

## My Experience with Religion

My life journey began on January 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup> grade I was sent to a boarding school. Since English in Bikaner State started in 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup> grade city subjects were mastered in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades of village schools. So I had plenty of time in my 5<sup>th</sup> 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 9<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.sikhbulletin.com)

Report on 2004 conferences was published in November-December 2004 Sikh Bulletin. Please go to [www.sikhbulletin.com](http://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.**

**Hardev Singh Shergill**

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**Nanak (1469-1536)**  
**India's Renaissance Reformer That World Never Heard Of. 6pp.**  
[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.

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 16<sup>th</sup> 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.



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

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.

*[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]*

[Rumi and Guru Nanak's 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".]



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."***



Straits of Bosphorus, Istanbul, separating Asia from Europe

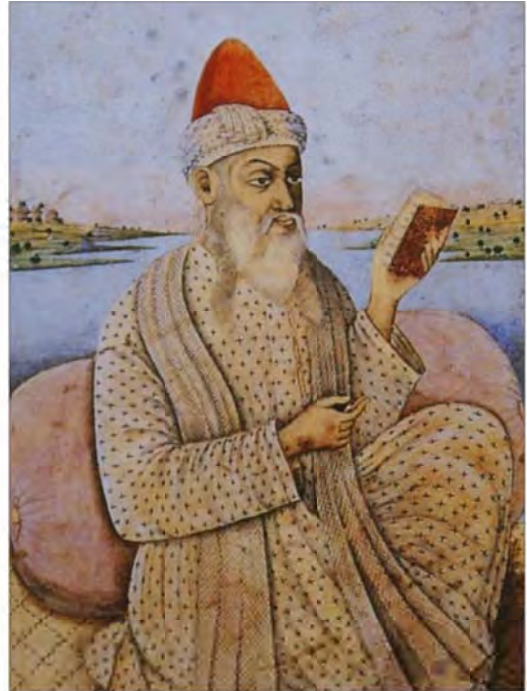


Fig. 2-3. Guru Nanak with a turban on *Kula* (cap) and one end of his turban is coming out. The turban style is very similar to that of Maulana Jallaluddin Rumi of Konya, Turkey (Fig.2-4). Guru Nanak is shown holding a notebook in which he used to write his Bani. The most prominent feature to be noted 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)

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.

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 Jhaggi, 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-ul-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 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> )

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 '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 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 Gilanis/Gils/Gills/McGills/Cowgills/Scargills etc.

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 of the faith of his birth*. 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 book has now been published and is also available free in electronic format at our website: [www.sikhbulletin.com](http://www.sikhbulletin.com). Printed copies are available for \$5.00 US and Canada plus postage.]

**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 by the Pope for contradicting Bible which claims Earth as the center of the Universe.

**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. 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*', 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.

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## **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 ਜੋਰੁ ॥

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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 Philosophy 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.

## GURU NANAK AND RELIGION

Religion by its fundamental practices is divisive. Historical concept of God from the beginning of time of human presence is flawed. Egyptian Pharos became Gods by claiming to be sole representatives of God. Until recently British Kings could do no wrong and preached Divine Right of Kings. Three Semitic religions, although born out of same human stock and same geographical area have three different Gods at war with each other. It is hard to say which one is the worst.

**Jews** claim to be the chosen people of the first Semitic God they call **YHWH** (Yahweh in English) who bequeathed to them for eternity the lands of **Judea and Samaria** which is plaguing the human kind to this day in 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Christ**, the Jew, saw Jewish Temple Priests in cahoots with Roman rulers exploiting the workingman and started a reformation in Judaism. He paid for it with his life but his twelve Apostles created their own religion in his name that got into conflict with Judaism.

That was a good example for **Mohammed** to follow. If Christ was a Son of God born to a virgin, surely Mohammed could invent an Angel who delivered God's message to him and put a stop to any more Semitic religions by claiming to be last Messiah of God.

But he did not count on one of his own Sons-in-Law from claiming to be the last Messiah and give birth to **Shia Islam** as opposed to his Father-in-Law's **Sunni Islam**. Schism that developed among the followers of Father-in-Law and Son-in-Law within one generation still manifests itself.

Shias and Sunnis are blowing each other up in Syria, Iraq and Yemen and in Pakistan Sunni majority is blowing up minority Shias almost on daily basis.

All that history of Semitic Gods was good enough for **Joseph Smith Jr (1806-1844)**, a farmer from western New York, to discover his own Angel, Moroni, as opposed to Mohammad's Gabriel, and start his own religion. He distinguished it from Judaism based on **Ten Commandments** written on **Stone Tablets** to his God's message given to him on **Gold Tablets**. Even God became prosperous over nineteen centuries and advanced from Stone Age to Gold Age. I bought my **Book of Mormon** from a Mormon Temple in Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada in 1962 but could not read it beyond first 40 pages or so because it was an insult to my intelligence. My overwhelming memory is that it was a **badly written novel**.

