

EDITORIAL
DOWN TO EARTH COMMON SENSE SIMPLICITY OF
GURU NANAK'S MESSAGE

[Editorial from March-April 2007 Sikh Bulletin]

This Vaisakhi day I wish we were celebrating Guru Nanak's birthday by spreading his true teachings rather than the Hinduised version being preached and practiced in the Gurdwaras today; but knowing all the world's Gurdwaras and the Sikh religious leadership in Amritsar have already celebrated it in 'Katak' (October) I am obviously living in a fool's paradise.

The other day when I read that a researcher in Italy has probably identified the person whose portrait is the famous Mona Lisa, I could not help but marvel at the Roman civilization and its legacy. This researcher found the birth and death records of the subject of Mona Lisa. She was born ten years after Guru Nanak's birth. Legacy our Gurus have left us is the GGS. But what have we done? We have accepted a rival Granth, 'Sri Dasam Guru Granth Sahib Ji' without questioning its historical authenticity or examining its very controversial contents with the touch stone of Gurbani. A non-practicing attorney, D. S. Gill, even has the stupidity of asserting that he had difficulty understanding Gurbani in GGS until he happened to read Dasam Granth first. He would have us believe that the key to Gurbani is not the writings of Bhai Gurdas but what some of us call '*kanjar kahani*' and '*kanjar kavita*'.

He is even a bigger fool than I thought when I first got to know him in 1995. And why would the leadership not correct this error about the birth of Guru Nanak? It has become the accepted practice '*maryada-ban-chucki-hai*' so why upset the apple cart?

Not even for a moment do they think that they are talking about a person who threw away centuries old *maryada*. At a very young age he refused to wear the janeu; discarded the caste system; preached against idol worship; recognized the equality of mankind; asserted the equality of men and women; 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*'. We have neither Ten Commandments nor 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. Simple as that!

One example of increasing brahmanical influence on Sikhi was in the Sacramento Bee newspaper recently – the controversy about Guru Nanak's picture in a California School textbook. But the opposition by some members of the Sikh community was not to the presence of the picture but the version of the picture. They wanted to replace the version selected by the publisher according to their standards of authenticity by a more recent version that they preferred. **For a Sikh 'gur murat gur shabad hai'. Rest is 'moorakh jhagra'.**

Hardev Singh Shergill

EDITORIAL
NANKIAN PHILOSOPHY
[Editorial from January-February 2009 Sikh Bulletin]

“Guru Nanak (1469-1539 CE) originated a unique philosophy and challenged the existing concepts about God, heaven/hell, reincarnation/transmigration, idol worship, caste system, astrology, mantra systems, etc. in Southeast Asia.” Amen! Halleluia! This quote came to me from a Sikh scholar who is doing a great service to the cause of Sikhi and I could not help but compliment him and told him that I agreed with his quote whole heartedly.

To that I added that Guru Nanak was not a prophet in the sense of Biblical or Muslim prophets who claimed to speak to or spoken to by God, directly as in the case of Moses or indirectly, as in the case of Mohammed who had an Angel as an intermediary. When Bani talks about '*dhur-ki-bani*' it is not God talking to Nanak; **Sikhi is not a 'revealed' religion**; it is born out of Guru's life experience; it is Guru's own inspiration and thought process that inspires him to seek and speak fundamental truths.

He wrote back that he was pleased to read my response but observed, **“No Sikh scholar could dare to say what you have said.”** He is right and therein lies the tragedy. I am not afraid to say it precisely because I am not a scholar. The tragedy is that Sikh scholars are too fearful of consequences if they break with the established tradition; as Mr. Tohra had explained away the un-Sikh practice of denial of sewa to the women at Harmander Sahib because of the long established tradition. The fact that Guru Nanak had broken many traditions going back centuries was inconsequential.

Bhai Ardaman Singh, a Sikh scholar of yore, in his book 'Thoughts of Bhai Ardaman Singh' writes, **“In Sikhism, certain philosophical interpretations are common with Hindu thought, like life after death,...while such concepts as Oneness of God...Sikhism is nearer to Islam than to Hinduism.”**

Unfortunately, he is dead wrong on both counts. As for the comparison with Hinduism Dr. Baldev Singh's article, which is this entire issue, explodes that myth. Comparison with Islam and the other two Middle Eastern religions, Judaism and Christianity, all three the people of the Book and believers in One God, is also not kosher. Although all three believe in One God and share historical personalities, **each one of them has their own separate One God.** Jews claim to be the chosen people of their God who bequeathed for eternity strictly for them the lands of Palestine and they are still waiting for their Messiah. Christian God delivered his own son to die for the sins of only those who will accept his son as their savior and had him crucified but only to raise him from the dead to come back to the earth for the second and the last time. Muslim God declared Mohammed the last prophet among the peoples of the book, with no more to come. **Guru Nanak does not agree with any of it.** His God is loving and merciful God of the entire universe and all the creation in it.

In this issue we are presenting a revolutionary interpretation of Gurbani by Dr. Baldev Singh. It will, no doubt, cause controversy. We would welcome reasoned response to further the intellectual discussion that involves the use of '**bibek budhi**'.
Hardev Singh Shergill

[Editor's Note: Entire January-February 2009 issue of The Sikh Bulletin was devoted to the writings of Dr. Baldev Singh. It can be accessed at www.sikhbulletin.com . Sikh Qaum suffered a great loss when Dr. Baldev Singh passed away on October 1, 2009 at Yuba City, California.]

EDITORIAL
[From March April 2012 Sikh Bulletin]
EVOLUTION OF GOD

By the time I stepped into my teenage years I had become a confirmed agnostic. I did not know much about religion and concept of God to deny the existence of the latter so I could not be an atheist. But I did know enough from observation and reading literature that God, as being described and worshipped, could not exist. In the mostly Hindu literature that I read it seemed that any time someone with a long and hard tapasya got within reach of God, he would send a heavenly prostitute (apasra) to make them fall from grace.

It was in my sixties that I got introduced to Guru Nanak's concept of God and that God, I thought, I could accept because it was unlike any other God and whom everyone could accept. More on Guru Nanak's concept of God will be the subject of next issue of The Sikh Bulletin.

One of the writings that explained the meaning of Moolmantar/Manglacharan, the very first words in Guru Granth Sahib, was that of Dr. Devinder Singh Chahal. Starting with the September-October 2011 issue of The Sikh Bulletin, in which we published a review of his book "Nankian Philosophy: Basics for Humanity", we have begun publishing chapters from that book in every successive issue. This issue has 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 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.**

Religion was created to bring order to the social organization in the absence of secular codes of conduct and means to enforce their implementation. God did not appear on Mount Sinai to Moses. Moses himself chiseled the Ten Commandments on a slab of stone to put fear of God to control the desperate and increasingly unruly people. 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 had not 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.

While reading this book I also came across a couple of Hebrew words that carry the same meaning in Punjabi. Hebrew word for RIVER is NAHAR (flowing water) and Hebrew God of death is called MOT (מֹת). Another similarity that comes to mind is the Biblical concept of **Adam and Eve** and Panjabi saying of '*Baba Adam they valae di*', '*from the time of Grandfather Adam*' when describing something ancient. Also Panjabi word for man is **Adami**. Somehow in Panjab 'Eve' got dropped out but now the science has given us a brand new Eve, the African mother of entire current human race. That makes all of us, Jews, Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Jains and Nanak Panthis, cousins. It certainly applies to me. My first name is Indian and last name is Persian. **Har** and **Dev** in Hardev is obviously Indian, reference to God in Hinduism. Last name Shergill, **Sher** + **Gill**, means lion and wet earth in Persian. My family is ancestral farmers. My uncle, Principal Gurbax Singh Shergill, was the first person in our family to go to College and abandon farming for field of Education. I followed in his footsteps. Panjabi and Persian both descended from Indo European language of the Indo European people who for some reason perhaps 5000 years ago moved from Caucasus Mountains and shores of Caspian Sea, east to northern India and west to British Isles. Hence we are Caucasians. My ancestors could have pulled out their stakes from the rich farming land of Gilan province of present day Iran, along the shores of southern Caspian Sea. In northern India we are Gils, Gills, Shergills, Gilanis and many Gills have dropped this last name but there is human memory behind their new names. In British Isles they are Gils, Gills, McGills, Cowgills, Scargills, and Gilmores.

Whether multiple Gods preceded or followed the One God the fact remains that idols were an integral part of that belief system. Mohammed pitted himself against idol worship in the Arab world and was successful. Christianity had the same effect in Greece where the stone images of Gods lie in ruin. But stone Gods are alive and well in Hindu India. Over centuries nothing has changed. There is so much in common between Greek and Hindu mythology and human and animal mix in their Gods that it is hard to miss.

Finally, the concept of Miri Piri in Sikhism is the tail end of the ancient concept of religion and politics, being the flip sides of the same coin. Its impracticality is shown by the current control of SGPC by the Badal clan in Punjab.

Hardev Singh Shergill

EDITORIAL

[From May-June 2012 Sikh Bulletin]

GURU NANAK'S GOD

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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).

Guru Nanak is quite certain that God is a singularity, unlike Hindu or Christian Trinity, and calls it Truth. 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 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.**

Guru Nanak's belief in One God was so absolute that the very next thing that follows the opening verse is:

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||

Of all the creatures in Its Creation only human species is equipped with *budhi* (brain, mind, intelligence, wisdom). Guru Nanak puts so much importance on *bibek budhi* (discerning mind) that he wants us to use it even when listening to him.

Unfortunately, when it comes to understanding Gurbani, 99.9% of us do not use *bibek budhi* and they end up as mindless *sangat* listening to fables in the Gurdwaras or devoted *chelas* in *deras* which are more numerous than the villages in Panjab.

Those who do use *bibek budhi*, use it in two different ways. Those who think intuitively do not perceive God as Guru Nanak would want them to. For them God is traditional to whom they can pray for Its protection, largesse and favoritism. It also requires no effort. Rare are those individuals who think of God analytically, the way Guru Nanak did, that requires more effort.

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.

So how can we describe in simple easy to understand words Guru Nanak's God? We will have to elaborate on the traditional interpretation of the opening verse. It describes God definitely not human or any other life form because it has neither a form nor any human attributes such as fear and enmity. 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 *sunni*, nothingness. Out of this nothingness It created the cosmos, in an instant.

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

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

Guru Nanak's God is inside every living cell of our bodies. Truth be told that our bodies are made of stardust 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.

Following excerpt from the Jan-Feb 2009 Sikh Bulletin editorial is appropriate here:

"Guru Nanak (1469-1539 CE) originated a unique philosophy and challenged the existing concepts about God, heaven, hell, reincarnation, transmigration, idol worship, caste system, astrology, mantra systems, etc. in Southeast Asia."

Amen! Halleluiah! This quote came to me from a Sikh scholar who is doing a great service to the cause of Sikhi and I could not help but compliment him and told him that I agreed with his quote whole heartedly.

To that I added that Guru Nanak was not a prophet in the sense of Biblical or Muslim prophets who claimed to speak to or spoken to by God, directly as in the case of Moses or indirectly, as in the case of Mohammed who had an Angel as an intermediary. When Bani talks about 'dhur-ki-bani' it is not God talking to Nanak; **Sikhi is not a 'revealed' religion**; it is born out of Gurus life experience; it is Guru's own inspiration and thought process that inspires him to seek and speak fundamental truths. He wrote back that he was pleased to read my response but observed, **“No Sikh scholar could dare to say what you have said.”**

He is right and therein lies the tragedy. I am not afraid to say it precisely because I am not a scholar. The tragedy is that Sikh scholars are too fearful of consequences if they break with the established tradition, as Mr. Tohra had explained away the unsikh practice of denial of sewa to the women at Harmander Sahib because of the long established tradition. The fact that Guru Nanak had broken many traditions going back centuries was inconsequential.”

In a random email exchanges on the internet among many, the following caught my attention: **“Do the Sikhs really know who the Nanak is? Is he Guru or mystic or reformer or philosopher or scientist or something else?”** The person who wrote that was also the person who triggered my response above. That was Dr. Devinder Singh Chahal, whose book ‘Nanakian Philosophy’ we are serializing in The Sikh Bulletin.

Freed Zakaria, in his book ‘The Post American World, Release 2.0’ writes, “Indeed, the hundred years between 1450 and 1550 marked the most significant break in human history – between faith, ritual and dogma, on the one hand and observation, experimentation and critical thought, on the other. And it happened in Europe...”

Freed is referring to the period of **Renaissance in Europe**. One of the personalities of that period in Europe was **Copernicus (1473-1543)** who went against the teachings of Catholic Church by asserting that it was the earth that was revolving around the Sun and not the other way around. At the same time in India **Guru Nanak (1469-1539)** was challenging the Hindu concept of cosmos by asserting that there are countless earths, moons and suns and that their movements were governed by Laws of Nature.

Freed Zakaria does not know that Nanak existed; nor did Jawahar Lal Nehru. But we, the Sikhs, cannot lay entire blame on Zakarias and Nehrus. The religious scholars and religious leaders that we have produced have mostly been copy cats and influenced by right wing Hindu organizations such as Rashtriya Sikh Sangat and institutions of learning such as Banaras Hindu University. One of our recent and notorious in terms of ethics ‘Jathedar’ was a Vedanti, not a scholar of Gurbani. Central government, which is basically a Hindu government, whether Congress or BJP, has also done everything in its power to deny us our true faith. Indian constitution pronounces us Hindus as does most of the world.

Hardev Singh Shergill

EDITORIAL [II]

(From the July-August 2012 Sikh Bulletin)

GURBANI & SIKH REHT MARYADA SOME CONTRADICTIONS

Quotes from Guru Granth Sahib:

ਏਕੁ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਤੂ ਮੇਰਾ ਗੁਰ ਹਾਈ ॥

The One God is our father; we are the children of the One God. You are our Guru. GGS Page 611

ਨਾ ਕੇ ਬੈਰੀ ਨਹੀ ਬਿਗਾਨਾ ਸਗਲ ਸੰਗਿ ਹਮ ਕਉ ਬਨਿ ਆਈ ॥੧॥

*No one is my enemy, and no one is a stranger.
I get along with everyone. GGS Page 1299*

Both 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. Guru Nanak preached the same thing 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. Scientific research on human origins confirms the same thing. In fact it even pin points the origin of the human race to an 'African Mother'.

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 all of humanity is the child of one God then why discriminate in the name of religion, which is man-made?

It is logical to assume from the above quotes that a Sikh can be recognized by his appearance alone. A key determinant of that is unshorn hair. Yet there is no mention of the requirement for a

Sikh to keep unshorn hair in Guru Granth Sahib. If anything, it says that it makes no difference to the creator whether we keep long hair or a bald head; what counts are our deeds, our conduct in our daily lives.

ਕਬੀਰ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਏਕ ਸਿਉਂ ਕੀਏ ਆਨ ਦੁਬਿਧਾ ਜਾਇ॥
ਭਾਵੈ ਲਾਂਬੇ ਕੇਸ ਕਰੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਘਰਰਿ ਮੁਡਾਇ॥ GGS ਪ। 1365।

If the Gurus kept unshorn hair, covered with a turban, they were simply following one of the then prevalent Indian customs that also included completely shorn and partially shorn hair. It was Hindus and Muslims, in various forms of appearance, who came to listen to the Gurus and none was barred based on their appearance or for any other reason.

Mardana, a Muslim, perhaps should be considered first among Guru Nanak's Sikhs because he spent his entire adult life in Guru's company and provided music for Guru's hymns. Today his descendants are not allowed to perform kirtan at Darbar Sahib or any other Gurdwara.

The requirement of keeping unshorn hair started with the tenth Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh, but only for those who volunteered to partake 'khande-di-pahul' and alongwith unshorn hair they were also required to carry four more articles of faith. At no time were the non-pahuldhari Sikhs considered any lesser.

In time the children of pahuldhari Sikhs, and many others, started keeping long hair without taking pahul, and now we are at a point where non-kesadhari Sikh is not just looked down upon but not even considered a Sikh. There is one kesadhari and pahuldhari sect among us that does not consider as Sikhs even those kesadhari and pahuldhari Sikhs who have not been baptized by their ritual and do not agree with their interpretation of Gurbani. Members of this group have resorted to violence in UK, Canada and USA to stop missionaries trained in Gurmat Gian Colleges from performing katha in our gurdwaras.

