

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥
Ik oaṅkār saṭ nām kartā purakh nīrbha'o nirvair akāl mūrati ajūnī saibha'n gur parsād.



THE SIKH BULLETIN GURU NANAK AND HIS BANI

March-April 2016

ਚੇਤ-ਵੈਸਾਖ ੫੪੮ ਨਾਨਕਸ਼ਾਹੀ

editor@sikhbulletin.com

Volume 18 Number 3&4

Published by: Hardev Singh Shergill, President, Khalsa Tricentennial Foundation of N.A. Inc;
3524 Rocky Ridge Way, El Dorado Hills, CA 95762, USA Fax (916) 933-5808
Khalsa Tricentennial Foundation of N.A. Inc. is a religious tax-exempt California Corporation.

In This Issue/ਤਤਕਰਾ

WWR World Without Religion.....1
Interfaith and World Peace-Sikh Perspective
By Prof Devinder Singh Chahal, PhD7
I HAVE NO RELIGION:
My Journey of Finding Guru Nanak (1469-1539)
The One and Only.....19

WWR

WORLD WITHOUT RELIGION Ah! Wouldn't that be heaven and Guru Nanak's mission finally fulfilled?

Throughout human history since man created God and then claimed his own creation by God in God's image, man himself has been playing God. Cruelty and religion have gone hand in hand. Throughout the ages religions have justified war calling it **Dharm Yuddh** by the Hindus, **Crusades** by the Christians and **Jehad** by the Muslims. 21st century is witnessing the worst form of Islamic Jehad.

Moses (1391–1271 BCE) had to invoke God to bring commonsense and semblance of civility among the masses he was shepherding. Failing to control the destructive behaviour of his flock he had to chisle **Ten Commandments**, all commonsense, himself, hidden from the masses on top of Mount Sinai and create fear of God through 1st commandment: ***I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt have no other gods before me;*** through the tenth Commandment, ***Thou shalt not covet (neighbor's house, wife, servants, animals, or anything else.)***

Ten Commandments do not present very flattering picture of that society yet Christians, especially the evangelical types in the South of United States, literally take it as God's word. That belief is not confined to the ignorant but highly literate, say judges!? **Roy Stewart Moore** is an American judge, Republican politician. During his first term as **Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court**, he refused to remove a monument of the Ten Commandments, which he had commissioned, from the Alabama Judicial Building despite orders to do so from a federal judge. On November 13, 2003, the **Alabama Court of the Judiciary** unanimously removed Moore from his post as Chief Justice.

Technical Associate Amrinder Singh

This issue of the Sikh Bulletin is only in electronic format being sent to those whose email addresses we have. If you or someone you know would like to receive it please provide the email address. You may also pass it along to those on your email list.

The views expressed by the authors are their own. Please send the feedback and inputs to:

editor@sikhbulletin.com
Our Website: www.sikhbulletin.com

On November 6, 2012, Moore won election back to the office of Alabama Chief Justice. In 2015 hours before Alabama was set to become the first state in the Deep South to legalize same-sex marriage, the state's top justice, **Roy Stewart Moore**, ordered local judges to ignore federal court orders to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

Christ raised his voice against corrupt priesthood of Judaism, who were in collusion with Roman occupiers. He paid for that with his life and an attempt at reformation of Judaism as a religion led to the birth of first violent Semitic religion that proved extremely harmful for humanity primarily because of **twelve zealot Apostles of Christ**.

Christ himself did not leave behind a written word of his philosophy. Christianity today is based on what some of the successors of those Apostles chose to select from the writings of some of them. Christian missionaries tailing the European explorers and conquerors destroyed the nature based cultures around the globe, all in the name of Christianity, based on falsehood.

In 2015 **Pope Francis** declared **Junípero Serra** as a **Catholic Saint** because of a **miracle associated with him** in spite of vigorous opposition by California's native Indians for his slaughter of their ancestors.

Christianity is based on miracles; Guru Nanak rejected miracles. See below the description of a similar event between **Guru Nanak** and Christ's Apostle **St. Thomas**:

Appearing at Hardwar where Hindus were performing the ritual of throwing water up towards the sun in the east for their deceased ancestors, instead of questioning them, Guru waded into the Ganges and started throwing water towards the west. When they questioned him he nonchalantly replied that he was watering his fields in Panjab. When they questioned what made him think his water would get there his response was a **teaching**

moment. If their water could reach their deceased ancestors in another world his could certainly reach another place on this world.

Compare this with similar incident involving **St. Thomas**, one of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus, who founded the first Christian church in India, in A.D. 52, at Parur, Kerala, on the west coast of southern India:

*"At Palayur Church in Guruvayur, Kerala, Thomas is said to have raised the first cross in India and performed one of his earliest **miracles**: When he encountered a group of Brahmans throwing water into the air as part of a ritual, he asked why the water fell back to earth if it was pleasing to their deity. My God, Thomas said, would accept such an offering. He then flung a great spray into the air, and the droplets hung there in the form of glistening white blossoms. Most onlookers converted on the spot; the rest fled."* [From the National Geographic March 2012 p52]

To a thinking person the above comparison should ring an alarm bell for the caliber of other eleven Apostles.

No religion makes more baseless and shameless claims as does Christianity. In March 2016 I found the following flyer from Jehova's Witnesses at my door:

In the hours before he died, Jesus assured his faithful apostles that they would be with him in his heavenly Kingdom. (Luke 22:28-30). He later promised a condemned criminal: "You will be with me in paradise". (Luke 23:43). How will those words come true?

The fulfillment of both promises is possible because Jesus surrendered his life for mankind, even for sinners like that criminal. Jesus' sacrifice was so vital that he commanded his followers to commemorate it. (Luke 22:19, 20)

Guru Nanak rejects all that. There is no heaven or hell after death because there is no life after death. An individual makes his/her heaven/hell in this life on this earth by one's actions. No one dies for anyone else's sins. God does not appear in anthropomorphic form. There is no virgin birth nor is there resurrection. Once you are dead even the Creator cannot reverse the Natural Law that anything that is born has to die; only the Creator lives forever.

Christianity was followed by third Semitic religion, **Islam**, in the sixth century by **Muhammad** (570 CE – 632 CE) who claimed it to be revealed religion, but Allah did not instruct him to treat women as equal to men. And it spread by the sword, not persuasion.

In pre-Islamic Arabia, gods or goddesses were viewed as protectors of individual tribes, their spirits being associated with sacred trees, stones, springs and wells. As well as being the site of an annual pilgrimage, the Kaaba shrine in Mecca housed 360 idols of tribal patron deities. Three goddesses were associated with Allah as his daughters: Allāt, Manāt and al-'Uzzā. Monotheistic communities existed in Arabia, including Christians and Jews. Hanifs – native pre-Islamic Arabs who "professed a rigid monotheism" are also sometimes listed alongside Jews and Christians in pre-Islamic Arabia, although their historicity is disputed among scholars. According to Muslim tradition, Muhammad himself was a Hanif and one of the descendants of Ishmael, son of Abraham.

Islam first came to the western coast of India with Arab traders as early as the 7th century AD to coastal Malabar and the Konkan-Gujarat. Cheraman Juma Masjid in Kerala is thought to be the first mosque in India, built in 629 AD by Malik Ibn Dinar. Following an expedition from the governor of Bahrain to Bharuch in the 7th century AD, immigrant Arab and Persian trading communities from South Arabia and the Persian Gulf began settling in coastal Gujarat.

Islam arrived in North India in the 12th century with Turkic invasions and has since become a part of India's religious and cultural heritage.

Longest lasting Muslim dynasty in India was the Mughal Dynasty (1526-1707) coinciding with the Guru period in Panjab from Nanak (1469-1539) to Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708). **In the United States the politically correct thing to say is that Islam is a peaceful religion but the history of Muslim rule in India and experience of Gurus is that Islam is not a peaceful religion.**

In India non-Muslims were to either convert or pay a special tax, *jizya*, to practice their faith. Two Sikh Gurus, 5th Guru Arjan and 9th Guru Tegh Bahadur, were martyred for their belief in freedom of faith.

The history of violent conflict among the three Semitic religions intensified with the **Crusades**, Papal sanctioned military campaigns beginning in the late 11th-century by the armies of **Christians** from Western Europe against the **Muslims** who had established supremacy on the land of their Christian saviour. That religious conflict not only has not ended but has intensified in the same part of the world as of today.

A precocious child, **Nanak was a genius that the world never heard of and India ignored.** I strongly believe that **Guru Nanak discarded the concept of religion and God as preached by all the prevalent religions.** If Guru Nanak were to be here today he will surely say he is neither Hindu, nor Muslim nor Sikh or any of the Semitic religions.

Guru Nanak had come to the conclusion that **root cause of all the conflict in the society**, which in his time consisted of two majority religions, Hinduism and Islam, **was the religion.** To Guru Nanak religion was a divisive force, each with its own God; whereas **he wanted his mission to bring people together, unite humanity, because we are all children of One Creator.**

Truth is that Guru Nanak rejected the existing three **Semitic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam)** and three **Indian religions of his time (Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism)** and **their Gods** and he was not about to start a yet another religion, **Sikhism**, to add to them.

His **first** pronouncement to this effect came upon his return from across the **Vein River** that oral tradition quotes him uttering his first words as **“Na Ko Hindu Na Mussalman”**; **(there is neither a Hindu nor a Muslim)**, meaning we are all members of the human family.

His **second** pronouncement came during his visit to **Mecca** during his dialogue with **Qazi Ruknuddin** when Guru Nanak was found sleeping with his feet towards Kaaba. To Qazi Ruknuddin's question to Guru Nanak about his religion the Guru responded, **“I am a man of The Creator, and belong to no religion”**.

The **third** pronouncement is by **Fifth Nanak, Guru Arjan**, on p.1136 of Adi Granth, **“Na Ham Hindu Na Mussalman” (We are neither Hindus nor Muslims)**. He is using plural ‘WE’ because by this time the number of people believing in teachings of Guru Nanak had become substantial and distinct enough group to be reckoned by the state. **Note that he does not say ‘We are Sikhs’**.

However, Guru Nanak was not the first person to reject religion as an institution. **Rumi (1207-1273)**, a 13th-century Persian poet, jurist, Islamic scholar, theologian, and Sufi mystic who inherited and expanded a centre for Sufism in **Konya in Turkey** wrote: **“I’m not from the East or the West. I’m not Christian or Jew or Muslim. I’m not Hindu, Buddhist, Sufi or Zen. I don’t belong to any established religion or any cultural system. I’m neither body nor soul, for I belong to the Soul of my beloved.”**

In the article that follows Prof Devinder Singh Chahal has eloquently demonstrated that Nanakian Philosophy has universal acceptability. This paper

was presented at the Council of Parliament of World Religions Conference held at Melbourne, Australia on December 3-9, 2009.

This gathering traces its roots to 1893 World's Fair in Chicago and its rejuvenation to its first centennial in 1993. Since then it has picked up steam and has been meeting more frequently. More recently Sikhs have also been making their presence known at these events.

The 2015 Conference in Salt Lake City Utah was attended by Sikhs in large numbers and their contribution was **‘Guru-ka-langar’**, for the well fed, and turbans for the well dressed. You see, ‘turban’ unfortunately has become the symbol of a Sikh, in their mistaken opinion, even though Guru Nanak rejected symbolism. Some may have read a paper at that gathering, but I am sure that they would have promoted Sikhism as the world's youngest **REVEALED RELIGION** and worthy of every body else to convert to it as I at one time believed.

That has been the **sad story of misrepresentation of Guru Nanak's philosophy** that unfortunately by accident of Guru Nsanak's birth in India, got entrusted to the wrong people. **Sikh speakers at such conferences should dissuade the world audience from blowing their religious horns and use Guru Nanak's Bani as a means to make the world free of religions and discord they bring. They should think outside the box.**

We urge the readers of the Sikh Bulletin to give this article by Dr. Chahal widest possible circulation

I had given up religion before my teenage years. But in my sixties circumstances forced me into operating a Gurdwara. It was the definition, in English, of opening verse in GGS by Dr. Chahal that made me to come to the conclusion that **Guru Nanak's God I could believe in**. His ‘God’ was not the traditional Hindu or Muslim revengeful God but a form of Creative Energy that had no

human attributes like taking birth, dying, being fearful or having enemies and nor it interfered in daily functioning of the creatures by favours for some and punishment for others. Since then I have learned a lot from the writings, in English, of Dr. Chahal on Gurbani.

But my first teacher was S. Gurbakhash Singh Kala Afghana. I was convinced during our very brief first meeting in 1998 in Seattle, Washington that he was the person who could teach me the real meaning of philosophy enshrined in GGS in a language 500 years old. My two questions to test him were about Bachittar Natak and Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee. He reinforced my views of my pre-teen years about both. His writings under the heading '*Bipran ki reet ton sach da marg*' (From the way of the Brahmin to the path of truth) has enriched the Gurbani literature.

My first attempt was at reformation of Sikhi; **only if I could convert the whole world to Sikhism.** But that was naivette on my part. In time I realized that every faith considers their's as the best and only faith. **I have since learned that Guru Nanak had rejected faith in favour of reason,** use of '*bibek budhi*'. With that I came under attack from the establishment, the guardians of the Sikh faith, as well as the **Sikh Taliban.**

It is interesting that both words, **Sikh and Taliban**, mean the same thing, **student**, former in Sanskrit/Panjabi and latter in Persian. As recently as this year I found out that **Sikh Taliban**, as **Akhand Kirtani Jatha** and **Taksal**, have grown even stronger to silence the scholarly expression or discussion of Gurbani in Gurdwaras. They are the new guardians of Guru Nanak's Philosophy enshrined in GGS. Most recent incidents this year were in Fairfield and Roseville, California, Gurdwaras where they forcibly disrupted the scholarly talk by a Professor from a Missionary College in Panjab. They did the same antics in Australia. Sikhism is on its way to oblivion as was Buddhism and what a loss it would be for Guru

Nanak's lifetime of effort. That would be a tragic loss.

In his single digit years as a child Guru Nanak challenged the Brahmin about their ritualistic practices. Brahmin never forgave him for that audacity. Caste system that Brahmin invented is the most powerful force in the world and it explains the power that Brahmin, smallest caste in India, has held over the masses and still does.

Foreign rulers did not affect the Brahmin; they simply became advisors to the new rulers and helped them to suppress the masses. Guru Nanak wrote about that role of the Brahmin in his writings. But Brahmin took his revenge.

While Guru Nanak was travelling the world to save it from itself, Brahmin was busy brain washing Nanak's two sons. Nanak realized it was too late for him to save his sons from the Brahmin so when he selected a successor to himself he advised him to move away from the commune at Kartar Pur that he had established. Had he stayed at Kartar Pur the conflict between Guru Nanak's successor and his sons would have led to much more damage to the Nanakian Philosophy.

The seeds of destruction that Brahmin planted then have only flourished. Gradual Brahminization of Sikhism, as in the case of Buddhism between 7th and 13th BCE, is now complete, with the control of Sikh institutions passing to **RSS.**

This **RSS** is not your old 'benevolent' **Hindu Rashtrya Swayamsewak Sangh**, RSS that left Sikhs alone until 1999. That year was the first **BJP** government in New Delhi and this government of a secular state allocated crores of Rupees to celebrate **300th anniversary of birth of Khalsa** because their contention is that **Sikhs are Hindus**, which they can prove by distorting history and pointing out to the **Indian Constitution** that groups Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains as Hindus, thanks to a Brahmin named **Jawahar Lal Nehru**, India's first Prime Minister.

The new **RSS, Rashtriya Sikh Sangat**, was created that year; its first President/Chairman was the brother of Hindu RSS President/Chairman. He and his co-conspirators were initiated into Khalsa by Damdami Taksal. This year BJP is again in power for the second time and this year they have allocated 100 Crore Rupees to celebrate Guru Gobind Singh's 350th anniversary.

Sikhs no longer read and understand Gurbani themselves but rely on paid Granthis as the Brahmin has done all along for the Hindus; **Akhandpaths** in Sikh homes have replaced Havans in Hindu homes, complete with candles, coconut and incense; GGS is no longer read but worshipped and dressed as the Hindus dress their godly statues, warm clothes in winter and cottons and silks in summer; Sikhs carry the GGS in parades called **Nagar Kirtan** on decorated trucks in their communities as Brahmin carries its various god statues for display in chariots; two historical Sikh Gurdwaras, Patna Sahib and Nander Sahib, already look like and practice Hindu temple rituals, including Aarti that Guru Nanak rejected. It won't be long before the three in Panjab follow suit.

Today even access to a volume of GGS has been heavily restricted. Five Sikhs have to go to SGPC to obtain a volume and carry it home with style.

The only salvation to keep Guru Nanak's Philosophy alive, in real perspective, as Dr. Chahal would say, is to translate it into English, just Guru Nanak's Bani, and make it available to the English speaking world.

As to the Sikh attendance at the future Interfaith Conferences I would suggest that Sikhs go there not to present Guru Nanak's Philosophy as the newest **REVEALED RELIGION** but as a practical way to live the life of a **SACHIARA**, (righteous) without the suffocating and contradictory constraints of religion.

There is enough material in this issue of the Sikh Bulletin for them to find arguments for world free of religions, including evidence for that from Gurbani. I do not have in depth knowledge of gurbani but still have gleaned enough evidence to come to the conclusion that Guru Nanak was opposed to organized manmade religions, even if they were claimed to be God inspired and did not start yet another religion.

Following brief extract is from the larger article FINDING GURUNANAK (1469-1539), THE ONE & ONLY, MY JOURNEY that appears on page 19 in this issue:

For there to be peace on Earth religions have to disappear and take their Gods to their graves.

In fact no religion is a revealed religion. All those claims are based on falsehood. Just think about it with your *Bibek Buddhi* (discerning mind).

There should be concerted effort to expose the myth of revealed religions and their Gods as based on falsehood. Therein lies the salvation of Humanity.

Let us take the three Semitic religions (Judaism. Christianity and Islam), only ones that claim divine revelation and only ones that have brought carnage on humanity:

These three religions do believe in one God but each one has its own one God.

Jewish God discriminates among people as the **Jews claim to be God's chosen people**. This God, like other Semitic and Hindu Gods, demands human sacrifice, like Abraham's son; and when Abraham prepares to sacrifice his son, God becomes kinder and gentler God and asks Abraham to slaughter a lamb instead. **Guru Nanak's God does not favour one group over the other.**

Christian God fathered a child from Mary and his son, Jesus, established his own religion, Christianity, and proclaimed that **only those who**

believe in him will achieve salvation. Then his 'FATHER' allowed for him to be crucified for the sins of others; but then HE raises Jesus from the dead, on the third day, and gives him life.

Guru Nanak rejects all three fundamentals of Christian faith. Foundation of this faith is so shaky I am surprised it lasted so long and was allowed to decimate nature based cultures of so many people around the world. Guru Nanak's Creator neither goes around fathering children from virgins, nor does anybody die for sins of others; each is responsible to face the consequences of his or her own actions and that too in this life because there is no second coming because once anyone dies, it is **dead**, it cannot be reversed, even by the Creator. According to Guru Nanak only The Creator never dies but **anything that has been created will surely die, even this Cosmos.** As to the second coming who are you kidding?

Mohammed's God chose not to talk to Mohammed directly but through an Angel, just as in the 19th century **Joseph Smith** who founded Mormon faith was to claim. But Allah did not instruct Mohammed to bring equal justice to women in Arabia, such as one man one wife.

When people, including Sikhs, proclaim that there are similarities between Sikhism and other faiths on basic concepts they should take a second look. Guru Nanak's concept of God is not the same as in the Middle Eastern religions where God (Male) dictates the Law and gives direction to the prophets (Male) nor is it like Hindu Gods who incarnate as humans (Men specifically).

Although he incorporated into his Bani the multiple names for God in other religions, to make him understood by the masses, his personal word for the 'God' entity is '**Karta Purakh**' or '**KARTAR**' (Creator), formless, ageless, and everlasting and devoid of human attributes.

Hardev Singh Shergill

Editorial Note:

The following article, '**INTERFAITH AND WORLD PEACE – SIKH PERSPECTIVE***' by Prof Devinder Singh Chahal originally appeared on-line in the *Understanding Sikhism: The Research*. The links are as follows:

INTERFAITH AND WORLD PEACE – SIKH PERSPECTIVE*

<http://www.iuscanada.com/journal/archives/2010/j1212p24.pdf>

and Then as:

INTERFAITH AND WORLD PEACE – SIKH PERSPECTIVE*

www.parliamentofreligions.org/sites/default/files/j1212p24.pdf

Keeping its importance it is reproduced here for the readers of the Sikh Bulletin.