**Less said better about multitude of Hindu Gods and the curse of India, the Caste System.**

**In my view Guru Nanak, in an inoffensive way, unique only to him, actually discredited and rejected all manmade religions.**

That is the case I have made in **Nanak My Discovery 1469-1539**) and I find myself in good company, **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."

<http://sikhbulletin.com/Files/NanakMyDiscoveryMarApr2015.pdf>

<http://sikhbulletin.com/Files/NanakEditorials.pdf>

**God, Divine, Spiritual, Holy** are tainted words of English language associated with **Christianity**, a religion that is based on false ridiculous myths of virgin birth, resurrection, miracles of multiplying fish, walking on water, turning water into wine, healing cripples and blind that in its drive to turn whole world into this one faith destroyed nature based cultures living in harmony with their environment all over the globe. Christ did not start Christianity. You cannot find a single word written by him. His was an effort to free Judaism from the Temple Priests.

**These words must not be used in describing Guru Nanak's philosophy based on his own life experiences, his own observation of his human as well as natural environment. His philosophy was not based on faith. He rejected all faith based religions. His was a REASON based Philosophy of Living, "Jeevan Jaach", where he stressed use of "Bibek-Budhi", (discerning mind).**

A contemporary of **Copernicus**, Guru Nanak was five centuries ahead of that famous European [Renaissance](#) mathematician and astronomer who formulated a [model](#) of [the universe](#) that placed [the Sun rather than the Earth at the center of the universe](#).

**Guru Nanak postulated Big Bang (Kvao), origin of life in water, evolution of species with time and environmental changes, infinity of cosmos, need for protecting our fragile environment by treating air, water and earth as Guru, father and Mother.**

Use of one's ***Bibek Budhi*** (discerning mind) is what Guru Nanak preached and practiced. Surely to explain to the masses he used the terminology of other religions but his own name for YHWH, GOD, ALLAH, and BHAGWAN was **KARTAR** and that is the only word that should be used in describing his philosophy. **Kartar is also English word**, only pronounced as Creator. Remove the vowels and you have **KRTR** and **CRTR** because both **Panjabi** and **English** are long lost cousins, children of **Indo-European language** going back thousands of years. **Satnam** is not the name of Nanak's Creator but merely an **adjective** to say **'Its true name is Kartar.'**

Hardev S Sherrgill

**WWR**  
**WORLD WITHOUT RELIGION**  
**Ah! Wouldn't that be heaven and**  
**Guru Nanak's mission finally fulfilled?**  
[March-April 2016]

**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. 21<sup>st</sup> 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 chisel **Ten Commandments**, all commonsense, himself, hidden from the masses on top of Mount Sinai and create fear of God through 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

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 ones 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-‘Uzzá](#). 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, *Jazia*, to practice their faith. Two Sikh Gurus, 5<sup>th</sup> Guru Arjan and 9<sup>th</sup> 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 everybody 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 Nanak'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 naiveté on my part. In time I realized that every faith considers theirs 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 7<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> 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 **300<sup>th</sup> 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 350<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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

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**EDITORIAL**  
**GURU NANAK AND HIS MESSAGE**  
**[September-October 2015]**

This issue is continuation of our effort to bring Guru Nanak's bani to the attention of the whole humanity. We begin by presenting the best English translation of JappBani that we have come across. July-August 2015 issue carried a brief bio of **Col. Manmohan Singh** and his translation of Japp Bani along with some other authors. This issue carries strictly his translation and is presented in two versions. First is **English** only for the English speaking people; second is **Panjabi and its English** translation. For those who do nitname it would be ideal to follow the latter; this way they will come to understand the meaning of the verses in Panjabi. **Col. Manmohan Singh also requests your suggestions to improve the quality of the translation.**

The above is followed by an excellent dissertation by Dr. Devinder Singh Chahal on **Aad Guru Granth Sahib** and the recommendation that *“there is a need of examining the whole composition of the AGGS by expert theologians, linguistics, scientists, philosophers, historians, etc.”*

Also included in this issue are the two major speeches by **Pope Francis** to the Joint Meeting of United States Congress and to the United Nations. It is interesting to note that **Pope Francis echoes what Guru Nanak spoke about 500 years ago and many fundamental concerns that are still the same:**

*“Creator in every human face; care for the people; transcendent dignity of the human being; disturbing social and political situation of the world today; our world is increasingly a place of violent conflict; hatred and brutal atrocities committed even in the name of God and of religion; no religion is immune from forms of individual delusion or ideological extremism; religious freedom, intellectual freedom and individual freedoms; enemy within; hope and healing; of peace and justice; cycle of poverty; respect for the environment and right use of natural resources of earth, our common home; time to protect nature; justice and the cause of the oppressed; and richness and the beauty of family life”.*

Pope's is a message of hope as was Guru Nanak's. But alas, Pope would not speak against **organized religion, the root cause of mankind's troubles in Guru Nanak's time and now.** Guru Nanak had no religion, nor did he start one. He was a man of reason whereas religion is based on blind faith which Pope Francis practices. **Religion is raising its Middle Eastern ugly head in this land of Lincoln through none others than the members of his own party, the Republican Presidential candidates the whole lot of them.** See page 79.