It is an interesting coincidence that both terms, **Sikh** and **Taliban**, literally mean the same thing, 'the student'. Unfortunately, we have seen the emergence of Sikh Taliban in the Diaspora. **We should never forget that a Sikh is one who lives by the teachings enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib that embodies the philosophy of Guru Nanak. Gurus lived their lives as they preached. There was no difference in their kathani and karni and they did not expect anything less from their Sikhs.**

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

"Here I would like to confess to my personal belief that might be considered a blasphemy and offend most people, even those who know me well. That is that Guru Nanak did not initiate another religion. There were too many religions and divisions among them in his time as is the case today. Today he will surely say that 'I am neither a Hindu nor a Muslim; neither a Sikh nor a Christian'. He showed mankind a path to life and living. The tragedy is that 'well meaning people', which would be 99.9% of us all, have turned it into yet another divisive and suffocating faith."

Several days after this issue of the Sikh Bulletin was released on the internet, Dr. Harbans Lal sent me an article for publications about the findings of **Syed Mushtaq Hussain Mirpuri**, a Kashmiri Muslim, during his stay at a madrassa in Mecca from 1927-1930. The following quote is from that article to be published in the September-October 2012 issue of the Sikh Bulletin:

*“Siyah to Baba Nanak Shah Faqir, by **Haji Tajjudin Naqshbandhi**, who had met Guru Nanak during the hajj. Tajjudin caught up with Guru Nanak in the town of Undlas located between Erar and Bagdad and travelled thereafter with him as a member of his entourage. **He thus remained with Guru Nanak during the years of 1504-06.***

*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.*

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, about ten years ago. 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 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 Guru period and The Mughal period were contemporary. There should be a wealth of original information in the archives of the Mogul Empire in Persian, the official language of the court. We need to train future researchers, proficient in Panjabi, Persian and English.

Hardev S. Shergill

EDITORIAL
NANAK (1469-1539)
The One and Only of His Kind
(From the November-December 2012 Sikh Bulletin)

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)**, thousands of miles apart and unknown to each other, arrived at the **same conclusion about the cosmos, including that it is in constant change.**

Guru Nanak also planted the seeds of the future successes to come in the field of science, such as: the Big Bang theory, EMC², 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.

First article in this issue is "**Origin of Universe**", Chapter 15 of Dr Devinder Singh Chahal's book, '*Nanakian Philosophy*'. It is worth repeating here the first two paragraphs in his introduction to this chapter to illustrate the above point:

"I would like to quote the following statement of Carl Sagan before describing the origin of universe according to Nanakian Philosophy: "**A religion, old or new, that stressed the magnificence of the universe as revealed by modern science, might be able to draw forth reserves of reverence and awe hardly tapped by the conventional faiths. Sooner or later, such a religion will emerge**". Carl Sagan, Pale Blue Dot (1995) [17].

"I was wonder-struck when I came across the above statement of Carl Sagan. I immediately went back to the 15th century, when the science was just emerging as a powerful tool to find the truth; Guru Nanak was describing the origin of universe, which appears to be very close to scientific version of today. And he laid the foundation of a new religion, Sikhi (Sikhism), which is now being envisioned by Carl Sagan as above".

Magnificence of the universe described with reverence and awe and that too through poetry is what Carl Sagan wanted a religion to stress; how sad that we who claim to be the lawful recipients of this priceless gift have it hidden from every Carl Sagan of this world.

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.** Advocate Surinder Singh Kanwar, in his article in this issue, '*sikh-di-pehchaan*' makes the same point that **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 what **S. Parminder Singh Parmar** in his article

in this issue calls *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.

In a random email exchanges on the internet, among many, the following had caught my attention: *“Do the Sikhs really know who the Nanak is? Is he Guru or mystic or reformer or philosopher or scientist or something else?”* The person who wrote that was **Dr. Devinder Singh Chahal**, and that triggered our serialization of his book ‘**Nanakian Philosophy**’ in **The Sikh Bulletin.**

I humbly submit, and beseech discerning minds among us, to consider that Guru Nanak was all of these. As **Principal Sawan Singh Gogia** aptly states in his article in this issue, ‘*Guru Nanak Dev about Muslims*’: **“His tenets preach liberation of humanity from social, political, religious and economic exploitation.”**

Blinded by our egos we have turned a pipe dream of life after death into an article of blind faith and invented Gods and Goddesses as impeccable witnesses to it. And then some of us have the audacity to claim that God created mankind in His image. But unfortunately it is all based on falsehood and this falsehood is the basis of all the world's religions. **Blind have been and are leading the Blind.**

In this country, the United States of America, a Republican Medical Doctor can unashamedly claim the world to be 6,000 years old (younger than Chinese history) because The Bible says so. A young and University educated type, Republican potential 2016 Presidential candidate, when cornered about the same question hee-hawed but did not commit himself to the answer by alleging not being a scientist. All this because a sizeable majority of the 47% who voted for Republican Presidential Candidate Mitt Romney believe in that kind of falsehood being preached in multiple denominational Christian Churches and over radio waves. They also oppose teaching of Theory of Evolution in their schools; God created man in his image; this in a country that claims to be the leader of the world.

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. I used to think that the story of young Nanak being punished by his father for distributing the purchases he made for the family business to Sadhus and Santa as a myth. But upon meeting Col. Manmohan

Singh Scout on internet through his translation of JappBani he convinced that that myth could be a fact. According to him these wandering Sadhus must have become a resource for inquisitive young Nanak about the outside world, the holy places where large crowds gathered.

He was also an accomplished linguist. Otherwise how could he have communicated with all those diverse people in and around the Indian sub-continent? As **Dr. Sarbjit Singh** of Mumbai states in his article in this issue, *'Guru Nanak Sahib knew more than hundred languages'*.

He formulated his philosophy by use of his keen observation and use of his *bibek budhi* (discerning mind). His disappearance from home for three days or so was also not a myth. He did not stay submerged in the water for that period but waded across the stream to do some introspection in the quiet of the forest. Once his mission was clear to him he took leave of his young family of a wife and two teenage sons 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. That also made it possible for the Pandit whose janaeu ceremony was spurned by Nanak to take his revenge by turning his sons against their own father.

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

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

He had simple and straightforward messages for all the world's religions. To those who sought salvation in after life but went begging for food at the door of a householder in this life, Nanak prescribed the **life of a householder and to seek salvation in this life.**

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

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

To those who faced towards a specific direction while praying (Muslims) Guru revealed that Creator 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.

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. This editorial is followed by some selections from GGS to illustrate these points.

The opening verse:

ੴ ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

"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."

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. **In the opening line of 'Jap' Guru unequivocally reasserts his firm belief that what he is saying is an absolute truth.**

ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ ॥

ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੇਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥੧॥

ਅਰਥ:- ਹੇ ਨਾਨਕ! ਅਕਾਲ ਪੁਰਖ ਮੁੱਢ ਤੋਂ ਹੋਂਦ ਵਾਲਾ ਹੈ, ਜੁਗਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਢ ਤੋਂ ਮੌਜੂਦ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਭੀ ਮੌਜੂਦ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਅਗਾਂਹ ਨੂੰ ਭੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਵਾਲਾ ਰਹੇਗਾ।੧।

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

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

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 $E=MC^2$.

Hardev Singh Shergill

EDITORIAL

PRAYER - ARDAAS

From SB January-February 2013

Practice of prayer has a universal presence in all societies, primitive to very advanced and in all the religions. Whether it helps or not is another matter and depends upon an individual's beliefs. One thing is certain, however, prayer might help a person if it is about self and that not because of any divine intervention but because of the **placebo effect**, well known in the field of medicine. To pray for someone else's good health, rainfall during drought and world peace is a fruitless exercise.

Dr. Chahal, in his article on Ardaas (p.2) with extensive quotes from Gurbani has come to the conclusion that Guru Nanak's belief about prayer was different from what his followers are now proclaiming and practicing, and it is best summed up by his quote by Albert Einstein:

“Scientific research is based on the idea that everything that takes place is determined by laws of nature, and therefore this holds for the actions of people. For this reason, a research scientist will hardly be inclined to believe that events could be influenced by a prayer, i.e. by a wish addressed to a supernatural Being.”

Had Albert Einstein read the philosophy of Guru Nanak he would have said that same advice was given by Guru Nanak during the 15th century (the Period of Renaissance in Europe) to the people of the Indian Sub-continent and the Middle East.

Prayer is an essential component of all the faiths but in the Sikh prayer that is recited in Gurdwaras and homes there are glaring words and phrases that are in **conflict with Gurbani**. Commencing word, **‘Bhagauti’** and **‘meditate then on revered Hari Krishan on seeing whom all suffering vanishes’** are just two examples.

Dr. Chahal has correctly pointed out that a Sikh’s Ardaas is found in the Guru Granth Sahib itself. **This Ardaas begs for nothing from the Creator** because the Creator has already provided all the means of sustaining all the living things, including mankind. **In this Ardaas a Sikh offers thanks to the Creator for Its bountiful blessings and describes Creator’s characteristics.**

The Ardaas that Dr. Chahal chose from the Guru Granth Sahib is from **page 268**. He has given a better English rendition than the literal ones you will find. Same Ardaas is presented below with meanings in Panjabi by Professor Sahib Singh:

ਤੂੰ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਤੁਮ ਪਹਿ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ॥
ਜੀਉ ਪਿੰਡੁ ਸਭੁ ਤੇਰੀ ਰਾਸਿ ॥
ਤੁਮ ਮਾਤ ਪਿਤਾ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਤੇਰੇ ॥
ਤੁਮਰੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਮਹਿ ਸੂਖ ਘਨੇਰੇ ॥
ਕੇਇ ਨ ਜਾਨੈ ਤੁਮਰਾ ਅੰਤੁ ॥
ਉਚੇ ਤੇ ਉਚਾ ਭਗਵੰਤ ॥
ਸਗਲ ਸਮਗ੍ਰੀ ਤੁਮਰੈ ਸੂਤ੍ਰਿ ਧਾਰੀ ॥
ਤੁਮ ਤੇ ਹੋਇ ਸੁ ਆਗਿਆਕਾਰੀ ॥
ਤੁਮਰੀ ਗਤਿ ਮਿਤਿ ਤੁਮ ਹੀ ਜਾਨੀ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਦਾਸ ਸਦਾ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀ ॥੮॥੪॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 268}

ਅਰਥ:- (ਹੇ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ!) ਤੂੰ ਮਾਲਿਕ ਹੈਂ (ਸਾਡੀ ਜੀਵਾਂ ਦੀ) ਅਰਜ਼ ਤੇਰੇ ਅੱਗੇ ਹੀ ਹੈ, ਇਹ ਜਿੰਦ ਤੇ ਸਰੀਰ (ਜੋ ਤੂੰ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ) ਸਭ ਤੇਰੀ ਹੀ ਬਖਸ਼ੀਸ਼ ਹੈ ।
ਤੂੰ ਸਾਡਾ ਮਾਂ ਪਿਉ ਹੈਂ, ਅਸੀਂ ਤੇਰੇ ਬਾਲ ਹਾਂ, ਤੇਰੀ ਮੇਹਰ (ਦੀ ਨਜ਼ਰ) ਵਿਚ ਬੇਅੰਤ ਸੁਖ ਹਨ ।

ਕੋਈ ਤੇਰਾ ਅੰਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਾ ਸਕਦਾ, (ਕਿਉਂਕਿ) ਤੂੰ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਉੱਚਾ ਭਗਵਾਨ ਹੈਂ ।
(ਜਗਤ ਦੇ) ਸਾਰੇ ਪਦਾਰਥ ਤੇਰੇ ਹੀ ਹੁਕਮ ਵਿਚ ਟਿਕੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ; ਤੇਰੀ ਰਚੀ ਹੋਈ ਸ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਤੇਰੀ ਹੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਵਿਚ ਤੁਰ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ ।

ਤੂੰ ਕਿਹੋ ਜਿਹਾ ਹੈਂ ਤੇ ਕੇਡਾ ਵੱਡਾ ਹੈਂ—ਇਹ ਤੂੰ ਆਪ ਹੀ ਜਾਣਦਾ ਹੈਂ । ਹੇ ਨਾਨਕ! (ਆਖ, ਹੇ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ!) ਤੇਰੇ ਸੇਵਕ
(ਤੈਥੋਂ) ਸਦਾ ਸਦਕੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ । 18।4।

Hardev Singh Shergill

SIKH ARDAS/PRAAYER

**Campus-Community Memorial Service
For the victims of the Tsunami Tragedy
Activities and Recreational Center, U. C. Davis
Tuesday, January 25, 2005**

[Author was invited by UC Davis Chancellor's office to join in an inter religious service for the victims of Tsunami disaster and "make remarks and/or offer a prayer that reflects their religious perspective on dealing with tragedies of this nature i.e. mourning, grieving, death and moving forward with life". Opening prayer was offered by the representative of the Sikh community, Hardev Singh Shergill.]

Mr. Chancellor, Lady Mayor, Faculty and Student body of UC Davis and invited guests:

At 500 years Sikhism is the youngest of the world's great religions **and the least understood**. On behalf of the Sikh Community in this country I thank you for honoring it by inviting one of its members to participate in this memorial service for the victims of tsunami tragedy.

Our Gurus bequeathed to us their writings and writings of Hindu *bhagats* and Muslim *faqirs* in the form of Guru Granth Sahib, the holy scripture of the Sikhs and the only scripture actually authored by the founders themselves unlike all the other religions that were written by others long after the founders passed away. For Guru's advice concerning any human experience we look to this Gurus' written word.

Gurus have used every word for God that was prevalent in 15th century India, including Ram of Hindus and Allah of Muslims. **The most all-encompassing Sikh term for God is '*karta purakh*', The Creator of the universe, both visible and invisible.**

This Creator is One and is Real. Creator existed before the creation and will be after this creation has run its course. Universe that we see is real but is ever changing. It has been created, destroyed and created again in an unending cycle. Anything that is created will come to an end. Only the Creator is everlasting and permeates the entire creation.

Entire mankind is one family. We are all children of the same God. **That God is not vengeful.** Although God created the universe and all that is in it, **God does not micromanage it.** God has established certain **immutable natural laws that Gurus have called '*hukam*'**. Everything in the universe, animate or inanimate, obeys those natural laws.

Anything that takes birth must die. To mourn and to grieve at death is human but moving forward with life is to accept the '*hukam*' with equanimity. Pain and pleasure are like robes that

hang in everybody's wardrobe. To accept the tragedies and triumphs of life in good grace is the essence of living in the shadow of the Creator.

Of all the creatures, Creator has given to the humans the gift of intelligence that, Guru Nanak called '*bibek-budhi*', (**discerning mind**) to discover the immutable laws of nature and use the gift of technology and self-effort to minimize the danger to humans and other life forms and maximize the comfort and quality of life. **Every tragedy is a stepping stone to the triumph of human spirit.**

Selfless effort to ameliorate the effects of tragedy is the best prayer. Joy and grief, the human emotions, are the gifts from the Creator. We have to learn to experience them without extremes. That is the meaning of living under '*hukam*'.

Guru says that the heaven and hell are right here on this earth. We make them by our own deeds and experience them only in this life. Man has invited tragedy by inhabiting places that are subject to natural disasters. Man can surmount any future tragedies by using caution and technology. Rim of the Indian Ocean has been converted into a hell for those directly affected. For the rest of the mankind it is an opportunity to convert this hell into heaven.

Sikh Prayer is on P.268 of GGS Holy Scripture. It makes no personal request to the Creator. It simply thanks the Creator for the bounties It itself has showered on all its Creation.

Please rise for the Sikh Prayer

*You are the Lord, we pray to You.
You have graced us with our body and being.
You are our mother and father and we are your children.
You have showered us with bountiful gifts.
Nobody can fathom your limits.
Only you are Supreme.
Whole universe is governed by your '*hukam*'.
Whatever you have created obeys your command.
Only you know the extent and condition of your greatness.
O God, Nanak, your devotee, is sacrifice to You.
Dear God of us all, Nanak beseeches you to bless us all. P.268*

Thank you. Please be seated.