INTERFAITH AND WORLD PEACE – SIKH PERSPECTIVE*

Prof Devinder Singh Chahal, PhD
Institute for Understanding Sikhism 4418 Rue
Martin-Plouffe, Laval, Quebec, Canada H7W 5L9
Email: Sikhism@iuscanada.com

ABSTRACT:

Although religions have been around for some millenniums still they failed to maintain peace in the world. **Now it is generally accepted that religion is the primary cause of social division, conflict and war in the world.** Some scholars have blamed the custodians of religions that they have failed to understand their religions in their real perspective. Interfaith Dialogues around the world have also failed to achieve any understanding among various religions.

This paper discusses the method devised by Guru Nanak that all the religions should put forward universally acceptable principles of their religions to be discussed on the common platform provided by the International Interfaith Organizations, which would enable them to formulate some principles to achieve peace on this Earth. This paper further discusses the universally acceptable

principles of philosophy of Guru Nanak as Sikh perspective to be considered by the other religions for working out a solution towards maintaining peace in the world.

INTRODUCTION:

Hinnells and King [7] reported that in today's increasingly polarized world, **religion has been represented by some as primary cause of social division, conflict and war**, whilst others have argued that this is a distortion of the 'true' significance of religion, which when properly followed promote peace, harmony, goodwill and social cohesion.

On the other hand Dr Parvez Hoodbhoy, a Professor of Nuclear Physics at Islamabad's Quaid-e-Azam University, Pakistan says that **if we look into the cause of all the troubles and fights going on in the world the blame will fall on religions** because every religion is about absolute belief in its own superiority and the divine right to impose itself upon others [8].

The man has controlled the most dangerous diseases and has evolved nutritious food and wonder drugs through genetically engineered plants, animals and microorganisms to increase his life span. He has also created many automatic machines and robots to make his life easier. He has also advanced so much in other Sciences especially in the fields of computer and space technology that he is trying to travel deep into the space, i.e. to the other planets of our solar system or the other solar systems of our own galaxy, the Milky Way, and hoping to travel beyond our galaxy into other galaxies of the Universe. Now they are building a space station for various experimentations and observations into the space [11, 12]. In spite of tremendous progress in Science the man has failed to create peace in the world. On the other hand humans have been practicing religions seriously for more than three millenniums they still failed to maintain peace on this tiny planet, the Earth? [3, 5].

The Council of Parliament of World Religions, Chicago and many other such organizations have been providing venue to all the religions and faiths of the world to sit together on one platform to understand each other. Unfortunately such interfaith Conferences have failed to show any sign leading towards establishment of world peace during the last many years' effort.

What is the **SOLUTION**?

DISCUSSION:

1. Understanding through Interfaith Dialogues

Although the Interfaith Conferences have failed to achieve any success leading towards any solution for peace still that is the one of the many other approaches which can lead to establish ONE WORLD ORDER AND PEACE. Now we are living in the Communication Age when one can communicate with the other person on the other side of the globe within a fraction of second. Similarly one can reach the other side of the planet within few hours now, which took days or months before. Although with the advances in Science the future of religion seems to be obscure but the increased communication between all parts of the world would increase understanding between various religions of the world through interfaith dialogues.

Although the Interfaith Conferences have failed to achieve any success leading towards any solution for peace still that is one of the many other approaches which can lead to establish ONE WORLD ORDER AND PEACE.

Now we are living in the Communication Age when one can communicate with the other person on the other side of the globe within a fraction of second. Similarly one can reach the other side of the planet within few hours now, which took days or months before. Although with the advances in Science the future of religion seems to be obscure

but the increase communication between all parts of the world would increase understanding between various religions of the world through interfaith dialogues. Such interfaith dialogues would definitely lead the humanity to understand world religions in their real perspective and enabling their followers to resolve the religious conflicts amicably.

2. Causes of Failure to Establish Peace

Dr Diane Moore [14], Harvard Divinity, School Harvard University, USA emphasized that the illiteracy of religion is wide spread over the globe. The significant consequence is that it fuels antagonism and hinders respect for pluralism, peaceful coexistence and cooperative endeavors. Therefore, failure to maintain peace on earth may be due to the fact that the custodians of religions have not studied their religion in their real perspective. The application of Science and logic to understand the religious scriptures have settled a few wrong concepts and many more can be settled if studied scientifically and logically. **Einstein** is right in this respect when he said: *“After religious teachers accomplished the refining process indicated, they will surely recognize with joy that true religion has been ennobled and made more profound by scientific knowledge.”*

The modern world is looking for peace for the survival of the humanity. It will make a world of difference if all the major religions can sit together and present their philosophy scientifically and logically to understand each other. This should be the first step toward establishment of peace on this Earth.

And this solution was presented by Guru Nanak about 540 years ago as follows:

ਗੁਣਾ ਕਾ ਹੋਵੈ ਵਾਸੁਲਾ ਕਢਿ ਵਾਸਿ ਲਈਜੈ॥
ਜੇ ਗਣ ਹੋਵਨਿ ਸਾਜਨਾ ਮਿਲਿ ਸਾਝ ਕਰੀਜੈ॥
ਸਾਝ ਕੀਜੈ ਗੁਣਹ ਕੇਰੀ ਛੋਡਿ ਅਵਗਣ ਚਲੀਐ॥

If you have a bag of wisdom/philosophy, open it, so that it can be shared by others. If your friends have good philosophy, adopt it. Only adopt good philosophy. Leave the others, which are not acceptable. AGGS, M 1, p 765 [1].

Guru Nanak further emphasizes that it is very important to evaluate the philosophy/ideas properly before adopting it:

ਪਹਿਲਾ¹ ਵਸਤੁ² ਸਿਵਾਣਿ³ ਕੈ ਤਾ ਕੀਚੈ⁴ ਵਾਪਾਰੁ⁵ ॥

It is advised that one must evaluate³ the things / philosophy² first¹, if convinced, then adopt/follow^{4,5} it. AGGS, M 1, p 1410.

This is the first step to be followed at the Interfaith Conferences but it does not happen so. Are the representatives of every religion ready to work according to the above formula provided by Guru Nanak?

The irony is that none of the Interfaith Conferences has reached to that stage yet. Every religion has some basics which could be acceptable universally. As advised by Guru Nanak if we can put together all such basics from major religions of the world we may be able to build some principles which could become one of the major approaches to maintain peace on this planet, The Earth.

Therefore, I would like to put forward some basics of philosophy of Guru Nanak embodied in his Bani (Word), explained and strengthened by the Sikh Gurus who succeeded to the ‘House of Nanak’ in their Bani which is incorporated in the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) along with that of Guru Nanak. I termed it as ‘Nanakian Philosophy’ [6].

SOME BASICS OF NANAKIAN PHILOSOPHY

1. God

It is difficult to define God since It (God) is accepted differently in different religions.

Although it is widely accepted in almost all religion that there is one God but still every religion understands God differently than that of others. Not going into details of the concept of God in different religions I come to the **concept of God by Guru Nanak**. The concise and precise definition of God given by Guru Nanak is incorporated right in the beginning of the sacred book of the Sikhs, Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) [1].

In fact this is not exactly the definition of God but a description which makes the God of Guru Nanak different than that of others:

ੴ¹

ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ
ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ²
ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ³ ॥

*The One and Only, Oh, the Infinite¹;
Exists; Creator; Without fear (Not governed by
any other – Not under any Law of Universe);
Without enmity;
Timeless (Without effect of time and space);
Neither takes birth nor dies;
(Never comes into any anthropomorphic form)
Created by Itself²;
Enlightener; and Bounteous³.*

If one examines this definition critically it will not be difficult to be accepted by the whole humanity including the atheists. For example, Guru Nanak says God is Ajooni (God does not come into anthropomorphic form) and this attribute was also realized by the **Nobel Laureate, Elbert Einstein (1879-1955 CE)**, that **“God does not come into anthropomorphic form”**. There is another attribute of God assigned by Guru Nanak that God is Nirvair (without enmity) and **Einstein has expressed this attribute as: “Subtle is the Lord but malicious He is not”**.

Now the question here to ponder upon is that how come the two attributes of God, assigned by Guru Nanak about 540 years ago, have been realized by

a scientist who was unaware of the philosophy of Guru Nanak. **This is because the truth is always discovered sooner or later by the discriminative intellectuals. This is the best proof about the universal acceptability of basics of Nanakian Philosophy.**

1. The Earth

According to **Guru Nanak** the **Earth belongs to the Humanity**. While this Earth was being formed as a planet of our Solar System, God created necessary environment on the Earth to sustain different types of lives. As we know at this time the Earth is the only planet of our Solar System where life is found. However, the possibilities of similar or better or less developed type of life on other planets of other Solar Systems of our galaxy or of other galaxies cannot be ruled out [11, 12], because it is beyond our all available technology to reach on such planets and beyond our comprehension to visualize life on the other planets for the time being. In this respect we should be grateful to God for giving us a chance to be a part of the life on this Earth, one of the billions of planets of Solar Systems of our galaxy - the Milky Way.

The Earth as described by Guru Nanak in JAP is as follows:

i) The Earth

ਰਾਤੀ ਰੁਤੀ ਬਿਤੀ ਵਾਰ ॥
ਪਵਣ ਪਾਣੀ ਅਗਨੀ ਪਾਤਾਲ¹ ॥
ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਧਰਤੀ ਥਾਪਿ ਰਖੀ ਧਰਮ ਸਾਲ² ॥
ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਜੀਅ³ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਕੇ ਰੰਗ ॥
ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਨਾਮ ਅਨੇਕ ਅਨੰਤ ॥
ਕਰਮੀ ਕਰਮੀ⁴ ਹੋਇ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ⁵ ॥
ਸਚਾ ਆਪਿ ਸਚਾ ਦਰਬਾਰੁ⁶ ॥
ਤਿਥੈ ਸੋਹਨਿ ਪੰਚ⁷ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ⁸ ॥
ਨਦਰੀ⁹ ਕਰਮਿ¹⁰ ਪਵੈ ਨੀਸਾਣੁ¹¹ ॥
ਕਚ¹² ਪਕਾਈ¹³ ਓਥੈ ਪਾਇ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਗਇਆ ਜਾਪੈ ਜਾਇ ॥ 34 ॥

*Nights, seasons, days, and weeks; Wind, water, and fire in the center of the Earth¹;
Amidst all these natural phenomena and resources, the Earth is placed as a venue to*

practice righteousness².

Thereon are various types of living beings³.

And their names and kinds are uncountable. By their deeds⁴ their destinies are judged⁵.

The court⁶ of the Ever-Existing (God) is true.

In that court only nobles⁷ are accepted⁸.

This honor of acceptance of good deeds¹⁰ is achieved¹¹ by the blessing⁹ of the God.

Nanak says: Whether one is ordinary¹² or elevated¹³ is sent for judgment and is judged in the court of God.³⁴ AGGS, Jap 34. p 7 [1].

Note: ਪਾਤਾਲ¹ (Patal): Here 'Patal' is not a mythical 'Patal', so -called nether world, it means the center of earth where it is too hot and everything is in molten form. According to Bachan [2] 'Patal' is the center of earth also.

Here Guru Nanak is explaining that the earth is a venue to practice righteousness. On this earth God has supplied all the natural resources and necessary phenomena for sustaining all types of living beings. One is judged as an ordinary or elevated one according to the deeds performed. In the court of Ever-Existing (God) only those are honored who have been blessed because of their good deeds.

The 'court of God' has been used here metaphorically for the Laws of Nature since every action and reaction is going on under these laws and one gets the result of these laws right here in this life. The God, after creating the Earth and the necessary environment for sustaining life, declared the earth as the realm of justice, where the actions (good or evil) will be considered. The word, "Dharmsaal", used in Nanakian Philosophy has been interpreted as the 'realm of justice'; because the word "dharam" according to Nanakian Philosophy means Laws of Nature (God) set to control all the actions and reactions going on in the whole Universe and in every living being; and "saal" means the venue/place. It is just possible that the "saal" may have its common roots in Archaic Punjabi and/or in French 'salle', which means, 'house', 'room', 'hall', 'place'.

Therefore, in this 'realm of justice', the Earth, everybody will be adjudged and honored or punished according to their deeds under the Laws of Nature.

In continuation of the above basic principle of Nanakian Philosophy the importance of air, water and earth; and of days and nights have been expressed as the Guru (teacher), the father, the Mother Nature, and the nurses, respectively, for sustaining life on this planet:

ii) Natural Resources and Environment

ਪਵਣੂ¹ ਗੁਰੂ ਪਾਣੀ ਪਿਤਾ ਮਾਤਾ² ਧਰਤੀ³ ਮਹਤਾ⁴ ॥

ਦਿਵਸੁ⁵ ਰਾਤਿ⁶ ਦੁਇ ਦਾਈ⁷ ਦਾਇਆ⁸ ਖੇਲੈ ਸਗਲ⁹

ਜਗਤੁ¹⁰ ॥

ਚੰਗਿਆਈਆ¹¹ ਬੁਰਿਆਈਆ¹² ਵਾਚੈ ਧਰਮੁ¹³ ਹਦੂਰਿ¹⁴

॥

ਕਰਮੀ¹⁵ ਆਪੋ ਆਪਣੀ ਕੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਕੇ ਦੂਰਿ ॥

ਜਿਨੀ ਨਾਮੁ¹⁶ ਧਿਆਇਆ¹⁷ ਗਏ ਮਸਕਤਿ¹⁸ ਘਾਲਿ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਤੇ ਮੁਖ ਉਜਲ¹⁹ ਕੇਤੀ²⁰ ਛੁਟੀ ਨਾਲਿ ॥1॥

AGGS, Sloka of Jap, p 8; M 2, p 146.

Air¹ is like a Guru, water like a father (represent environment and resource), and Earth³ is like the great⁴ mother² (which provides all types of resources and food). Both day⁵ and night⁶ are like male-nurse⁷ and female nurse⁸, respectively, and the whole⁹ humanity¹⁰ plays in their laps. (Means the humanity enjoys these natural environment and resources provided by God. Therefore, it is the duty of humans to practice righteousness.) (Now) your virtues (good deeds)¹¹ and vices (bad deeds)¹² are evaluated under¹⁴ the Laws of Nature¹³. Since people are honored according to their deeds¹⁵, therefore, some will come near to salvation while others will remain away from it. Nanak says: The faces of those nobles¹⁹, who have comprehended¹⁷ God¹⁶, glow with happiness and attain liberation from their troubles¹⁸. And with the association of such nobles many others²⁰ can attain salvation. AGGS, Sloka Jap, p 8; M 2, p 146.

Here it is explained that God has provided all the natural resources, i.e. air, water and Earth; the

necessary phenomena - day, night, and seasons; and the necessary environment for all the living beings on this earth. Therefore, the earth provides all types of resources and necessary environment to sustain life. And all these resources and the environment around the Earth belong to the whole humanity to be shared equally. Those, who would practice righteousness will be near or far away from salvation according to the deeds conducted by them.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804 CE) in his essay Toward Perpetual Peace claimed that the expansion of hospitality with regard to "use of the right to the earth's surface which belongs to the human race in common" would "finally bring the human race ever closer to a cosmopolitan constitution" [9].

iii) Age of the Earth

While we keep ourselves busy in fighting with each other either on religious bases or some other reason we are ignoring the fact that we, the humanity, are not going to live on this Earth forever. According to Vince Stricherz [13] that in its 4.5 billion years, Earth has evolved from its hot, violent birth to the celebrated watery blue planet that stands out in pictures from space. But in a new book, two noted University of Washington astrobiologists say the planet already has begun the long process of devolving into a burned-out cinder, eventually to be swallowed by the sun. By their reckoning, Earth's "day in the sun" has reached 4:30 a.m., corresponding to its 4.5 billion-year age. By 5 a.m., the 1 billion-year reign of animals and plants will come to an end (Fig. 1). Therefore, we should not forget that life is going to disappear from this Earth after about 500,000,000 years.

Now it is up to us to decide whether we want to disappear before that time by fighting with each other on religious grounds or on some other reasons or we want to live up to the last moment of life of this Earth available to us by maintaining peace. At 8 a.m. the oceans will

vaporize. At noon – after 12 billion years – the ever-expanding sun, transformed into a red giant, will engulf the planet, melting away any evidence it ever existed and sending molecules and atoms that once were Earth floating off into space.

"The disappearance of our planet is still 7.5 billion years away, but people really should consider the fate of our world and have a realistic understanding of where we are going," said UW astrophysicist Donald Brownlee. "We live in a fabulous place at a fabulous time. It's a healthy thing for people to realize what a treasure this is in space and time, and fully appreciate and protect their environment as much as possible."

2. Status of Man among the Living Organisms

The next most important point in Nanakian Philosophy is to understand the status of man among the living organisms on this Earth. The human has been declared as of the highest order developed through long evolutionary processes. Not going through the long history of Darwin's Theory of Evolution I come to origin of man according to Nanakian Philosophy. Although there is no direct information about the origin of man in Nanakian Philosophy, however, the following phrase of Guru Amardas indicates where the man comes from:

i) The Roots of Man:

AGGS, M 3, p 441. (* This stanza was first uttered by Guru Nanak as admitted by Guru Amardas: **ਇਉ ਕਹੈ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਮਨ ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰੂਪੁ ਹੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੂਲੁ ਪਛਾਣੁ ॥**)

Many of the Sikh theologians interpret ਮਨ (mann) as 'soul' as has been accepted right from the time of Plato and ancient philosophy of India (Hinduism). Therefore, the above phrase is usually interpreted as follows: *"My soul, thou art the embodiment (image) of Divine light, so know thy source."*

If we look into the following information its interpretation would be entirely different than that.

Humans share many genes with yeasts, worms, fruit flies, and lettuce, about 90% with mice and about 99% with chimpanzees. Pollard [10] reported that Chimpanzees are the closest living relatives of humans and share nearly 99 percent of our DNA. The efforts to identify those regions of the human genome that have changed the most since chimps and humans diverged from a common ancestor have helped pinpoint the DNA sequences that make us human. She further said that the findings have also provided vital insights into how chimps and humans can differ so profoundly, despite having nearly identical DNA blueprints.

Keeping in view the above information it becomes evident that man can trace back his roots (mool) to primate (chimpanzees) to mice to plants (lettuce) to microorganisms and ultimately to DNA – composed of 5 elements (Hydrogen, Carbon, Oxygen, Nitrogen and Phosphorus). The first element originated from Energy was Hydrogen which gave rise to other elements found on this Earth. **Therefore, the primordial source of life is Energy, which is called ‘Jyot’ in Gurbani.**

This Energy (Jyot) gave rise to matter (the whole Universe) according to the equation of Energy ($E = mc^2$). This information leads us to the evolution of man through successive stages of evolution from DNA molecule to single-celled to multi-cellular form to higher life of plants and animal culminating at highest form, the man, of evolution.

Gurbani had also explained the evolution of man through different stages of various living forms starting from the smallest organism as indicated in the following Sabd starting as:

ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਭਏ ਕੀਟ ਪਤੰਗਾ ॥ ...AGGS, M 5, p 176.

However, the sequence of evolution described in the above Sabd is not exactly according to modern theory of evolution of man.

It is further mentioned in the Gurbani that man is at the highest level of evolution and he is the commander of all the living beings on this earth:

ਅਵਰ ਜੋਨਿ ਤੇਰੀ ਪਨਿਹਾਰੀ ॥

ਇਸੁ ਧਰਤੀ ਮੀਹ ਤੇਰੀ ਸਿਕਦਾਰੀ ॥

All other beings (excluding human) are at your service. You are the commander on this Earth. AGGS, M 5, p 374.

Now keeping in view the above related verses, the first verse:

(ਮਨ¹ * ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ² ਸਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੂਲ³ ਪਛਾਣ⁴ ॥)

Can be interpreted scientifically and logically as follows:

"Hay man (mind)¹! Recognize⁴ your roots³.

Your roots are from the primordial Energy (Jyot)², the God."

*ਮਨ (Mann) in Nanakian Philosophy means ‘mind’, ‘brain’, and sometimes represents ‘man’ but not ‘soul’ as is translated by some theologians.

Finally, it could be concluded that after passing through long process of evolution starting from the Energy (Jyot) man has attained human form, the highest form of evolution and has become the commander of all the living beings.

The above stanzas clearly indicate the evolution of man but not creation of man as man usually understood in many religions.

Recently, scientists have almost completed the sequencing of human genome, The Book of Life. The impact of ‘The Book of Life’ is expected to be enormous. It would help us to find out that an individual is prone to what diseases and problems: Alzheimer's disease, heart problems, cholesterol, addiction to tobacco, alcohol, etc. It would also help to do the gene therapy to control the diseases that are caused by certain genes. Transfer for human gene in pigs to produce different organs for transplants into humans will be a big biological business in the future [4].

Bill Clinton, US President has expressed mapping of human genome as follows: “**Today we are learning the language in which God created life.** We are gaining ever more awe for the complexity, the beauty, the wonder of God’s most divine and sacred gift.” [4]. Bill Clinton further said that: “If the project (The Book of Life) proves anything, it is the most important fact of life on this Earth is our ‘**common community**’ [CNN.com, June 27, 2000].