All this is capped by an excellent piece by Dr. Harbans Lal about Guru Nanak's true Sikh, **Bhagat Puran Singh**, and the true Sikh values that this gursewak upheld with compassion and perseverance.

Hardev Singh Shergill

## Nanak in Middle East

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.

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 16<sup>th</sup> 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.



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

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 Jhaggi**, 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 **Khwaja 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 Jhaggi, 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-ul-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 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> )

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 '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 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.**

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The Register-Guard

Eugene, Oregon

[Editorial from September-October 2010 SB]

Recently, a friend who knew that I have written about Bhajan Yogi in my magazine, The Sikh Bulletin, in the past, sent me a couple of articles on Yogi's organizations involved in litigation in Oregon, that appeared in The Register-Guard. This was no surprise to me. But the letters to the editor that followed, critical of the reporter and some implied criticism of writing negative about minorities, prompts me to briefly throw some light on the subject. Bhajan Yogi was extremely good at what he did but propagation of Sikhism it was not. **Criticism of Bhajan Yogi's cult cannot be construed as criticism of Sikhism.**

Bhajan Yogi's cult was based in Los Angeles and New Mexico but Oregon has had its own share of cults of Indian origin. Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh moved into the central Oregon town of Antelope and created a commune of free love, immigration scam, mass murder plots and 93 Rolls Royces, gifted to him by his very wealthy twenty and thirty-some things, during 1981-85, before his deportation by Presidential intervention.

Dr. Trilochan Singh, a distinguished Sikh scholar, in his book 'Sikhism and Tantric Yoga', published in 1977, describes Bhajan Yogi, succinctly and devastatingly, in the following words: *"Yogi Bhajan is a Sikh by birth, a Maha Tantric by choice but without training, and a 'Sri Singh Sahib' and self styled Leader of the Sikhs of Western Hemisphere by fluke and mysterious strategy"*.

There was no mystery to his strategy. All he had to do was to ingratiate himself with the Sikh Religious leadership in Panjab that was more corrupt than the Vatican during the time of Martin Luther (1483-1546), founder of the Protestant Church.

According to the Tantrics the best form of worship is the fullest satisfaction of the sexual desires of man therefore in Tantric worship sexual intercourse with any woman is prescribed as a part of worship. In the annals of abuse of women some had harems, others had concubines and Bhajan Yogi had Secretaries. The Sikh Gurus condemned the Tantrics and their practices. When I received copies of the court documents of cases against Yogi from the Federal Govt. archives in Colorado I was incredulous about one disciple of Yogi luring her own sister into a rape victim but just then news papers reported exactly a similar story where a sister conspired to have her own sister raped by her boy friend. **All the cases mentioned in The Register-Guard had merit, otherwise Yogi would not have settled out of court. In some cases, such as lottery scam, some of yogi's lieutenants shouldered the entire blame and served prison time but some innocent families were destroyed, including their faith in Sikhism (falsely taught).**

**Bhajan Yogi devised 'The Siri Singh Sahib Bhai Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogi Ji' as his full name/title. That is eleven words. The person whose teachings Yogi was supposedly**



practicing and preaching had conquered his ego and used only one word in his name – Nanak. But yogi was full of it. Humility is the hallmark of a Sikh and Yogi did not have any of it. Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, himself describes people like Bhajan Yogi in succinct language:

ਨਾਨਕ ਸੇ ਨਰ ਅਸਲਿ ਖਰ ਜਿ ਬਿਨੁ ਗੁਣ ਗਰਬੁ ਕਰੰਤਿ ॥੨॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 1246}

*“Nanak, those are real asses, who have no virtues but are filled with egotistical pride. GGS P. 1246.”*

Sikhism is unique among the world's religions because it is unlike any of them, except certain principles of ethics and moral norms which are common to all religions as well as the atheists. Sikhism is the only religion of The Book from the East, 'Guru Granth Sahib', like the three Semitic religions of, 'The Torah', 'The Holy Bible' and 'The Holy Quran'. But similarity ends right there; fundamental difference being the concept of One God. Superficially all four religions believe in One God, but which one? God of Jews favours only his chosen people who are still waiting for their Messiah; Christian God would save only those who believe in his son Jesus Christ, the Messiah who has already come, and the Muslim God has the last word because Mohammed is the last Messiah and there shall be no more. **President Bush, a Christian, has a different God than Osama-bin-Laden, a Muslim**

**Guru Nanak rejected all the religions of his day, including the one he was born into.** Guru Nanak's God is the God of entire creation, *“God is ONE. His name is Truth. He is the creator. He is fearless and not inimical. He is without death and without birth. He is self-existent. Humans can attune to him through Guru's grace.”* “God existed in the beginning; He existed when time started running its course; He exists even now and He shall exist forever and ever”.