**ਤੂ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਤੁਮ ਪਹਿ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ॥
ਜੀਉ ਪਿੰਡੁ ਸਭੁ ਤੇਰੀ ਰਾਸਿ ॥
ਤੁਮ ਮਾਤ ਪਿਤਾ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਤੇਰੇ ॥**

ਤੁਮਰੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਮਹਿ ਸੂਖ ਘਨੇਰੇ ॥
ਕੋਇ ਨ ਜਾਨੈ ਤੁਮਰਾ ਅੰਤੁ ॥
ਉਚੇ ਤੇ ਉਚਾ ਭਗਵੰਤ ॥
ਸਗਲ ਸਮਗ੍ਰੀ ਤੁਮਰੈ ਸੂਤ੍ਰਿ ਧਾਰੀ ॥
ਤੁਮ ਤੇ ਹੋਇ ਸੁ ਆਗਿਆਕਾਰੀ ॥
ਤੁਮਰੀ ਗਤਿ ਮਿਤਿ ਤੁਮ ਹੀ ਜਾਨੀ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਦਾਸ ਸਦਾ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀ ॥੮॥੪॥ {ਪੰਨਾ 268}

Hardev Singh Shergill

EDITORIAL
RECASTING OF THE SIKH BULLETIN
November-December 1999 – March-April 2013
AS
GURU NANAK MISSION
[From March-April 2013 SB]

The Sikh Bulletin commenced publication in November 1999 with the sole objective of bringing about reformation in Sikhi. But it has become clear; to me at least, that Sikhi cannot be reformed. After considerable soul searching it became obvious why not. A look back at the history of all the world's major religions reveals that no religion has ever been reformed. In fact there has been only one, initially successful, attempt at reformation when **Martin Luther (1483-1546)** ushered **Protestant Reformation** with his **95 Theses** followed by **Edict of Worms in 1521**. Today Catholic Church is still one but Protestant Churches have multiplied. Interestingly, in the same period, in his own unique way, Guru Nanak (1469-1539) was trying to bring about simultaneous reformation in Hinduism and Islam in the Indian sub-continent. **He did not succeed and I strongly believe that he did not start a new religion.** Sikhi just happened, in due time, in response to evolving social and political circumstances. In this last issue of The Sikh Bulletin I would like to acknowledge the selfless contribution, from the goodness of their hearts, by several people and record a synopsis of the very brief life of this publication in its original direction.

TWO FACES RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PUBLICATION OF THE SIKH BULLETIN



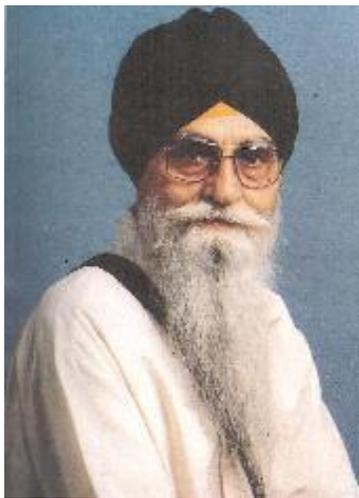
Sarbjit Singh Sandhu

Amrinder Singh Sandhu

I am very grateful to S. Sarbjit Singh Sandhu and his eldest son Amrinder Singh Sandhu of Elk Grove, California. Without their dedicated support I would not have been able to publish the Bulletin for so long.

Sarbjit Singh is a 1985-86 graduate of the two year correspondence Gurmat course from the Sikh Missionary College, Field Ganj, Ludhiana, Panjab. It was this background that enabled him to understand that **Gurbakhsh Singh Kala Afghana's** thinking was on right track. If he had not taken those courses and had not acquired some knowledge of Gurbani, he himself thinks that he would have been a critic of Kala Afghana. Basic understanding of Gurbani, he says, was essential to understand and appreciate Kala Afghana.

Mr. Sandhu came into contact with me in response to my open letter '*Sikhan-di-talash*'. I had circulated one thousand copies of that open letter on **May 29, 1998**. As a direct result of that letter I received a phone call from Collegeville, PA to call a certain party in Sydney, Australia, who in turn asked me to go see **S. Gurbakhsh Singh Kala Afghana** in Seattle, Washington, which I did, and I invited S. Kala Afghana to visit us at Sikh Center Roseville for a week or two and he very kindly agreed.



S. Gurbakhsh Singh Kala Afghana



S. Gian Singh 1941-Feb. 11, 2013

I then spread the word around Sacramento to invite people with knowledge of Gurbani to come to listen to him. **Sarbjit Singh Sandhu** was one of them and he brought with him late **S. Gian Singh of Elk Grove**, who not only commented favourably on discourses of S. Kala Afghana but also became a very active member of our reform movement. His own discourses on Gurbani were also extremely valuable and he gave freely of his time. He is sorely missed. He was a graduate of both the University of New Delhi and Missionary College Delhi.

Soon after we started on this course of **reformation in Sikhi**, I had the good fortune of meeting late **Dr. Sulakhan Singh Dhillon of Berkeley, California**. I being so green in matters of knowledge of Gurbani and paucity of acquaintance with scholars in this field, he took me under his wings, so to speak. In the words of his wife, **Mrs. Darleen Dhillon**, *“He was a wonderful Sikh, embodying all the best teachings, and showing by example what a Sikh should be. He was my hero and best friend as well as my dear husband of 42 years.”*



Dr. Sulakhan Singh Dhillon (1927-2004) Dr Sarjeet Singh Sidhu, Malaysia

S. Gurpal Singh Khaira

I first met him in his role as a founder member of the group that started teaching of **Panjabi at the U. C. Berkeley**. He helped me hold educational and informational seminars at the Sikh Center Roseville to which he brought as speakers and resource persons educators from the faculties at the University of The Pacific in Stockton and Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B. C., Canada. His passing, in blissful sleep, was a great personal loss to me but even more so for the Sikh community because he was a unifier and a bridge builder.

He helped arrange our **first annual conference in November 1999** to which **Dr. Pashaura Singh** was especially invited, his first appearance at a gathering of Sikhs since his thesis controversy. Coincidentally, **Pashaura Singh**, before he obtained his Ph. D. Degree, performed the Anandkarj ceremony for my wedding in 1985 when he was Head Granthi at the first Gurdwara in Calgary, Canada. **Notable achievements of this conference were:**

1. Adoption of **Nanakshahi Calendar**, as presented by Pal Singh Purewal, in its original form, at this conference, long before the SGPC finally approved it.
2. Substituting words ‘**Akal Purakh**’ for ‘**Bhagauti**’ in the Sikh Ardaas.
3. Birth of The **Sikh Bulletin** as an instrument of reform in Sikhi.

4. Initiation of practice of **annual conferences**.

Very successful 2003 conference in Chandigarh was followed by six conferences in six countries on six weekends of September and October 2004. First of those conferences was held at **Melaka, Malaysia**. It was at that conference that I first heard and met **Dr. Sarjeet Singh Sidhu**. That association was to lead to many articles and some guest editorials by him for The Sikh Bulletin. **He has been a big partner in our efforts at reformation in Sikhi.**

Dato' **Dr Sarjeet Singh Sidhu**, an alumnus of the Royal Military College, is a Fellow of the Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists (FRCOG), and a senior Obstetrician & Gynaecologist. He has served his country faithfully, both in the Health Ministry and the Defence Ministry. His last Govt. posting was as State Consultant Obstetrician & Gynaecologist in Terengganu. Whilst a Captain with the Army he served as Senior Medical Officer in 2 Brigade in Ipoh, saw active duty in several Military Operations including joint operations with Thailand, as well as Staff Officer at 1st Division, Kuching and at RASCOM, Sibul.

From 1985 until June 2011 he was in private practice as a consultant Obstetrician & Gynecologist. He now teaches Obs and Gynae full time at the Royal College of Medicine Perak in Ipoh, his hometown.

He is an active member of several Medical Societies, including the Malaysian Medical Association, having served as its Hon. Deputy Secretary, its Ex Co and Council, and still serves on several important committees of the Association. His abiding interest in the study of Law led him to do his LLB which he passed with Honours from the University of London in 2002.

Dato' Dr Sarjeet is also actively involved in Punjabi Education and is well-known within Sikh circles, both locally and internationally, for his critical views on Sikhism – his articles have been published in several reputable Sikh Journals. He serves on the Editorial Board of *Understanding Sikhism: A Research Journal*, published from Canada, and on the Editorial Board of *The Sikh Bulletin* published from USA.

On the local (Malaysian) front he is actively involved in serving the Sikh Community through the activities of UPSO Foundation (of which he is the founding and current Vice-Chairman) as well as several other Sikh Organisations.

For his services to the State he was awarded the DPMP, which carries the title Dato', by HRH Sultan Perak.

DATO' DR SARJEET SINGH SIDHU *DPMP*
MBBS, FRCOG, FICS, LLB (HONS.), AM (M'SIA)

Next person who came into my Sikhi Reformation life has very kindly agreed to assume the major responsibility for the publication of The Sikh Bulletin in its new vision, as Editor-In-Chief, to carry the message of Guru Nanak to the non-Sikhs and to those Sikhs who choose to listen to unadulterated version of Gurbani, unencumbered by rituals and miracles being practiced in all of our Gurdwaras, including Darbar Sahib. He is **S. Gurpal Singh Khaira**. This is due to some health reasons that I am recovering from.

Gurpal Singh Khaira left India at a very young age and was educated in England and Canada. After a very successful career at upper management level in the **Canadian Government** and private sector which took him all over the world, he retired to Sacramento area to be closer to his Doctor Sons and grandchildren. He is a Punjabi language poet and fiction writer and loves Sikh classical kirtan music.

He had been very active most of his life organizing Sikh conferences to teach and propagate **Guru Nanak's mission** as enshrined in Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. He had been frequent speaker at Sikh forums and his articles have been published in Sikh Review, Sikh Bulletin, and other local publication.

He started visiting us in Roseville around the year 2000 when he moved to this area from Southern California. This was the time when we had decided to call our reform movement '**Singh Sabha International**'.

I address him as Singh Sahib because he really foots the bill; he considers me as his older brother. But more appropriately he would be my brother-in-law because he is married to a Shergill from my ancestral village, **Chak Bilgan**, in **District Jalandhar** that my great-grandmother and her family left for **Bikaner** state nine decades ago, my great-grandfather having passed away at a rather young age. Or it could be a relationship one generation up or down. It is not unusual among large families that have stayed in the same place over a long period of time to have age differences that create unusual relationships.

The only time I went to my family's ancestral village was when my father took me there when I was six years old. I remember three things from that visit:

1. Mela at Kultham with all its fun events.
2. Train with just as many passengers riding on the roof as inside and a whole lot hanging from the doors.
3. And in the house of my father's second cousin kids twice my age looking at me and giggling while addressing me as their granduncle.

Being a student of History, Geography and Indo-European language I cannot help but wonder where my family's roots lie in the distant past. North Indians belong to a group called **Caucasians** because they supposedly migrated east and west from the region of Caucasus Mountains. The two syllables of my first name '**Har**' and '**Dev**' have clearly Indian connotation because in Hinduism they both refer to 'God'. The two syllables of my last name '**Sher**' and '**Gill**', however, are clearly of **Persian** origin, meaning '**Lion**' (**Shir**) and '**soil**' in **Persian**. A northern province of Iran that slopes down from the mountains to the shores of the Caspian Sea is called '**Gilan**' and its inhabitants are called '**Gils**/'**Gilanis**'. Surname Gill or versions of it are widespread. Pakistan has Gilani surnames, Pakistan and India have Gills and Shergills, British Isles have Gils, Gills, McGills, Cowgills and Scargills.

Sorry I got carried away; you cannot be immersed in Gurbani and not think everybody is your cousin.

ਏਕੁ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਤੂ ਮੇਰਾ ਗੁਰ ਹਾਈ ॥ GGS P 611

ਨਾ ਕੈ ਬੈਰੀ ਨਹੀ ਬਿਗਾਨਾ ਸਗਲ ਸੰਗਿ ਹਮ ਕਉ ਬਨਿ ਆਈ ॥ GGS P. 1299

*Meaning: We are all children of one Kartar/Creator.
No one is my enemy; or a stranger; I get along with everyone.*

Kartar and Creator are both words from Indo-European language. If you remove the vowels the consonants are exactly the same in both KRTR and CRTR.

It is ok to take these words of Gurbani literally, sometimes.

Hardev Singh Shergill

SYNOPSIS OF THE PUBLICATION OF THE FIRST FOURTEEN YEARS OF THE SIKH BULLETIN

[From March-April 2013 SB]

Since this is the last issue of the original Sikh Bulletin and as a result of which I have learned so much about the Sikh community, it is essential that I share some observations with our readers. At the very least a reader can say, "I knew all this already."

The Sikh Bulletin commenced publication as a result of a felt need during our **November 1999 conference**; first such conference at the Roseville Sikh Center and which became an annual feature through 2004. It is a sad commentary and glaring example of majority of **Sikhs wanting to do 'sewa' with an eye on some sort of personal angle in it.**

When an idea of a magazine was floated at the **November 1999 conference** I had proposed that I will provide the facilities and the material to be published but I need someone to prepare a master copy on the computer that I could take to the Office Depot to make Xerox copies for distribution. The gentleman who volunteered to put together an electronic copy of The Sikh Bulletin prepared only three monthly issues. When he handed me the third copy at his house he made a demand that I could not fulfill. He mentioned a gentleman, a relative of his mother, sitting downstairs in the family room with her; he wanted me to bring a family member of his from India to USA through the Gurdwara. Surprising as this demand was I had no hesitation in turning him down. Several incidents like this had already happened and I had developed a pat answer. But as I drove away from his house toward the Office Depot, it dawned on me that **this could be the last issue of The Sikh Bulletin.** I was not wrong. A couple days later I got a call from him expressing his work load that will not allow time for him to prepare The Sikh Bulletin. His work load consisted of driving a diesel locomotive, a union job.

Not much later he started his own Gurdwara at the local Community Center renting the space for few hours on Sundays. He also became Kesadhari, if not Amritdhari Sikh. Eventually, whether meeting his need of bringing the relative from India or not, his Gurdwara shut down and he reverted to his **non-kesadhari sarup.** The irony is that the current format of

The Sikh Bulletin is still the same that he set up but I am unable to give him the credit that is his due

Lacking any knowledge of the computers I turned to any person in our small congregation who could help. There were several young couples among whom the husbands worked in local electronic companies. Several of them helped me, as I struggled to learn myself, but only for a few issues. Their newlywed wives did not want them to take their weekend time away from them. Then a young high school son of our Granthi, recently arrived from India but very quick learner of computers, helped me over several months. There was a problem there as well. He had a cousin of his age who wanted him to play with him and he circled the computer room always urging his cousin to forget the Sikh Bulletin and come out to play and eventually he even succeeded.

During this period of tense transition when I did not know from issue to issue if that was going to be the last one, from lack of technical help, **Amrinder Singh Sandhu**, a High School student himself, came into Sikh Bulletin's life at the urging of his dad, **Sarbjit Singh Sandhu**, who brought his entire family to the Gurdwara every Sunday to the farthest Gurdwara from his house in greater Sacramento. Amrinder Singh carried on with his studies and The Sikh Bulletin kept on publishing under his technical support. In due course Amrinder Singh finished his studies at U. C. Davis with Master's Degree in Computer Engineering and now works for Microsoft. So, all is not lost **but the tragedy is that there are so few parents like Sarbjit Singh and so few sons like Amrinder Singh**. That is why it gives me a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction in putting their pictures on the front page to say thank you. I have absolutely no doubt that but for their involvement the Sikh Bulletin would have become history as of August 2003. Amrinder's name first appears as Production Associate on September 2003 issue. It is a ten year relationship and I have no doubt that it will carry on.

May 2001 was a landmark event in the Sikh Bulletin's life. **From Xeroxed monthly copies we went to printed monthly copies, 2000 of them, mailed to individuals in 22 countries** and in bulk to the gurdwaras in USA, free. It is another matter that in some Gurdwaras bulk copies were trashed, before anyone could see them, by misguided members of an otherwise considered respectable Sikh Sanstha that shell, since I have mellowed, remain unnamed.