The human being, as a common community, is the basic principle of Nanakian Philosophy that was taught during 15th century by Guru Nanak.

Scientists have now discovered this fact that all the human beings are a ‘common community’.

The man being at the top of the evolution and being a commander of all living beings is advised to practice altruism and egalitarianism for fellow humans in Nanakian Philosophy.

1. Altruism

Altruism is most important feature of Nanakian Philosophy. It has been represented that the education of a person is only good or worth if it is used for the service and up lift of the humanity. It has also been mentioned many times in the AGGS that **any type of service that is for the welfare of the humanity is considered the service to God.** Therefore, unselfish concern for the welfare of the humanity (altruism) is the first and foremost principle of Nanakian Philosophy as explained in the following verses:

ਵਿਦਿਆ¹ ਵੀਚਾਰੀ² ਤਾਂ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ³ ॥

Nanak Says: That education¹ is worth², which is applied² to the welfare³ of the humanity. AGGS, M 1, p 356.

This is also the motto of the Punjabi University, Patiala, India.

ਜੇਤੇ ਜੀਅ¹ ਤੇਤੇ ਸਭਿ ਤੇਰੇ ਵਿਣੁ ਸੇਵਾ² * ਫਲੁ³ ਕਿਸੈ ਨਾਰੀ ॥

*All those living beings¹ (on this earth) are Yours. Without service² *, no one obtains any reward³. AGGS, M 1, p 354.*

What does ਸੇਵਾ² * (Sewa/Service) mean here?

Guru Nanak explains ਸੇਵਾ (service) as follows:

ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ¹ ਸਬਦੁ² ਵੀਚਾਰੁ³ ॥

ਹਉਮੈ⁴ ਮਾਰੇ⁵ ਕਰਣੀ⁶ ਸਾਰੁ ॥

ਜਪ⁷ ਤਪ⁸ ਸੰਜਮ⁹ ਪਾਠ¹⁰ ਪੁਰਾਣੁ¹¹ ॥

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਅਪੰਪਰ¹² ਮਾਨੁ¹³ ॥

The service¹ to the Guru is to comprehend³ the philosophy² of the Guru. What is that philosophy? Getting rid⁵ of ego⁴ and to do good deeds⁶ is the service to the God. What is the benefit of good deeds and getting rid of ego? Consider¹³ doing good deeds and knowing the God is more than¹² (highest of all) that of all your meditation⁷, austerities⁸, self-discipline⁹ and reading¹⁰ of Puranas¹¹. AGGS, M 1, p 223.

The main principle of the Nanakian Philosophy given here is that getting rid of ego and doing good deeds for the humanity are the greatest service of all. Finally, Guru Arjan sums up altruism in Nanakian Philosophy as follows:

ਸਫਲੁ¹ ਜਨਮੁ² ਹਰਿ ਜਨ ਕਾ ਉਪਜਿਆ ਜਿਨਿ ਕੀਨੇ ਸਉਤੁ³ ਬਿਧਾਤਾ⁴ ॥

ਸਗਲ⁵ ਸਮੂਹ⁶ ਲੈ ਉਧਰੇ⁷ ਨਾਨਕ ਪੂਰਨ⁸ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ⁹ ਪਛਾਤਾ¹⁰ ॥

Nanak says: Successfull are those lives² (devotees), who consider that everyone is the child³ of God⁴. Those, who have realized¹⁰ the perfect⁸ God⁹, take along with them all⁵ their colleagues⁶ across the sea of life⁷. AGGS, M 5, p 532.

5. Egalitarianism

a. Oneness and Sameness (Equality)

Guru Nanak preached the Oneness, Omnipresence, Omnipotence, and Omniscience of the God and the sameness of all the peoples. Every human is

equal to each other as explained in the following stanza:

ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਉਚਾ¹ ਆਖੀਐ ਨੀਚੁ² ਨ ਦੀਸੈ ਕੋਇ ॥
ਇਕਨੈ³ ਭਾਂਡੇ⁴ ਸਾਜਿਐ⁵ ਇਕੁ ਚਾਨਣੁ⁶ * ਤਿਹੁ ਲੋਇ⁷ ॥
ਕਰਮਿ⁸ ਮਿਲੈ ਸਚੁ⁹ ਪਾਈਐ ਧੁਰਿ¹⁰ ਬਖਸ¹¹ ਨ ਮੇਟੈ¹²
ਕੋਇ ॥ 6 ॥

*Call everyone exalted¹; none appears to be low²; Everyone has been moulded⁵ from the same³ matter⁴; And the same source of light⁶ shines⁷ in all. Finally, Guru Nanak explains: Such actions⁸ are developed through nature¹⁰ (heredity) and the Grace¹¹ of God⁹, which cannot be erased¹². 6. AGGS, M 1, p 62. *cwnx: joq (Jyot): Energy.*

b. Caste-system

If basically we all are same, being the creation of the only One, the God, then why should we have any hatred among ourselves? Guru Nanak realized that this hatred was mostly due to caste-system prevailing before and during his time. Most scholars say that **Guru Nanak** revolted against the caste-system; in fact, **he revolted against any type of discrimination based on the creed, color, country of origin, social status, sex, etc.** Although we may find slight morphological differences [11] in peoples of different regions of the world, which developed due to the different ecology of those regions, but we all share the same physiological processes to maintain the life and were created by the same one Father, the God. Most probably we all might have one same mother originated somewhere in Africa according to the latest research on the origin of man.

ਫਕੜ¹ ਜਾਤੀ² ਫਕੜੁ ਨਾਉ³।
ਸਭਨਾ ਜੀਆ ਇਕਾ ਛਾਉ⁴ ॥
ਆਪਹੁ ਜੇ ਕੋ ਭਲਾ⁵ ਕਹਾਏ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਤਾ ਪਰੁ ਜਾਪੈ ਜਾ ਪਤਿ⁶ ਲੇਖੈ⁷ ਪਾਇ ॥ 1 ॥

Pride in social status² and personal glory³ are useless¹ since every living being is under one Law and Order. One may call oneself as a noble man⁴ but nobility⁶ is achieved when one's good deeds are accepted⁷. AGGS. M 1, p 83.

c. Sharing of Material Wealth

Sharing of earning for the uplift of the humanity:

ਘਾਲਿ¹ ਖਾਇ² ਕਿਛੁ³ ਹਥਹੁ ਦੇਹਿ⁴ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹੁ⁵ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ⁶ ਸੇਇ ॥ AGGS, M 1, p 1284.

"Nanak Says: The one who earns² with his sweat of brow¹ and shares⁴ some of his earning³ for the welfare of the humanity has recognized⁶ the real path of life⁵.

It is not only sharing of the earnings but sharing of the philosophy/knowledge/wisdom with that of others and accepting the best ones and discarding the worst ones as recommended in Nanakian Philosophy is also part of egalitarianism as discussed earlier.

6. Truthful living

Everybody understands that the truth is of the highest order in the morality but Guru Nanak emphasizes that **it is actually the truthful living that is highest of all:**

ਮਨਹਠ¹ ਬੁਧੀ² ਕੇਤੀਆ ਕੇਤੇ ਬੇਦ³ ਬੀਚਾਰ⁴ ॥
ਕੇਤੇ ਬੰਧਨ⁵ ਜੀਅ ਕੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ⁶ ਮੋਖ⁷ ਦੁਆਰ ॥
ਸਚਹੁ⁸ ਓਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ⁹ ਆਚਾਰੁ¹⁰ ॥ 5 ॥

AGGS, M 1, p 62.

Stubborn-minded¹ intelligent² have contemplated⁴ the Vedas³. There are so many rituals in Vedas in which one is entangled⁵, but only Guru-oriented⁶ person gets salvation⁷.

Who is the Guru-oriented person? Guru Nanak explains it as follows:

Although truth⁸ is higher than everything; but higher still is truthful⁹ living¹⁰. 5.

7. Good Deeds – The Highest Religion

The above principle of Guru Nanak has further been explained by Guru Arjan that **practicing righteousness on this earth is the highest religion of all:**

ਸਰਬ¹ ਧਰਮ² ਮਹਿ ਸ੍ਰੇਸਟ³ ਧਰਮੁ ॥
ਹਰਿ ਕੋ ਨਾਮ ਜਪਿ⁴ ਨਿਰਮਲ⁵ ਕਰਮੁ⁶ ॥ AGGS, M 5, p 266.

Amongst all the religions², the highest³ religion

*of the human is to do good⁵ deeds⁶ that is equivalent to the repetition⁴ * of God's name."*

*In some religions repetition of God's name or of certain deity or certain mantra is considered the highest of all religious duties. And many Sikh theologians also interpret it literally so. **But according to Nanakian Philosophy all such acts are of no avail. Conducting good deeds is the highest social responsibility rather than repetition of God's name or of any deity or any mantra.**

8. Jealousy

Jealousy is another factor of hatred between two groups, between two communities, between two religions, between two races, between two nations, between two countries etc. Most of the time the jealousy is due to the economic factor that one group is more prosperous than the others because of their special traits and virtues. Instead of feeling jealous that creates hatred, that group should develop friendship with the other groups to raise them to their levels. Nanakian Philosophy explains that jealousy could be controlled by keeping the company of good peoples. Once we get rid of jealousy then nobody is an enemy or a stranger for us:

ਬਿਸਰਿ¹ ਗਈ ਸਭ ਤਾਤਿ² ਪਰਾਈ ॥
ਜਬ ਤੇ ਸਾਧਸੰਗਤਿ³ ਮੋਹਿ ਪਾਈ ॥ 1 ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
ਨਾ ਕੋ ਬੈਰੀ⁴ ਨਹੀ ਬਿਗਾਨਾ⁵ ਸਗਲ⁶ ਸੰਗਿ⁷ ਹਮ ਕਉ
ਬਨਿ ਆਈ ॥ 1 ॥
ਜੋ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕੀਨੋ⁸ ਸੋ ਭਲ ਮਾਨਿਓ⁹ ਏਹ ਸੁਮਤਿ¹⁰ ਸਾਧੂ¹¹ ਤੇ
ਪਾਈ ॥ 2 ॥
ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਰਵਿ¹² ਰਹਿਆ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਏਕੈ¹³ ਪੇਖਿ ਪੇਖਿ¹⁴
ਨਾਨਕ ਬਿਗਸਾਈ¹⁵ ॥ 3 ॥ 8 ॥

I have totally forgotten¹ to be jealous of others prosperity² since I have found the company of noble people³. Pause. Now no one is my enemy⁴ or stranger⁵ to me, therefore, I can get along with⁷ everyone⁶. 1. I accept⁹ what is being done⁸ by God under Its Laws of Nature since I have attained this wisdom¹⁰ from the company of the noble people¹¹. 2. I also realized that The One

God¹³ is pervading¹² in everyone and to see¹⁴ them happy¹⁵. 3. 8. AGGS, M 5, p 1299.

9. Egoism/Egotism

According to the Nanakian philosophy egoism/egotism is the biggest factor in human nature that leads him toward his destruction. Getting rid of the nature of egoism/egotism is the greatest achievement of all for self-improvement and to maintain peace with others:

ਆਪੁ¹ ਵੰਵਾਏ² ਤਾ ਸਭ ਕਿਛੁ³ ਪਾਏ ॥ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦੀ⁴ ਸਚੀ
ਲਿਵ⁵ ਲਾਏ ॥ AGGS, M 3, p 115.

Guru Amardas says:

By destroying² egoism¹ one can achieve everything³. This can be achieved by contemplating⁵ on the teachings of Guru (Nanak)⁴.

10. Tolerance

Once it becomes clear about the Oneness of the God and sameness of the whole humanity; and we eliminate egoism; follow the path of truthful living; and overcome the jealousy then developing fellowship of humanity would be easier if we have a spirit of tolerance and accommodation of ideas of others. When Guru Nanak had some discussions with the Siddhas, they claimed to belong to the highest class, so-called '*Aayee Panthi*', then Guru Nanak advises them that the whole humanity belongs to the highest class according to the evolution of human:

ਆਈ ਪੰਥੀ ਸਗਲ ਜਮਾਤੀ ॥
The whole humanity belongs to the highest class, the 'Aayee Panthee'. AGGS. Jap 28, p 6.

11. Non-violence

The politeness and humility are the major factors that lead to the development of the principle of non-violence. Thus, cultivation of politeness and humility is the first and foremost characteristic of Sikhism:

ਮਿਠਤੁ¹ ਨੀਵੀ² ਨਾਨਕਾ ਗੁਣ³ ਚੰਗਿਆਈਆ⁴ ਤਤੁ⁵ ॥

Nanak says: Sweetness¹ (politeness) and humility² are the essence⁵ of virtue³ and goodness⁴. AGGS, M 1, p 470.

ਮੰਦਾ¹ ਕਿਸੇ ਨ ਆਖੀਐ² ਪੜਿ ਅਖਰੁ³ ਏਹੋ ਬੁਝੀਐ⁴ ॥
ਮੁਰਖੈ⁵ ਨਾਲਿ ਨ ਲੁਝੀਐ⁶ ॥

Do not call² anyone bad¹ and don't argue⁶ with a fool⁵, I have discovered⁴ after studying the word³. AGGS, M 1, p 473.

ਗਰੀਬੀ¹ ਗਦਾ² ਹਮਾਰੀ ॥
ਖੰਨਾ³ ਸਗਲ⁴ ਰੇਨੁ⁵ ਛਾਰੀ⁶ ॥
ਇਸੁ ਆਗੈ⁷ ਕੇ ਨ ਟਿਕੈ⁸ ਵੇਕਾਰੀ⁹ ॥
ਗੁਰ ਪੂਰੇ¹⁰ ਏਹ ਗਲ ਸਾਰੀ¹¹ ॥

Humility¹ is my mace². My dagger³ is to be the dust of all⁴ men's feet^{5,6} (mean service to the humanity). No evil doer⁹ can withstand⁸ against⁷ these weapons. The Perfect Guru¹⁰ (Nanak) gave me this understanding¹¹. AGGS, M 5, p 628.

This philosophy was not only developed by the Sikh Gurus merely for teaching to the Sikhs but to be practiced by them (the Gurus) and by the Sikhs.

Therefore, **Guru Arjan** preferred to be sacrificed to keep up the principle of non-violence rather than to take up arms when he was ordered to change the teachings of Sikh Gurus incorporated into the AGGS to favor the rulers of that time. Similarly,

Guru Teg Bahadur sacrificed himself rather to take up arms to resolve the problem of human rights that the then rulers were violating.

Since then, the Sikhs have maintained this tradition of non-violence. There are many examples of observance of non-violence for resolving religious issues with the government in the history of the Sikhs. Some glaring examples of observance of non-violence by the Sikhs are found during the struggle of independence of India. From a practical point of view the Sikh Gurus and the Sikhs were the first to adopt nonviolence during the beginning of 17th

century to resolve the differences between the rulers and the ruled.

12. Fearing of none and Threatening to none

Sometimes the politeness, humility and practising of nonviolence by a particular nation or a community is taken as its weakness to be exploited by the other deceitful nation or community.

Thus, to safeguard the so-called weakness, Guru Teg Bahadur established the following two principles: The first principle is that **one should be strong enough not to be afraid of anyone and being strong, should not threaten others:**

ਭੈ¹ ਕਾਹੂ ਕਉ ਦੇਤ² ਨਹਿ, ਨਹਿ ਭੈ ਮਾਨਤ³ ਆਨ ॥
ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨਿ⁴ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ⁵ ਗਿਆਨੀ⁶ ਤਾਹਿ
ਬਖਾਨਿ⁷ ॥ 16 ॥

Oh mind (man)⁵ ! Listen⁴! A person who does² not threaten¹ anybody and does not accept³ the threat of anybody that person is described⁷ as the wise/intellectual⁶. AGGS, M 9, p 1427.

The first principle of Nanakian Philosophy is that one should be strong enough not to be afraid of anyone and being strong, should not threaten others as described above. The second principle is the establishment of power to keep up the above principle to maintain the politeness, humility and peace. Therefore, possession of power is also necessary to cut off the fetters of slavery if one falls into it:

ਬਲੁ¹ ਛੁਟਕਿਓ² ਬੰਧਨ³ ਪਰੇ ਕਛੂ⁴ ਨ ਹੋਤ ਉਪਾਇ⁵ ॥
ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਅਬ ਓਟ⁶ ਹਰਿ⁷ ਗਜ⁸ ਜਿਉ ਹੋਹੁ
ਸਹਾਇ⁹ ॥ 53 ॥
ਬਲੁ ਹੋਆ ਬੰਧਨ ਛੁਟੇ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਹੋਤ ਉਪਾਇ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਤੁਮਰੈ ਹਾਥ¹⁰ ਮੈ ਤੁਮ ਹੀ ਹੋਤ
ਸਹਾਇ¹¹ ॥ 54 ॥

Nanak says: One falls into shackles³ when one loses² his all powers¹; then he cannot do⁵ anything⁴. Under such circumstances one looks for help⁶ of God⁷ as has been mentioned in mythology that God helped⁹ the elephant⁸ caught

by an octopus. 53.

However, Nanak explains his philosophy in the next stanza as follows:

When one regains his power then one can break the shackles and he can achieve whatever he likes. When one is working under these Laws of Nature then God¹⁰ comes to help (means everything happens according to the Laws of Nature). 54. AGGS, M 9, p 1429.

13. Freedom of Expression

There is complete freedom of expression in Nanakian Philosophy. And discussion can only be held if one listens to others and expresses one's views to the others:

ਜਬ¹ ਲਗੁ² ਦੁਨੀਆ³ ਰਹੀਐ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਿਛੁ⁴ ਸੁਣੀਐ⁵ ਕਿਛੁ ਕਹੀਐ⁶ ॥

As long as^{1,2} one lives in this world³ one must listen⁵ to others⁴ and express⁶ oneself to the others (to find the truth). AGGS, M 1, p 661.

14. Praise of Woman

Guru Nanak has highest praise for women and also has indicated her importance in raising the future humanity in the following verses:

ਭੰਡਿ¹ ਜੰਮੀਐ² ਭੰਡਿ ਨਿੰਮੀਐ³ ਭੰਡਿ⁴ ਮੰਗਣੁ⁵ ਵੀਆਹੁ⁶ ॥
 ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਦੋਸਤੀ⁷ ਭੰਡਹੁ ਚਲੈ ਰਾਹੁ⁸ ॥
 ਭੰਡ ਮੁਆ⁹ ਭੰਡੁ ਭਾਲੀਐ¹⁰ ਭੰਡਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਬੰਧਾਨੁ¹¹ ॥
 ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ¹² ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਜੰਮਹਿ¹³ ਰਾਜਾਨ¹⁴ ॥
 ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੀ ਭੰਡੁ ਊਪਜੈ¹⁵ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਝੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਏਕੋ¹⁶ ਸੋਇ ॥
 ਜਿਤੁ ਮੁਖਿ ਸਦਾ ਸਾਲਾਹੀਐ¹⁷ ਭਾਗਾ ਰਤੀ ਚਾਰਿ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਤੇ ਮੁਖ ਊਜਲੇ¹⁸ ਤਿਤੁ ਸਚੈ¹⁹ ਦਰਬਾਰਿ²⁰ ॥ 2 ॥

AGGS, M 1, p 473.

From the woman¹ is our birth²; in the woman's womb⁴ one grows³; to the woman one is engaged⁵; to the woman one is wedded⁶. One be friends⁷ with woman and starts one's life⁸. When woman is dead⁹ and another woman is sought¹⁰ and with woman we are attached¹¹ and raise a family. Why call woman evil¹² that gives birth¹³

to kings¹⁴? From the woman is born¹⁵ a woman, without woman there is none. Nanak says: There is only One¹⁶, the Eternal, who is not dependent upon woman. That person, who always praises¹⁷ the One, is very fortunate. That person's face glows¹⁸ in the court²⁰ of God¹⁹ (means contented).

16. Benign Sovereignty

If everybody abides by the above principles laid out in Nanakian Philosophy, it would definitely lead to the development of the benign sovereignty as conceived by Guru Arjan, under which the whole humanity would live in peace on this planet, the earth:

ਹੁਣਿ ਹੁਕਮੁ¹ ਹੋਆ ਮਿਹਰਵਾਣ² ਦਾ ॥
 ਕੋਇ ਨ ਕਿਸੈ ਰਵਾਣਦਾ³ ॥
 ਸਭ ਸੁਖਾਲੀ⁴ ਵੁਠੀਆ⁵ ਇਹੁ ਹੋਆ ਹਲੇਮੀ⁶ ਰਾਜੂ⁷
 ਜੀਉ ॥ 13 ॥

Now, the Merciful² God has issued a command¹ of benign⁶ rule⁷ that no one will chase and attack³ anyone and everyone will live⁵ easily⁴ in peace. 13. AGGS, M 5, p 74.