When the Pope had **Galileo (1564-1642)** jailed for advocacy of **Copernicus' (1473-1543)** theory, condemned by the Roman Catholic Church as heretical, that earth revolves around the sun, **Guru Nanak (1469-1539)** was postulating views on the origin of the Universe that will make the Big Bang theorists proud and stating unambiguously that there are countless Earths, Moons and Suns. He called the natural laws that govern their motions in space '*hukam*' (Cosmic Law). Cosmos is the manifest form of God, *hukam* (Cosmic Law) is the invisible form that pervades the cosmos. And long before **Darwin's (1809-1882)** theory of origin of species, Nanak had declared that life began in water and evolved through many life forms in the water, over and under the land and in the air with human beings the ultimate life form. Death is a loss of consciousness. When a person dies he/she does not go to heaven or hell, because heaven and hell exist only on this earth, in this life and we make them. A person gets human form only once. Upon death, the spark we call soul merges with the cosmic law/God and body turns to star dust.

**Guru Nanak was born into a Hindu household but with that faith Sikhism shares nothing, not even the concept of One God.** At a very young age he 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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, transmigration, 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 Universal Humanism.**

**Sikhism has neither anything like Ten Commandments nor Sharia. 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. Simple as that! Guru Nanak rejected the concepts of virgin birth, resurrection (death is final), specific times and facing specific direction for prayer, starving the body for a day or day time and then gorging at night fall, pilgrimage for spiritual gain and feeding the Brahman to sustain deceased relatives.**

In Sikhism, no one place is holier than the other because all places are created by God and God permeates everywhere. Eugene, Oregon is just as holy as Hardwar, Banaras, Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem; no time or day is more auspicious than the other; but only that time is blessed when one remembers God/Truth; Truth is higher than everything, but higher still is truthful living because that is union with God.

Hardev Singh Shergill  
President  
Khalsa Tricentennial Foundation of N. A. Inc.  
Editor-in-Chief  
The Sikh Bulletin  
[editor@sikhbulletin.com](mailto:editor@sikhbulletin.com)  
May 24, 2010

[With my permission the Editors of the Newspaper condensed this letter, very nicely I must say, to bring it within their number of words limit but they could not bring themselves around to printing the words '*real asses*' in the quote from GGS p.1246. ED.]

[For an amazing look at Yogi World click at the links below. ED]

[Gurmukhyoga.com](http://Gurmukhyoga.com)  
[http://www.sarbloh.info/htmls/sikh\\_udhasi.html](http://www.sarbloh.info/htmls/sikh_udhasi.html)  
<http://yogibhajan.tripod.com/2/>  
<http://www.rickross.com/reference/3ho/3ho58.html>  
<http://www.yogibotanicals.com/index.php>  
<http://www.yogibotanicals.com/experience-expertise.php>  
<http://www.yogibotanicals.com/ceo-message.php>  
<http://www.rickross.com/reference/3ho/3ho58.html>



## Nanak on Bhajan Yogi

**Bhajan Yogi** devised *‘The Siri Singh Sahib Bhai Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogi Ji’* as his full name/title. That is eleven words. The person whose teachings Yogi was supposedly practicing and preaching had conquered his ego and used only one word in his name – **Nanak**. **But yogi was full of it. Humility is the hallmark of a Sikh and Yogi did not have any of it.** Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhi Philosophy, himself describes people like Bhajan Yogi in succinct language:

ਨਾਨਕ ਸੇ ਨਰ ਅਸਲਿ ਖਰ ਜਿ ਬਿਨੁ ਗੁਣ ਗਰਬੁ ਕਰੰਤਿ ॥੨॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 1246}

*“Nanak, those are real asses, who have no virtues but are filled with egotistical pride.  
GGS P. 1246.”*

[From September-October 2010 SB Editorial]

**Nanak and Brahmin**  
**[From July-August 2016 SB]**

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.

According to Sikh tradition Guru Nanak refused to wear a **Janeu** (sacred thread) which was a mandatory religious requirement for a boy from a Khatri caste. He asked, “**Why wear a ritual thread that can break or burn or gets soiled or worn out or lost?**” Instead, he proposed an alternative universal lifelong thread:

ਦਇਆ ਕਪਾਹ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਸੂਤੁ ਜਤੁ ਗੰਢੀ ਸਤੁ ਵਟੁ॥  
ਏਹੁ ਜਨੇਊ ਜੀਅ ਕਾ ਹਈ ਤ ਪਾਡੇ ਘਤੁ॥

*Make compassion the cotton, contentment the yarn, continence the knot and truth the twist. O pundit (priest), a thread of this type awakens the inner-self (conscience). If you have such a janaeu, then put it on me. AGGS, M 1, p. 471.*

ਸਾਲਗ੍ਰਾਮ ਬਿਪ ਪੂਜਿ ਮਨਾਵਹੁ ਸੁਕ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਤੁਲਸੀ ਮਾਲਾ ॥  
ਰਾਮਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਿ ਬੇੜਾ ਬਾਂਧਹੁ ਦਇਆ ਕਰਹੁ ਦਇਆਲਾ ॥  
ਕਾਹੇ ਕਲਰਾ ਸਿੰਚਹੁ ਜਨਮੁ ਗਵਾਵਹੁ ॥  
ਕਾਚੀ ਢਹਗਿ ਦਿਵਾਲ ਕਾਹੇ ਗਚੁ ਲਾਵਹੁ ॥

