



The Man Who Stopped the Wind

Sikhism

In the Sikh tradition, originating from the Punjab, in India, the teachings of the ten Sikh teachers are followed. Their places of religious worship are called *gurdwaras*. In the *gurdwaras*, the tradition of *langar* or 'free kitchen' is carried out. Here, food is served to all people present, regardless of their age, caste, gender, race, religion and economic or social status. This tradition constitutes a symbol of equality among all people, based on the community ethic of inclusion and the unity of the human race.

In the time of the Second Master, Guru Angad Dev Ji, there was a man named Bhai Jeeva who served day and night in the *langar* of the *gurdwara* of Khadoor Sahib. He personally served Guru Angad Dev, and he liked to bring him daily a large pot of *khichree*, a vegetarian dish made with rice and lentils.

But it happened one day that the wind was too intense, so strong that he could not light the cooking fire, no matter how hard he tried. Seeing that the wind was not going to wane on its own and that they might have to go to bed without dinner, Bhai Jeeva finally prayed for it to stop.

Bhai Jeeva was not too surprised when the wind calmed around him. Without giving it a second thought, he cooked his *khichree* pot and went to the communal dining hall.

However, the Guru refused to accept the dish and Bhai Jeeva was very disappointed. When he asked the Guru why he did not want to taste his food, the teacher replied:

‘By stopping the wind you have been able to cook and feed a handful of people, but you should take into consideration that the Almighty has to feed many more beings, from the earth, the water and the skies. He takes care of animals, trees and plants, and wind is one of the tools He uses in this task, since it transports clouds, pollen, leaves and grains from one place to another, and makes the fruits fall to the ground. Through the wind, God serves the ants and many other creatures.’

Angad Dev paused. Seeing the sad face of Bhai Jeeva, he put his hand on his shoulder and added with affection:

‘With this, I do not want to tell you not to pray, but it is important that you always have in mind His divine will. You must understand that He not only deals with human beings, but with all of creation; not only the present generation, but also all future generations.’ □

Adapted by Grian A. Cutanda (2018).

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Comments

his story is an adaptation of the version put out by the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (2013). This version of the story has seemed more appropriate to me, because of its narrative and values, as compared to the versions of Bhai Vir Singh (n.d.), de Kulbir Singh (2010) y de Sri Guru Granth Sahib (n.d.). However, there is another version of this story (Chadha, 1999) very similar to the first one, but with an important difference: that the person who stops the wind to cook is not Bhai Jeeva, but his daughter, Bibi Jeeva, because it says that by then Bhai Jeeva had died.

This teaching of Guru Angad Dev Ji, could be translated into the current language of systems dynamics, in terms of demonstrating that

the complex system in which we exist and are nested within has its own goals and objectives, oriented to the survival of the system itself. Therefore, it is not sensible to interfere with its operation, given that, in its complexity, we can never know what operations and processes, large or small, insignificant or crucial, we would be interfering with. In this way, we would be talking about the same teaching, but from two different languages born from different historical, cultural and scientific contexts, one from the 16th century and the other from the 21st century.

Sources

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Associated text of the Earth Charter

Principle 6a: Take action to avoid the possibility of serious or irreversible environmental harm even when scientific knowledge is incomplete or inconclusive.

Other passages that this story illustrates

Principle 2a: Accept that with the right to own, manage, and use natural resources comes the duty to prevent environmental harm and to protect the rights of people.

