in today's current scenario, solving the present problems of human life on the basis of life enriching philosophy of Sree Narayana Guru and Saint Jnaneshwar. My Professor and Veteran, Author and writer Shri Dr. Nigal quotes in lectures on Saint Jnaneshwara –

*"Sāmājik krāntitun vaiyaktik krānti
Vaiyaktik krāntitun sāmājik kranti"*

Introduction:

Philosophy and Modernization is connected or concerned with the basic questions about the meaning of Life, the nature of truth, validity of knowledge, justice and overall Happiness in existence as Human Being. It is also rightly said that



the ideas, ideals and values rule the world. Philosophy can help to promote a view of the whole and Man's inherent dignity irrespective of caste, creed, color and community. Modernization today is the emergence of a new 'World order,' an order synchronizing in an era for Global peace as a focal point. Leading Modernization not only in adaptation of lifestyle but overall growth in civilization.

My focus shall be on India as one of the most prominent 'Developing' countries today. My choice of focus is prompted by several considerations to introduce our past legacy of scriptures, to refurbish the teachings and the philanthropic work of our Saints and Masters. Their work to be considered beyond the Spiritual aura leading only to Moksha, but liberating in real terms from injustice - Hunger, equanimity and social stigma. Their work of going beyond the Spiritual aura leading only to Moksha, but liberating in real terms from injustice - Hunger, equanimity, social stigma. Leading to the state of reforms in approach to life that is modernized society.

Sree Narayana Guru, from Kerala and Saint Jnaneshwar from Maharashtra played the crucial role of social reformist keeping intact the Vedic knowledge of Vedas in their day-to-day life as practical Vedantins. Though Sree Narayana Guru's theosophical work was confined to Kerala, his philosophy is universally applied by world Leaders, on the principle of 'For the emancipation of one's self and the good of the universe.

'Atmano, moksha ya, jagat hitaya ca.'

Shloka, Rig Veda

On these lines of conduct Sree Narayan Guru's philosophy spreads the message of Individual transformation leads to social transformation and vice versa. The defining theme of Sree Narayana Guru and Jnaneshwar's vast philosophical writings is the oneness of human race transcending all peripheral differences.

Why Modernization:

The Desire for Change – Human being has evolved only on his skills to thrive for CHANGE. 'The "men of words" - priests, prophets, intellectuals – have played a more decisive role in history than military leaders, statesmen, and businessmen – This quote is from Eric Hoffer's book The Ordeal of Change. Over the many centuries' humanity has witnessed manipulation and influence becoming the key factors for any social movements to survive and spur in the vast arena of societal developments. In the eternal march of ages, there do appear on the stage of the world certain great personalities who take over higher positions above the ordinary man, whose life and teachings give a new outlook to life. They demonstrate by living and leading by examples of their own way of life. Teachers whose message is of Universal Values. They are rarely understood when they are alive in their days, but they leave by the legacy of inherent teachings through practice. Saint Jnaneshwar led his life in reformation of society. Modernization theory suggests that traditional societies will develop as they adopt more modern practices. Saint Jnaneshwar introduced it by writing Dnyaneshwari in colloquial language Marathi so that it could reach every home. This revolution totally changed the topography of Maharashtra in many ways be it Social, Cultural or traditional.

Transition in Indian has been through the implementation of our scriptures from time to time. Scriptures led to value added living. The way of life is a personal choice. Each one is thriving hard to find his solution. Many Thinkers, Saints, Scriptures have suggested the ideal way of life. But one of the most universal and eternal problems of humanity has been the problem of Man versus Man. It has been the concrete problem of sufferings, injustice and social stigmas; that Man is responsible to create for himself, where he also plays the victim.

What is man searching for? – Is it Happiness!



Sree Narayana Guru contemplates that the basis of all human efforts is seeking ‘Happiness’ he says *“Whichever be one’s religion, it is enough that becomes a Good man”*.