The Sikh Bulletin was so successful in bringing people together that we held our first International Conference in Chandigarh in October 2003, all paid for by its North American readers. That conference brought us in direct conflict with the Sikh religious/political establishment that unsuccessfully tried to deny us even the venue for the conference and to thwart our efforts created its own 23 member committee to bring about reforms that we were proposing. One of the key members of this committee was a Sikh Scholar who in **December 1999** had proposed that we start an organization called **Singh Sabha International** to revive the reform movement that Singh Sabha of post Ranjeet Singh period had started. He had also agreed to run the Sikh Center of Roseville and turn it into a center for reform. **None of that materialized because he got lured away by a position in the religious/political establishment in India. So it came natural for him to oppose us in 2003.**

Our 2003 conference led to six conferences in 2004 in six countries: Melaka, Malaysia; Sydney, Australia; Toronto, Canada; Philadelphia, U.S.A.; London, U.K.; and Chandigarh, India; and five mini week day conferences in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Bangkok, Thailand; Abbotsford (B.C.) and Calgary (Alberta), Canada; and Richmond (Virginia), U.S.A. Prof. Gurtej Singh and I circled the globe over this six week period.

By this time the rival gurdwara to ours that our opposition had established in Roseville in November 2003 had split into two, since the only reason for their existence was opposition to us and we had introduced the reforms that we had been proposing at the conferences. Among them were substitution of 'Akalpurakh' for 'Bhagauti' in our Ardaas; implementation of Nanakshahi Calendar; ban on recitation of anything from the book misnamed Dasam Granth, including three banis mandated for 'khande-di-pahul'; ban on Akhandpaths, instead we provided families with volumes of Gurmukhi translation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib by Professor Sahib Singh to read, in any order, and upon completion of the ten volumes to offer Langar sewa at the Gurdwara.

We were forced to shut down for lack of sangat after the service on Vaisakhi day 2005.

Several people promised financial help for The Sikh Bulletin and in anticipation of that the publication was carried on. But since no financial help in fact was delivered, from June-July 2005 the Sikh Bulletin published bi-monthly. By November-December 2006 even that financial obligation became burdensome and for the sake of Bulletin's survival it became **electronic bi-monthly**. It goes to about 1000 addresses on our email list with request to recipients to email to people on their private lists, which most of them do.

Hardev Singh Shergill

EDITORIAL SAT KARTAR

[From May-June 2013 issue of The Sikh Bulletin]

At the **Singh Sabha International Canada conference in Brampton in September 2012**, when the Constitution and By-Laws were being voted upon, only four of us among about sixty participants, voted against the requirement that all members of the Executive Committee be kesadhari.

In an earlier editorial I have expressed my views that on one hand we make a case, and rightly so, that in matters of religious scriptures there is nothing like the Guru Granth Sahib. All other scriptures were written by many authors and that too after the founders' passing. Guru Granth Sahib not only has the original scriptures by Guru Nanak and some of his successor Gurus but also the writings of Hindu and Muslim writers, who were not kesadhari. Guru Nanak's lifelong companion, a Muslim, Mardana, was also most likely a non-kesadhari, as his descendants are today.

We can truly describe GGS as a universal message. But over time the outward appearance for a Sikh has gained precedence. **Hair** has become so sacred that the SGPC went to court to get the definition of a Sikh as Kesadhari to deny admission to one of its Medical Colleges to a Sikh

daughter who **plucked her eyebrows** and succeeded. SGPC should really have gone to Guru Granth Sahib instead.

Upon reflection, though, the decision of that conference made sense. It reminded me of Mr. Tohra's response when asked why women were not allowed to participate in sewa at Darbar Sahib. His prompt and honest answer was that it has become '*maryada*' (**tradition**) now. He did not have a moment's hesitation in giving that response even though he must have known that **the person whose institutions he was managing broke most of the 'maryadas' of the religion and the society that he was born into.**

That event in that conference did put me on a course of serious thinking. **The idea of Singh Sabha International had germinated at Roseville, California in December 2000.** There it died but in Ontario, Canada it is doing a positive job of **funding missionary graduates of the Missionary College in Ludhiana and preparing CD's on gurbani and other religious literature for mass distribution.** Their work is confined primarily to Punjab and few other parts of India. Any attempt on their part to negate the significance of uncut hair would impede their effort back '*home*'.

In another editorial I have stated that I became a **confirmed agnostic at the age of twelve** after reading '*Bachittar Natak*' and '*Bale-dian-Sakhian*' to practice reading and writing Panjabi at home and reading Hindu Granths, including '*Mahabharat*' and '*Ramayan*' from the middle school library. **Being born into a Sikh household I had uncut hair when I arrived in this country in 1960 at the age of twenty-six but within four months I was clean shaven.**

That lasted until 1997 when **Bhai Jeewan Singh and Ripudaman Singh Malik of Satnam Education Society of British Columbia, Canada** came to the Roseville, California Gurdwara to hold summer gurnat camp. It was their earnest desire that I should serve the congregation in '*Sikhi Sarup*'. I complied and even though now I have definite views on the matter and the Roseville Gurdwara has been closed since April 2005, because the *sangat* was not supportive of the reforms that we were introducing, **I have no intention of cutting my hair because I consider them part of my culture, not a religious requirement.**

I cannot reconcile with many practices of Sikhism today with what they ought to be, key among them the issues of *kes* and definition of a Sikh. These, just like any religion, are **divisive**. **Guru Nanak was not a divider; he was a uniter.** In an age when you ventured away from your neighborhood at your peril he travelled far and wide to every corner of India and to Ceylon, Tibet and Mecca beyond, regardless of what W. H. McLeod and his students assert.

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 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 21st century democratic India); preached against **idol worship**; recognized the **equality of mankind**; asserted the **equality of men and women**; condemned the Hindu practice of *Sati* (live immolation of widow on her husband's funeral pyre); instructed the women to discard **veil**; allowed widow and widower **remarriage**; rejected the then prevalent concepts of *karma*, after life salvation, *tapasya*, **heaven and hell** (after death),

incarnation, **84 lakh juni** (8,400,000 life forms) *yatra* to holy places, **fasting, multiple gods and goddesses**; and of course, unique only to Sikhism, wished ‘*sarbat da bhala*’ (wishing well being of all, not just of oneself, one’s own family or one’s own country) in his prayers.

His was a faith of Universal Humanism. I therefore am a Nanakpanthi as represented by the Gurbani of Shri Guru Granth Sahib ji.

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

ਪਵਣੁ¹ ਗੁਰੂ² ਪਾਣੀ³ ਪਿਤਾ⁴ ਮਾਤਾ⁵ ਧਰਤਿ⁶ ਮਹਤੁ⁷ ॥

Pavaṇ gurū pāṇī piṭā māṭā ḍharat mahat.

Air¹ is like a Guru², water³ like a father⁴ and the Earth⁶ like the great⁷ mother⁵ (which provides all types of resources and food).

The quote above is taken from the article ‘**EARTH DAY, ਮਾਤਾ ਧਰਤਿ ਮਹਤੁ, EARTH, THE GREAT MOTHER**’ by Prof Devinder Singh Chahal, PhD in the following pages of this issue.

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.

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

I firmly believe that Guru Nanak and Guru Granth are not for starting a new religion. Sikhism is a way of life. Whereas religions compartmentalize people, Sikhism breaks those barriers.

An excellent example of that is the incorporation of writings of both Hindus and Muslims that are compatible with gurbani. It is true that the Christian Bible incorporates the Old Testament, the Jewish scripture, and Mohammed accepted the Jewish and Christian prophets; but that is all among the one family of Semitic people who shared common origins, culture and history. Christ himself was a Jew. His was a crusade for reform in the practice of Jewish faith that had come to be controlled by the Temple Priests. It was the rejection of Christ by the establishment Judaism that gave an impetus to what came to be known as Christianity. Islam, on the other hand, was an alien faith in the Indian sub-continent, with no common history or bond with the native religions of India. But Guru Nanak found fellow interpreters of Koran among Muslims and incorporated their writings to reinforce his views which had universal application.

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. In my judgment that does not add any prestige to Sikhism. 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.

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. 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 once anyone dies 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.

Mohammed's God chose not to talk to Mohammed directly but through an Angel, just as in the 19th century **Joseph Smith** who founded **Mormon** faith was to claim. But Allah did not instruct Mohammed to bring equal justice to women in Arabia, such as one man one wife. Nor did God forbid him to marry a child which in the 21st century would be called pedophilia, a criminal act. Mohammed not only had many a women as sex slaves but also was married to a dozen of them, including marriage to a six year old child and consummated that marriage when she was nine.

When people proclaim that there are similarities between Sikhism and other faiths on basic concepts, it makes me cringe.

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, his personal word for the 'God' entity is '**Karta Purakh**' or '**KARTAR**', formless, ageless, and everlasting and devoid of human attributes.

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ

ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

Ik oaṅkār saṭ nām kartā purakhḥ nirbhāo nirvair
akāl mūrati ajūnī saibhaṅ gur parsād.

I would interpret this phrase, called 'Moolmantar'/Gurmantar' as:

‘There is One and Only, a Singular Reality, called 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 (actual term should really be Brahmanism) claims. IT can only be comprehended through knowledge.’

Thus Guru Nanak discarded the pre Nanak God concept completely and unequivocally.

Not only that, to press his point home even more strongly, in the very first verse in Jap that immediately follows the above ‘Moolmantar’ the Guru reasserts the basic 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||

The words **KARTAR** in Punjabi and **CREATOR** in English come from the parent language, Indo-European. If one removes the vowels from both, the consonants in both languages are the same ‘KRTR’ and ‘CRTR’ and sound exactly the same. 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 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, and God and that name was ‘**Karta Purakh**’.

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. 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.

Hardev Singh Shergill

EDITORIAL
MILK BARS TO DESI SHRAB BARS
IN THE LAND OF THE GURUS

[March-April 2014 Sikh Bulletin]

It was more than half a century ago, June 25th 1960 to be exact, that I stepped off the Indian soil and on to Pakistan's at Wagah border, hitchhiking my way across the Middle East, Europe and the United States to the University of Washington in Seattle.

My first return visit to India came in 1968. Eight years had brought changes but mostly in the increased population. Before 1960 I had seen people ride on top of the trains but this time, at least in Ganganagar District of Rajasthan, people were riding on top of the buses as well and not the double decker kind.

There was, however, one bright development in Panjab. At almost every road crossing over the irrigation canals there was a Milk Bar and my favourite was almond milk. Cold bottle of milk was so refreshing during Panjab's summer and healthy, I still remember it fondly.

In 1976, to avoid the summer heat because my family with six and four year olds was with us, I chose to travel during January through March. It had its own discomfort, very cold for lack of central heating that we take for granted here. I do not have a memory of whether the Milk Bars were still there in 1976 or not. But this time there was no sign of them but '*desi shrab thekas*' were in every village, thanks, no doubt, to both the ruling parties in Panjab.

This year, after 38 years, I decided to pay a visit to my village, 35BB in Ganganagar District of Rajasthan, the village that I left in 1960, for good, where I grew up and where my nine siblings were born. I wanted to see what miracle my youngest brother had brought to the place where he was born. (Please see The Sikh Bulletin July-August 2012 at www.sikhbulletin.com).

This time the changes since 1976 were profound. For starters we travelled by car from New Delhi airport to 35BB, in the middle of the night in thick fog, in many ways more convenient than train, although even train travel has improved. All the narrow gauges in District Ganganagar are now to the standard of the rest of the country and one does not have to switch trains going from New Delhi to Ganganagar. Paved roads are plentiful, although they have a lot of room for improvement including educating the public in the rules of the road.

But not only one thing has not changed it has added to its ranks another of God's creatures. To the wandering cattle on the streets of the cities you can now add stray dogs. In Goa the visitors had to avoid disturbing at least half a dozen stray dogs, blissfully asleep, at the entrance to a historical Church. The stray dogs in the cities are just as numerous as the cattle used to be and still are and they make themselves comfortable on sidewalks, streets, and at the entrance to the shops, totally oblivious to the pedestrians and noisy traffic.

But what is missing in every city are the trash bins; as a result the whole city is a trash bin. What I learnt about cleanliness of human surroundings in first grade in the village school in 35BB has escaped the city folks and even the village folks. 35BB Primary School that had one teacher and

22 students grades 1-4 in my time has four teachers in a Middle School for twice that many students and within two miles of the village are two Public (Private that is) Schools, for profit, with English medium. As the educational opportunities have increased, the civic sense has disappeared. When we visited my alma mater I could not help but point out to the teachers bits of paper littering the ground around the children seated on the floor. Response was shocking. Parent involvement in their children's education has increased so much that they have forbidden the teachers to ask their children to keep the school litter free.

In New Delhi when our tour bus stopped for lunch in a rather posh area, with tourist emporiums surrounding a fenced park, I asked a security guard outside one such emporium where I could throw the banana peel in my hand. He pointed to a corner of the fenced park across the street where I could see a cluster of cattle and dogs. I walked up to see a heap of garbage with the animals munching on it. I added my contribution to this recycling bin.

Tongas and rickshaws are mostly gone, at least in Panjab but vehicles of various kinds are plentiful. The family of one of my sisters had gone from the States to their village in Ganganagar District for the wedding of their granddaughter, a month before my visit. As is the custom in India these days, they had hosted 1200 people for the party. I asked my brother in law where he accommodated all the relatives during the nights. No body stayed the night, he responded, everybody has cars and after the functions everybody went home and came back the next day.

Every village in Ganganagar District, at least where all of my relatives live and whom I visited, are linked with paved roads. Same is true in Hoshiarpur District of Panjab. During my college days the travelling time to relatives' villages that used take most of a day now took less than an hour by car; now that is a real improvement. And yes India has toll roads too.

Where ever we drove in Rajasthan, Punjab, and Uttar Pradesh and flying from Udaipur to Bombay, there was one common sight, the brick kiln chimneys. I do not recall seeing any during my last two visits. As a result adobe homes in the villages are being replaced with baked brick and villages have water works and electricity. Now that is a real improvement.

As before, the villages are cleaner, quieter and healthy to live in and the cities are crowded, noisy, filthy, smelly and unhealthy to live in. In Panjab's Doaba, several villages, ancestral home to NRIs in Canada, United State and UK, have been adopted by their Diaspora sons and living conditions improved by bringing modern sanitary practices. Water, sewer and drainage has been piped underground, streets are paved and wired for electricity.

One fact manifested itself every place I went to, a very large growth in India's population. The places I knew, I failed to recognize and nobody seems to be concerned about it.

We had combined three visits into one, eleven days to visit relatives in Ganganagar District of Rajasthan and where I and my wife were born and educated, in Panjab, seventeen days of a guided tour of New Delhi, Agra, Rajasthan, Bombay and Goa, through Virgin Vacations and three days in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. It was a miracle that everything went smoothly and exactly as planned, in spite of the hectic and chaotic days.

I had never been south of the Chandigarh, Delhi, Jaipur line. While teaching Geography for the Indian Air Force in New Delhi in 1959 I had planned a student excursion to Ceylon. All of my colleagues were very concerned about us, northerners, travelling by train for days through the territory of the southerners. Relief was felt by them all when on the morning of the day we were to depart New Delhi the news broke that the Ceylonese had assassinated their Prime Minister, Mr. Bandaranaike, forcing us to cancel the trip. The change in that kind of attitude this time was refreshing. Our driver was from Uttra Khand, the Chefs and other hospitality industry workers were from all over India, placed in the hotels and restaurants by their privately run hospitality schools.

I had lived in Delhi for two years, 1958-1960, had visited the Red Fort, Chandani Chowk, Gurudwara Sis Ganj Sahib, but neither the Jama Masjid nor the alleys and narrow streets around it. Most charitable comment I can make is that I am so grateful I do not have to live there.