*O Brahman, why do you worship a salgram (stone idol)? Make honest work your rosary of tulsi (an aromatic plant, Ocimum Sanctum venerated by Hindus). Make contemplation on God the boat to take you across the ocean of the corrupting influence of the world. Pray for mercy to the Merciful One. Why are you wasting your life irrigating alkaline (barren) land? Why are you plastering a mud wall which surely will fall? AGGS, M 1, p. 1170.*

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.*

## **Nanak on Christianity**

**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.**

## Nanak on Death

### **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  $E=MC^2$

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), bhandā (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 ਕੇ ਮੂਆ ਨ ਮਰਣੈ ਜੋਗੁ॥  
ਨਹ ਬਿਨਸੈ ਅਬਿਨਾਸੀ ਹੋਗੁ॥  
ਜੋ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਹੁ ਸੋ ਇਹੁ ਨਾਹਿ॥  
ਜਾਨਣੁਹਾਰੇ 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.*

## Nanak on Environment

Guru Nanak was an environmentalist half a millennium ahead of his time.

ਪਵਣੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਪਾਣੀ 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 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.

Climate change, advancement of science, resistance against illness, and medical discoveries or economic developments are essential to not only survival but to new growth.



## Nanak on Evolution of Species

ਜੀਅ ਜਾਤਿ ਰੰਗਾ ਕੇ ਨਾਵ ॥ (3)

ਸਭਨਾ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਵੁੜੀ ਕਲਾਮ ॥ (3)

*Living beings are of innumerable kinds and varieties; And there are innumerable names for them. The nature of the growth and development of all of them has been written in great mystic words (DNA).*

Centuries later it came to be called Evolution of Species.

### 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 ਗਜ਼ 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.*

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

ਜਲਿ ਥਲਿ ਜੀਆ ਪੁਰੀਆ ਲੋਆ ਆਕਾਰਾ ਆਕਾਰ॥

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

## Nanak and Five Prayers in Islam

[From July-August 2016 SB]

He carried the same message to the **Muslim** audience. For example, he explained the true meaning of the **five prayers** and what is required to become a **true Muslim** (gurmukh):

ਪੰਜਿ ਨਿਵਾਜਾ, ਵਖਤ ਪੰਜਿ ਪੰਜਾ ਪੰਜੇ ਨਾਉ॥  
ਪਹਿਲਾ ਸਚੁ ਹਲਾਲੁ ਦੁਇ ਤੀਜਾ ਖੈਰ ਖੁਦਾਇ ॥  
ਚਉਥੀ ਨੀਅਤ ਰਾਸਿ ਮਨੁ ਪੰਜਵੀ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਸਨਾਇ ॥  
ਕਰਣੀ ਕਲਮਾ ਆਖਿ ਕੈ ਤਾ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਸਦਾਇ ॥  
ਨਾਨਕ ਜੇਤੇ ਕੂੜਿਆਰ ਕੂੜੈ ਕੂੜੀ ਪਾਇ ॥

*The five prayers for the five different times during the day have five different names. Make truth the first prayer, honest living the second one, practice of charity the third one, cleansing the mind of evil thoughts the fourth one and contemplation on God's excellences the fifth one. And let good deeds become your kalma, the foundation of your faith. If one practices the above, only then one is a true Muslim (gurmukh). Otherwise O Nanak, by practicing hypocrisy, one becomes false through and through. AGGS, M 1, p. 141.*

## Nanak on God

**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.*

**My translation 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 sat̃ nām kartā purakh̃ nirbh̃a'o nirvair akāl mūrati ajūnī saibh̃a'n gur parsād̃.**

*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 *sun*, 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 (Shakti)**

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.**

## Nanak on Human Race

### Human race is one.

#### Quotes from Sri Guru Granth Sahib:

ਏਕੁ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਤੂ ਮੇਰਾ ਗੁਰ ਹਾਈ ॥

Èk 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 ਕੋ 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.

## **Nanak on Islam**

**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.**

### **Nanak on Jainism**

**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.**

## Nanak 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 ॥  
ਗੈਂਡਾ 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 ॥

AGGS M1 P. 1289

*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.*

## Nanak on Origin of Universe

### Origin of Universe according to Guru Nanak:

ਕੀਤਾ ਪਸਾਉ ਏਕੋ ਕਵਾਉ ॥ (3)

ਤਿਸ ਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਲਖ ਦਰੀਆਉ ॥ (3)

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

Centuries later scientists called it Big Bang.