FINAL MESSAGE

Here is a message, based on Nanakian Philosophy, from Guru Arjan, which can be widely accepted by the whole humanity of Current Science Age:

ਆਗਾਹਾ¹ ਕੂ ਤ੍ਰਾਪਿ² ਪਿਛਾ³ ਫੇਰਿ ਨ ਮੁਹਡੜਾ⁴ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਸਿਝਿ⁵ ਇਵੇਹਾ⁶ ਵਾਰ ਬਹੁੜਿ⁷ ਨ ਹੋਵੀ ਜਨਮੜਾ⁸
 ॥ 1 ॥

Nanak says: "Think² about the future¹, look not on the past³ over the shoulders⁴. Make⁵ the present life⁶ a great success because there is no birth⁸ again⁷." AGGS, M 5, p 1096.

This verse clearly indicates that there is no life after death. Since this is the only life, therefore, try to get best use of this life for uplift of the humanity, including you.

CONCLUSIONS

I have tried to demonstrate that Nanakian

Philosophy has universal acceptability. Similarly, if the representatives of other religions put forward their principles for the evaluation of their universal acceptability by the Joint Committee of representatives of all the religions, then the representatives of all the religions should sit together to recommend universally acceptable ethics to be followed by the whole humanity. This would be first great step forward to the establishment of fellowship of the humanity by resolving our differences and hatred then peace can easily be established on this Earth. Ultimately it would result in reduction of the expenditure on arms race. The savings thus accrued could be spent on science and religion to exploit their potentials for the welfare of the humanity. Consequently, the humanity can easily be saved from its extinction from the atomic warfare and can live peacefully forever.

REFERENCES

1. AGGS = Aad Guru Granth Sahib. 1983 (reprint). Publishers: Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar. (M = Mahla, i.e., succession number of the Sikh Gurus to the House of Guru Nanak, p = Page of the AGGS).
2. Bachan, G. S. 1985. Theo-Cosmo evolutionary concept: A new interpretation of Japji Sahib. *J. Sikh Studies*. 12 (11): 1-24.
3. Barrier, N. Gerald. 2002. Guest Editorial: Kala September – Crisis and Response among American Sikhs. *Understanding Sikhism Res. J.* 4 (1): 6, 7, & 9.
4. Blanchfield, Mike. 2000. Genetic map ‘a day for the ages’. *The Gazette*, Montreal, June 27, 2000.
5. Chahal, D. S. 2002. Editorial: Religions and World Peace: Mistaken Identity, Recognized Identity, and Similar Identity. *Understanding Sikhism Res. J.* 4 (1): 3-5.
6. Chahal, D. S. 2008. Nanakian Philosophy: The Term Defined. In Chahal, D. S. 2008. *Nanakian Philosophy: Basics for Humanity*. Institute for Understanding Sikhism, Laval, Quebec, Canada. Distributors: Singh Brothers, Amritsar. Pp 43-54.
7. Hinnells, John R. and King, Richard (eds.). 2007. *Religion and Violence in South Asia: Theory and Practice*. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, London and New York.
8. Hoodbhoy, Parvez. 2001. *The Dawn*, Karachi, October 10, 11.
9. Kant, Immanuel. 1999. 'Toward Perpetual Peace' in *Practical Philosophy-Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*. Gregor MJ (trans.). Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. 1999. p329 (8:358).
10. Pollard, Kathrine S. What makes us human? <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=what-makes-us-huma>
11. Reader's Digest History of Man: The Last Two Million Years. The Reader's Digest Assoc., Montreal, 1973.
12. Reeves, Hubert. 1985. Life on other planets? Of course. (An interview with Reeves Hubert), (Reader's Digest, June 1988, Canadian Edition) From *Le Nouvel Observation*. Sept. 22-Oct. 3, 1985.
13. <http://www.washington.edu/news/2003archive/01-03archive/k011303a.html> Vince Stricherz (206-543-2580): vince@u.washington.edu
14. Why Religious Literacy is important in Today's World - An International Symposium for Educators, Scholars and policy makers was held at Moyse Hall, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada on October 2, 2009.

***Paper presented at the Council of Parliament of World Religions Conference held at Melbourne, Australia on December 3-9, 2009.**

I HAVE NO RELIGION My Journey of Finding Guru Nanak (1469-1539)

The One and Only

[Editorial from the Sikh Bulletin March-April 2015]

Peace on Earth will not prevail until all the manmade Religions and their Gods are DEAD and mankind learns to live within Hukam.

First time I said that was at age twelve. Fifty years later, when a responsibility to operate a Gurdwara was thrust upon me, I tried my best to become a Gursikh; but eighteen years into that effort made me realize that a Gursikh has no place in Sikhism. That was a great disappointment but not for long because I soon discovered that I was in excellent company of no other than Guru Nanak himself, the One and Only gift of the Creator to mankind, and under whose name Sikhism as a religion is being touted.

Truth is that Guru Nanak rejected the existing three **Semitic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam)** and three **Indian religions of his time (Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism)** and **their Gods** and he was not about to start a yet another religion to add to them. Religions divide people whereas Guru Nanak was a uniter who devoted his entire life to make mankind realize that humanity is One.

His **first** pronouncement to this effect came upon his return from across the **Vein River** that oral tradition quotes him uttering his first words as **“Na Ko Hindu Na Mussalman”**; **(there is neither a Hindu nor a Muslim)**, meaning we are all members of the human family. His **second** pronouncement came during his visit to Mecca during his dialogue with Qazi Ruknuddin when Guru Nanak was found sleeping with his feet towards Kaaba. To Qazi Ruknuddin’s question to Guru Nanak about his religion the Guru responded, **“I am a man of The Creator, and belong to no religion”**. The **third** pronouncement is by **Fifth Nanak, Guru Arjan**, on p.1136 of Adi Granth, **“Na Ham Hindu Na Mussalman’ (We are neither Hindus nor Muslims)**. He is using plural ‘WE’ because by this time the number of people believing in teachings of Guru Nanak had become substantial and distinct enough group to be reckoned by the state. **Note that he does not say ‘We the Sikhs’**.

However, Guru Nanak was not the first person to reject religion as an institution. **Rumi (1207-**

1273), a 13th-century Persian poet, jurist, Islamic scholar, theologian, and Sufi mystic who inherited and expanded a centre for Sufism in **Konya in Turkey** wrote: **“I’m not from the East or the West. I’m not Christian or Jew or Muslim. I’m not Hindu, Buddhist, Sufi or Zen. I don’t belong to any established religion or any cultural system. I’m neither body nor soul, for I belong to the Soul of my beloved.”**

Hardev Singh Shergill

**FINDING GURU NANAK
(1469-1539)
THE ONE & ONLY
MY JOURNEY**
Hardev Singh Shergill



Hardev Singh Shergill, Publisher of the Sikh Bulletin at Calgary, Alberta, Canada Conference on April 11, 2015.

My journey began on January 3rd 1934 at my Nanke village Sakruli of Hoshiarpur District of Panjab, India, in the same house where my mother was born. Born into a khande-di-pahul dhari Sikh household, I had turned agnostic by the time I turned twelve. Being educated in a Hindi medium state, my mother had taught me Gurmukhi at home when I was in 3rd grade. For practice I read my

father's books, among them *Bale-dian-Sakhian* and *Bachittar Natak*.

Although village Gurdwara always had a resident Granthi, my father used to perform all the religious services such as monthly Sangrands, Gurpurabs, weddings etc. I grew up knowing people addressing him as Giani Ji. So I had a fair understanding that Sikh faith started with Guru Nanak, followed by nine other Gurus who were considered Guru Nanak's jyote and that the tenth Guru declared an end to bodily Guru and assigned Guruship to Adi Granth now called Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

I did not believe a word in those two books.

Most galling thing I remember is the writer taking us for fools, when talking about God coming to Guru Gobind Singh while he was doing tapasya at Hemkunt in his previous life and wanting to send him to earth (*maatloke*) to save the mankind. Two questions arose in my ten year old mind: Hemkunt was already on this earth in Himalayas, so Guru Gobind Singh was already on this earth. Secondly, if this Guru was to be deputed by God to save the humanity then which God had sent Guru Nanak, ten generations earlier, whose message Guru Gobind Singh was propagating?

For 5th grade I was sent to a boarding school. Since English in Bikaner State started in 3rd grade and village teachers knew no English, the curriculum for the grades 1 to 5 had two streams, one for village schools and another for city schools. Village 4th grade pass students were enrolled in a class called Special Class in which they studied only English; grade 3 and 4 English during the first half of the year and grade 5 English during second half. Other 5th grade city subjects were mastered in the 3rd and 4th grades of village schools. So I had plenty of time in my 5th grade to read all the Hindu granths in the middle school library, including **Mahabharat and Ramayan**.

My strongest memory from all that reading is the wonderment in my mind about God. Any time a tapasvee had done enough tapasya to reach God, God would send an Apasra (I called them heavenly prostitutes) and the poor tapasvee would fall from grace. To a twelve year old there was no difference between Hinduism and Sikhism. I turned agnostic, although I did not know this term then. I just could not see any difference between Hinduism and Sikhism nor could I believe in God that seemed the same in both the religions.

Gurbani stresses '*bibek-budhi*'. I did not know it then but I was unconsciously using it when I rejected what I read in *Bale-dian-Sakhian*, *Bachittar Natak*, and *Hindu Granths* by the ripe old age of twelve.

I was not confused; I was turned off religion.

Any lingering doubts were cleared by the 1947 riots in India and Pakistan which preceded the partition in the Punjab region in the west and Bengal on the east; between 200,000 to 500,000 people were killed in the retributive genocide in the name of religion. Estimated 14 million Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims were displaced during the partition. The home land of two communities with same history, language and culture, who had lived in harmony for centuries, Bengal in the east and Panjab in the west, were dismembered with a pen into two. It was the largest [mass migration](#) in human history.

The only reason for this partition of a country was religion.

I had no use for any religion. During my seven years of university education in Panjab where I received my Masters and Bachelor of Education degrees and three years of teaching in Panjab and Delhi, I visited no Gurdwara, other than Gurdwara Sis Ganj in New Delhi, once, for its historical interest, where Muslim Mughal rulers had put to death 9th Nanak, Guru Tegh Bahadur, for purely religious reasons.

Around age sixty, under the influence of Hindu granths read in my childhood and having helped raise my younger siblings and my own children I wanted to do something for the community that I was born into. But I could never have dreamt what a traumatic experience that desire would put me through. Gurdwaras do not do what I wanted to do but I was introduced to a Sant Baba who turned out to be a world class con artist, scoundrel and a sociopath.

After acquiring the Gurdwara building through Court Order in April 1996 and learning the meaning of the Commencing Verse of Adi Granth in English I said to myself that **Guru Nanak's 'God' I could believe in** because it was not human at all. In fact the verse says clearly that Ek Onkar is Nirbhau, Nirvair, Akaal Murat, Ajuni, all the attributes that humans don't possess. To the best of my understanding Guru Nanak's 'God' was some mysterious and all powerful (Shakti) ENERGY, mother of all the forces, that cannot be described and there was only one of its kind and self-created.

I could not bring myself to run this Gurdwara as the other Gurdwaras were run. I wanted to understand what entire Adi Granth meant. I searched for and met some practicing Sikhs; but they were so few. In 2002 we started a Sikhi Reform movement as was the case with Singh Sabha movement during the British occupation of Panjab. Year 2004 was the second most audacious attempt when Prof. Gurtej Singh and I went around the world for six weeks and held six major and three minor conferences in six countries, Malaysia, Australia, Canada, USA, UK and India. All that came to naught when the Amritsar, Panjab based Sikh religious establishment first tried desperately to deny us a venue for the 2003 conference in Chandigarh. We had to obtain a court order to hold our conference, less than 24 hours hence. The judge had to hold court in his house on Diwali day, Saturday, before our Sunday conference to reinstate our third venue.

October 2003 conference report appears in December 2003 issue of The Sikh Bulletin. Please go to www.sikhbulletin.com

Report on 2004 conferences was published in November-December 2004 Sikh Bulletin. Please go to www.sikhbulletin.com

By the time I came back home from the 2003 conference two weeks later, there was a new Gurdwara in our vicinity, established on short order and with three year lease at \$8,300.00 per month. Upon return home after six worldwide conferences in 2004 I found that the 2003 Gurdwara had split into two, a very common occurrence in the history of Gurdwaras in North America. The second group was paying over \$5,000.00 monthly rent. I was charging no rent for the 7,900.00 square foot building being used as Sikh Center, Roseville, California.

By this time we had banned from our Gurdwara everything from Dasam Granth, including three khande-di-pahul banis and beloved Chaupai, dropped Bhagauti from Ardas, adopted Nanakshahi calendar before SGPC or Akal Takhat approved it and best of all stopped the practice of Akhandpaths.

We closed doors on Vaisakhi day in 2005 for lack of sangat.

Seventy years later I have not only come full circle but also gone beyond. **I have now become a confirmed Atheist.**

Or am I a Deist?

I came across '**Deist**' term only in January 2015 when I was reading '**Nanak: The Guru**', published by the **Institute for Understanding Sikhism** for publication in Jan-Feb 2015 issue of the Sikh Bulletin. This publication is authored by Dr. Devinder Singh Chahal, Dr. Kulbir Singh Thind and Dr. A. S. Dhaliwal and **edited by Jesse Schell of New Zealand.**

I first got to know Jesse in January 2014 when he wrote to me for some issues of The Sikh

Bulletin. It turned out that he had been studying all the world's religions and lately had come upon Sikhism on the internet. What he found on the internet about Sikhism was very confusing and contradictory. Then he had a brilliant idea. He googled 'heretic Sikh' and found The Sikh Bulletin and me. He started reading The Sikh Bulletin from its first issue on the internet but soon learned what to skip. Correspondence between us then commenced in earnest.

He came across to me as someone with very keen and inquiring mind and I felt an immediate kinship with him. We seemed to hold some very similar views. **Inquiring mind is what Guru Nanak preached in his hymns.**

Guru Nanak practiced what he preached. He critiqued religious philosophy of Hindus and Muslims and rejected their concepts of Gods and religions unequivocally.

It was in the write up about Jesse in 'Nanak: The Guru' (Published in the January-February 2015 issue of The Sikh Bulletin) that I came to read, "He now describes himself as a secular humanist with Deist leanings." That sent me immediately to the dictionary because this term was new to me.

It struck me that **Guru Nanak**, as I have understood, was definitely not an atheist but the term 'secular humanist with Deist leanings' could be applied to him and he certainly was the first **Deist without any religious connotations, two centuries before it emerged in Europe.**

Deism is a theological position concerning the relationship between "the Creator" and the **natural world.** Deistic viewpoints emerged during the **scientific revolution** of 17th-century Europe and came to exert a powerful influence during the eighteenth century enlightenment.

"Deism combines a rejection of religious knowledge as a source of authority with the conclusion that **reason** and **observation** of the **natural world** are sufficient to determine the existence of a **single creator** of the **universe.**"

For Deists, human beings can only know God via reason and the observation of nature, but not by revelation or supernatural manifestations (such as miracles).

- Creator exists and created the universe.
- Creator gave humans the ability to **reason.**

It was the use of reason and observation that led Guru to write:

ਧਵਲੈ ਉਪਰਿ ਕੇਤਾ ਭਾਰੁ ॥

Dhavlai upar ketā bhār.

ਧਰਤੀ ਹੇਰੁ ਪਰੈ ਹੇਰੁ ਹੇਰੁ ॥

Dhartī hor parai hor hor.

ਤਿਸ ਤੇ ਭਾਰੁ ਤਲੈ ਕਵਣੁ ਜੇਰੁ ॥

Tis te bhār talai kavan jor.

What a great load there is on the bull!

There are countless earths beyond this earth.

What power holds them, and supports their weight? AGGS M1, p 3

Hindu philosophy believed that earth is supported by a mythical bull. Whenever that bull shifts the weight of the earth from one horn to the other, earthquakes result. But Guru says this is not the only earth. There are countless earths. What power supports their weight?

He then answers his own question:

ਹੁਕਮੈ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਭੁ ਕੇ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਹੁਕਮ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥

Everything is subject to the Laws of Nature; nothing is beyond the Laws of Nature.

AGGS M1, p 1

ਸੈਲ ਪਥਰ ਮਹਿ ਜੰਤ ਉਪਾਏ ਤਾ ਕਾ ਰਿਜਕੁ ਆਗੈ ਕਰਿ

ਧਰਿਆ ॥੧॥

The Creator provides sustenance for every form of life it created in water, on earth and even inside the rocks.

That was Guru Nanak's message two hundred years before the term Deist was coined. If he

were born in Europe every one now would know about him. In the Indian sub-continent every new philosophy is, sooner or later, smothered under the shade of Brahmanical tree. That is what happened to Buddhism and now it is Sikhism's turn. Even Islam got brahmanized. Three countries of the Indian Sub-Continent, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, that were one country until 1947, are the only examples in the world where Muslims practice caste system.

I came across a book on Buddhism in a Singapore hotel room. As I read it I was surprised how close to Guru Nanak's philosophy it was until I got through halfway. Then suddenly it made an about face and became Vedantic philosophy that Sikhism has become.

Guru Nanak says there is no heaven or hell after life. We make our life heaven or hell by our own actions and any punishment or reward that is due to us is given during our mortal stay on Earth.

“Deism holds that God does not intervene with the functioning of the natural world in any way, allowing it to run according to the laws of nature.

How similar it is to my **SB May-June 2012 editorial: “Guru Nanak’s God is bountiful God of the entire universe and all the creation in it. It does not micro manage Its Creation; nor It applies its laws selectively.**

This similarity between my editorial and Deism belief has another companion:

“Once I understood God as described by Guru Nanak I had no problem accepting it. My beef was with the God/Gods of all the other religions that laid claim to divine revelation and proclaimed man to be created in the image of God. In reality what they have done is create

God in the image of man. [SB Sept-Oct 2011 Editorial]

We had started publishing chapters from Dr. Devinder Singh Chahal's book “**Nankian Philosophy: Basics for Humanity**” starting with the November-December 2011 issue of the Sikh Bulletin. In the March-April 2012 issue we were going to publish Chapter 12 ‘**Concept of God**’. In preparation for that I decided to look for a book on evolution of the concept of God. The book that I chose to read on this subject was “**The Evolution of God**” by **Robert Wright**, published in June 2009 by Little, Brown and Company. This book put into words my thoughts that I had developed over time. **It was also gratifying to learn that I shared a basic belief with Aristotle. “According to the book of Genesis, God created man in his own image, but according to Aristotle, men create gods after their own image.”**

God and religion are the two worst farces ever committed on mankind.

Religions cannot be reformed and that includes Sikhism. Martin Luther (1483-1546), a contemporary of Guru Nanak and, some even think they met, tried to reform Christianity. Result is Catholic Church just as strong but Protestant Churches have multiplied.

Maryada Dilemma

Mr. Gurbachan Singh Tohra, President of Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak for a quarter century, was once asked by the Sikh ladies from the United States why women are not allowed to do sewa at Darbar Sahib. His answer was that sewa by men only had become a tradition. Fact that he was administering the affairs of the institution established to perpetuate the teachings of a person who had rejected all the traditions of the religion and society he was born into was inconsequential.

Maryadas (established traditions) that Guru Nanak rejected:

Guru Nanak was born into a Hindu household but with that faith Sikhism shares almost nothing, not even the concept of One God. At a very young age Nanak refused to wear the janeu (Hindu sacred thread worn by high caste males); discarded the caste system (a religiously sanctioned discrimination still entrenched in the 21st century democratic India); preached against idol worship; recognized the equality of mankind; asserted the equality of men and women; condemned the Hindu practice of *Sati* (live immolation of widow on her husband's funeral pyre); instructed the women to discard veil; allowed widow and widower remarriage; rejected the then prevalent concepts of *karma*, after life salvation, *tapasya*, heaven and hell (after death), incarnation, 84 lakh juni (8,400,000 life forms) *yatra* to holy places, fasting, multiple gods and goddesses; and of course, unique only to Sikhism, wished '*sarbat da bhala*' (wishing well being of all, not just of oneself, one's own family or one's own country) in his prayers.

His was a faith of Secular Humanism and is a faith for this Scientific Age.

Gurbani has nothing comparable to **Ten Commandments or Sharia law**. Instead the Guru simply says:

- 1. Do not commit an act that you will later regret and;**
- 2. Do not eat or drink that is unhealthy for your body and mind.**

In both cases Guru wants you to use your **bibek-budhi** (discerning mind) that evolution has equipped you with.

Origins of religion:

Religion was created to bring order to the social organization in the absence of secular codes of conduct and means to enforce their implementation. God did not appear on Mount Sinai to Moses (1391–1271 BCE). Moses himself

chiseled the Ten Commandments on a slab of stone to put fear of God to control the desperate and increasingly unruly people.