Bombay, the Slumdog Millionaire city, was a pleasant contrast to Delhi. Both are big and home to India's ethnic diversity but Bombay appeared to be much cleaner and more accepting of India's ethnic diversity than New Delhi and much safer. While Delhi newspapers carried daily stories of rapes and murder, it was pleasantly surprising to see young couples of all religious beliefs, including scarf clad young Muslim women and, even single young women, strolling and jogging on the Marine Drive across from our hotel in Nariman Point. The best pleasant surprise was Udaipur, the City of Lakes, the cleanest city of all that we visited.

The culmination of this trip was the three night stop in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, the city of the future, in the present, a *mangal* in the desert, with a crowning jewel for a Sikh, not the Burj Khalifa, but Gurudwara Guru Nanak Darbar. I had wanted to see it in person since 2012 when I first reported about it in the September-October 2012 issue of The Sikh Bulletin. Result of this wish fulfillment is this special issue of The Sikh Bulletin on this Gurudwara.

Our tour manager/guide, Mr. Kapil Rohatgi, was so eloquent and knowledgeable about India that I requested him to write for this issue what he was telling the tourists. His article appears very last.

Hardev Singh Shergill

**TRANSITION FROM THE SIKH BULLETIN TO
GURU NANAK AND HIS BANI
November-December 2014**

Guru Nanak cut through the fog of multiple religions and multiple Gods by his simple statement of 'Ek Onkar' symbolized as .

The following excerpt from the March-April 2013 Sikh Bulletin is appropriate here to begin the new direction for the future issues of this publication:

**EDITORIAL
RECASTING OF THE SIKH BULLETIN
November-December 1999 – March-April 2013**

AS
GURU NANAK MISSION

*“The Sikh Bulletin commenced publication in November 1999 with the sole objective of bringing about reformation in Sikhi. But it has become clear; to me at least, that Sikhi cannot be reformed. After considerable soul searching it became obvious why not. A look back at the history of all the world’s major religions reveals that no religion has ever been reformed. In fact there has been only one, initially successful, attempt at reformation when Martin Luther (1483-1546) ushered Protestant Reformation with his 95 Theses followed by Edict of Worms in 1521. Today Catholic Church is still one but Protestant Churches have multiplied. Interestingly, in the same period, in his own unique way, Guru Nanak (1469-1539) was trying to bring about simultaneous reformation in Hinduism and Islam in the Indian sub-continent. **He did not succeed and I strongly believe that he did not start a new religion.** Sikhism just happened, in due time, in response to evolving social and political circumstances.”*

Our focus in the future issues of this publication is not going to be reformation in Sikhism. Rather the **focus will be on Guru Nanak, his life and times and his Bani.** We invite our readers to send us articles relevant to that, in English only, and good English translations of Guru Nanak’s Bani. It is our hope that all English speaking people, including the Sikhs, might benefit from it.

Hardev S Shergill

**DISCOVERING GURU NANAK
THE ONE AND ONLY
MY JOURNEY**

Hardev Singh Shergill

[From November-December 2014 SB]

Born into a khande-di- pahul dhari Sikh household, I had turned agnostic by the time I turned eleven. Being educated in a Hindi medium state, my mother had taught me Gurmukhi at home. For practice I read my father’s books, among them *Bale-dian-Sakhian* and *Bachittar Natak*. My father had run away from home as a teenager and when he returned he was Khande-di-pahul dhari, had learned to read and write Gurmukhi, read GGS and do kirtan. In fact I grew up knowing people addressing him as Giani Ji because he performed all the monthly services, Gurpurabs, weddings and kirtan in the village gurdwara. Resident Granthi did only Sukhasan and Parkash.

I did not believe a word in those two books. Most galling thing I remember is the writer taking us as 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.? **I was not confused; I was turned off religion.**

Last straw was the Hindu granths in my Middle School library where I had gone to boarding school beyond our village school's four grades. Since English in Bikaner State started in 3rd grade and village teachers knew no English, the curriculum for the grades 1 to 5 had two streams, one for village schools and another for city schools. Village 4th grade pass students were enrolled in a class called **Special Class** in which they studied only English; grade 3 and 4 English during the first half of the year and grade 5 English during second half. Other 5th grade city subjects were mastered in the 3rd and 4th grades of village schools.

From 6th grade village and city kids followed the same curriculum. So I had plenty of time in my 5th grade to read all the Hindu granths in the 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 an eleven year old there was no difference between Hinduism and Sikhism. I turned agnostic.

Around age sixty, after acquiring a Gurdwara building through Court Order and learning the meaning of Moolmantar, the opening verse in GGS, in English, I said to myself that **Guru Nanak's 'God'** I could believe in because it was **not human at all**. In fact Moolmantar 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 **ENERGY** that cannot be described and there was only one of its kind and self-created.

I could not bring myself to run Gurdwara as the other Gurdwaras were run. I wanted to understand what entire GGS meant. I searched for and met some practicing Sikhs; but they were so few. In 2003 we started a Sikhi Reform movement as was the case with Singh Sabha movement during the British Raj. **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.**

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.

By the time I came back home 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, the second group paying over \$5,000.00 monthly rent.

By this time we had banned from our Gurdwara everything from Dasam Granth, including 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 2004 for lack of sangat.

Seventy years later I have not only come full circle but also gone beyond. I am now a confirmed **atheist. God and religion are the two worst farces ever committed on the mankind.** Religions cannot be reformed and that includes Sikhism. **If Guru Nanak were to be here today he will surely say he is neither Hindu, nor Muslim nor Sikh.**

In fact, I believe, Guru Nanak discarded the concept of religion and God as preached by all the prevalent religions. First three words of Moolmantar, Ek Onkar, Satnam, Kartapurakh to me mean there is only one entity whose **True Name is Kartapurakh**, The Creator that created Itself.

With the Sept-Oct 2014 issue The Sikh Bulletin has completed 15 years of publication. This period concludes my fifteen year unsuccessful attempt at reformation in Sikhi.

November-December 2014 issue is going to be a transitional issue. From 2015 on my attempt is going to be to collect as good English translation of only Guru Nanak's bani as is possible. **First issue of 2015 will carry all of Guru Nanak's bani with page numbers in GGS in Gurmukhi.** Subsequent issues will publish English translations that convey Guru Nanak's bani as close to its real meaning as humanly possible which the readers can incorporate in their own computer files.

We invite our readers to submit any meaningful translations into English of Guru Nanak's bani that they may have come across.

Now the purpose of November-December 2014 transitional issue is to inform our readers why the change and also publish my journey from childhood to current old age in search of...?

I think I have now found what I have been searching for and I marvel at what Guru Nanak taught us 500 years ago but we still do not want to know or understand him. The following quote from my November-December 2012 Sikh Bulletin Editorial summarizes in nutshell what I have found:

*“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)**, thousands of miles apart and unknown to each other, arrived at the same conclusion about the cosmos, including that it is in constant change.*

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.”

No literary, historical, religious or political writer or leader in India has acknowledged Guru Nanak's contribution to Indian culture, literature and philosophy. Those who claim to be successors to his message have almost reversed themselves 180 degrees in the opposite direction from where the Guru was taking us.

I am also certain I am not alone in this. So I am asking those few I know to write about their journey. Never know, once our experience goes out we might find others who think the same way and we could all make some contribution to Guru Nanak's selfless endeavor to teach mankind how to live and love, half a millennia after Guru Nanak first tried it.

Hardev Singh Shergill

EDITORIAL

[From The Sikh Bulletin January-February 2015]

COMMENCING VERSE FROM GGS

[From The Sikh Bulletin January-February 2015]

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

Ik oaṅkār saṭ nām kartā purakhḥ nirbhāo nirvair akāl mūrati ajūnī saibhaṅ gur parsād.

I would interpret this opening verse in Guru Granth Sahib as:

‘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.’

That is also why Guru Nanak named the commune he established in his later life, ‘Kartar Pur’ and salutation as ‘Sat Kartar’. His followers were called ‘Nanakpanthi’.

Hardev Singh Shergill

I HAVE NO RELIGION

My Journey of Finding Guru Nanak (1469-1539)

The One and Only

[From March-April 2015 SB]

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

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

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

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

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

Hardev Singh Shergill

WHAT SIKHS MUST KNOW ABOUT GURU NANAK

[From The Sikh Bulletin May-June 2015]

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 16th century when Guru Nanak visited the Middle East, would have been a must and travel within it would have been safer than it is today. Ottoman Empire was a powerful multinational, multilingual empire controlling much of [Southeast Europe](#), [Western Asia](#), the [Caucasus](#), [North Africa](#), and the [Horn of Africa](#).

It is more than likely that he must have, in addition to Mecca, Medina and Baghdad, that is commonly referred to about his Middle East travels, visited, **Konya, Turkey.** Konya was a Centre of learning for Sufi Islam established by the followers of Maulana Jallaluddin **Rumi**, himself a transplant from present day Afghanistan of Persian parents.

Sufis consider themselves to be the original true proponents of this pure original form of Islam. Guru Nanak was drawn to Islamic scholars of Sufi Islam than the Islam practiced in India by the rulers of his time. During his studies of Islamic literature it stands to reason that Guru Nanak had access to Rumi's writings and must have engaged in discussions with Sufi scholars in India.

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

***"I'm not from the East or the west.
I'm not Christian or Jew or Muslim.
I'm not Hindu, Buddhist, Sufi or Zen.
I do not belong to any established religion or any cultural system.
I'm neither body nor soul, for I belong to the Soul of my Beloved."***



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

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.

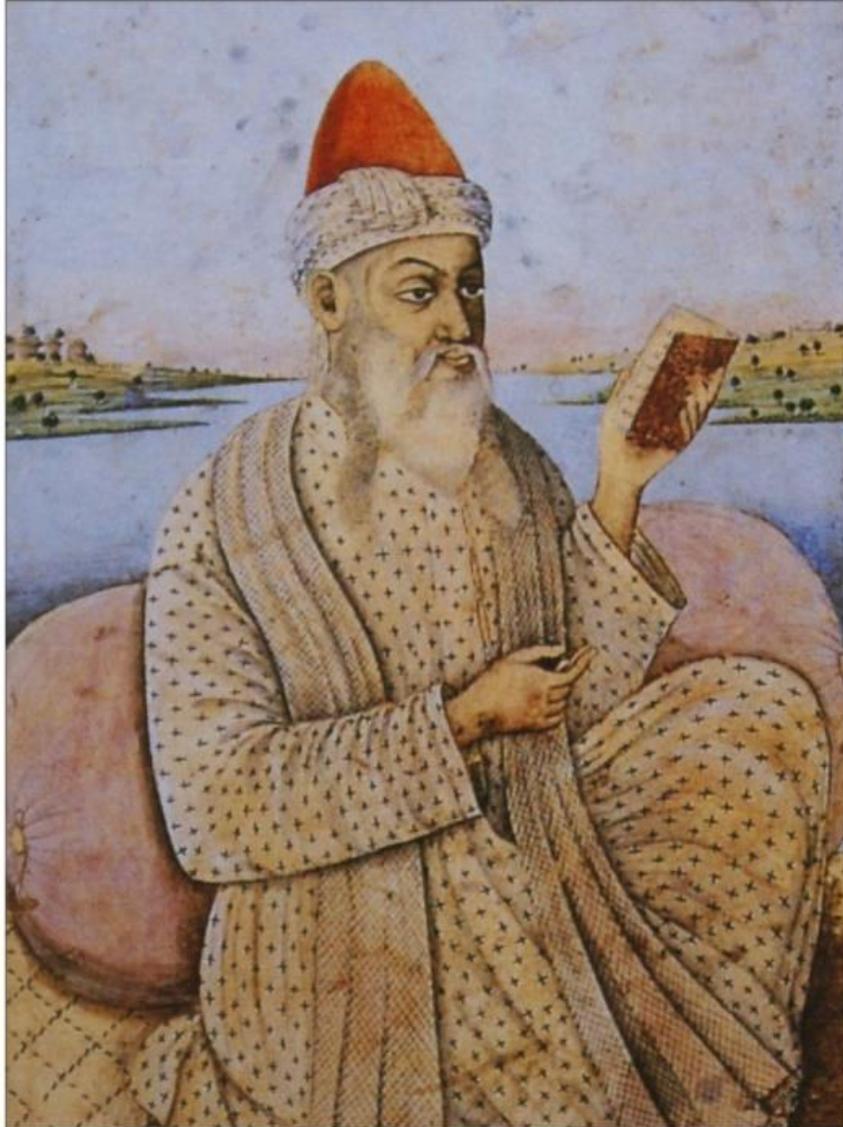


Fig. 2-3. Guru Nanak with a turban on *Kula* (cap) and one end of his turban is coming out. The turban style is very similar to that of Maulana Jallaluddin Rumi of Konya, Turkey (Fig.2-4). Guru Nanak is shown holding a notebook in which he used to write his Bani. The most prominent feature to be noted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

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 **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 Jhajj, December 26, 2012.*

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



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>)

[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".]

What you see here is the **Commencing Verse** of the Adi Granth, courtesy Dr. Devinder Singh Chahal. It is inscribed in stone above a doorway of a temple that originally was a prominent centre of Zoroastrianism 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.

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

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

George Forester had left Bengal for this overland Journey from Calcutta on **March 23, 1782** arriving in **London on March 31, 1784**. Quite a feat! **On March 27, 1784 he visited this temple complex in Baku, saw these inscriptions both in Gurmukhi and Devnagri script** and met a group of aging 'Moulton Hindu Traders' who told him that they were the last ones because their children were 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 see called, 'Gilan', land of Gils/Gills.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Guru Nanak (1469-1539):

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

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

Vasco da Gama, Portugal (1460-1524).

Michelangelo, Italy (1475-1564).

Henry VIII, England (1491-1547).

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

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

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

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

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

Hardev Singh Shergill

JULY-AUGUST 2014 EDITORIAL

EDITORIAL FROM NOV-DEC 2014 SIKH BULLETIN TRANSITION FROM THE SIKH BULLETIN TO GURU NANAK AND HIS BANI

November-December 2014

Guru Nanak cut through the fog of multiple religions and multiple Gods by his simple statement of 'Ek Onkar' symbolized as <. The following excerpt from the March-April 2013 Sikh Bulletin is appropriate here to begin the new direction for the future issues of this publication:

EDITORIAL

RECASTING OF THE SIKH BULLETIN November-December 1999 – March-April 2013 AS GURU NANAK MISSION

*"The Sikh Bulletin commenced publication in November 1999 with the sole objective of bringing about reformation in Sikhi. But it has become clear; to me at least, that Sikhi cannot be reformed. After considerable soul searching it became obvious why not. A look back at the history of all the world's major religions reveals that no religion has ever been reformed. In fact there has been only one, initially successful, attempt at reformation when Martin Luther (1483-1546), a contemporary of Guru Nanak, ushered Protestant Reformation with his 95 Theses followed by Edict of Worms in 1521. Today Catholic Church is still one but Protestant Churches have multiplied. Interestingly, in the same period, in his own unique way, Guru Nanak (1469-1539) was trying to bring about simultaneous reformation in Hinduism and Islam in the Indian sub-continent. **He did not succeed and I strongly believe that he did not start a new religion. Sikhism just happened, in due time, in response to evolving social and political circumstances.***

Our focus in the future issues of this publication is not going to be reformation in Sikhism. Rather the focus will be on Guru Nanak, his life and times and his Bani. We invite our readers to send us articles relevant to that, in English only, and good English translations of Guru Nanak's Bani. It is our hope that all English speaking people, including the Sikhs, might benefit from it.

Hardev S Shergill

This issue of the Sikh Bulletin is moving us towards the fulfillment of that mission. We start with the most modern translation of Jap Bani by Col. Sardar Manmohan Singh Scout of Mohali, supplemented by translations by late Dr. Baldev Singh in his manuscript "Nanakian Philosophy (Gurmat): The Path of Enlightened" that we published in a special issue of The Sikh Bulletin in January-February 2009 and by Dr. Devinder Singh Chahal from his publication "Nanak: The Guru - The Founder of Sikhism" published in January-February 2015 Sikh Bulletin.