ਪਾਤਾਲਾ ਪਾਤਾਲ ਲਖ ਆਗਾਸਾ ਆਗਾਸ ॥ (5)

ਓੜਕ ਓੜਕ ਭਾਲਿ ਥਕੇ ਵੇਦ ਕਹਨਿ ਇਕ ਵਾਤ ॥ (5)

ਸਹਸ ਅਠਾਰਹ ਕਹਨਿ ਕਤੇਬਾ ਅਸੁਲੂ ਇਕੁ ਧਾਤੁ ॥ (5)

ਲੇਖਾ ਹੋਇ ਤ ਲਿਖੀਐ ਲੇਖੈ ਹੋਇ ਵਿਣਾਸੁ ॥ (5)

ਨਾਨਕ ਵਡਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਆਪੇ ਜਾਣੈ ਆਪੁ ॥੨੨॥ (5)

*There are hundreds of thousands of netherworlds, and hundreds of thousands of skies. After great research the Vedas have said it definitely. The Semitic books say that there are eighteen thousand worlds and that is the fact.*

However, Nanak says:

*It cannot be possible to count (the number of the celestial bodies in the universe) because the counting person may reach the end of his life while counting, but it will still be incomplete. He further says that (Entity) is Great who knows the count (of the celestial bodies in the universe). 22. Page 5*

ਧਵਲੈ ਉਪਰਿ ਕੇਤਾ ਭਾਰੁ ॥ (3)

ਧਰਤੀ ਹੋਰੁ ਪਰੈ ਹੋਰੁ ਹੋਰੁ ॥ (3)

ਤਿਸ ਤੇ ਭਾਰੁ ਤਲੈ ਕਵਣੁ ਜੋਰੁ ॥ (3)

*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

Centuries later scientists discovered those Laws of Nature.

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.*

ਪਾਤਾਲਾ ਪਾਤਾਲ ਲਖ ਆਗਾਸਾ ਆਗਾਸ ॥ (5)

ਓੜਕ ਓੜਕ ਭਾਲਿ ਥਕੇ ਵੇਦ ਕਹਨਿ ਇਕ ਵਾਤ ॥ (5)

ਸਹਸ ਅਠਾਰਹ ਕਹਨਿ ਕਤੇਬਾ ਅਸੁਲੂ ਇਕੁ ਧਾਤੁ ॥ (5)

ਲੇਖਾ ਹੋਇ ਤ ਲਿਖੀਐ ਲੇਖੇ ਹੋਇ ਵਿਣਾਸੁ ॥ (5)

ਨਾਨਕ ਵਡਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਆਪੇ ਜਾਣੈ ਆਪੁ ॥੨੨॥ (5)

*There are hundreds of thousands of netherworlds, and hundreds of thousands of skies.*

*After great research the Vedas have said it definitely.*

*The Semitic books say that there are eighteen thousand worlds and that is the fact.*

However, Nanak says:

*It cannot be possible to count (the number of the celestial bodies in the universe) because the counting person may reach the end of his life while counting, but it will still be incomplete.*

*He further says that (Entity) is Great who knows the count (of the celestial bodies in the universe). 22. Page 5*

ਕੇਤੇ ਪਵਣ ਪਾਣੀ ਵੈਸੰਤਰ ਕੇਤੇ ਕਾਨ ਮਹੇਸ ॥ (7)

ਕੇਤੀਆ ਕਰਮ ਭੂਮੀ ਮੇਰ ਕੇਤੇ ਕੇਤੇ ਧੂ ਉਪਦੇਸ ॥ (7)

ਕੇਤੇ ਇੰਦ ਚੰਦ ਸੂਰ ਕੇਤੇ ਕੇਤੇ ਮੰਡਲ ਦੇਸ ॥ (7)

ਕੇਤੇ ਸਿਧ ਬੁਧ ਨਾਥ ਕੇਤੇ ਕੇਤੇ ਦੇਵੀ ਵੇਸ ॥ (7)

ਕੇਤੇ ਦੇਵ ਦਾਨਵ ਮੁਨਿ ਕੇਤੇ ਕੇਤੇ ਰਤਨ ਸਮੁੰਦ ॥ (7)

*There are numerous Earths for practicing righteousness, and there are numerous mountains on these Earths; and uncountable devotees like Dhru are giving sermons.*

*There is an unlimited amount of clouds around the Earth;*

*There is an unlimited number of moons and suns in these numerous worlds. 35 Page 7.*

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.

## Nanak on Religion

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, Sikhi 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:**

