

my Strength. I know that You are mine. Inside of all, and outside of all, You are our Self-sufficient Father. ||2|| "

NATURE OF A MOTHER

The nature of a mother is associated with Wisdom.

"Let wisdom be your mother, and contentment your father. Let Truth be your brother - these are your best relatives. ||1|| He has been described, but He cannot be described at all. Your All-pervading creative nature cannot be estimated. ||1||Pause|| " (Guru Granth Sahib, p.151)

GOD DESCRIBED AS MOTHER

The Guru is associated with the nurturing and caring qualities of a mother.

"Just as the mother, having given birth to a son, feeds him and keeps him in her vision - indoors and outdoors, she puts food in his mouth; each and every moment, she caresses him. In just the same way, the True Guru protects His GurSikhs, who love their Beloved Lord. ||1||" (Guru Granth Sahib, p.168)

VEIL AS AN OUTDATED CLOTHING ITEM

The veil as a useless outdated piece of clothing.

"Stay, stay, O daughter-in-law - do not cover your face with a veil. In the end, this shall not bring you even half a shell. ||1||Pause|| The one before you used to veil her face; do not follow in her footsteps. ||1|| The only merit in veiling your face is that for a few days, people will say, "What a noble bride has come". ||2|| Your veil shall be true only if you skip, dance and sing the Glorious Praises of the Lord. ||3|| Says Kabeer, the soul-bride shall win, only if

she passes her life singing the Lord's Praises. ||4||1||34||" (Guru Granth Sahib, p.484)

HINDU SATI TRADITION REDEFINED

Hindu tradition of Sati (burning of alive widow on funeral pyre) redefined.

"Do not call them 'satee', who burn themselves along with their husbands' corpses. O Nanak, they alone are known as 'satee', who die from the shock of separation. ||1|| They are also known as 'satee', who abide in modesty and contentment. They serve their Lord, and rise in the early hours to contemplate Him. ||2||" (Guru Granth Sahib, p.787)

MARRIAGE

Marriage is considered an integral part of the spiritual journey to realise God. A married couple must live together as equals. It is the duty of both husband and wife to share the responsibilities of rearing Children. All other family duties should also be shared equally.

"They are not said to be husband and wife who merely sit together. Rather they alone are husband and wife who have one soul in two bodies."

SUMMARY OF WOMEN IN SIKHISM

There are a selection of teachings from the Sikh Gurus regarding women and their contribution to gender equality. It has been shown that in Sikhism, women are equal to men in status, role and power, and that women are the very grace of God.

Women In Sikhism

INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN IN SIKHISM

Sikhism is the world's first spiritual tradition to support gender equality. Here are some of the wonderful quotes from the Sikh Holy Scripture, the Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji (Guru Granth Sahib).

LIGHT OF GOD

The light of God sits equally within both men and women.

"In the earth and in the sky, I do not see any second. Among all the women and the men, His Light is shining. ||3|| In the lamps of the sun and the moon, I see His Light. Dwelling among all is my ever-youthful Beloved. ||4|| In His Mercy, He attuned my consciousness to the Lord." (Guru Granth Sahib, p.223)

CESSATION OF SUFFERING

The cessation of suffering is available to both men and women.

"The Transcendent Lord has given me His support. The house of pain and disease has been demolished. The men and women celebrate. The Lord God, Har, Har, has extended His Mercy. ||1||" (Guru Granth Sahib, p.627)

SOUL BRIDES

Both men and women are regarded as soul brides of God.

"Her Husband Lord is Beautiful; His Body is forever fresh and new. The True One does not die, and shall not go. He continually enjoys His happy soul-bride; He casts His Gracious Glance of Truth upon her, and she abides in His Will. ||4|| The bride braids her hair with Truth; her clothes are decorated with His Love. Like the essence of sandalwood, He permeates her consciousness, and the Temple of the Tenth Gate is opened. The lamp of the Shabad is lit,

and the Name of the Lord is her necklace. ||5|| She is the most beautiful among women; upon her forehead she wears the Jewel of the Lord's Love. Her glory and her wisdom are magnificent; her love for the Infinite Lord is True. Other than her Beloved Lord, she knows no man. She enshrines love for the True Guru. ||6||" (Guru Granth Sahib, p.54)

PEOPLE REGARDED AS WOMEN OF GOD

Both men and women regarded as women of God.

"The women come and sing the songs of joy. Meeting with their Beloved, lasting peace is obtained. ||1|| I am a sacrifice to those, whose minds are filled with the Lord. Meeting with the humble servant of the Lord, peace is obtained, and one intuitively sings the Glorious Praises of the Lord. ||1||Pause|| They are always imbued with Your Joyful Love; O Dear Lord, You Yourself come to dwell in their minds. They obtain eternal glory. The Gurmukhs are united in the Lord's Union. ||2||" (Guru Granth Sahib, p.798)

CHALLENGE TO MEN TO ACCEPT WOMEN AS EQUALS

At a time when Hindu women were committing Sati (suicide on their husbands funeral pyres) and Muslim women enjoyed little equality, the Guru challenged men to accept women as second to God.

"From woman, man is born; within woman, man is conceived; to woman he is engaged and married. Woman becomes his friend; through woman, the future generations come. When his woman dies, he seeks another woman; to woman he is bound. So why call her bad? From her, kings are born. From woman, woman is born; without woman, there would be no one at all. O Nanak, only the True Lord is without a woman. That mouth which

praises the Lord continually is blessed and beautiful. O Nanak, those faces shall be radiant in the Court of the True Lord. ||2||" (Guru Granth Sahib, p.473)

MENSTRUATION

Most religions have considered menstruating women as impure or bad. But the Guru Granth Sahib teaches that purity is linked to the mind and not the body and has nothing to do with menstruation.

"As a woman has her periods, month after month, so does falsehood dwell in the mouth of the false; they suffer forever, again and again. They are not called pure, who sit down after merely washing their bodies. Only they are pure, O Nanak, within whose minds the Lord abides. ||2||" (Guru Granth Sahib, p.472)

"When the clothes are soiled and stained by urine, soap can wash them clean. But when the intellect is stained and polluted by sin, it can only be cleansed by the Love of the Name." (Guru Granth Sahib, p.4)

BLESSINGS OF A MOTHER

The blessings of a mother who has helped to raise good children.

"Fruitful are the lives of those who walk in harmony with the Will of the True Guru. Their families are saved; blessed are the mothers who gave birth to them. By His Will He grants His Grace; those who are so blessed, meditate on the Name of the Lord, Har, Har. ||3||" (Guru Granth Sahib, p.28)

GOD AS MOTHER AND FATHER

"Like a foolish child, I have made mistakes. O Lord, You are my Father and Mother. ||1|| It is easy to speak and talk, but it is difficult to accept Your Will. ||1||Pause|| I stand tall; You are