Hardev S Shergill

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

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 Scout 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

GIFT TO HUMANITY

[From November-December 2015 SB]

In addition to late **Dr. Baldev Singh** who gave us this invaluable treasure, credit for this book goes to **Mrs. Nakshatar Kaur Singh** of Yuba City, California who kept this manuscript of her husband safe until the time was right to bring it before the public. Two other individuals deserving credit are **S. Gurcharan Singh Brar** of Brampton, Canada, founder of Singh Sabha International Canada, who handled the finances and printing of this book and **Dr. Didar Singh** of VPO Babarpur, Distt. Ludhiana, who did the ground work in India from selecting the printers, transporting and storing the finished work and handling the distribution of this book.

In this issue, in addition to the Book, is an excellent article relevant to the subject, by **Dr. Kazi Nurul Islam** of Dhaka, Bangladesh. Readers will also enjoy a short text and an excellent BBC video on the life of Maharaja **Ranjeet Singh’s granddaughter Princess Sophia Alexandra Duleep Singh**. On the last page readers would find something that Guru Nanak would have approved of.

I credit three people for enlightening me about Guru Nanak’s Philosophy starting with **S. Gurbakhash Singh Kala Afghana** in 1998 (*Bipran ki reet ton sach da marg*) and **Dr. Baldev Singh** and **Dr. Devinder Singh Chahal** since 1999. Their articles have enriched the pages of the Sikh Bulletin and lots of readers of the Sikh Bulletin have benefited from their wisdom. All three are my teachers. I am immensely grateful to them. All three of them broke away from the crowd of typical scholars of Gurbani who engaged in meaningless, literal and basically copycat rephrasing of someone else’s translation to **their own original interpretation of Gurbani in its real perspective.**

Gurbani was meant to be understood and made part of one’s daily life and given widest publicity by everyone exposed to it. Instead it has been bound in a single volume Granth and worshipped as a living Guru and paraded once or twice a year bedecked in silks, much like the Hindu processions for their stone Gods. Worst of it all, one cannot even acquire a copy of it unless five

of you go to the phony Jathedar with folded hands to acquire one and bring it home **ceremoniously**. Nothing has changed since **Guru Nanak** raised his voice against the **Pandits** and **Qazis** to which we can now add **Granthis** and **Jathedars**. Blind are still leading the blind.

It gives me a great deal of satisfaction that I played a small role in getting this book published. It would make an excellent gift to your family and friends, especially non-Sikh friends.

Hardev Singh Shergill

EDITORIAL
GURU NANAK vs GOD AND DIVINE
A Case for dropping God & Divine from translation of Gurbani.
[From January-February 2016 SB]

The Random House Dictionary of the English Language (the Unabridged Edition) defines **GOD**:

1. The one Supreme **Being**, the Creator and Ruler of the universe.
2. The Supreme **Being** considered with reference to a particular attribute: the God of Battles.
3. One of several deities, especially a **male** deity, presiding over some portion of worldly affairs.
4. A Supreme **Being** according to some particular conception: the God of Pantheism.
5. Christian Science, the Supreme **Being** considered with reference to the sum of **His** attributes.
6. An image of a deity; an idol.
7. Any deified **person** or object.

DIVINE:

1. Of or pertaining to a god, especially the Supreme **Being**.
2. Addressed, appropriated or devoted to God or a god; religious; sacred: *divine worship*.
3. Proceeding from God or a god: *divine laws*.
4. Godlike: characteristic of or befitting a deity: *divine magnanimity*.
5. Heavenly; celestial: *the divine kingdom*.
6. Being a god; being God: *a divine person*.
7. Of superhuman or surpassing excellence.
8. A theologian; scholar in religion.
9. A priest or clergyman.

The above definitions of **God** and **Divine** are basically taken from the Christian faith which has given **human** attributes and **masculine gender** to the Supreme **Being**.

Guru Nanak rejected the whole concept of God, Divinity and Religion. He rejected the existing three **Semitic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam)** and three **Indian religions of his time (Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism)** and **their Gods** and he was not about to start a yet another religion to add to them.

Religions divide people whereas Guru Nanak was a uniter who devoted his entire life to make mankind realize that **humanity is One**. He was among the early **philosopher scientists** of humanity. **He was not a Prophet** nor did he start a new religion. **Nor was his philosophy revealed** to him as is claimed by the three Semitic religions. **His philosophy was the product of his study of his surroundings** with the strength of his '**bibek-budhi**', his discerning mind. Biggest disservice to his memory has been the creation of a new religion in his name, **Sikhism**.

Half way through his life, which was marked by native Hindu majority ruled by an alien people professing an alien faith, **Islam**, he came to the conclusion that the underlying cause of conflict among people was **manmade religions and their manmade gods**. Once he was convinced of that basic truth he gave up his normal life and set upon a course to deliver that message as far as his physical capacity would permit. Rest of his life was devoted to that goal.

Unknown to each other **Nanak** (1469-1539) was a contemporary of **Copernicus** (1473-1543) and **Martin Luther** (1483-1546). With the former he shared the same views about the nature of the cosmos and if he could have met **Martin Luther** he would have strongly advised him not to expend his energy in reforming Christianity. He would have served humanity better by speaking against manmade religions and their gods.

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.

Guru Nanak threw away centuries old *maryada (traditions)*. 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 in his philosophy, wished '*sarbat da bhala*' well-being of **all**, not just one's own country or family. 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 discerning mind, the only species that has it.

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 or 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.

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

ਧਵਲੈ ਉਪਰਿ ਕੇਤਾ ਭਾਰੁ ॥
Dhavlai upar ketā bhār.
ਧਰਤੀ ਹੋਰੁ ਪਰੈ ਹੋਰੁ ਹੋਰੁ ॥
Dhartī hor parai hor hor.
ਤਿਸ ਤੇ ਭਾਰੁ ਤਲੈ ਕਵਣੁ ਜੋਰੁ ॥

Tis te bhār talai kavaṇ 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

ਸੈਲੁ 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.

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.

Origin of Universe according to Guru Nanak:

ਕੀਤਾ ਪਸਾਉ ਏਕੋ ਕਵਾਉ ॥

ਤਿਸ ਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਲਖ ਦਰੀਆਉ ॥

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

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

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

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

ਕਈ ਬਾਰ ਪਸਰਿਓ ਪਸਾਰ ॥
ਸਦਾ ਸਦਾ ਇਕੁ ਏਕੰਕਾਰ ॥

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

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

Evolution of Life!

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

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

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

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

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

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

Many births (different evolutionary stages of life) created worm and insect. Many births created elephant, fish and deer. Many births created bird and snake. Many births created ox and horse, which are yoked. Similarly, it took a very long time for the human body to evolve

through many evolutionary stages of life. Now is your time to meet the Master of the universe, the Creator. Pause. The matter constituting the human body was recycled many times as rocks and mountains. Many births resulted in abortion (defective mutations resulting in death of the species). Many births produced plant life. It took innumerable births to produce a human body. AGGS, M 5, p. 176.

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

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

ਜਲਿ ਥਲਿ ਜੀਆ ਪੁਰੀਆ ਲੋਆ ਆਕਾਰਾ ਆਕਾਰ॥

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

What is Death?

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

I see seeds of $E=MC^2$

The following quotes are from Dr. Baldev Singh's manuscript 'Nankian Philosophy (Gurmat): The Path of Enlightenment that we published in the January-February 2009 Sikh Bulletin and again in November-December 2015 Sikh Bulletin:

ਦੇਹੀ ਮਾਟੀ ਬੋਲੈ ਪਉਣੁ॥
ਬੁਝੁ ਰੇ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਮੁਆ ਹੈ ਕਉਣੁ॥
ਮੁਈ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਬਾਦੁ ਅਹੰਕਾਰੁ॥
ਓਹ ਨ ਮੁਆ 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 ਊਠਿ ਸਿਧਾਈ ॥
 ਭਰਮ ਮੋਹ ਕੇ ਬਾਂਧੇ ਬੰਧ ॥
 ਸੁਪਨੁ ਭਇਆ ਭਖਲਾਏ ਅੰਧ ॥
 ਇਹੁ ਤਉ ਰਚਨੁ ਰਚਿਆ ਕਰਤਾਰਿ ॥
 ਆਵਤ ਜਾਵਤ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਅਪਾਰਿ ॥
 ਨਹ ਕੋ ਮੂਆ ਨ ਮਰਣੈ ਜੋਗੁ ॥
 ਨਹ ਬਿਨਸੈ ਅਬਿਨਾਸੀ ਹੋਗੁ ॥
 ਜੋ ਇਹੁ ਜਾਣਹੁ ਸੋ ਇਹੁ ਨਾਹਿ ॥
 ਜਾਨਣਹਾਰੇ ਕਉ ਬਲਿ ਜਾਉ ॥
 ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਿ ਭਰਮੁ ਚੁਕਾਇਆ ॥
 ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਮਰੈ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਜਾਇਆ ॥

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

On Meat and Vegetables:

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

ਮਾਸੁ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਰਿ ਮੂਰਖੁ ਝਗੜੇ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਣੈ ॥
ਕਉਣੁ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਉਣੁ ਸਾਗੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ ਕਿਸੁ ਮਹਿ ਪਾਪੁ ਸਮਾਣੈ ॥
ਗੈਡਾ ਮਾਰਿ ਹੋਮ ਜਗ ਕੀਏ ਦੇਵਤਿਆ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੈ ॥
ਮਾਸੁ ਛੇਡਿ ਬੈਸਿ ਨਕੁ ਪਕੜਹਿ ਰਾਤੀ ਮਾਣਸੁ ਖਾਣੈ ॥
ਫੜੁ ਕਰਿ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਦਿਖਲਾਵਹਿ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਨਹੀ ਸੂਝੈ ॥

.....
ਮਾਸਹੁ ਨਿੰਮੇ ਮਾਸਹੁ ਜੰਮੇ ਹਮ ਮਾਸੈ ਕੇ ਭਾਂਡੇ ॥

.....
ਜੀਅ ਜੰਤ ਸਭਿ ਮਾਸਹੁ ਹੋਏ ਜੀਇ ਲਇਆ ਵਾਸੇਰਾ ॥

.....
ਮਾਸਹੁ ਨਿੰਮੇ ਮਾਸਹੁ ਜੰਮੇ ਹਮ ਮਾਸੈ ਕੇ ਭਾਂਡੇ ॥

.....
ਮਾਸੁ ਪੁਰਾਣੀ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਤੇਬੀ ਚਹੁ ਜੁਗਿ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਮਾਣਾ ॥
ਜਜਿ ਕਾਜਿ ਵੀਆਹਿ ਸੁਹਾਵੈ ਓਥੈ ਮਾਸੁ ਸਮਾਣਾ ॥

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

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

It was the practice of the Hindu gods to kill the rhinoceros, and make a feast of the burnt offering.

Those who renounce meat, and hold their noses when sitting near it, devour men at night. (Take advantage of poor and ignorant).

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

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

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

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

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

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

Human race is one.

Quotes from Sri Guru Granth Sahib:

ਏਕੁ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਤੂ ਮੇਰਾ ਗੁਰ ਹਾਈ ॥

Èk pitā ekas ke ham bārik tū merā gur hāī.

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

You are our Guru. AGGS M5, P 611

ਨਾ ਕੇ ਬੈਰੀ ਨਹੀ ਬਿਗਾਨਾ ਸਗਲ ਸੰਗਿ ਹਮ ਕਉ ਬਨਿ ਆਈ ॥੧॥

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

I get along with everyone. AGGS M5, p 1299

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

ਪਵਣੁ¹ ਗੁਰੂ² ਪਾਣੀ³ ਪਿਤਾ⁴ ਮਾਤਾ⁵ ਧਰਤਿ⁶ ਮਹਤੁ⁷ ॥

Pavaṇ gurū pāṇī piṭā mātā d̥harat̥ mahat̥.

Air¹ is like a Guru², water³ like a father⁴ and the Earth⁶ like the great⁷ mother⁵ (which provides all types of resources and food).

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.

His philosophy is found in the volume known as ‘Guru Granth Sahib’ where it has been supplemented by writings of five more Gurus and several Hindu and Muslim poets, all written in Hymns and to be sung to Indian classical music.

Basics of his philosophy are condensed in few words in the commencing verse of JappBani which is essence of his philosophy:

Commencing Verse from Guru Granth Sahib

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

Ik oṅkār saṭ nām kartā purakh̥ nirbh̥o nirvair akāl mūrati ajūnī saibh̥an gur parsād̥.

I would interpret this opening verse in Guru Granth Sahib as:

‘There is One and Only, a Singular Reality, whose True Name is The Creator, (Kartar) 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.’

That is also why Guru Nanak named the commune he established in his later life, ‘**Kartar Pur**’ (Now in Pakistan) and salutation as ‘**Sat Kartar**’. His followers were called ‘Nanakpanthi’.

What follows the commencing verse is a short but very forceful Truth: 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 ਹੇਸੀ 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.**

Guru Nanak is quite certain that ‘God’ is a singularity, unlike Hindu or Christian Trinity, and says its true name is **Creator (Kartar)**. 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.

Hardev Singh Shergill

WWR

WORLD WITHOUT RELIGION

**Ah! Wouldn't that be heaven and
Guru Nanak's mission finally fulfilled?**

[From March-April 2016 SB]

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

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

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

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 Jehovah'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, 5th Guru Arjan and 9th Guru Tegh Bahadur, were martyred for their belief in freedom of faith.

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

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

Guru Nanak had come to the conclusion that **root cause of all the conflict in the society**, which in his time consisted of two majority religions, Hinduism and Islam, **was the religion**. To Guru Nanak religion was a divisive force, each with its own God; whereas **he wanted his mission to bring people together, unite humanity, because we are all children of One Creator**. Truth is that Guru Nanak rejected the existing three **Semitic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam)** and three **Indian religions of his time (Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism)** and **their Gods** and he was not about to start a yet another religion, **Sikhism**, to add to them.

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

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

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

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

In the article that follows Prof Devinder Singh Chahal has eloquently demonstrated that Nanakian Philosophy has universal acceptability. This paper was presented at the Council of Parliament of World Religions Conference held at Melbourne, Australia on December 3-9, 2009.

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

The 2015 Conference in Salt Lake City Utah was attended by Sikhs in large numbers and their contribution was '*Guru-ka-langar*', for the well fed, and turbans for the well-dressed. You see, 'turban' unfortunately has become the symbol of a Sikh, in their **mistaken** opinion, even though Guru Nanak rejected symbolism. Some may have read a paper at that gathering, but I am sure that they would have promoted Sikhism as the world's youngest **REVEALED RELIGION** and worthy of 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. He called them 'dogs' in ਰਾਜੇ ਸੀਹ ਮੁਕਦਮ ਕੁਤੇ p.1288.

But Brahmin took his revenge.

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

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

This **RSS** is not your old 'benevolent' **Hindu Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh**, RSS that left Sikhs alone until 1999. That year was the first **BJP** government in New Delhi and this government of a secular state allocated crores of Rupees to celebrate **300th anniversary of birth of Khalsa** because their contention is that **Sikhs are Hindus**, which they can prove by distorting history and pointing out to the **Indian Constitution** that groups Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains as Hindus, thanks to a Brahmin named **Jawahar Lal Nehru**, India's first Prime Minister. The new **RSS, Rashtriya Sikh Sangat**, was created that year; its first President/Chairman was the brother of Hindu RSS President/Chairman. He and his co-conspirators were initiated into Khalsa by Damdami Taksal. This year BJP is again in power for the second time and this year they have allocated 100 Crore Rupees to celebrate Guru Gobind Singh's 350th anniversary.

Sikhs no longer read and understand Gurbani themselves but rely on paid Granthis as the Brahmin has done all along for the Hindus; **Akhandpaths** in Sikh homes have replaced Havans in Hindu homes, complete with candles, coconut and incense; GGS is no longer read but worshipped and dressed as the Hindus dress their godly statues, warm clothes in winter and cottons and silks in summer; Sikhs carry the GGS in parades called **Nagar Kirtan** on decorated trucks in their communities as Brahmin carries its various god statues for display in chariots; two historical Sikh Gurdwaras, Patna Sahib and Nander Sahib, already look like and practice Hindu

temple rituals, including Aarti that Guru Nanak rejected. It won't be long before the three in Panjab follow suit.