ਵਰਤ<sup>1</sup> ਨ ਰਹਉ<sup>2</sup> ਨ ਮਹ ਰਮਦਾਨਾ<sup>3</sup> ॥  
ਤਿਸੁ<sup>4</sup> ਸੇਵੀ<sup>5</sup> ਜੇ ਰਖੈ ਨਿਦਾਨਾ<sup>6</sup> ॥੧॥  
ਏਕੁ<sup>7</sup> ਗੁਸਾਈ<sup>8</sup> ਅਲਹੁ<sup>9</sup> ਮੇਰਾ ॥  
ਹਿੰਦੂ<sup>10</sup> ਤੁਰਕ<sup>11</sup> ਦੁਹਾਂ ਨੇਬੇਰਾ<sup>12</sup> ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥  
ਹਜ<sup>13</sup> ਕਾਬੈ ਜਾਉ ਨ ਤੀਰਥ<sup>14</sup> ਪੂਜਾ<sup>15</sup> ॥  
ਏਕੇ ਸੇਵੀ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਦੂਜਾ ॥੨॥  
ਪੂਜਾ ਕਰਉ ਨ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਗੁਜਾਰਉ<sup>16</sup> ॥  
ਏਕ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ<sup>17</sup> ਲੇ ਰਿਦੈ<sup>18</sup> ਨਮਸਕਾਰਉ<sup>19</sup> ॥੩॥  
**ਨਾ ਹਮ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਨ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ॥**  
ਅਲਹ ਰਾਮ ਕੇ ਪਿੰਡੁ<sup>20</sup> ਪਰਾਨ<sup>21</sup> ॥੪॥  
ਕਹੁ ਕਬੀਰ ਇਹੁ ਕੀਆ ਵਖਾਨਾ<sup>22</sup> ॥  
ਗੁਰ ਪੀਰ ਮਿਲਿ<sup>23</sup> ਖੁਦਿ<sup>24</sup> ਖਸਮੁ<sup>25</sup> ਪਛਾਨਾ ॥੫॥੩॥  
ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 5, ਪੰਨਾ 1136.

**I do not practice<sup>2</sup> the fasts<sup>1</sup> (of Hindus), nor do I observe the month of Ramadaan<sup>3</sup> (the Roza<sup>3</sup>).**

**I serve<sup>5</sup> only the One<sup>4</sup>, who protects all till the end of life<sup>6</sup>. 1.**

**My God is only One<sup>7</sup>, Who is called Gosain<sup>8</sup> (by the Hindus) and Allah<sup>9</sup> (by the Muslims).**

**I have separated<sup>12</sup> myself from (religious practices) of them both, the Hindus<sup>10</sup> and the Muslims<sup>11</sup>. Pause.**

**I do not make pilgrimages<sup>13</sup> to Mecca, nor do I worship<sup>15</sup> at Hindu sacred shrines<sup>14</sup>.**

**I serve no other than the Only One. 2.**

*I do not perform Hindu worship, nor do I offer<sup>16</sup> the Muslim prayers.  
I have understood in my mind<sup>18</sup> and pay my obeisance<sup>19</sup> to the One, the Formless<sup>17</sup>. 3.  
We are neither Hindus, nor Muslims.  
My body<sup>20</sup> and life<sup>21</sup> belong to the One (who is) Allah (for Muslims) and Ram (for Hindus). 4.  
Oh Kabir! This is what I say<sup>22</sup>:  
That the one-self<sup>24</sup> can realize<sup>26</sup> the God<sup>25</sup> through Guru - Pir (Spiritual Teacher)<sup>23</sup>.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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.



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 nirbhā'o nirvair akāl mūraṭ ajūnī saibha'n 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 translation 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 saṭ nām kartā purakhḥ nirbhā'o nirvair akāl mūraṭ 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 *sun*, 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 (Shakti)**

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.**

*“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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 on Rulers and Their Brahmin Civil Servants

### **Criticism of the Cruel Rulers and Invaders**

Guru Nanak's ideology did not allow him to remain silent against the unjust rulers and cruel invaders. He openly and fearlessly raised his forceful voice against them and awakened the oppressed people. In his eyes these cruel rulers were like fierce tigers and their ministers behaved like mad dogs who oppress the innocent people:

ਰਾਜੇ ਸੀਹ ਮੁਕਦਮ ਕੁਤੇ॥ ਜਾਇ ਜਗਾਇਨਿ ਬੈਠੇ ਸੁਤੇ ॥(SGGS: 1288)

“The kings are like tigers, and their **underlings like dogs**: they prey upon innocent unwary people, plundering them.”

ਕਲਿ ਕਾਤੀ ਰਾਜੇ ਕਾਸਾਈ ਧਰਮੁ ਪੰਖ ਕਰਿ ਉਡਰਿਆ ॥ (SGGS:145)

*'The Dark Age of Kali Yuga is the knife, and the kings are butchers; righteousness has sprouted wings and flown away.'*

About Babar, the mighty Mughal invader, he remarked:

ਪਾਪ ਕੀ ਜੰਵ ਲੈ ਕਾਬਲਹੁ ਧਾਇਆ ਜੋਰੀ ਮੰਗੇ ਦਾਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੇ ॥ ( SGGS: 722)

*“Bringing the ‘marriage party of sin’, Babar invaded from Kabul, demanding our land as his wedding gift, O Lalo.”*

Guru Nanak's criticism was loud and serious, and not an empty rhetoric. He even criticized Kartar/Creator for allowing the oppression of the weak to take place:

ਏਤੀ ਮਾਰ ਪਈ ਕਰਲਾਣੇ ਤੈਂ ਕੀ ਦਰਦੁ ਨ ਆਇਆ ॥

(SGGS: 360)

*There was so much slaughter that the people agonized, didn't You feel compassion, O Kartar/Creator?’*

