



## Mains Practice Question

**Q.** Analyze the relevance of the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev in modern India. (150 words)

28 Nov, 2019 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

### Approach

- Introduce by briefly mentioning about Guru Nanak Dev.
- Link his teachings with contemporary problems of India.
- Explain how it can help in resolving them.

### Introduction

Guru Nanak Dev, also referred to as Baba Nanak, was the founder of Sikhism and the first of the ten Sikh Gurus. His teachings focused on building a just, inclusive and harmonious society.

### Body

#### ***Relevance of the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev in modern India:***

##### **Building an egalitarian society:**

- His innovative social institutions, such as **Langar** (Collective cooking and food sharing), **Pangat:** (Partaking food without distinctions of high and low caste) and **Sangat** (Collective decision making) highlight need for creating an egalitarian society.
- These egalitarian practices had directly challenged the untouchability and the caste system and continue to do so.
- These principles also motivate the community to help those in need which can be helpful in tackling poverty, destitution, malnutrition among children and creating a healthy India.

##### **Building social harmony:**

- According to him, the whole world is God's creation (Jeeye kaa ik daata) and all are born equal. There is only one universal creator i.e. "**Ik Omkaar Satnaam.**"
- This **spirit of equality** began with Guru Nanak Dev's clear recognition that there is no distinction between a Hindu and Muslim. For him, no country was foreign and no people were alien.
- Apart from it, **forgiveness, patience, forbearance, and kindness** are the core of Guru Nanak Dev's teachings.
- Today, these principles are key to make a society tolerant and humanitarian. The rising cases of communal hatred and mob lynching can be effectively tackled by adhering to such principles.

##### **Creating a just society**

- **Inequality is the root cause of all social evils.** The teachings of Guru Nanak Dev can help us in establishing a just society today.
  - Guru Nanak Dev placed the motto of "**kirat karo, naam japo and vand chhako**" (work,

- worship and share) before his disciples.
- He stood for **karma as the basis of dharma**, and he transformed the idea of spiritualism into the **ideology of social responsibility and social change**.
  - He suggested that we earn by honest labour and share the earnings with the needy.
  - He advocated the concept of **“dasvandh”** or donating one-tenth of one’s earning among needy persons.
  - The selfless service to mankind known as **“Seva”** is central to the teaching of Sikhism.

## Gender Equality

- Guru Nanak Dev argued that **"How can women be inferior when they give birth to men?"**
- According to him, "Women as well as men share the grace of God and are equally responsible for their actions to him."
- Respect for women and gender equality is perhaps the most important lesson to be learnt from Guru Nanak Dev’s teachings.

## Conclusion

- Anyone can learn a lot from the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev. Leaders of the world can also learn from his life and teachings so that meaningful dialogue between various communities can be initiated (especially in the conflict-ridden parts of the world). This will certainly propagate the ideas of peace, stability and cooperation, and make the world a better place to live in.
- Also, the opening of the Kartarpur Corridor is a symbol of the power of religion and culture in bringing peace and harmony among nations.