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

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

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

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

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

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

In fact no religion is a revealed religion. All those claims are based on falsehood. Just think about it with your *Bibek Buddhi* (discerning mind). There should be concerted effort to expose the myth of revealed religions and their Gods as based on falsehood. Therein lies the salvation of Humanity.

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

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

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

Christian God fathered a child from Mary and his son, Jesus, established his own religion, Christianity, and proclaimed that **only those who believe in him will achieve salvation**. Then

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

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

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

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

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

Hardev Singh Shergill

EDITORIAL

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE, MY LIFE

[From May-June 2016 SB]

Focus of this issue is on 'Purpose of Life' in general, with or without religious connotations, and also one's personal life. I got the inspiration for this during a brief email exchange with Dr. I. J. Singh which included his article on this topic. My article is going to be without religious connotations. There will be no mention in it of words such as God, Divine, Destiny, Soul, Faith or Revealed, other than denying their validity.

Religion became an anathema for me before my teenage years. Although circumstances gave me an opportunity to rejoin Sikhism, my birth religion, but the experience of over a decade to rejoin this faith left me with a bitter taste in the operation and teachings in Gurdwaras and at the highest level of Sikh religious establishment in India but gratification about my childhood decision to reject all religions. This time I found support and comfort for this decision, once again, from the teachings of Guru Nanak.

As Gurbani says, human life is the highest form of life and only life form that possesses *bibek-budhi* (discerning mind); therefore it is the sole responsibility of this life form to protect its and other life forms' environment on this earth.

ਅਵਰ ਜੋਨਿ ਤੇਰੀ ਪਨਿਹਾਰੀ ॥
ਇਸੁ ਧਰਤੀ ਮਹਿ ਤੇਰੀ ਸਿਕਦਾਰੀ ॥

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

For the purpose of life as an individual, in addition to what Gurbani says, my take on **Purpose of Life is highly influenced by Hindu Granths** that I read in my 11th and 12th years while attending grades 5th and 6th.

In my formative years purpose of my life was to educate myself in whatever opportunity the life presented to me and take good care of my health.

Because I was the eldest in what eventually would be a family of ten siblings, purpose of my life was also to see that all of them get the same opportunity that was available to me.

Due to circumstances beyond my control my siblings No. 2, 3&4 for reasons of being females could not go to school and I was too young to do anything and sibling No.7, a brother, attended only village primary school because family wanted someone to take care of the family farm and he was too young to think for himself.

When I finished my studies by the age of 23 and started working, Hindu Granths had prescribed married life and raising a family. I had to forego married life for myself because circumstances made my younger siblings my responsibility.

Once those who needed my full time attention got on a path of their choosing I got married and raised a family of my own. At the same time I did not lose sight of my older siblings whom I could not help earlier because of my age. Eventually all nine of them were brought to Canada where I first lived, and married one's and their families to the United States later where I now live. There are five of us settled in Canada and other five in California, within 60 miles of each other.

During my working life I tried to do something for the communities that I lived and worked in by belonging to and working with **Lions Service Clubs International** for whom I **charted six new clubs in six different towns** I lived in, in British Columbia, Canada: **Revelstoke, Port Hardy, Port Alice, Port McNeill, Holberg Air Force Base and Alert Bay.**

After I had successful professional careers and raised and educated my children the time came to do something for the community that I was born into as the Hindu Granths prescribed.

That is when my troubles began. I could not find any institution to work with because only Sikh institution in this country is a Gurdwara that not only I had rejected before my teen age years but also not conducive to do community work.

That is when I was introduced to a **Sant Baba** who was operating Sikh Schools all over the world, so I was told, where Sikhs lived and taught local country's curriculum in addition to Panjabi and Gurbani. Having been raised in Ganganagar district of Rajasthan where there were no Sant Babas at that time and in Panjab never attending any Gurdwaras **I was totally ignorant about these scums of society.**

Rest is History already narrated in pages of the Sikh Bulletin. www.sikhbulletin.com

But that experience did convince me that Sikhi being practiced is not what Gurus preached. Hence I ended up operating a Gurdwara that I inherited through Court order in lieu of my funds swindled by the **Sant Baba. I gave three years of my life to this scoundrel Sant Baba and nine years to *Sikhi Sudhar*, reformation of Sikhism.**

Result was not really a failure but the realization that all the world's religions are based on falsehood and they cannot be reformed.

Kindest thing I can say about religions is that if they were not based on falsehood for the one who started them, the followers have distorted them and **Sikhism is the latest living example of that.**

After the Roseville, California, Gurdwara had to be closed due to stiff opposition of the Sikh Religious Establishment I struggled with what to do with the Sikh Bulletin.

In few years realization came that **Guru Nanak did not start a new religion. He rejected all the man made religions, Hinduism that he was born into and Islam, the religion of the rulers of India. What Guru Nanak taught us was how to live life and let live, as human beings,** not as Hindus, Muslims, Christians, or any other faith, a universal message for all faiths and no faith.

As Dr. Devinder Singh Chahal said in one of his recent email exchanges on Yahoo groups Learning Zone:

*"My statement "**Religion teaches to believe rather than to think**" has not been taken in a good sense by some members as if free thinking goes against SIKHI. However, Tiwana Ji said that Moderators allow Dr Chahal's free thought but I don't know in what sense. I hope in encouraging sense. I am quoting just the beginning of the "Free Thought" from Wikipedia for further exploring if free thinking is good or bad."*

Free Thought

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freethought>

Freethought — or **free thought** — is a [philosophical](#) view point which holds that positions regarding [truth](#) should be formed on the basis of logic, reason, and [empiricism](#), rather than [authority](#), tradition, revelation, or other [dogma](#). The cognitive application of free thought is known as "free thinking", and practitioners of free thought are known as "**free thinkers**". The

term first came into use in the 17th century to indicate people who inquired into the basis of traditional religious beliefs.

A free thinker is defined as a person who forms his or her own opinions about important subjects (such as religion and politics) instead of accepting what others say. Freethinkers are heavily committed to the use of scientific inquiry, and logic.

Guru Nanak was the greatest Free Thinker of 15th century, two centuries before this term was even coined.

I am a follower of Guru Nanak. I too am a Free Thinker. To propagate that message is the current Purpose of my life.

It is as **mundane** as that because my birth was an accident of nature as Gurbani says father's semen and mother's egg produced a combination of atoms that is me and nature nurtured me. When an affliction hits my being and there is no cure these atoms will disperse back to their original source never to assemble again. As Gurbani says:

ਦੇਹੀ ਮਾਟੀ ਬੋਲੈ ਪਉਣੁ॥
ਬੁਝੁ ਰੇ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਮੂਆ ਹੈ ਕਉਣੁ॥
ਮੁਈ 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 Kartar/Creator is both manifest as **Cosmos** and un-manifest as omnipresent **Hukam**. Death of the body affects only the manifest form of the Creator/Kartar - 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 the Creator/Kartar, 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), bhanda (pot) and miti (clay, earth) are used metaphorically for the Creator/Kartar, 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 ਮੁਆ ਰੇ ਕਉਨੁ ਮੁਆ ॥
 ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਮਿਲਿ ਕਰਹੁ ਬੀਚਾਰਾ ਇਹੁ ਤਉ ਚਲਤੁ ਭਇਆ ॥
 ਰਹਾਉ ॥
 ਅਗਲੀ ਕਿਛੁ ਖਬਰਿ ਨ ਪਾਈ ॥
 ਰੋਵਨਹਾਰੁ ਭਿ ਉਠਿ ਸਿਧਾਈ ॥
 ਭਰਮ ਮੋਹ ਕੇ ਬਾਂਧੇ ਬੰਧ ॥
 ਸੁਪਨੁ ਭਇਆ ਭਖਲਾਏ ਅੰਧ ॥
 ਇਹੁ ਤਉ ਰਚਨੁ ਰਚਿਆ ਕਰਤਾਰਿ ॥
 ਆਵਤ ਜਾਵਤ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਅਪਾਰਿ ॥
 ਨਹ ਕੋ ਮੁਆ ਨ ਮਰਣੈ ਜੋਗੁ ॥
 ਨਹ ਬਿਨਸੈ ਅਬਿਨਾਸੀ ਹੋਗੁ ॥
 ਜੋ ਇਹੁ ਜਾਣਹੁ ਸੋ ਇਹੁ ਨਾਹਿ ॥
 ਜਾਨਣਹਾਰੇ ਕਉ ਬਲਿ ਜਾਉ ॥
 ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਿ ਭਰਮੁ ਚੁਕਾਇਆ ॥
 ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਮਰੈ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਜਾਇਆ ॥

After death air [breath] merges into air, light merges into light (consciousness is lost when Hukam stops operating in the body) and the earth (lifeless body) becomes one with earth. What support is there for the one who cries over this loss? Who has died? O' who has died? O' enlightened beings get-together and ponder over this question. This is indeed a puzzle! Pause.

Without any information about what happened to the dead, the one who was crying also dies. The ignorant fools shackled by doubts and attachments babble about death as if dreaming. This world is the creation of the Creator/Kartar (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.

Purpose of life is neither 'divinely' inspired nor immutable nor same for everybody. It is end product of one's upbringing, surroundings, circumstances beyond one's control and a whole set of one's own life experiences. Each individual creates his or her own purpose of life just as one creates his or her own hell or heaven, in this life on this earth because there is no second coming.

One purpose of life, for sure, is not to meet the multiple 'Gods' of all the world's religions because those 'Gods' are manmade fiction created by all the religions, each one with its own God. But they would all assert theirs is the only authentic religion and only way for humanity to save itself from itself is to follow their way.

Global Hindu Heritage Foundation USA www.Aalayavani.org, championing the global preservation of Hinduism makes a case that Hinduism is the ultimate Saviour of humanity.

Which religion does not make a similar claim?

Quoting Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, first Vice-President and second President of India, implies only Hinduism's connection with spirituality. "Spirituality is perceived in the context of integrating every segment in the universe to bring about unity – nothing is excluded and everything is included that will bring happiness and harmony. Spirituality involves the integration of three dimensions— knowledge base and belief systems, interior life and inner self, and exterior life and institutional activity. These three domains overlap and interact with each other – one dealing with individual experience, search for inner life and also the external world. Spirituality is the experience of connection to something higher level that transcends our ordinary lives. The most prominent feature of spirituality in Indian culture is the ideal of oneness of all beings in the universe (Radhakrishnan 1929).

Then it takes on two largest religions of the world, Christianity and Islam, and paints them bad.

Islamic brutality on Hindus was unmatched in the annals of human history. It is bigger than the holocaust of Jews by the Nazis and also much bigger than the massacre of the Armenians by the Turks. According the estimates as many as 60 million Hindus were massacred by Islamic rulers. Actual numbers could be very well up to one billion. Every Islamic ruler made hills of Hindu skulls to outnumber the previous rulers. In Afghanistan, **Hindu Kush Mountains** has seen more blood and brutality

Quoting Will Durant: "**Will Durant** has argued in his 1935 book "The Story of Civilization: Our Oriental Heritage" that "The **Mohammedan conquest of India is probably the bloodiest story in history**. The Islamic historians and scholars have recorded with great glee and pride the slaughters of Hindus, forced conversions, abduction of Hindu women and children to slave markets and the destruction of temples carried out by the warriors of Islam during 800 AD to 1700 AD. Millions of Hindus were converted to Islam by sword during this period." (P: 459).

Quoting **Jurgen Todenhofer**: "The German writer and journalist **Jurgen Todenhofer**, who actually did the unthinkable and spent 10 days in the Islamic State as the Caliph's guest, says that the ISIS wants to kill "all non-believers and apostates and enslave their women and children. All Shiites, Yazidi, Hindus, atheists and polytheists should be killed . . . Hundreds of millions of people are to be eliminated in the course of this religious cleansing. All moderate Muslims who promote democracy should be killed [as well] because, from the ISIS perspective, they promote human laws over the laws of God."

Quoting **Thomas Jefferson**, the third President of the United States stated, "Millions of innocent men, women and children, since the introduction of Christianity, have been burnt, tortured, fined, imprisoned; yet we have not advanced one inch towards humanity. What has been the effect of coercion? To make one half of the world fools, and the other half hypocrites. To support error and roguery all over the earth."

The only solution to this mentality of conquering the humanity by terror and deception to submit to their respective religion is follow the advice of **Toynbee** who suggested all the nations to turn

to India and embrace the spiritual path couched in the principle of ahimsa. Patanjali Yoga Sutras enumerate five yamas that are considered the codes of restraints, truthfulness, abstain from immoral acts, think of highest reality and no-acquisitiveness; the five niyamas prescribing the virtues such as purity, contentment, controlling the senses, surrender and self-study.

By practicing one will be elevated to the path of spirituality allowing one to know the true nature of human existence and find the truth (atman) and it is relevant to the higher truth (Paramatma). Patanjali says “*Ahimsa pratishtayam tat sannidhau vairatyagaha*” meaning “When a person is established in non-violence, then violence is dropped in his or her presence.” (2:35). Dropping off these violent behaviors is the need of the hour if the humanity has to prevent itself from self-destruction. As Toynbee stated that the only salvation for the humanity is to turn to India for her spiritual legacy that can prevent the holocausts.

What Global Hindu Heritage Foundation USA does not mention is the role Hinduism played in the persecution and **decline of Buddhism in India, the land of its birth, even as it continued to flourish beyond the frontiers of India.**

Buddhism had seen a steady growth from its beginnings in the 6th century BCE to its endorsement as state religion of the Maurya Empire under Ashoka in the 3rd century BCE. It continued to flourish during the final centuries BCE and the first centuries of the Common Era, and spread even beyond the Indian subcontinent to Central Asia and beyond to China. But a steady decline of Buddhism in India set in during the later Gupta era and under the Pala Empire.

Chinese monks travelling through the region between the 5th and 8th centuries CE, such as Faxian, Xuanzang, Yijing, Huisheng, and Song Yun, began to speak of a decline of the Buddhist sangha, especially in the wake of the White Hun invasion. Decline continued after the fall of the Pala dynasty in the 12th century CE and the gradual Muslim conquest in the Indian subcontinent. By that time, Buddhism had become especially vulnerable to hostile rulers because it lacked strong roots in society as most of its adherents were ascetic communities.

Apart from a small community in eastern Bengal (present-day Bangladesh) in which it had survived from ancient times and Nepal, Buddhism was virtually extinct in India by the end of the 19th century. In recent times Buddhism has seen a revival in India due to the influence of Anagarika Dharmapala, Kripasaran Mahasthavir, B. R. Ambedkar and Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama.

Hardev Singh Shergill

EDITORIAL
SIKH AND GURSIKH
[From July-August 2016 SB]

**I am not a Sikh but I am a
Gursikh and a Free Thinker**



Hardev Singh Shergill

"ਸਿਖੀ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਗੁਰ ਵੀਚਾਰਿ॥" *Sikhee sikhiaa gur veechaar*. P.465

Sikhi is the understanding and reflection of the Guru's thought processes and to live by it.

I am a Sikh and a Gursikh



Dr. Harbans Lal

Guru Nanak rejected all the man made religions and their Gods based on Faith. He was a Free Thinker who, like today's Scientists, used his 'bibek-budhi' to discover the truth and urged his followers to do the same and reject Faith based religions:

ਪਹਿਲਾ ਵਸਤੁ ਸਿਵਾਣਿ ਕੈ ਤਾ ਕੀਚੈ ਵਾਪਾਰੁ॥

***First evaluate the goods, then buy (first evaluate an idea or philosophy before accepting it).
AGGS, M1, p.1410.***

A great disservice was done to his original and unique philosophy by confining it to 1430 pages of Adi Granth.

As a result today an attempt at publishing just **Guru Nanak's** writing in the Adi Granth is tantamount to dismembering a body in the eyes of the faithful who instead of reading, understanding and applying it to their daily lives worship it much the same way as Hindus worship stone statues and dress it like them and parade it in public exactly as the Hindus do to their stone deities, once a year.