Ten Commandments

1. I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt have no other gods before me
2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain
4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy
5. Honour thy father and thy mother
6. Thou shalt not kill
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery
8. Thou shalt not steal
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour
10. Thou shalt not covet (neighbor's house, wife, servants, animals, or anything else)

Moses's flock believed in multiple Gods, made their idols, showed no respect to their elders, engaged in murderous and immoral acts, stole, lied, practiced slavery and were treating all women as personal property, not as equal humans.

One does not need God to come up with the above commandments. In today's society they are common sense. But they do tell a great deal about that society. They show the social mindset of those people at that time that was very destructive to the fabric of the society.

They worshipped multiple Gods and their idols, their living was not truthful, and they showed disrespect to their elders, engaged in murder and took by force or stealth what was not their own, a lawless group of people.

They also held other humans as slaves and treated their women as property as they would their house, servants, animals, or anything else. So Moses invoked God.

That is what religion does, puts fear of God in people's minds to control their behaviour.

Evolution of God and religion also came in handy for the powerful to stay powerful and for ambitious and charismatic characters like Joseph Smith, Jr. (1805 – 1844), the founder of [Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](#). Like Mohammed he too was led to God's word by an Angel, Gabriel for former and Moroni for the latter, and if God was accessible to Moses and Mohammed then why not to Joseph Smith and he got witnesses to prove it although they would not have witnessed anything.

Today there are plentiful Evangelical Christian preachers who claim to have been commandeered by God himself to do His work.

Human nature, governed by evolution, being the same prompted the Shamans, Medicine men, Chiefs and Kings, from the Pharaohs to rulers of more recent times and some even today, with their divine right to rule, to use religion and God to perpetuate their special and superior status. Kings of Egypt, Mayan Kings and more recently English Kings claimed to be the sole agents of the Gods. Henry VIII in England dissolved the monasteries and abbeys of Roman Catholic Church in 1536 and set the Anglican Church apart from the Roman Catholic Church. Constantine the Great (272-337) became the first Roman Emperor (306-307) to convert to Christianity that his predecessors persecuted because it suited his political ambitions. Mohammed was a political ruler. His moral compass made necessary adjustments depending upon the circumstances.

Beginning of **monotheism** is generally attributed to **Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.**

But here is an interesting point to ponder.

The concept of Indo-European Languages, and therefore people, is well accepted. This is the largest language family group with three billion

speakers. Of the [twenty languages with the largest numbers of native speakers](#) twelve are Indo-European, English and Punjabi among them. Take the English word **CREATOR** and Punjabi word **KARTAR** that Guru Nanak used to address 'God'. Word sounds come from consonants. So when we remove the vowels from both of these words we are left with **C R T R** and **K R T R**. Now C and K in English produce the same sound unless they are followed by letter H which is not the case here. Would it be a stretch to suggest that perhaps, at least among the Indo European speaking people, monotheism preceded the concept of multiple Gods? It is very tempting to have exclusively your own God. In ancient Israel each city state had its own Yahweh until the most powerful tribe's Yahweh triumphed over the other weaker Yahwehs.

It might not be too far out to speculate that the Indo-European people, before they spread to the present geographical expanse from British Isles through Europe and Iran to the Indian sub-continent, developed the concept of a single Creator but as the time went on it evolved into multiple private single Gods.

The man first showed his audacity by first creating a God and then having that God create man in HIS image.

I strongly believe that Guru Nanak discarded the concept of religion and God as preached by all the prevalent religions. If Guru Nanak were to be here today he will surely say he is neither Hindu, nor Muslim nor Sikh or any of the Semitic religions.

Oral tradition has it that when Guru Nanak received his enlightenment, when he had disappeared across the Vein River for three days of intense introspection, the first words he uttered were 'Na Ko Hindu Na Mussalman'.

Guru Nanak had come to the conclusion that root cause of all the conflict in the society, which in his time consisted of two majority

religions, Hinduism and Islam, was the religion. To Guru Nanak religion was a divisive force, each with its own God; whereas he wanted his mission to bring people together, unite humanity, because we are all children of One Creator.

Syed Mushtaq Hussain, a young man from Kashmir, had been left behind in Mecca to study Quran for a period of three years from 1927 to 1930 by his parents during a Hajj pilgrimage. There this young man came across two manuscripts, one by **Taajudin Naqshabandhi**, who had joined Guru Nanak and remained with him for roughly one-and-a-half to two years and **Khwaja Jainul Abdin**, the author of *Tarikhe Arab*, who wrote the first-person account of Guru Nanak Dev ji's Arabian journey.

During Guru Nanak's visit to Mecca, **Qazi Ruknuddin** was among the first batch of Muslims who had extensive dialogue with him. After the incident in which Nanak was found sleeping with his feet pointing in the "wrong" direction, several Hajjis or pilgrims to Mecca-Medina gathered around Guru Nanak, seeking a dialogue: In his Arabic book, *Tarikhe Arab*, **Khwaja Jainul Abdin** writes, "I was with Guru Nanak Dev Ji when Guru Ji met **Qazi** (an Islamic religious judge) **Rukn-ud-din**." As they came face-to-face **Rukn-ud-din** offered his Salam, and the Guru replied, "Sat Shri Akal, Gurbar Akal" (The Lord immortal is the sole truth; the all-powerful timeless God).

Qazi Ruknuddin then asked Nanak:
"Fala Allah mazabo"? (What is your religion?)

To that Guru Nanak responded:
"Abdulla Allah la mazaboo" (I am a man of God and belong to no religion.)

"This was one of some 360 questions and answers from Guru Nanak's dialogues during his Middle-East Visit."

This response by Guru Nanak reminded me of a similar utterance I heard in a scene of a play, '**Bulleshah**' (1680-1757) performed in Chandigarh by a Pakistani group in 2004. Two of his disciples were accosted by the religious police while eating during daylight during the month of Ramadan. When asked what religion they belonged to they had responded that they were Muslims. **Bulleshah** told them that with their response they asked for that treatment because a Muslim is not supposed to eat during the day time during the month of Ramadan fasting; that their answer should have been 'we are men of God'.

The incident in which Nanak was found sleeping with his feet pointing in the "wrong" direction i.e. towards Kaaba, is illustrative of Guru's unique method of getting his message across.

Appearing at Hardwar where Hindus were performing the ritual of throwing water up towards the sun in the east for their deceased ancestors, instead of questioning them, Guru waded into the Ganges and started throwing water towards the west. When they questioned him he nonchalantly replied that he was watering his fields in Panjab. When they questioned what made him think his water would get there his response was a teaching moment. If their water could reach their deceased ancestors in another world his could certainly reach another place on this world.

Compare this with similar incident involving St. Thomas, one of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus, who founded the first Christian church in India, in A.D. 52, at Parur, Kerala, on the west coast of southern India:

"At Palayur Church in Guruvayur, Kerala, Thomas is said to have raised the first cross in India and performed one of his earliest miracles: When he encountered a group of Brahmans throwing water into the air as part of a ritual, he asked why the water fell back to earth if it was pleasing to their deity. My God, Thomas said,

would accept such an offering. He then flung a great spray into the air, and the droplets hung there in the form of glistening white blossoms. Most onlookers converted on the spot; the rest fled.” [From the National Geographic March 2012 p52]

Guru Nanak's mission was to spread the message of common origins and brotherhood of mankind and importance of truthful living. *Truth is higher than everything; but higher still is truthful living.* //5// AGGS, M 1, p 62. Religions can be changed, voluntarily or by inducements as in Christianity and by the sword as in Islam, but truthful living does not have to change with change in faith.

I firmly believe that Guru Nanak and Guru Granth are not for starting a new religion. Sikhism is a way of life. Whereas religions compartmentalize people, Sikhism breaks those barriers. An excellent example of that is the incorporation of writings of both Hindus and Muslims that are compatible with gurbani.

It is true that the Christian Bible incorporates the Old Testament, the Jewish scripture, and Mohammed accepted the Jewish and Christian prophets; but that is all among the one family of Semitic people who shared common origins, culture and history. Christ himself was a Jew. His was a crusade for reform in the practice of Jewish faith that had come to be controlled by the Temple Priests.

It was the rejection of Christ by the establishment Judaism that gave an impetus to what came to be known as Christianity. Islam, on the other hand, was an alien faith in the Indian sub-continent, with no common history or bond with the native religions of India. But Guru Nanak found fellow interpreters of Koran among Muslims and incorporated their writings to reinforce his views which had universal application.

The strongest evidence of Guru Nanak's aversion towards religion is found on P. 1136 of AGGS.

ਨਾ ਹਮ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਨ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ॥

Nā am Hindū nā Musalmān.

We are neither Hindus, nor Muslims. AGGS M5, p 1136

To fully understand the immense significance of the above quote the entire hymn is reproduced below:

ਵਰਤ¹ ਨ ਰਹਉ² ਨ ਮਹ ਰਮਦਾਨ³ ॥

ਤਿਸੁ⁴ ਸੇਵੀ⁵ ਜੇ ਰਖੈ ਨਿਦਾਨ⁶ ॥੧॥

ਏਕੁ⁷ ਗੁਸਾਈ⁸ ਅਲਹੁ⁹ ਮੇਰਾ ॥

ਹਿੰਦੂ¹⁰ ਤੁਰਕ¹¹ ਦੁਹਾਂ ਨੇਬੇਰਾ¹² ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

ਹਜ¹³ ਕਾਬੈ ਜਾਉ ਨ ਤੀਰਥ¹⁴ ਪੂਜਾ¹⁵ ॥

ਏਕੇ ਸੇਵੀ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਦੂਜਾ ॥੨॥

ਪੂਜਾ ਕਰਉ ਨ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਗੁਜਾਰਉ¹⁶ ॥

ਏਕ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ¹⁷ ਲੇ ਰਿਦੈ¹⁸ ਨਮਸਕਾਰਉ¹⁹ ॥੩॥

ਨਾ ਹਮ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਨ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ॥

ਅਲਹ ਰਾਮ ਕੇ ਪਿੰਡੁ²⁰ ਪਰਾਨ²¹ ॥੪॥

ਕਹੁ ਕਬੀਰ ਇਹੁ ਕੀਆ ਵਖਾਨਾ²² ॥

ਗੁਰ ਪੀਰ ਮਿਲਿ²³ ਖੁਦਿ²⁴ ਖਸਮੁ²⁵ ਪਛਾਨਾ ॥੫॥੩॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 5, ਪੰਨਾ 1136.

I do not practice² the fasts¹ (of Hindus), nor do I observe the month of Ramadaan³ (the Roza³). I serve⁵ only the One⁴, who protects all till the end of life⁶. 1.

My God is only One⁷, Who is called Gosain⁸ (by the Hindus) and Allah⁹ (by the Muslims). I have separated¹² myself from (religious practices) of them both, the Hindus¹⁰ and the Muslims¹¹. Pause.

I do not make pilgrimages¹³ to Mecca, nor do I worship¹⁵ at Hindu sacred shrines¹⁴. 4.

I serve no other than the Only One. 2.

I do not perform Hindu worship, nor do I offer¹⁶

the Muslim prayers.

I have understood in my mind¹⁸ and pay my
obeisance¹⁹ to the One, the Formless¹⁷. 3.

We are neither Hindus, nor Muslims.

My body²⁰ and life²¹ belong to the One (who is)
Allah (for Muslims) and Ram (for Hindus). 4.

Oh Kabir! This is what I say²²:

That the one-self²⁴ can realize²⁶ the God²⁵
through Guru - Pir (Spiritual Teacher)²³. 5. 3.

AGGS, M 5, p 1136.

Quotes above are from the Bani of Fifth Nanak, Guru Arjan Dev Ji. Guru Ji is stressing that whole Human Race is one big Family. He is expressing, succinctly, the views of Guru Nanak. When he started compiling the Adi Granth he had access to all the writings of Guru Nanak that had survived the ravages of Gurus travels and time. Any hymn he found intact he recorded it in Adi Granth as Guru Nanak's bani but there was enough other material which could not be entered in a hymn format. Guru Arjan incorporated those views into his hymns. Then he set upon to select hymns that were collected by Guru Nanak from Hindu and Muslim bhagats that were compatible with Guru Nanak's views and incorporated them into Adi Granth. Adi Granth is the only scripture that incorporates writings from people professing other faiths.

Guru Nanak preached to his Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and Muslim audiences in India and the Middle East and to the Christian and Jewish audiences whom he must have come across during his visit to Mecca, Medina and Baghdad, that human race is one, created by the same Creator, out of the same elements. So why should there be any conflict based on manmade institution of religion? Scientific research on human origins confirms the same thing. In fact it even pin points origin of human race to an 'African Mother'.

During Guru Nanak's period his followers were identified as **Nanakpanthis**. But by the time of 3rd Nanak, Guru Amar Das, the word **Sikh**, from Sanskrit word 'Shishya' (Student) had crept into

the vocabulary just as 'Taliban' in Pashto in Afghanistan means student of Islam. [It is noteworthy that the Indian government, especially after 1984, tried to equate Sikhs, whom it does not even recognize as distinct from Hinduism in its Constitution, with Taliban as terrorists and even United States State Department succumbed to that trap by including several seconds of Indian army's attack on Darbar Sahib as an act to drive Sikh Terrorists' out in its post 9/11 video on terrorism distributed in nations' schools.]

Guru Nanak's concept of what other religions call 'God' in the opening verse of Adi Granth:

First three words of the Commencing Verse in Adi Granth, *Ek Onkar, Satnam, Karta purakh*, to me mean there is only one entity whose True Name is Karta purakh, The Creator that created Itself.

ੴ
ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ
ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

The opening verse of Guru Granth Sahib, shown above, is accepted as Guru Nanak's description or definition of God. English translation of the above verse by Manmohan Singh in 'Sri Guru Granth Sahib', published by Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee is as follows:

There is but one God. True is His name, creative His personality and immortal His form. He is without fear, sans enmity, unborn and self-illuminated. By the Guru's grace (He is obtained).

Dr. Devinder Singh Chahal's translation which prompted me to accept Guru Nanak's description of God back in 1999:

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ
ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

Ik oa'nkār saṭ nām kartā purakhḥ nirbhāṁo nirvair
akāl mūraṭ ajūnī saibhāṁ gur parsād.

*The One and Only, Oh the Infinite; Exists;
Creator; Without fear (Not governed by any other-*

Not under any Law of University); Without enmity; Timeless (Without effect of time and space); Neither takes birth nor dies; (Never comes into any anthropomorphic form); Created by Itself; Enlightener; and Bounteous.

My definition as published in the January-February 2015 issue of the Sikh Bulletin:

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ

ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

Ik oa'nkār sat nām kartā purakh nīrbha'o nīrvair akāl mūrati ajūnī saibha'n gur parsād.

There is One and Only, a Singular Reality, whose True Name is The Creator, that created Itself; It has no human attributes such as fear, enmity, limited life span, an image and therefore it does not communicate with the Prophets directly or through others, as the Semitic religions claim, nor does it incarnate as a human as Hinduism claims. IT can only be comprehended through knowledge.

What does it really mean? What does it describe? Certainly it is not anything akin to a human. It is formless and timeless and yet is self-existent. It does not incarnate in any human or other form.

In the commencing line of 'Jap' that immediately follows the above opening verse the Guru doubles down. He unequivocally reasserts his firm belief that what he is saying is an absolute truth.

ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ ॥

ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥੧॥

True In The Primal Beginning. True Throughout The Ages. True Here And Now. O Nanak, Forever And Ever True. ||1|| AGGS M1 p1

It was there before the Creation, at the time of Creation, now and it will be there in the future, for ever and ever. It was there when there was sunn, nothingness. Out of this nothingness It created the cosmos, in an instant.

There is a single English word that describes what Guru is saying and that word is *ENERGY*.

Guru Nanak is quite certain that 'God' is a singularity, unlike Hindu or Christian Trinity, and says its true name is **Creator**. It is the Creator of everything, visible and invisible. It created itself but unlike its creation It is timeless and formless.

But then he mentions two attributes that are purely human, fear and enmity, but says God does not show either. Then why mention it unless Guru Nanak also wishes man to aspire to be God like. If one treats others as he would like to be treated then there would be no enmity. **If there is no enmity, there is no hostility and fear will disappear.** That is a strong indication of life course that Guru Nanak would like us to follow.

Origin of Universe according to Guru Nanak:

ਕੀਤਾ ਪਸਾਉ ਏਕੇ ਕਵਾਉ ॥

ਤਿਸ ਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਲਖ ਦਰੀਆਉ ॥

The universe exploded from one source of energy (One - Singularity) and started to expand. Thereafter many things appeared. AGGS, Jap 16, p 3.

Does that sound like 'Big Bang' theory? Yet we do not perceive Guru Nanak as a scientist but we do consider his contemporary, **Copernicus**, as a scientist. Alfred Wegener published his Theory of Continental Drift in 1912 but he was not believed because he was unable to provide a convincing explanation for the physical processes which might have caused this drift. But he was right nevertheless. **Similarly Guru Nanak was right about the origin of universe. It took only 500 years for the 'scientists' to propose that theory.**

Not only that, Guru Nanak also says that everything that has been created will die including this universe, only Creator never dies:

The Cosmos has coalesced and reformed several times according to the *Hukam*:

ਕਈ ਬਾਰ ਪਸਰਿਓ ਪਸਾਰ ॥
ਸਦਾ ਸਦਾ ਇਕੁ ਏਕੰਕਾਰ ॥

The Cosmos has coalesced and reformed several times but the Creator is eternal. AGGS, M 5, p. 276.

Long before the modern scientific thought developed Guru Nanak sowed the seeds of it in the opening verse of Guru Granth Sahib and the bani 'Jap' that follows it.

Evolution of Life!

The Cosmos is continuously evolving, be it the Earth and the life on it. Guru Nanak postulates that life evolved in water and water is essential for the survival of life:

ਸਾਚੇ ਤੇ ਪਵਨਾ ਭਇਆ ਪਵਨੈ ਤੇ ਜਲੁ ਹੋਇ ॥
ਜਲ ਤੇ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣੁ ਸਾਜਿਆ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਮੋਇ ॥

The True One created the air; air produced water and it is water wherein evolved the world of life with Cosmic-consciousness (God-consciousness). AGGS, M 1, p. 19.

Similarly Guru Nanak turned the Hindu concept of transmigration into '**Origin of Species**' attributed to **Charles Darwin**, 400 years after Guru Nanak.

Homo sapiens evolved through countless forms of life like other species - ants, worms, moths, fish, elephants, deer, snakes and domestic animals like horses and bullocks - starting from inanimate matter, the basic elements. Moreover, he goes on to say that basic elements were recycled as inanimate matter like rocks and mountains before

the creation of the "building blocks of life" for the evolution of a living cell:

ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਭਏ ਕੀਟ ਪਤੰਗਾ ॥
ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਗਜ ਮੀਨ ਕੁਰੰਗਾ ॥
ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਪੰਖੀ ਸਰਪ ਹੋਇਓ ॥
ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਹੈਵਰ ਬ੍ਰਿਖ ਜੋਇਓ ॥
ਮਿਲੁ ਜਗਦੀਸ ਮਿਲਨ ਕੀ ਬਰੀਆ
ਚਿਰੰਕਾਲ ਇਹ ਦੇਹ ਸੰਜਰੀਆ ॥ ਰਹਾਓ ॥
ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਸੈਲ ਗਿਰਿ ਕਰਿਆ ॥
ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਗਰਭ ਹਿਰਿ ਖਰਿਆ ॥
ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਸਾਖ ਕਰਿ ਉਪਾਇਆ ॥
ਲਖ ਚਉਰਾਸੀਹ ਜੋਨਿ ਭ੍ਰਮਾਇਆ ॥

Many births (different evolutionary stages of life) created worm and insect. Many births created elephant, fish and deer. Many births created bird and snake. Many births created ox and horse, which are yoked. Similarly, it took a very long time for the human body to evolve through many evolutionary stages of life. Now is your time to meet the Master of the universe, the Creator. Pause. The matter constituting the human body was recycled many times as rocks and mountains. Many births resulted in abortion (defective mutations resulting in death of the species). Many births produced plant life. It took innumerable births to produce a human body. AGGS, M 5, p. 176.

The discovery of deoxyribonucleic acids (DNA) and the principle of the double helix have shown how self-regenerating molecular chains evolve naturally from nonliving matter.

Guru Nanak also postulated that there are other places with life in the cosmos:

ਜਲਿ ਥਲਿ ਜੀਆ ਪੁਰੀਆ ਲੋਆ ਆਕਾਰਾ ਆਕਾਰਾ ॥

There are living beings in water, on land and in the Cosmos. AGGS, M 1, p. 466.

To the above we should add that Guru Nanak was an *environmentalist* half a millennium ahead of his time.

ਪਵਣੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਪਾਈ ਪਿਤਾ ਮਾਤਾ ਧਰਤਿ ਮਹਤੁ ॥

*Air is like a Guru, water like a father and the Earth like the great mother (which provides all types of resources and food).
AGGS, M 1, p. 8.*

The quote above is taken from the article 'EARTH DAY, ਮਾਤਾ ਧਰਤਿ ਮਹਤੁ, EARTH, THE GREAT MOTHER' by Prof Devinder Singh Chahal.

The positions of Guru, Father and Mother are the most highly regarded in Indian culture. By associating those with the three most essential life support elements Guru Nanak wants people to show the same consideration to these elements as they do to the three human relationships. In other words, do nothing that will pollute them.

Guru Nanak's God is inside every living cell of our bodies. Truth be told that our bodies are made of stardust, as Carl Sagan would say, with a spark of the Creator. You may call it SOUL but it is not located in any specific part of the body; it permeates the body.

That is why Guru Nanak can say to a Muslim, and for that matter to an 'amritdhari' Sikh, that if you can see God in every face that in itself is your five daily prayers or recitation of five banis, respectively. In simplest language Guru Nanak's God is 'Mother of all the Forces of Nature'.

Yes, I do believe in God but only of Guru Nanak's and not of any other religion. **Most powerful instrument Guru Nanak had was his mind, bibek budhi.** Even most of our scientists are so hide bound as to ignore what should be obvious to them under the negative influences of their formative years.

I am told by one knowledgeable source that in Guru Nanak's time the greetings were 'Sat Kartar'. The fact that Guru Nanak named his

settlement **Kartar Pur**, the 'place to practice righteousness', further reinforces that and also the fact that he chose his own name for Bhagwan, Ishwer, Allah and God and that name was 'Karta Purakh'.

Guru says:

ਸੇ ਮੁਖੁ ਜਲਉ ਜਿਤੁ ਕਹਹਿ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਜੇਨੀ ॥੩॥

ਜਨਮਿ ਨ ਮਰੈ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਕਾ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਰਹਿਓ ਸਮਾਇ ॥੪॥੧॥

Let that mouth be burnt, which says that He is subject to birth. //3//

He is not born, and He does not die; He does not come and go in reincarnation.

The God of Nanak is pervading and permeating everywhere. //4//1// AGGS M5 P 1136.

What is Death?

Referring to death Guru asks what has died. Then he answers his own question; nothing has died. Body has simply gone back to its elements. The breath mixes with air, body becomes dust and the spark of ENERGY merges with the ENERGY.

I see seeds of $E=MC^2$:

The following quotes are from Dr. Baldev Singh's manuscript 'Nankian Philosophy (Gurmat): The Path of Enlightenment that we published in the January-February 2009 Sikh Bulletin:

ਦੇਹੀ ਮਾਟੀ ਬੋਲੈ ਪਉਣੁ॥
ਬੁਝੁ ਰੇ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਮੂਆ ਹੈ ਕਉਣੁ॥
ਮੂਈ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਬਾਦੁ ਅਹੰਕਾਰੁ॥
ਓਹ ਨ ਮੂਆ ਜੋ ਦੇਖਣਹਾਰੁ॥

The body is made of earth (various elements) and it is the air (breath) that keeps it alive. O wise one, then tell me who died because the body and the air it breathed are still here? It is consciousness that died along with disputes caused by egotistical pride, but the One (Creator) who takes care of all does not die. AGGS, M 1, p.

152.

The meaning of the four pithy verses becomes abundantly clear when we consider that God is both manifest as Cosmos and un-manifest as omnipresent Hukam. Death of the body affects only the manifest form of God - the matter (elements) that constitutes the body. The matter goes back to earth and is recycled to create new life. The Omnipresent One (Hukam), which operates in all living beings and pervades everywhere is Everlasting. It is remarkable that **Guru Nanak defines death as the loss of consciousness**, which is similar to the modern understanding of death, medically speaking. Cosmos is the manifest form of God, which is continuously changing, but it does not change in its total content.

Guru Arjan elaborates on this issue further. In the AGGS ghumar (potter), bhandra (pot) and miti (clay, earth) are used metaphorically for the Creator, being and the material that makes the being, respectively:

ਪਵਨੈ ਮਹਿ ਪਵਨੁ ਸਮਾਇਆ ॥
ਜੋਤੀ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਰਲਿ ਜਾਇਆ ॥
ਮਾਟੀ ਮਾਟੀ ਹੋਈ ਏਕ ॥
ਰੋਵਨਹਾਰੇ ਕੀ ਕਵਨ ਟੇਕ ॥
ਕਉਨੁ ਮੂਆ ਰੇ ਕਉਨੁ ਮੂਆ ॥
ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਮਿਲਿ ਕਰਹੁ ਬੀਚਾਰਾ ਇਹੁ ਤਉ ਚਲਤੁ ਭਇਆ ॥
ਰਹਾਉ ॥
ਅਗਲੀ ਕਿਛੁ ਖਬਰਿ ਨ ਪਾਈ ॥
ਰੋਵਨਹਾਰੁ ਭਿ ਉਠਿ ਸਿਧਾਈ ॥
ਭਰਮ ਮੋਹ ਕੇ ਬਾਂਧੇ ਬੰਧ ॥
ਸੁਪਨੁ ਭਇਆ ਭਖਲਾਏ ਅੰਧ ॥
ਇਹੁ ਤਉ ਰਚਨੁ ਰਚਿਆ ਕਰਤਾਰਿ ॥
ਆਵਤ ਜਾਵਤ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਅਪਾਰਿ ॥
ਨਹ ਕੋ ਮੂਆ ਨ ਮਰਣੈ ਜੋਗੁ ॥
ਨਹ ਬਿਨਸੈ ਅਬਿਨਾਸੀ ਹੋਗੁ ॥
ਜੋ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਹੁ ਸੋ ਇਹੁ ਨਾਹਿ ॥
ਜਾਨਣਹਾਰੇ ਕਉ ਬਲਿ ਜਾਉ ॥
ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਿ ਭਰਮੁ ਚੁਕਾਇਆ ॥

ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਮਰੈ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਜਾਇਆ ॥

After death air [breath] merges into air, light merges into light (consciousness is lost when Hukam stops operating in the body) and the earth (lifeless body) becomes one with earth. What support is there for the one who cries over this loss? Who has died? O' who has died? O' enlightened beings get-together and ponder over this question. This is indeed a puzzle! Pause. Without any information about what happened to the dead, the one who was crying also dies. The ignorant fools shackled by doubts and attachments babble about death as if dreaming. This world is the creation of the Creator (Hukam). Coming (birth) and going (death) is controlled by the infinite Hukam. No one dies as no one is capable of dying. The Eternal One does not perish. It is not what people think about "soul." I am awestruck by the one who understands this reality. Says Nanak, the Guru has dispelled my doubts. No one dies or no one comes and goes. AGGS, M 5, p. 885.

On Meat and Vegetables:

Addressing the High Caste Pandits who looked down on meat eaters the Guru says:

ਮਾਸੁ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਰਿ ਮੂਰਖੁ ਝਗੜੇ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਣੈ ॥
ਕਉਣੁ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਉਣੁ ਸਾਗੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ ਕਿਸੁ ਮਹਿ ਪਾਪ ਸਮਾਣੈ ॥
ਗੈਡਾ ਮਾਰਿ ਹੋਮ ਜਗ ਕੀਏ ਦੇਵਤਿਆ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੈ ॥
ਮਾਸੁ ਛੇਡਿ ਬੈਸਿ ਨਕੁ ਪਕੜਹਿ ਰਾਤੀ ਮਾਣਸ ਖਾਣੈ ॥
ਫੜੁ ਕਰਿ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਦਿਖਲਾਵਹਿ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਨਹੀ ਸੂਝੈ ॥
॥
.....
ਮਾਸਹੁ ਨਿੰਮੇ ਮਾਸਹੁ ਜੰਮੇ ਹਮ ਮਾਸੈ ਕੇ ਭਾਂਡੇ ॥
.....
ਜੀਅ ਜੰਤ ਸਭਿ ਮਾਸਹੁ ਹੋਏ ਜੀਇ ਲਇਆ ਵਾਸੇਰਾ ॥
.....

ਮਾਸਹੁ ਨਿੰਮੇ ਮਾਸਹੁ ਜੰਮੇ ਹਮ ਮਾਸੈ ਕੇ ਭਾਂਡੇ ॥

.....

ਮਾਸੁ ਪੁਰਾਣੀ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਤੇਬੀ॥ ਚਹੁ ਜੁਗਿ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਮਾਣਾ ॥

ਜਜਿ ਕਾਜਿ ਵੀਆਹਿ ਸੁਹਾਵੈ ਓਥੈ ਮਾਸੁ ਸਮਾਣਾ ॥

Only fools argue about flesh and meat, because of utter ignorance.

What is meat, and what is vegetable? What is sin in eating either? They are both made of the same ingredients.

It was the practice of the Hindu gods to kill the rhinoceros, and make a feast of the burnt offering. Those who renounce meat, and hold their noses when sitting near it, devour men at night. (Take advantage of poor and ignorant).

They practice hypocrisy, and make a show before other people, but they themselves are steeped in ignorance.

.....

In the flesh we are conceived, and in the flesh we are born; we are vessels of flesh.

.....

All beings and creatures are flesh; the soul has taken up its home in the flesh.

.....

In the flesh we are conceived, and in the flesh we are born; we are vessels of flesh.

.....

Meat is allowed in the Puraanas, meat is allowed in the Bible and the Koran. Throughout the four ages, meat has been consumed.

It is featured in sacred feasts and marriage festivities; meat is used in them.

Human race is one.

Quotes from Sri Guru Granth Sahib:

ਏਕੁ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਤੂ ਮੇਰਾ ਗੁਰ ਹਾਈ ॥

Ēk piṭā ekas ke ham bārik tū merā gur hāī.

The One God is our father; we are the children of the One God.

You are our Guru. AGGS M5, P 611

ਨਾ ਕੇ ਬੈਰੀ ਨਹੀ ਬਿਗਾਨਾ ਸਗਲ ਸੰਗਿ ਹਮ ਕਉ ਬਨਿ

ਆਈ ॥੧॥

No one is my enemy, and no one is a stranger.

I get along with everyone. AGGS M5, p 1299

Now notice the conflict with Guru's teachings in Sikh practices:

Quotes from 'Sikh Reht Maryada:

The Code of Sikh Conduct & Conventions',
Published by Dharam Parchar Committee
Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee
December 2000 (English version)

"Only a Sikh may perform kirtan in a congregation".

(Chapter V Article VI c) p.15

"A Sikh daughter must be married to a Sikh".

(Chapter XI Article XVIII b) p.26

Two questions arise:

1. Why the distinction between daughter and son when Gurbani gives both sexes an equal status?
2. If the entire humanity is child of one God then why discriminate in the name of religion which is manmade?

Guru Nanak's Bani does not have much in common with either Hinduism or Islam but Sikh practices do:

Quotes from Sharia Law:

A Muslim man can marry only a Muslim, Christian or Jewish woman. He cannot marry an atheist, agnostic or polytheist.

A Muslim woman can marry only a Muslim man.
She cannot marry a Christian, Jew, atheist, agnostic or polytheist.

Here are three interesting incidents in my personal experience that highlight the tragedy of conflict between what Guru Nanak preached

and what Sikhism has become today:

1. Soon after we started publishing The Sikh Bulletin in November 1999, I received an email from a teenager from one of the Eastern Seaboard States. He wanted all the material on Sikhism that I could send him. I did not have much but whatever I had I sent that to him including a couple copies of Dr. Devinder Singh Chahal's magazine that he had started publishing around the same time as we did. I also put him on the mailing list. Some years later I received an email from him telling me that he had converted to Islam because he had found contradiction between Sikh scriptures and Sikh practices and Sikhs practiced caste system. I wish he had turned agnostic because what he got into was the worst of the lot. If he ever visits India he will find Muslims practicing the same caste system.
2. A lady from Brazil also asked for literature on Sikhism and expressed strong desire to see Sikh missionaries in Brazil but without the zeal for propagating the requirement for uncut hair and carrying sword.
3. Bawa Singh Jagdev of Australia narrated an incident where a School Girl asked for material on Sikhism for her school project. Her younger brother read everything she received and expressed to her his desire to become a Sikh until she told him that he will have to keep long hair and carry a sword. That put a damper on his desire.

It would be appropriate here to quote from my May-June 2012 Sikh Bulletin editorial:

“Here I would like to confess to my personal belief that might be considered a blasphemy and offend most people, even those who know me well. That is that Guru Nanak did not initiate another religion.

There were too many religions and divisions among them in his time as is the case today. Today he will surely say that ‘I am neither a Hindu nor a Muslim; neither a Sikh nor a Christian’. He showed mankind a path to life and living.

The tragedy is that ‘well-meaning people’, which would be 99.9% of us all, have turned it into yet another divisive and suffocating faith.”

Sikhism is not a revealed religion.

Another issue that concerns me is the prevalent effort to claim Sikhism to be a **revealed religion** in league with the **three religions of the Middle East** that are based on **false claims** by mortals. In my judgment, that does neither add any prestige to Sikhism nor recognize the singularly unique contribution of Guru Nanak to smooth and harmonious functioning of the human society.

For there to be peace on Earth religions have to disappear and take their Gods to their graves.

In fact no religion is a revealed religion. All those claims are based on falsehood. Just think about it with your *Bibek Buddhi* (discerning mind).

There should be concerted effort to expose the myth of revealed religions and their Gods as based on falsehood. Therein lies the salvation of Humanity.

Let us take the three Semitic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam), only ones that claim divine revelation and only ones that have brought carnage on humanity:

These three religions do believe in one God but each one has its own one God.

Jewish God discriminates among people as the **Jews claim to be God's chosen people**. This God, like other Semitic and Hindu Gods, demands human sacrifice, like Abraham's son; and when

Abraham prepares to sacrifice his son, God becomes kinder and gentler God and asks Abraham to slaughter a lamb instead. **Guru Nanak's God does not favour one group over the other.**

Christian God fathered a child from Mary and his son, Jesus, established his own religion, Christianity, and proclaimed that **only those who believe in him will achieve salvation**. Then his 'FATHER' allowed for him to be crucified for the sins of others; but then HE raises Jesus from the dead, on the third day, and gives him life.

Guru Nanak rejects all three fundamentals of Christian faith. Foundation of this faith is so shaky I am surprised it lasted so long and was allowed to decimate nature based cultures of so many people around the world. Guru Nanak's Creator neither goes around fathering children from virgins, nor does anybody die for sins of others; each is responsible to face the consequences of his or her own actions and that too in this life because there is no second coming because once anyone dies, it is **dead**, it cannot be reversed, even by the Creator.

According to Guru Nanak only The Creator never dies but **anything that has been created will surely die, even this Cosmos.** As to the second coming who are you kidding?

Mohammed's God chose not to talk to Mohammed directly but through an Angel, just as in the 19th century **Joseph Smith** who founded Mormon faith was to claim. But Allah did not instruct Mohammed to bring equal justice to women in Arabia, such as one man one wife.

When people, including Sikhs, proclaim that there are similarities between Sikhism and other faiths on basic concepts they should take a second look.

Guru Nanak's concept of God is not the same as in the Middle Eastern religions where God (Male) dictates the Law and gives direction to the

prophets (Male) nor is it like Hindu Gods who incarnate as humans (Men specifically).

Although he incorporated into his Bani the multiple names for God in other religions, to make him understood by the masses, his personal word for the 'God' entity is '**Karta Purakh**' or '**KARTAR**' (Creator), formless, ageless, and everlasting and devoid of human attributes.

NANAK: The One and Only of His Kind

Before Nanak's coming there had been no body like him, including the founders of world's largest faiths, and nobody since.

During the age of European Renaissance of the 14th–17th centuries Guru Nanak was the only person who brought renaissance to the Indian sub-continent. Human mind, that Gurbani calls '**dasam duar**', is so unique that at any given time more than one person can arrive at the same conclusion about the fundamental truths of the physical world.

Guru Nanak (1469-1539) and Copernicus (1473-1543), a Polish Mathematician called the founder of modern Astronomy, thousands of miles apart and unknown to each other, arrived at the **same conclusion about the cosmos, including that it is in constant change**. He was the first to shatter the prevalent belief, supported by the Church, that Earth is the center of the universe and that Sun revolves around the Earth. **Galileo**, who concurred with Copernicus concept, was jailed by the Pope for disobeying the Church doctrine that Sun revolves around the Earth, **because The Bible says so.**

It is shameful that no literary, historical, religious or political writer or leader in India has acknowledged Guru Nanak's contribution to Indian culture, literature and philosophy and development of scientific thought. Those who claim to be successors to his message (The Sikhs) have almost reversed themselves 180

degrees in the opposite direction from where the Guru was taking us.

So, those who claim that Sikhi is also a revealed religion, like the other religions, are doing a grave disservice to Guru Nanak. Would they also say that Copernicus received divine revelation too? Copernicus himself makes no such claim. **The fact of the matter is that there is no such thing as revelation. Any religion making that claim is false.**

Guru Nanak and Copernicus both used their *bibek-budhi*, an evolutionary gift that only humans possess, even though they share 90% of their DNA with mice and 98% with chimpanzees. Copernicus published his theory in 1530; Guru Nanak put his view of Universe more than a decade earlier in ਜਪੁ (Jap).

Guru Nanak also planted the seeds of the future successes to come in the field of science, such as: the Big Bang theory, EMC^2 , origin of life in water, Evolution of Species and from the point of view of nurturing the body, no difference between meat and vegetables.

These were world changing pronouncements and yet the world never heard about them; not then, not now.

I so wish that Guru Nanak (1469-1539) was born in Europe and could call a three man summit with Copernicus (1473-1543) and Martin Luther (1483-1546). Deism would have arrived two centuries earlier, development of scientific thought would have been speeded up, and Martin Luther, instead of reforming the Church, would have joined forces with Nanak in abolishing it and all other manmade religions.

Guru Nanak:

Born as baby Nanak, because he was born at his mother's paternal house, he died known as Guru Nanak. **He gave a priceless gift to mankind but**

it was not a religion. Guru Nanak wanted to rid the masses of conflicts in the name of religion rather than introduce still another religion. What Guru Nanak gave was *jeevan-jaach* (How to live). His philosophy got distorted and ritualized into a traditional religion by lesser people who came to inherit it.

Since Nanak himself rejected the concept of Second Coming, the corner stone of the world's largest ritual filled religion, we just have to hope and wish that the world will produce, sometime down into the future, another personality like him, to implement what he started, **a universal concept of mankind living in a righteous, peaceful and prosperous world as one family, marked by brotherly love, tolerant of our petty differences, enlightened citizenry conscious of its responsibility towards the animal and vegetation kingdom as the highest form of life on this little speck of star dust that we call planet Earth.**

That just might delay the eventual oblivion of life on this planet that the cosmic law is speeding us towards.

Nanak was a child prodigy; he was a born genius.

At the very young age he mastered the religious and philosophical literature of both the Hindu and Muslim faiths of his time and he yearned for knowledge in search for which he went to the scholars of that period and engaged in intellectual discourses. **Neither God Himself nor his Angel appeared to give Guru Nanak his philosophy.** That is a myth propagated by the world's religions for their founders.

He was also an accomplished linguist.

He mastered **Persian**, the official language and **Sanskrit** and **Arabic**, the languages of scriptures of the two dominant religions of the country in his young age. He practiced the Panjabi folk saying

'pehniye jag bhaunda and khaiye man bhaunda'
(Wear clothes of the people you are among but eat what you like.) Otherwise how could he have communicated with all those diverse people in and around the Indian sub-continent?

He formulated his philosophy by use of his keen observation and use of his *bibek budhi* (discerning mind). Once his mission was clear to him he took leave of his young family and travelled to four corners of the globe from Tibet in the north, to Burma in the east, Ceylon in the south and Mecca in the west. He accomplished all that on foot and by boat. No flying carpets and no magic tricks for him. One can imagine the criticism he must have endured from family and friends. But there was a much larger family that needed to hear him, the human family.

It pains me a lot that **W. H. McLeod (1932-2009)**, 'an acknowledged scholar of Sikhism' who mentored many of our Sikh Scholars currently occupying Sikh Study Chairs in American Universities rejected any and all travels of Guru Nanak. See it yourself on page 40 of this issue under:

A BIGOT IS DEAD: LONG LIVE BIGOTRY

W. H. McLeod (1932-2009)

[From July-August 2009 Sikh Bulletin]

In His book '*Nanak, an Introduction*', Purushottam Nijhaawan writes, "In the 15th century, Indian society was a disturbing picture of rank ritualism, superstition, bigotry and social decay. The birth of Nanak in 1469 in the little village of Talwandi near Lahore, however, came as a miracle. The deteriorating Indian society had now found a redeemer".

It would be correct to say that the **world at large** had found a redeemer.