Combination between the personal life of a man and his empirical life was first established by Guru Nanak. According to Guru Nanak, kingdom of Kartar/Creator is not in a mythological heaven, but on this earth and we make our life hell or heaven by our own actions in this life. The guru directs us to give up our egocentric activities and rise to be a superman. His ideology is to establish link between the individual salvation and the social salvation of a man. It is for belief in both the transcendence and immanence of Kartar/Creator. Guru Nanak's mission was to ferry human beings across the turbulent sea of life. Guru Nanak's ideology is, **‘give up mammon and not the world.’**

## Nanak on Women

### Status of Women in Society

Guru Nanak was the first man who raised his voice for the uplift of women more than 500 years ago when other religions were treating and are still treating women as inferior to men. In some religions, she was considered a hurdle in the path of heaven and sin-born. In Catholic Christianity women have not been made priests even up till today. Guru Nanak said why call woman impure when she gives birth to great men and without woman there would be none:

ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ ॥(SGGS:473)  
'So why call her bad from whom great men are born?'

ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੀ ਭੰਡੁ ਊਪਜੈ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਝੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥  
ਨਾਨਕ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਏਕੋ ਸਚਾ ਸੋਇ ॥(SGGS:473)

*From woman, woman is born; without woman, there would be no one at all. Guru Nanak says that only Kartar/Creator is born without women.*

**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 ਜਿਤੁ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ॥  
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 ਏਕੈ 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 ਸੰਮ੍ਰਲੰਨਿ ॥

*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 ਦੂਰਹੁ 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 ਜੋਹੁ ਨ ਚੁਕੈ॥

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

ਪਰ ਧਨੁ 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 ਛੋਡਿ ਬਦ ਨਦਿਰੁ 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 ਧਨੁ ਪਰ ਦਾਰਾ ਪਰ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਇਨ ਸਿਉ ਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਨਿਵਾਰਿ॥

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

## Nanak on World Religions

In His book '*Nanak, an Introduction*', Purushottam Nijhaawan writes, "In the 15<sup>th</sup> 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.**

ਹਸੰਦਿਆ 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.

**Nanak and Yogis**  
[From July-August 2016 SB]

**Nanak 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.**

**Yogis** (ascetics) looked down upon the householders though they lived on the charity of the latter. Guru Nanak admonished them:

ਮੁੰਦਾ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਸਰਮੁ ਪਤੁ ਝੋਲੀ ਧਿਆਨ ਕੀ ਕਰਹਿ ਬਿਭੂਤਿ ॥  
ਖਿੰਬਾ ਕਾਲੁ ਕੁਆਰੀ ਕਾਇਆ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਡੰਡਾ ਪਰਤੀਤਿ ॥  
ਆਈ ਪੰਥੀ ਸਗਲ ਜਮਾਤੀ ਮਨਿ ਜੀਤੈ ਜਗੁ ਜੀਤੁ ॥  
ਆਦੇਸੁ ਤਿਸੈ ਆਦੇਸੁ ॥  
ਆਦਿ ਅਨੀਲੁ ਅਨਾਦਿ ਅਨਾਹਤਿ ਜੁਗੁ ਜੁਗੁ ਏਕੈ ਵੇਸੁ ॥

*O yogi, make contentment your earrings, begging bowl your modesty, meditation on God the ashes smeared on your body, thought of death your quilted robe, truthful living your way of life and faith in God your staff. Make universal brotherhood your Aee Panth (the highest order of yogis) and subdue your mind (haumai) to conquer the worldly temptations. Bow in reverence to the One Who is primordial, immaculate (pure/perfect), without beginning, indestructible and changeless throughout the ages. AGGS, M 1, Jap 28, p. 6*

ਸੋ ਜੋਗੀ ਜੋ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਪਛਾਣੈ ॥  
ਗੁਰ ਪਰਸਾਦੀ ਏਕੋ ਜਾਣੈ ॥  
ਕਾਜੀ ਸੋ ਜੋ ਉਲਟੀ ਕਰੈ ॥  
ਗੁਰ ਪਰਸਾਦੀ ਜੀਵਤੁ ਮਰੈ ॥  
ਸੋ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੁ ਜੋ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੈ ॥  
ਆਪਿ ਤਰੈ ਸਗਲੇ ਕੁਲ ਤਾਰੈ ॥

*A yogi is the one who recognizes the right way (Truth) and understands the One/God through enlightenment. A qaji (Muslim judge) is the one who remains unaffected by the corrupting worldly temptations and carries out justice in the light of Truth. A Brahman is the one who contemplates on the excellences of God. Such a Brahman enlightens himself and all his kin. AGGS, M 1, p. 662.*



## **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 15<sup>th</sup> 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.

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**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.**

ਹਸੰਦਿਆ 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 ਰਾਜਾਨ॥  
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 ਮਤਿਆ 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 ਸੰਮ੍ਹਲੰਨਿ ॥

*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 ਦੂਰਹੁ 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 ਕ੍ਰੋਧ 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 ਜੋਹੁ 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.*

## Nanak's Concept of God.

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 sat̃ nām kartā purakh̃ nirbh̃a'o nirvair akāl mūrati ajūnī saibh̃a'n gur parsād̃.

*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 *sun̄n*, 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.**