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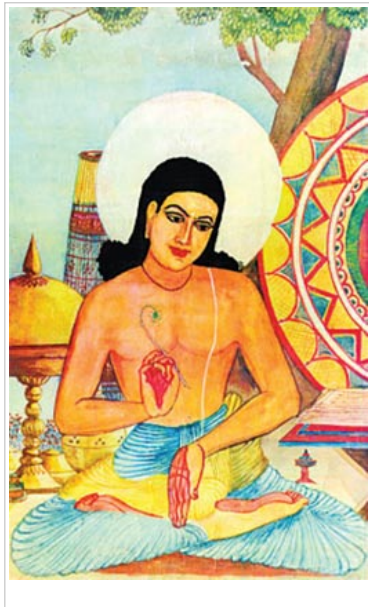
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Sankaradeva was a global citizen in true sense: Dr Borkakoti

A Correspondent



NAGAON, July 27 - Srimanta Sankaradeva's vision encompassed the entire humanity, it was not restricted to any geographical region. He was above narrow sectarianism. His altruistic love embraced the entire humanity. He was a global citizen in the true sense. His global vision has become all the more relevant today, when the entire humanity has come together to fight a pandemic (COVID-19), said eminent scholar of Sankaradeva Studies, Dr Sanjib Kumar Borkakoti in a lecture before the Assamese diaspora of North America during a spiritual dialogue organised by the Naamghar Association of America.

He was delivering an online lecture on the topic 'Spiritual Humanist Srimanta Sankaradeva' recently.

Dr Binoy Kr Bordoloi, eminent bio-technologist and chairman of Naamghar Association of America introduced the guest speaker at the outset. He said that the Naamghar Association of America is a spiritual and cultural organisation for the Assamese diaspora to celebrate the spiritual traditions and the philosophical teachings of Srimanta Sankaradeva. They hope to build a Naamghar in the USA. IT experts Shyam Dev Choudhury and Vavani Sarma were co-hosts of the programme. Mrs Anupree Perlmutter moderated the session.

Dr Sanjib Kumar Borkakoti said that Srimanta Sankaradeva

understood the malaise of the society he lived in very well. The 'Eka Sarana Nama Dharma' order founded by the saint had socio-economic factors also in addition to religious ones. The elements of reform were highly pronounced in his activities. He loved people. He was a spiritual humanist. The entire ambience inside the unique place of worship 'Kirtanghar' or Namghar is democratic, with equal place for all. There is no differentiation or discrimination in his order. He developed the order on the strong foundation of egalitarian principles.

Dr Borkakoti said that Srimanta Sankaradeva differed from other Vaishnavite Gurus even in respect of devotion to Lord Krishna. He adopted the 'Dasya' form of devotion among the nine forms of devotion. The attitude in his devotion was that of servitude towards God. Contrary to that, one finds 'Madhura' or 'Sakhitva' form of devotion among other Krishna devotees of Sanatana religion. These orders led to decadence in the society by spreading unwarranted practices in medieval times. The necessity of social reform encouraged Srimanta Sankaradeva to found a new order, said Dr Borkakoti. But the saint also said that one should not be vindictive to other religions; one should be sympathetic to all creatures with a compassionate heart. Dr Borkakoti also said that Guru Nanak was Srimanta Sankaradeva's spiritual follower and he came to Bardowa in 1505 to meet Sankaradeva.

A great humanist Srimanta Sankaradeva did not denigrate human birth or human body like other preceptors. Rather he treated it as a perfect tool for elevating oneself, Dr Borkakoti said. The saint had great concern and empathy for people. He said categorically that women and people in the lowest echelon of the society should be educated.

He incorporated the content of the then curriculum in his plays and hymns so that the common people could learn the content of formal education even if they did not go to school. He did not keep walls in the place of worship so that the recital could reach even those who did not come inside. He eked out his own living, unlike other preceptors in India or elsewhere. This tradition is followed by the heads of 'Than' and 'Satra' till these days, Dr Borkakoti said.

Dr Borkakoti discussed about the religious philosophy of Srimanta Sankaradeva Vivartanavada in details. He said that it facilitates the elevation of the individual self or 'Jiva' from the primary dual state to the non-dual state of identity with universal self or Brahma. Srimanta Sankaradeva gave stress on spiritual evolution of the devotee from gross to subtle, from plurality to non-duality.

Eminent petroleum engineer Dr Rajen Barua, agricultural economist of Rutgers University Dr Sanjib Bhuyan, data scientist Dr Purandar Sarma, Dr Jukti Kalita, IT expert Niraj Borbora, musician Rupam Jyoti Bora and several other prominent persons attended the programme.