He had simple and straightforward messages for all the world's religions. To those who sought salvation in after life but went begging for food at

the door of a householder in this life, Nanak prescribed the **life of a householder and to seek salvation in this life.**

To those who walked the earth bare feet with their mouths covered (**Jainism**) so as not to harm minute life, he made them aware of plenty of such life already swarming inside their bodies.

To those who worshipped stone images of multitudes of Gods and Goddesses (**Brahmanism**), Guru advised that there is only One God and it has no image.

To those who faced towards a specific direction while praying (**Muslims**) Guru revealed that God is not confined to one spot; It is everywhere and permeates everything.

If Guru had come across the faith that holds its redeemer to be the only son of God (**Christians**) and who was resurrected from death for a second coming sometime in the future he would have rejected that belief by saying that for the birth of a human to take place it needs a man's semen and a woman's egg inside her womb and the clock of death cannot be turned back.

Guru Nanak emphasized human equality, dignity, right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness.

ਹਰਸੰਦਿਆ ਖੇਲੰਦਿਆ ਪੈਨੂੰਦਿਆ ਖਾਵੰਦਿਆ ਵਿਚੇ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ ॥
One could attain liberation while enjoying life (laughing, playing, eating good food and wearing good clothes). AGGS, M 5, p. 522.

Guru Nanak places emphasis on individual human dignity and intellect. His message has nothing like the Ten Commandments or the Sharia Law. Instead the Guru simply says do not commit an act that you will later regret and do not eat or drink that is unhealthy for your body and mind.

Guru Nanak rejected the concepts of virgin birth,

resurrection, specific times or directions for prayer. Starving the body for a day time (as fast) and then gorging it at night fall was abhorrent to him. Pilgrimage for spiritual gain and feeding the Brahman to sustain deceased relatives had no value for him.

No one place is holier than the other because all places are created by God and God permeates everywhere. The place where you live is just as holy as Hardwar, Banaras, Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem and Salt Lake City. No one time or day is more auspicious than another. Only the time spent in honest productive work and thoughtfulness is considered blessed.

Women constitute one half of humanity but no religion accords women the status that Guru Nanak demands for women:

ਭੰਡਿ ਜੰਮੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਨਿੰਮੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਮੰਗਣੁ ਵੀਆਹੁ ॥
 ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਭੰਡਹੁ ਚਲੈ ਰਾਹੁ ॥
 ਭੰਡੁ ਮੁਆ ਭੰਡੁ ਭਾਲੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਬੰਧਾਨੁ ॥
 ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨੁ ॥
 ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੀ ਭੰਡੁ ਊਪਜੈ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਝੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਏਕੋ ਸਚਾ ਸੋਇ ॥
 ਜਿਤੁ ਮੁਖਿ ਸਦਾ ਸਾਲਾਹੀਐ ਭਾਗਾ ਰਤੀ ਚਾਰਿ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਤੇ ਮੁਖ ਊਜਲੇ ਤਿਤੁ ਸਚੈ ਦਰਬਾਰਿ ॥

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 page 473.

This hymn is a rebuke to the patriarchal culture, as it is addressed to men, especially rulers/leaders who were the guardians of the socio-religious order. Further, he declares that woman is the hub of humanity, the lifeline of humanity. It is woman who conceives, it is woman who nurtures humanity from birth to death. Moreover, he puts woman at the apex of “human evolution” by declaring that only God is independent of woman.

To sink deeper Guru Nanak’s message in a suffocating and corrosive patriarchal society, Guru Amar Das [3rd Nanak] declared female and male equality in a very forceful way:

ਇਸੁ ਜਗ ਮਹਿ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਏਕ ਹੈ ਹੋਰ ਸਗਲੀ ਨਾਰਿ ਸਬਾਈ॥
 ਸਭਿ ਘਟ ਭੋਗਵੈ ਅਲਿਪਤੁ ਰਹੈ ਅਲਖੁ ਨ ਲਖਣਾ ਜਾਈ ॥

In this world there is one “Husband,” all other beings are His brides. He enjoys being in all hearts and yet He remains detached. He is invisible and indescribable.

AGGS, M 3, p. 591.

Further the Guru denounced the inhuman practice of sati (burning of a living woman on her husband's funeral pyre), ill-treatment of women and female infanticide:

ਸਤੀਆ ਏਹਿ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਨਿ ਜੋ ਮੜਿਆ ਲਗਿ ਜਲੰਨਿ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤੀਆ ਜਾਣੀਅਨਿ ਜਿ ਬਿਰਹੇ ਚੋਟ ਮਰੰਨਿ॥

A sati is not the one who burns herself on the funeral pyres of her husband. O Nanak, she alone is sati for whom the agony due to separation from her husband is like death.
 AGGS, M 3, p. 787.

ਭੀ ਸੋ ਸਤੀਆ ਜਾਣੀਅਨਿ ਸੀਲ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਰਹੰਨਿ ॥
 ਸੇਵਨਿ ਸਾਈ ਆਪਣਾ ਨਿਤ ਉਠਿ ਸੰਮ੍ਰਾਲੰਨਿ ॥

She is also a sati who abides in modesty and contentment, and loves her husband and gets up daily to take care of the family. AGGS, M 3, p. 787.

ਕੰਤਾ ਨਾਲਿ ਮਹੇਲੀਆ ਸੇਤੀ ਅਗਿ ਜਲਾਹਿ ॥
 ਜੇ ਹਾਣਹਿ ਪਿਰੁ ਆਪਣਾ ਤਾ ਤਨਿ ਦੁਖ ਸਹਾਹਿ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਕੰਤ ਨ ਜਾਨਣੀ ਸੇ ਕਿਉ ਅਗਿ ਜਲਾਹਿ ॥

ਭਾਵੈ ਜੀਵਉ ਕੈ ਮਰਉ ਦੁਰਹੁ ਹੀ ਭਜਿ ਜਾਹਿ ॥

Wives struggle and face hardships in life along with their husbands. They endure physical pain because they love their husbands. O Nanak, if the husband does not care for his wife and is unconcerned whether she is happy or miserable then why should she suffer for him? AGGS, M 3, p. 787.

ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣ ਕੈਲੀ ਘਾਤੁ ਕੰਵਕਾ ਅਣਚਾਰੀ ਕਾ ਧਾਨੁ ॥
ਫਿਟਕ ਫਿਟਕਾ ਕੋੜ ਬਦੀਆ ਸਦਾ ਸਦਾ ਅਭਮਾਨੁ ॥

The Brahman worships the cow but approves the killing of innocent young girls and accepts food/donations from evil doers. Shame on such a Brahman! He is afflicted with the leprosy of vices, and yet he is filled with the egotistical pride of caste superiority forever and ever. AGGS, M 3, p. 1413.

Furthermore, it is remarkable that in the sacred hymns of the AGGS there are roughly 100 verses starting with the word “mother” whereas the hymns starting with the word “father” number about twenty. This is quite amazing considering the patriarchal cultural milieu of the Guru’s time when the mention of women was absent in public discourses and she was looked down upon as an impediment in the path of the spiritual growth of a man.

Besides, God is gender neutral, both man and woman and Its creative aspect is portrayed as that of a mother:

ਆਪੇ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਨਾਰੀ॥

God is both man and woman. AGGS, M 1, p. 1020.

ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਪਿਤਾ ਤੂੰ ਹੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਾਤਾ ॥
ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਬੰਧੁ ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਭ੍ਰਾਤਾ ॥

You (God) are my father, You are my mother, You are my relative and You are my sibling. AGGS, M 5, p. 103.

ਆਪੁਨੇ ਜੀਅ ਜੰਤ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਾਰੇ॥

ਜਿਉ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਮਾਤਾ ਸੰਮਾਰੇ॥

God takes care of all Its creatures, the way a mother nurtures her children. AGGS, M 5, p. 105.

Furthermore, the Gurus condemned polygamy and approved only of monogamy:

ਕਾਮੁ ਕ੍ਰੋਧੁ ਪਰਹਰ ਪਰ ਨਿੰਦਾ ॥
ਲਬੁ ਲੋਭੁ ਤਜਿ ਹੋਹੁ ਨਿਚਿੰਦਾ ॥

Control your lust and anger, and renounce slandering others. Giving up greed and possessiveness brings peace of mind. AGGS, M 1, p. 1041.

ਕਾਮਵੰਤ ਕਾਮੀ ਬਹੁ ਨਾਰੀ ਪਰ ਗ੍ਰਿਹੁ ਜੋਹ ਨ ਚੁਕੈ॥

The lustful and lecherous desires many women and never stops peeking into others’ homes. AGGS, M 5, p. 672.

ਪਰ ਧਨ ਪਰ ਦਾਰਾ ਸਿਉ ਰਚਿਓ ਬਿਰਥਾ ਜਨਮੁ ਸਿਰਾਵੈ॥

The manmukh (self-centered man) wastes away his life devouring others’ wealth and in sexual pleasure with others’ women. AGGS, M 9, p. 632.

ਬਨਿਤਾ ਛੇਡਿ ਬਦ ਨਦਿਰ ਪਰ ਨਾਰੀ।

ਵੇਸਿ ਨ ਪਾਈਐ ਮਹਾ ਦੁਖਿਆਰੀ।

A mere religious garb won’t bring salvation to the one (yogi) who leaves his wife and then covets another’s. Such a person faces much suffering. AGGS, M 5, p. 1348.

ਪਰ ਧਨ ਪਰ ਦਾਰਾ ਪਰ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਇਨ ਸਿਉ ਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਨਿਵਾਰਿ॥

Renounce slandering others and coveting another’s wife and wealth. AGGS, M 5, p. 379.

Truthful living is higher than truth.

Sikhism openly states:- “*Truth is higher than everything, but higher still is truthful living*” because that is union with God. (Guru Granth Sahib page 62)

WAS GURU NANAK OR ONE OF HIS FOLLOWERS IN BAKU, AZERBAIJAN?



Fig. 2-2. The inscription of 'Commencing Verse' of the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (commonly called as 'Mool Mantra' by many Sikhs) found on a wall in a temple in Baku, Azerbaijan. Reproduced with permission from Dr Joseph H. Peterson's
Web site: <http://www.avesta.org/modi/baku.htm>
(Modi, Jivanji Jamshedji. 1924. My Travels outside Bombay, Iran, Azerbaijan, Baku.
<http://www.avesta.org/modi/baku.htm>)

What you see here is the **Commencing Verse** of the Adi Granth, courtesy Dr. Devinder Singh Chahal. It is inscribed in stone above a doorway of a temple that originally was a prominent centre of Zoroastrianism that fell into disrepair after onset of Islam. Long ago, traders from India managed to get permission to convert a small portion of this complex of Zoroastrian Temples as their place of worship.

I first saw it in Dr. Chahal's magazine and then on web under "My Travels outside Bombay: Iran, Azerbaijan. Baku" by Ervad Shams-UI-Ulama Dr. Sir Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, B. A., Ph. D. C. I. E. (1854-1933). He had gone on a pilgrimage to the places associated with his Zoroastrian ancestors.

My latest exposure to this came in 2014 when I read:

“A Journey from Bengal to England, through
The Northern Part of India, Kashmire,
Afghanistan, And Persia, And into Russia, by
the Caspian-Sea”
By George Forster.

In the Civil Service of The Honourable The
East India Company.

Printed for R. Faulder, New Bond-Street,
London, 1798.
(Original Edition).

George Forester had left Bengal for this overland Journey from Calcutta on March 23, 1782 arriving in London on March 31, 1784. Quite a feat!

On March 27, 1784 he visited this temple complex in Baku, saw these inscriptions both in Gurmukhi and Devnagri script and met a group of aging 'Moultan Hindu Traders' who told him that they were the last ones because their children are not interested in following in their footsteps.

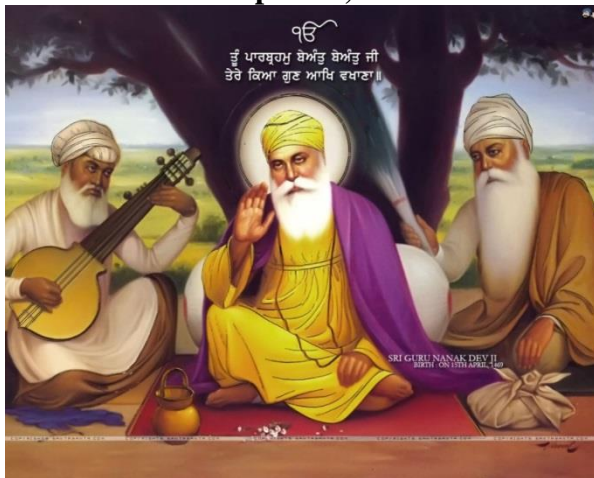
Now this is something worth researching by a Sikh scholar. Did Guru Nanak visit Konya and Istanbul in Turkey and perhaps Baku in Azerbaijan where he ran into Traders from Multan from his backyard in Panjab? After all these carvings were there in 1784 only two and a half century after Guru Nanak

It is time for us to bring the teachings of Guru Nanak to the notice of the outside world. Best way to do that is through the medium of English first and then translation from English into other languages. What I think we need to concentrate on is to take advantage of the electronic media and use the pages of The Sikh Bulletin to coordinate the translation of the Bani of Guru Nanak into English. For sure there are several versions of it already but none of them do justice to what the Guru is saying.

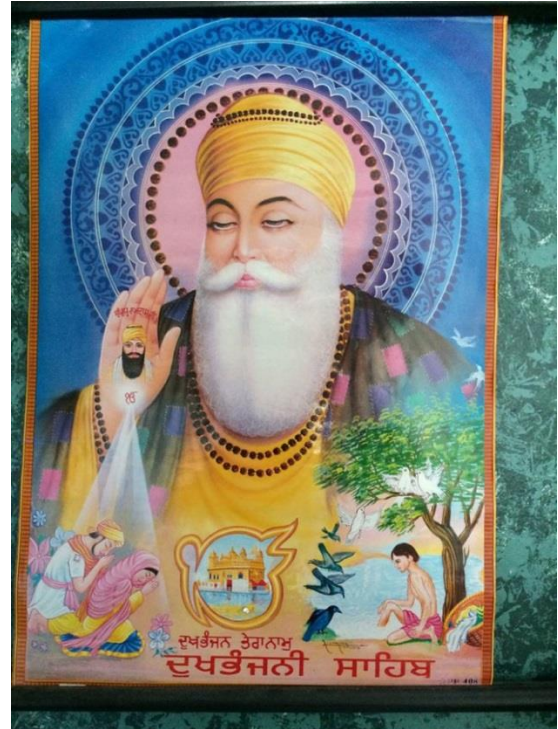
I ask the readers of The Sikh Bulletin in the Diaspora to create a *dharamsal* in their own homes, become *missionaries* for Guru Nanak and let their computer be the channel of communication and Social Media the Courier Pigeon.

Email to me one hymn of Guru Nanak and its English translation that you think is worthy of being brought to the notice of the population in the countries of our residences. We will invite our readers' opinions, arrive at a consensus and then make it available for everyone to use.

Pictures of and about Guru Nanak used by me at Calgary, Alberta, Canada Conference on April 11, 2015.



Guru Nanak, Bala and Mardana.
Companionship of Bala is disputed.



Hindu Nanak

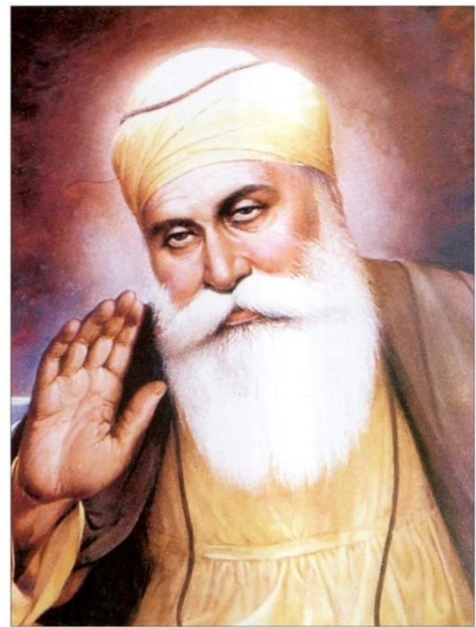


Fig. 2-7. Guru Nanak. In this type of paintings rosaries (*malas*) around the turban, in the hand and around the neck are clearly shown. This type of painting is very common in Gurdwaras and in houses of many Sikhs.

Sikh Nanak by Sobha Singh



Fig.2-5. Haji Bektashi with turban on *Kula* (cap). The end of his turban coming out is not seen in the painting, it may be on the other side. The facial expression resembles with that of Guru Nanak in Fig. 2-3.

Haji Bektashi, Turkey

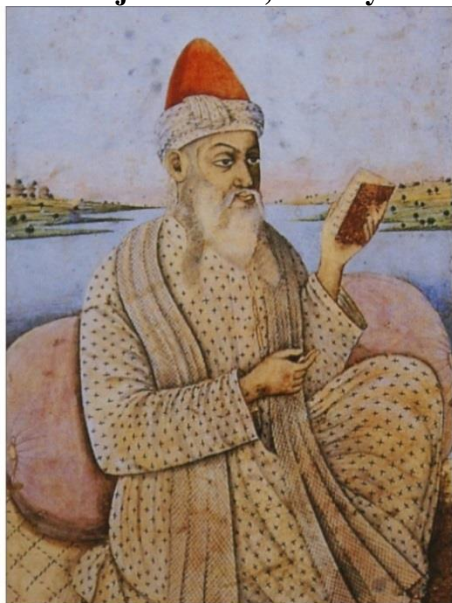


Fig. 2-3. Guru Nanak with a turban on *Kula* (cap) and one end of his turban is coming out. The turban style is very similar to that of Maulana Jallaluddin Rumi of Konya, Turkey (Fig.2-4). Guru Nanak is shown holding a notebook in which he used to write his Bani. The most prominent feature to be noted is that there is no *tilak* (frontal mark), no rosary (*mala*) in his hand or around his neck or around his turban. (Reproduced with permission from Rooli Books from *The Sikhs* by Khushwant Singh and Raghu Rai)

Sufi Nanak

Background landscape is very similar to Istanbul, Turkey, Today

If Guru Nanak did travel to Konya, his travels would surely have taken him to Jerusalem, place sacred to the three Semitic religions and on to Istanbul and may be Baku, Azerbaijan. Background for Guru Nanak's portrait above is intriguingly similar to views of Straits of Bosphorus in Istanbul today. With today's research this is the closest we come to placing Guru Nanak in Istanbul, Turkey.



Fig. 2-4. Maulana Jallaluddin Rumi of Konya, Turkey with turban on *Kula* (cap) and one end of his turban is coming out.

Rumi

[Rumi, Poet, Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī, also known as Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Balkhī, Mawlānā/Mevlānā, Mevlevī/Mawlawī, and more popularly simply as Rumi, was a 13th-century Persian poet, jurist, Islamic scholar, theologian, and Sufi mystic. [Wikipedia](#)

Born: September 30, 1207, [Vakhsh, Tajikistan](#)

Died: December 17, 1273, [Konya, Turkey](#)

Buried: [Mevlana Museum, Konya, Turkey](#)]

Guru Nanak must have found Rumi's philosophy to his liking:

"I'm not from the East or the west.

I'm not Christian or Jew or Muslim.

I'm not Hindu, Buddhist, Sufi or Zen.

I do not belong to any established religion or any cultural system.

I'm neither body nor soul, for I belong to the Soul of my Beloved."



ਕਰਤਾਰ ਪੁਰ ਵਿਖੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਪੀਰ ਦੀ ਮੁਬਾਰਕ ਕਬਰ
Muslim Memorial to Guru Nanak at Kartar Pur



Sikh Memorial to Guru Nanak at Kartar Pur



ਹਿੰਦੂਆਂ ਦੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੀ ਕਰਤਾਰਪੁਰ ਵਿਖੇ ਮੌਜੂਦ ਸਮਾਧ
Hindu Memorial to Guru Nanak at Kartar Pur



ਕਰਤਾਰਪੁਰ ਵਿਖੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਿਤਮ ਚੱਕਰ

Persian Wheel Memorial to Guru Nanak at Kartar Pur

WHAT SIKHS MUST KNOW ABOUT GURU NANAK

[Editorial from May-June 2015 Sikh Bulletin]

Guru Nanak was a child prodigy, showing early maturity when questioning his teacher on meaning of life and his priest on meaning of Janeu. A born linguist, he mastered Sanskrit and Arabic, two languages in which the Hindu and Islamic literature was written, the literature that he read in

depth, and Persian which was the official language of his time, at a very young age. He

communicated in the countries he visited in their language, wore their clothes and ate their food.



Fig. 2-4. Maulana Jallaluddin Rumi of Konya, Turkey with turban on Kula (cap) and one end of his turban is coming out.