Saint Jnaneshwar in his masterpiece ‘Amritanubhava’ mentions that happiness to Self is Happiness to Universe. *“Love that abides the oneself with the higher Self also abides all the fellow beings, there is no duality”* – Amritanubhava.

Conclusion:

Well-read intellectual heads of society cannot operate from glass compartments; it is must for them to practice on fields, among the common man. Sree Narayana Guru from Kerala and Saint Jnaneshwar from Maharashtra played the crucial role of social reformist, keeping intact the Vedic knowledge of Vedas. Philosophical work of Saint Jnaneshwar which is not simple philosophy. In the ordinary sense of the world; what he wrote was not mere speculation or theory but was an attempt to explain what he had personally experienced first-hand in his mystical experience for modernization of societal bindings. Freedom of Self and Society was considered on the same level. Jnaneshwar philosophical work here is considered to be of Universal significance. The philosophy of Jnandeva is based on universal love to self and others. Narayana Guru carried the baton from AVARNA to SAWARNA realizing the limitations of that period. On these lines of conduct Sree Narayana Guru's philosophy reached the lower strata and the higher strata of society. Sree Narayana Guru is one such social reformer who implemented practical approach through his works and his dictums, by his simplicity, purity and renunciation.

Fundamental concepts are required for the development and welfare of mankind to bring him out of his sufferings. *“Pain is inevitable, suffering is optional. That’s the ABC of life”* – Author Om Swami writes in his book, ‘THE QUESTIONS OF LIFE’. Is suffering a necessary part of life? Is it in our hands to avoid pain? How? Studying the current scenario around the world; amidst of Covid – 19, the trauma and the stress, disaster of deaths world over. Coronavirus is teaching us life lessons. Virus has not spared any religion, race and gender, rich or poor. Then why do humans create these barriers? Pain is all over the world but as mentioned above suffering is optional. Today when the common man is asking the question Why Me? Why do I have to suffer? Universally this is the right time to introspect. During the lockdown when one cannot go outside. One has to go inside, that is to introspect within.

Narayana Gurus and Jnaneshwar’s impact as spiritual and social reformers is unmatched in history. Working for those who had been denied basic human rights for centuries were able to experience dramatic changes in their lives. The unities of Amtoddhar and Lokoddhar make one’s goal of spiritual attainment universal. Philosophy of Saint Jnaneshwar has shown the way that one can bring personal elevation to result in social elevation very much similar to Sree Narayana Guru. Their simple philosophy of welfare of all leads one to speculate what if they were present in today’s current situation. Amidst so much uncertainty there is a ray of hope, a pathway to Higher Self. There is an interesting story we can relate to the current world crisis. Once, it became a dispute between two groups on which deity to be installed in a newly built temple. Narayan Guru resolved this by suggesting the novel one ‘AUM’. He scrapped out the silver coating of the mirror into AUM reflecting one seeker into the AUM itself being one with AUM. The mirror reflects oneself, similar to as God reflects in one self. GOD and SELF are both symbolized by AUM.

The Social Philosophy of Shree Narayan Guru presents a new value system, which is really applicable to the present and the future, not only in India but World over. There is no better lever to sway world to tranquility than the ethos emanating from the noble dictum in Gurus words:

“One Caste One Religion, One God for Men”

Narayan Guru's final motto was Universal Brotherhood of humanity *Sree Narayana Guru and Saint Jnaneshwar both have gifted humanity with the Gospel of Amritanubhava and Atmopadesa Satakam. If this is incorporated in our lives today humankind can taste the Nectar of Wisdom going beyond all sufferings.*

A prayer from the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad to conclude:

Sarve bhavantu sukhinah

Sarve santu niramayah

Sarve Bharani pashyantu

Ma kashchit dukkha bhag bhavet

Om shantih shantihi

May all be Happy

May all be Healthy

May everyone prosper

May none Suffer Om! Peace, peace, peace!

[Peace in all our three realms: surroundings, body, and mind.]

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