To spread his message he travelled the length and breadth of the Indian-subcontinent to Nepal and Tibet in the north to borders of Burma in the East, Ceylon in the south and Mecca, Medina and the neighbouring countries in the Middle East to the west. Within India he travelled extensively to meet and have discourse with Indian scholars of various faiths. He travelled to Mecca by sea with the Muslim pilgrims on Haj and returned to Panjab overland via Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan, along the well-travelled military and trade routes.

Not much is known about the details of his travels in the Arab world but reason and Guru Nanak's innate curiosity and search for knowledge dictates that his travels in the realm of the **Ottoman Empire**, which was at its peak in the 16th century when Guru Nanak visited the Middle East, would have been a must and travel within it would have been safer than it is today. Ottoman Empire was a powerful multinational, multilingual empire controlling much of [Southeast Europe](#), [Western Asia](#), the [Caucasus](#), [North Africa](#), and the [Horn of Africa](#).

It is more than likely that he must have, in addition to Mecca, Medina and Baghdad, that is commonly referred to about his Middle East travels, visited, Konya, Turkey. Konya was a Centre of learning for Sufi Islam established by the followers of Maulana Jallaluddin **Rumi**, himself a transplant from present day Afghanistan of Persian parents. Sufis consider themselves to be the original true proponents of this pure original form of Islam. Guru Nanak was drawn to Islamic scholars of Sufi Islam than the Islam practiced in India by the rulers of his time. During his studies of Islamic literature it stands to reason that Guru Nanak had access to Rumi's writings and must have engaged in discussions with Sufi scholars in India.

Guru Nanak must have found Rumi's philosophy to his liking:

***"I'm not from the East or the west.
I'm not Christian or Jew or Muslim.
I'm not Hindu, Buddhist, Sufi or Zen.***

I do not belong to any established religion or any cultural system.

I'm neither body nor soul, for I belong to the Soul of my Beloved."

[Rumi, Poet, Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī, also known as Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Balkhī, Mawlānā/Mevlānā, Mevlevī/Mawlawī, and more popularly simply as Rumi, was a 13th-century Persian poet, jurist, Islamic scholar, theologian, and Sufi mystic. [Wikipedia](#)

[Born](#): September 30, 1207, [Vakhsh, Tajikistan](#); [Died](#): December 17, 1273, [Konya, Turkey](#); [Buried](#): [Mevlana Museum, Konya, Turkey](#)]

If Guru Nanak did travel to Konya, his travels would surely have taken him to Jerusalem, place sacred to the three Semitic religions and on to Istanbul and may be Baku, Azerbaijan. Background for Guru Nanak's portrait below is intriguingly similar to views of Straits of Bosphorus in Istanbul today. With today's research this is the closest we come to placing Guru Nanak in Istanbul, Turkey.

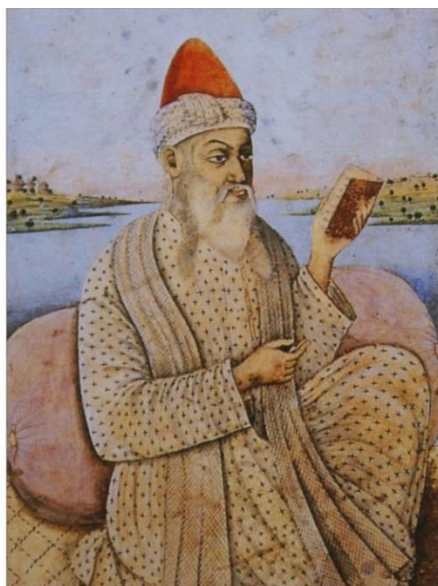


Fig. 2-3. Guru Nanak with a turban on *Kula* (cap) and one end of his turban is coming out. The turban style is very similar to that of Maulana Jallaluddin Rumi of Konya, Turkey (Fig.2-4). Guru Nanak is shown holding a notebook in which he used to write his Bani. The most prominent feature to be noted is that there is no *tilak* (frontal mark), no rosary (*mala*) in his hand or around his neck or around his turban. (Reproduced with permission from Rooli Books from *The Sikhs* by Khushwant Singh and Raghu Rai)



Straits of Bosphorus, Istanbul, separating Asia from Europe

[Rumi and Guru Nanak portraits and the inscription of Commencing Verse of Aad Guru Granth Sahib in an ancient Zoroastrian Temple in Baku, Azerbaijan are published with permission from Dr. Devinder Singh Chahal from his book "Nankian Philosophy: Basics for Humanity".]

A narrative to his visits to Mecca, Medina and Baghdad has been found in "**Babania Kahania**" by Inderjit Singh Jhajj, given to me by Dr. Harbans Lal:

"During Guru Nanak's journeys in the Middle East, a local author, **Taajudin Naqshabandhi**, joined Guru Nanak and remained with him for roughly one-and-a-half to two years. Taajudin documented his time with Guru Nanak in great detail. Four centuries later, a young man from Kashmir, **Syed Mushtaq Hussain**, chanced upon Taajudin's handwritten manuscript while studying to become an Islamic scholar. This manuscript changed Mushtaq's life. He converted to Sikhism and went on to become the renowned **Sant Syed Prithipal Singh**.

In the absence of any facility available for copying the book in facsimile, Mushtaq Hussain took notes from Taajudin's manuscript. He also took notes from another book, **Twarikh-e-Arab**, written by **Khawaja Jainul Abdin**, a Muslim author who also accompanied Guru Nanak during his travels to

*Mecca. Mushtaq's notes later formed the basis of the Punjabi book, **Babe Nanak di Baghdad Pheri.***

Inderjit Singh Jhajj, December 26, 2012

Another intriguing look into Guru Nanak's travels to the Middle East comes from "**My Travels outside Bombay: Iran, Azerbaijan, Baku**" by Ervad Shams-UI-Ulama Dr. Sir Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, B. A., Ph. D. C. I. E. (1854-1933).

What you see below is the Commencing Verse of the Adi Granth, courtesy Dr. Devinder Singh Chahal. It is inscribed in stone above a doorway of a temple that originally was a prominent centre of Zoroastrianism in Baku, Azerbaijan, that fell into disrepair after onset of Islam. Long ago, traders from India managed to get permission to convert a small portion of this complex of Zoroastrian Temples as their place of worship.



Fig. 2-2. The inscription of 'Commencing Verse' of the Adi Granth Sahib (commonly called as 'Mool Mantra' by many) found on a wall in a temple in Baku, Azerbaijan. Reproduction permission from Dr Joseph H. Peterson's

Web site: <http://www.avesta.org/modi/baku.htm>

(Modi, Jivanji Jamshedji. 1924. My Travels outside Bombay: Iran, Azerbaijan, Baku.

<http://www.avesta.org/modi/baku.htm>)

I first saw it in Dr. Chahal's magazine and then on web under "My Travels outside Bombay: Iran, Azerbaijan. Baku" by Ervad Shams-UI-Ulama Dr. Sir Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, B. A., Ph. D. C. I. E. (1854-1933). He had gone on a pilgrimage to the places associated with his Zoroastrian ancestors.

My latest exposure to reference to this inscription came in 2014 when I read, "**A Journey from Bengal to England, through The Northern Part of India, Kashmire, Afghanistan, And Persia, And into Russia, by the Caspian-Sea**" By George Forster. In the Civil Service of The Honourable The East India Company. Printed for R. Faulder, New Bond-Street, London, 1798. (Original Edition).

George Forester had left Bengal for this overland Journey from Calcutta on March 23, 1782 arriving in London on March 31, 1784. Quite a feat! On March 27, 1784 he visited this temple complex in Baku, saw these inscriptions both in Gurmukhi and Devnagri script and met a group of aging 'Moulton Hindu Traders' who told him that they were the last ones because their children are not interested in following in their footsteps.

Now this is something worth researching by a Sikh scholar. Did Guru Nanak visit Konya and Istanbul in Turkey and perhaps Baku in Azerbaijan where he ran into Traders from Multan from his backyard in Panjab? After all these carvings were there in 1784 only two and a half centuries after Guru Nanak and trade between India and that part of the world had gone on for centuries. In fact it is highly likely where the ancestors of many Panjabi's came from. My last name is Shergill, two Persian words put together, and meaning the same as in today's Panjabi. And, to boot, there is still a province of northern Iran along the south shore of the Caspian sea called, 'Gilan', land of Gils/Gills.

It is time for us to bring the teachings of Guru Nanak to the notice of the outside world. Best way to do that is through the medium of English first

and then translation from English into other languages. **What I think we need to concentrate on is to take advantage of the electronic media and use the pages of The Sikh Bulletin to coordinate the translation of the Bani of Guru Nanak into English.** For sure there are several versions of it already but none of them do justice to what the Guru is saying.

I ask the readers of The Sikh Bulletin in the Diaspora to create a *dharamsal* in their own homes, become *missionaries* for Guru Nanak and let their computer be the channel of communication and Social Media the *Courier Pigeon*.

Email to me one hymn of Guru Nanak and its English translation that you think is worthy of being brought to the notice of the population in the countries of our residences. We will invite our readers' opinions, arrive at a consensus and then make it available for everyone to use.

Guru Nanak was One of a Kind, just as his concept of Kartar/Creator was One and Only. The world had never produced anyone like him before nor since. His philosophy is unique and is applicable in all countries and cultures at all times.

He possessed a brilliant mind. He was a **Deist** two centuries before European intellectuals coined the term. **Deism rejected revelation and authority** as a source of religious knowledge with the conclusion that **reason and observation of the natural world are sufficient to determine the existence of a single creator of the universe.** Deism gained prominence among intellectuals during the Age of Enlightenment, especially in Britain, France, Germany and the United States, who, raised as Christians, believed in one god but became disenchanted with organized religion and notions such as the Trinity, Biblical inerrancy and the supernatural interpretation of events such as miracles. Included in those influenced by its ideas

were leaders of the American and French Revolutions.

Guru Nanak threw away centuries old *maryada*. At a very young age he refused to wear the *janeu*; discarded the *caste system*; preached against *idol worship*; recognised the *equality of mankind*; asserted the *equality of men and women*; opposed the practice of '*sati*' (self-immolation by widows upon their husbands' death, still prevalent in Hindu society), rejected the then prevalent concepts of *karma*, after life *salvation*, *tapasya*, *heaven* and *hell*, *incarnation*, *transmigration*, *84 lakh juni*, *yatra* to holy places, *fasting*, *multiple gods* and *goddesses*, and of course, unique only to Sikhism, wished '*sarbat da bhala*'. He gave us nothing like Ten Commandments or Sharia Law. Instead the Guru simply says '*do not commit an act that you will later regret and do not eat or drink that is unhealthy for your body and mind*'. He wanted mankind to use '*bibek budhi*', the only species that has it.

In this special issue some hymns have **English translation by Dr. Devinder Singh Chahal** from one of his articles and English translation of **all the hymns quoted by Dr. Baldev Singh in his manuscript** that we are planning on publishing this year.

This is an invitation to the readers who may wish to join us in spreading the message of Guru Nanak to the English speaking world. Our estimate is that the printing cost of the book will be around US \$1.00. If you wish to join us please contact us. The cost of shipment will be your responsibility and it might come to more than printing. But if you or your family often travel to India you can bring the books as personal luggage. Contact email: editor@sikhbulletin.com

Some Contemporaries of Guru Nanak and some who came later but developed their theories similar to Guru Nanak's on the basis of their own 'bibek budhi':

Guru Nanak (1469-1539):

Nicolaus Copernicus, Poland, (1473-1543). They shared the modern concept of Cosmos.

Martin Luther, Germany (1483-1546). Guru, had he met him, would have advised him against attempting reformation of Christianity because a religion can never be reformed.

Vasco da Gama, Portugal (1460-1524).

Michelangelo, Italy (1475-1564).

Henry VIII, England (1491-1547).

Babur, Uzbekistan (1483-1530). Started Mogul dynasty in India.

Galileo, Italy (1564-1642) believer in Copernicus cosmic view; spent last nine years of his life under house arrest.

Environmentalism (2015) What a refreshing change from the Vatican, in Galileo's time and now. Pope Francis Encyclical on climate change (2015) is very refreshing and completely opposite to his predecessors' actions. Besides, it is fun to watch United States Republican 2016 Presidential hopefuls, all totally devoid of conscience, quiver. It took the world 500 years to catch up with Guru Nanak, and yet not all the world.

Charles Darwin (1809-1882) published his '*On the Origin of Species by means of natural Selection*', was published in 1859, 300 years after Guru Nanak had expressed it in his hymns.

Alfred Wagner (1880-1930), Germany hypothesized in 1912 that the [continents](#) are slowly drifting around the Earth. He too had used his bibek budhi, as Guru Nanak did, by observing the coast lines of world's oceans and got laughed at because he could not explain the mechanism. Answers came half a century later with advancement in science.

Hardev Singh Shergill

EDITORIALS ON GURU NANAK IN THE SIKH BULLETIN

1. NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2004:
GURU NANAK
2. MARCH-APRIL 2007: DOWN TO EARTH
COMMON SENSE SIMPLICITY OF GURU
NANAK'S MESSAGE.
3. JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2009 :
NANKIAN PHILOSOPHY.
4. MARCH-APRIL 2009: WHO IS A SIKH?
5. JULY-AUGUST 2009:
A BIGOT IS DEAD; LONG LIVE BIGOTRY W.
H. MCLEOD (1932-2009)
6. NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2010:
YOUR RELIGION IS NOT IMPORTANT,
DALAI LAMA
7. JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2011:
WHO ARE THE SIKHS?
8. SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2011:
BIBEK BUDHI-SO ELUSIVE.
9. MARCH APRIL 2012:
EVOLUTION OF GOD.
10. MAY-JUNE 2012: GURU NANAK'S GOD
11. JULY-AUGUST 2012: GURBANI AND SIKH REHAT
MARYADA: SOME CONTRADICTIONS.
12. NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2012:
NANAK (1469-1539): THE ONE AND ONLY OF
HIS KIND
13. JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2013:
PRAYER – ARDAAS.
14. MARCH-APRIL 2013:
RECASTING OF THE SIKH BULLETIN

AS

GURU NANAK MISSION

15. MAY-JUNE 2013: SAT KARTAR
16. NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2014:
TRANSITION FROM THE SIKH BULLETIN

TO

GURU NANAK AND HIS BANI

17. JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2015:
THE OPENING VERSE
18. MARCH-APRIL 2015
I HAVE NO RELIGION
Finding Guru Nanak (1469-1539)
The One and Only
My Journey



ਅਕਲੀ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸੇਵੀਐ ?

-: ਸੰਪਾਦਕ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਨਿਊਜ਼

ਹੈਅਅਮ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਆ ਕੀ ਕਹਿ ਦਿੱਤਾ "ਅਕਲੀ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸੇਵੀਐ ..." ?

ਪਰ ਹੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹਿ, ਤੇਰੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਖਵਾਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਤਾਂ ਅਕਲ ਵਰਤਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਨੂੰ ਗਾਹਲਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਵਾਜਦੇ ਨੇ, ਏਜੰਸੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਬੰਦਾ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਨੇ... ਫਿਰ ਅਕਲ ਕਿੱਥੇ ਵਰਤੀਏ ? ਤੇਰੇ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਫੁਰਮਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਸਿੱਖ, ਤੇਰੇ ਹੀ ਦੁਆਰੇ 'ਤੇ ਆਉਣ ਲੱਗਿਆਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਹੀ ਛੱਡ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਨੇ !!!

ਤੇਰੀ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਗੱਲ ਮੰਨਣ ਨੂੰ ਤਿਆਰ ਨਹੀਂ...

- ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਆਉਣ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੀ ਪੈਰ ਧੋਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਪਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ "ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ" ਸਮਝ ਕੇ ਪੀ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਨੇ, ਫਿਰ ਜੇ ਤੂੰ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਬਾਰੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ 'ਚ ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ, ਉਹ "ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ" ਕਿਵੇਂ?

ਮ:1 ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਤੇਰੀ ਬਾਣੀਆ ॥ ਤੇਰਿਆ ਭਗਤਾ ਰਿਦੈ ਸਮਾਣੀਆ ॥ ਪੰਨਾ 72, ਸਤਰ 10

ਮ:3 ਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਸਬਦੁ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਹੈ ਜਿਤੁ ਪੀਤੈ ਤਿਖ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਪੰਨਾ 35, ਸਤਰ 8

ਮ:3 ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸਰੁ ਵਡਭਾਗੀ ਨਾਵਹਿ ਆਇ ॥ ਪੰਨਾ 40, ਸਤਰ 10

ਮ:5 ਰਤਨ ਜਵੇਹਰ ਮਾਣਿਕਾ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਹਰਿ ਕਾ ਨਾਉ ॥ ਪੰਨਾ 48, ਸਤਰ 14

ਮ:3 ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਫਲੁ ਹਰਿ ਏਕੁ ਹੈ ਆਪੇ ਦੇਇ ਖਵਾਇ ॥੩॥ ਪੰਨਾ 66, ਸਤਰ 6

ਮ:4 ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਬੋਲੈ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਬਾਣੀ ॥ ਪੰਨਾ 96, ਸਤਰ 11

ਮ:5 ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਬਾਣੀ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਤੇਰੀ ॥ ਪੰਨਾ 103, ਸਤਰ 7

ਪੈਰਾਂ ਵਾਲਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਵੀ "ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ" ਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਪਾਹੁਲ ਵੀ "ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ" ? ਹੈਅਅਮ

- ਫਿਰ ਝੰਡੇ ਨੂੰ ਮੱਥਾ, ਜੁੱਤੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੱਥਾ, ਫਿਰ ਉਹੀ ਮੱਥਾ ਤੇਰੇ ਅੱਗੇ, ਫਿਰ ਦਸ ਵੱਡਾ ਕੇਣ ਝੰਡਾ, ਜੁੱਤੀਆਂ ਕਿ ਤੂੰ?

- ਤੇਰੇ ਹੀ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਕੱਚੀਆਂ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਪੜ੍ਹੀ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ, ਫਿਰ "ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ..." ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਕਿਵੇਂ ?

- ਹਰ ਰੋਜ਼ ਗੱਜ ਵੱਜ ਕੇ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਨੇ "ਸਭ ਸਿੱਖਨ ਕੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਹੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਾਨਿਓ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ", ਪਰ ਮੰਨਦੇ ਨਹੀਂ, ਫਿਰ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਗੁਰੂ ਕਿਵੇਂ ?

- "ਗੁਰੂ ਦੁਆਰੇ ਹੋਇ ਸੇਝੀ ਪਾਇਸੀ ॥" ਨੂੰ ਛੱਡ ਕੇ "ਸਿਮਰਨ ਦੇ ਨਾ "ਤੇ ਬੱਤੀਆਂ ਬੰਦ ਕਰਕੇ ਤੇਤਾ ਰਟਨ ਕਰੀ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ, ਤੇਰੀ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਸੇਝੀ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਪਾਉਣਗੇ?

- ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਧਰਮਸ਼ਾਲਾ ਦੀ ਬਜਾਏ ਚੋਧਰ ਦਾ, ਲੜਾਈ ਦਾ ਥਾਂ ਬਣਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ, ਫਿਰ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਿੱਥੇ ਕਰੀਏ ?

- ਰੱਬ ਦੇ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਸਰੀਰ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਰਾਬ, ਹੋਰ ਨਸ਼ੇ, ਤੇਰੀ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਤੋਂ ਉਲਟ ਹਰ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਕੇ ਵਿਗਾੜ ਲਿਆ... ਫਿਰ "ਇਹੁ ਸਰੀਰੁ ਸਭੁ ਧਰਮੁ ਹੈ ਜਿਸੁ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਚੇ ਕੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਜੋਤਿ ॥" ਕਿੱਥੇ ਰਹਿ ਗਿਆ?

ਫਿਰ ਵੀ ਅਖਵਾਉਂਦੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਹੀ ਹਾਂ... ਕਿਵੇਂ ???; ਗੱਲ ਕਿ ...99% ਕੰਮ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਤੋਂ ਉਲਟ, ਤੇਰੇ ਹੀ ਨਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਹੋ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ; ਫਿਰ ਦੱਸ ਅਕਲ ਕਿੱਥੇ ਵਰਤਾਂ ਗਾਹਲਾਂ ਕੱਢਣ ਦੀ ਬਜਾਏ, ਜੇ ਜਾਵਬ ਹੋਵੇ, ਤਾਂ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਦੇਣਾ ਜੀ।

<http://khalsanews.org/newspics/2016/01%20Jan%202016/29%20Jan%2016/29%20Jan%2016%20What%20took%2014%20yrs%20to%20make%20Sikh%20Rehat%20Maryada%20-%20PKS%20USA.htm> Click and click on main news page and listen to Bhai Baljeet Singh Delhi.