Guru Nanak was third among the progressive thinkers of the world and first among Scientist Philosophers. I do not believe **Confucius** or **Buddha** touched on the subjects of origins of **Cosmos, Life, and Species, Death and Environment**. Contemporary of European Renaissance period **Copernicus**, who earned the wrath of Catholic Church for denying Biblical account of Earth as the center of the universe, **Nanak proposed origin of cosmos similar to the 20th century theory of Big Bang 500 years earlier:**

Cosmos:

ਕੀਤਾ ਪਸਾਉ ਏਕੇ ਕਵਾਉ ॥
ਤਿਸ ਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਲਖ ਦਰੀਆਉ ॥

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

Origin 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 (Universal -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:

Evolution of Species:

ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਭਏ ਕੀਟ ਪਤੰਗਾ ॥
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.

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.

The following quotes are from Dr. Baldev Singh's manuscript '[Nankian Philosophy \(Gurmat\): The Path of Enlightenment](#) that we published in Book form in 2015 and also published it in Special Issue of November-December 2015 Sikh Bulletin.

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

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.

Environmentalism:

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

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

Had he come across Martin Luther, also his contemporary, he would have advised him not to waste effort reforming Catholic Church because for vast majority of people faith is much easier to follow because for reason based philosophy they have to use their *bibek-budhi* which is found to be hard exercise. Instead he would have asked him to join efforts to abolish man-made religions all together. If that accident of birth had happened the world would have neither Christianity nor Islam, two religions that have systematically destroyed cultures all over the world and each other. It is sad that almost all Sikh scholars are claiming Nanak’s bani as **revealed** to him by God much the same way all the Semitic religions claim. **That shows disrespect on their part to Guru’s original philosophy and denies his status as a child prodigy.**

God did not reveal anything to Moses, Christ or Mohammed simply because there is no God like Semitic people or Hindus claim. Nor was Nanak a Prophet as those three religions claim.

Nanak and they, and **Joseph Smith** for that matter, were no more divine than you or I. We do not even know if they themselves claimed divinity or it was proclaimed by their followers who really wrote on their behalf, none of them leaving their own writings other than **Joseph Smith** who claims to have copied what God gave him on gold plates just as God gave Moses Ten Commandment on slabs of rock. **He claims to have witnesses who witnessed the event but they were his in-laws and close friends who witnessed nothing simply because the event did not occur.**

In China it was **Kung Fu Tzu**, better known as **Confucius**, a Chinese philosopher of the **sixth century B.C.E.** There is no **god** in **Confucianism**, but rather a **force** called the **Tao**, also known as the **Great Ultimate**. **Confucius** has never been considered a **god** by his adherents. **Confucianism is a socio-philosophical movement aimed at bettering society, just as Nankian Philosophy.**

In India it was **Gautama Buddha** in **623 B.C.** His philosophy is more messed up. There are multiple Buddhist sects about Buddhists’ belief in God or not. In my personal experience the only book on Buddhism that I have read was in a hotel room in Singapore in 1999. I had to stop reading it half way through when it changed from Nanakian Philosophy to Hindu Mythology.

The best explanation on Buddhism that I have come across is in **Buddha Dharma Education Association and BuddhaNet**. To the question ‘**Do Buddhists believe in a god?** Their unequivocal answer is **NO**.

See the excerpt below because it describes Nankian Philosophy in very concise words:

“No, we do not.” “There are several reasons for this. The Buddha, like modern sociologists and psychologists, believed that religious ideas and especially the god idea have their origins in fear.”

“The Buddha says:

*Gripped by fear people go to sacred mountains, sacred groves, sacred trees and shrines. Primitive humans found selves in a dangerous and hostile world, the fear of wild animals, of not being able to find enough food, of injury or disease, and of natural phenomena like thunder, lightning and volcanoes were constantly with them. Finding no security, they created the idea of gods in order to give them comfort in good times, courage in times of danger and consolation when things went wrong. To this day, you will notice that people become more religious at times of crises, you will hear them say that the belief in a god or gods gives them the strength they need to deal with life. You will hear them explain that they believe in a particular god because they prayed in time of need and their prayer was answered. All this seems to support the Buddha's teaching that the **god-idea is a response to fear and frustration**. The Buddha taught us to try to understand our fears, to lessen our desires and to calmly and courageously accept the things we cannot change. **He replaced fear, not with irrational belief but with rational understanding (Bibek-Budhi of Nankian Philosophy).***

*The second reason the Buddha did not believe in a god is because there does not seem to be any evidence to support this idea. There are numerous religions, all claiming that they alone have god's words preserved in their holy book, that they alone understand god's nature, that their god exists and that the gods of other religions do not. Some claim that god is masculine, some that she is feminine and others that it is neuter. They are all satisfied that there is ample evidence to prove the existence of their god but they laugh in disbelief at the evidence other religions use to prove the existence of another god. It is not surprising that with so many different religions spending so many centuries trying to prove the existence of their gods that still no real, concrete, substantial or irrefutable evidence has been found. **Buddhists suspend judgement until such evidence is forthcoming.***

The third reason the Buddha did not believe in a god is that the belief is not necessary. Some claim that the belief in a god is necessary in order to explain the origin of the universe. But this is not so. Science has very convincingly explained how the universe came into being without having to introduce the god-idea. Some claim that belief in god is necessary to have a happy, meaningful life. Again we can see that this is not so. There are millions of atheists and free-thinkers, not to mention many Buddhists, who live useful, happy and meaningful lives without belief in a god. Some claim that belief in god's power is necessary because humans, being weak, do not have the strength to help themselves. Once again, the evidence indicates the opposite. One often hears of people who have overcome great disabilities and handicaps, enormous odds and difficulties through their own inner resources, through their own efforts and without belief in a god. Some claim that god is necessary in order to give man salvation. But this argument only

holds good if you accept the theological concept of salvation and Buddhists do not accept such a concept. Based on his own experience, the Buddha saw that each human being had the capacity to purify the mind, develop infinite love and compassion and perfect understanding. **He shifted attention from the heavens to the heart and encouraged us to find solutions to our problems through self-understanding**”.

Nanak rejected both main religions of India, **Hinduism**, he was born into and **Islam** that ruled the Hindus.

ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬੀ ਭੇਦੁ ਨਾ ਜਾਤਾ ॥

Neither the Vedas [four Hindu texts] nor the four Katebas [Semitic texts: the Torah, the Zabur (Psalms), the Injil (Gospel) and the Quran] know the “Reality.” AGGS, M 1, p. 1021.

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 ਬੋੜਾ 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 tulsī (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.

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.

Here Guru Nanak rejects conventional/ritualistic prayers; instead he suggests universal human values as a way of life not only for a Muslim but for the entire humanity:

ਮਿਹਰ ਮਸੀਤਿ ਸਿਦਕੁ ਮੁਸਲਾ ਹਕ ਹਲਾਲੁ ਕੁਰਾਣੁ॥
 ਸਰਮ ਸੁੰਨਤਿ ਸੀਲੁ ਚੋਜਾ ਹੋਹੁ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ॥
 ਕਰਣੀ ਕਾਬਾ ਸਚੁ ਪੀਰ ਕਲਮਾ ਕਰਮ ਨਿਵਾਜ ॥
 ਤਸਬੀ ਸਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵਸੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਖੇ ਲਾਜ:॥

Let mercy be your mosque, faith be your prayer mat, honest living be your Quran, and fidelity to your wife be your circumcision and good conduct be your fast. This will make you a true Muslim. Make pious work your Kaaba, Truth your spiritual teacher, good deeds your prayer and recognize your rosary as God's Will. This conduct of yours will bring you honor in the court of God. AGGS, M 1, p. 140.

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 ਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ 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 was a Humanist

ਦੁਖੁ ਵਿਛੋੜਾ ਇਕੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਭੂਖੁ ॥
ਇਕੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਸਕਤਵਾਰ ਜਮਦੂਤੁ ॥

The first pain is the separation from Creator (lack of morality), the second pain is the grinding poverty and the third pain is the tyranny of the ruler. AGGS, M 1, p. 1256.

Nothing has changed since Guru Nanak uttered those words. These three pains still afflict all mankind. People who inherited Nanakian Philosophy have completely misunderstood it and the elite among them like other religions have turned this philosophy into a religion to snare gullible masses.

ਨੀਚਾ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਨੀਚ ਜਾਤਿ ਨੀਚੀ ਹੂ ਅਤਿ ਨੀਚੁ॥
ਨਾਨਕੁ ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਾਥਿ ਵਡਿਆ ਸਿਉ ਕਿਆ ਰੀਸ॥
ਜਿਥੈ ਨੀਚ ਸਮਾਲੀਅਨਿ ਤਿਥੈ ਨਦਿਰ ਤੇਰੀ ਬਖਸੀਸ॥

Nanak will stand by the lowest of the lowest, not with the elite. Societies that take care of the downtrodden have the blessing of God. AGGS, M 1, p. 15.

In tune with the true revolutionary zeal, Guru Nanak gave a clarion call to the masses to join his movement with an explicit warning that it would require supreme sacrifices:

ਜਉ ਤਉ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਖੇਲਣ ਕਾ ਚਾਉ॥
ਸਿਰੁ ਧਰਿ ਤਲੀ ਗਲੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਆਉ॥
ਇਤੁ ਮਾਰਗਿ ਪੈਰੁ ਧਰੀਜੈ॥
ਸਿਰ ਦੀਜੈ ਕਾਣਿ ਨ ਕੀਜੈ॥

If you want to play the game of love (follow the righteous path/Truth) then follow me and be prepared to sacrifice your life. Once you step on this path, do not hesitate to offer your head. AGGS, M 1, p. 1412.

Unfortunately that clarion call got lost among 1430 pages in Adi Granth that is being worshipped in Gurdwaras and people's homes just like Hindu stone gods, Christian Cross, Muslim Crescent Moon and Jewish Star of David.

Guru Nanak's universal message of peace, love, respect equality and justice brought more and more adherents (Hindus and Muslims) into the Sikh movement. With such continuing growth, almost a century after Guru Nanak, Guru Arjan (fifth Nanak) called for the establishment of **kingdom of peace and justice for "all."** This call was perceived as threat by **Emperor Jahangir** and the proponents of caste ideology. **Guru Arjan** was tortured on the orders of the Emperor by his Hindu and Muslim underlings and he died the death of a martyr on May 30, 1606 in Lahore. [1]

ਸਭੇ ਸਾਝੀਵਾਲ ਸਦਾਇਨਿ ਤੂੰ ਕਿਸੈ ਨ ਦਿਸਹਿ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਜੀਉ ॥

All are partners in Your (Kartar/Creator) commonwealth and You do not look at anyone as a stranger. AGGS, M 5, p. 97.

ਨਾ ਕੋ ਬੈਰੀ ਨਹੀ ਬਿਗਾਨਾ ਸਗਲ ਸੰਗਿ ਹਮ ਕਉ ਬਨਿ ਆਈ ॥

Neither we regard anyone as enemy nor stranger; living in harmony with all is our creed. AGGS, M 5, p. 1299

ਹੁਣਿ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਹੋਆ ਮਿਹਰਵਾਣ ਦਾ ॥

ਪੈ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਕਿਸੈ ਰਵਾਣਦਾ ॥

ਸਭ ਸੁਖਾਲੀ ਵੁਠੀਆ ਇਹੁ ਹਲੇਮੀ ਰਾਜੁ ਜੀਉ ॥

Now the Merciful has issued a Command that no one would be persecuted/harassed by anyone. All would live happily in peace under the benevolent rule of justice. AGGS, M 5, p. 74.

Support for my thesis that Guru Nanak rejected all the man made religions and their Gods based on Faith, from the life of Guru Nanak and Adi Granth:

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 one human family, undivided by man made religions.

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. Khwaja Jainul Abdin**, the author of *Tarikhe Arab*, wrote the first-person account of Guru Nanak’s Arabian journey. In his Arabic book, he writes, “I was with Guru Nanak when Guru 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 Creator). Rukn-ud-din asked, **“Fala Alla Mazahbu,”** meaning “which religion do you belong to?” The response was, **“Abdulla Allah La Mazahabu,”** meaning **“I am creator’s servant; I have no religion.”**

The **third** pronouncement is by **Fifth Nanak, Guru Arjan**, on **p.1136** of **Adi Granth**, **“Na Ham Hindu Na Mussalman’ (We are neither Hindus nor Muslims)**. He is using plural ‘WE’ because by this time the number of people believing in teachings of Guru Nanak had become substantial and distinct enough group to be reckoned by the state.

Note that he does not say ‘We the Sikhs’.

However, Guru Nanak was not the first person to reject religion as an institution.

Aristotle 384-322 BC: rejected man-made religions and their Gods. **“According to the book of Genesis, God created man in his own image, but according to Aristotle, men create gods after their own image.”**

But he believed that there must be some eternal and imperishable substance, otherwise all substance would be perishable, and then everything in the world would be perishable. *“But the world and time are not perishable...This eternal actual substance must be a single **prime mover**, which, while the source of all process and change, is not itself subject to process or change.”* (Chapters 6 to 10 of book 12 of the *Metaphysics*)

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.”*

Born into a ‘*khande di pahul dhari*’ family I rejected Sikhism by age eleven, Hinduism by age twelve and all religions before my teenage years when India’s division resulted in Hindu, Muslim, Sikh carnage. At age 62, due to strange set of circumstances, I came in possession of a Gurdwara building through court order. With the encouragement of some concerned Sikhs I was persuaded to operate it like no other Gurdwara. In the process **I learned that Guru Nanak’s philosophy is so unique and so 21st century that it should be spread throughout the world but not as a religion.**

Authentic and correct interpretation of Adi Granth is so rare that I ascribe my knowledge about it to only three people. I myself did not know literary Panjabi nor did I understand any of the many languages in which Adi Granth is written.

First person to interpret Adi Granth to me was **S. Gurbakhash Singh Kala Afghana** whom I went to visit in Seattle, Washington. Between 1998 and 2005, when we were forced to close the Gurdwara for lack of sangat, we spent many days and hours together listening, taping and publishing many of his books and organizing conferences.

Learning in English came only from late **Dr. Baldev Singh** and **Dr. Davinder Singh Chahal**, whose articles I first started reading in the **World Sikh News**, published from **Stockton, California** after 1984 Ghalughara (Indian Govt. pogroms against Sikhs) and now adorn pages of many issues of the Sikh Bulletin.

I would urge the readers to please read an expanded article **[Nanak My Discovery](http://sikhbulletin.com/Files/NanakMyDiscoveryMarApr2015.pdf)**.
<http://sikhbulletin.com/Files/NanakMyDiscoveryMarApr2015.pdf>

Hardev Singh Shergill

**DISCUSSION GENERATED BY JULY-AUGUST EDITORIAL
SIKH AND GURSIKH
September-October 2016**

From: Hardev Singh Shergill
[\[mailto:editor@sikhbulletin.com\]](mailto:editor@sikhbulletin.com)

Sent: Monday, 29 August 2016 6:19 AM

To: bawaj@optusnet.com.au; brar_jiwanwala@hotmail.com; Sewa Singh Sidhu; 'Sarjeet Sidhu'; akalsahaigurtejsingh@yahoo.com

Subject: SB

Please forward on your email list. Thanks. HSS

*

From: Bawa Jagdev
[mailto:bawaj@optusnet.com.au]
Sent: Monday, 29 August 2016 2:02 PM
Sikh Bulletin Vol 7&8,
Please forward it to your friends
With Kind Regards
Bawa Singh Jagdev OAM
(Mob) 0401211111
Bawaj@optusnet.com.au

*

From: Gurmit Singh
[mailto:GurmitSingh01@bigpond.com]
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2016 4:27 AM
Subject: FW: The Sikh Bulletin:
July-August 2016?

If Dr. Harbans Lal, USA (DOB: 8th January 1931) son of the Respected mother Ramkali Devi and father Dr. Beli Ram Saxena is “a Sikh and a Gursikh”, then it would mean that Keshadhari Sikhs would fall in the category of the Hindus because most of them continue to believe in

Manu-Smriti’s caste system!

If any doubt please write to the Editor:

Email Address: editor@sikhbulletin.com

Gurmit Singh (Sydney)

On Tuesday, 30 August 2016 12:10 PM, Hardev Singh Shergill <editor@sikhbulletin.com> wrote:

Gurmit Singh Ji you have spoken the Truth, Absolute Truth. Thank you.

Hindu India and their Sikh toadies in connivance with its BJP masters and RSS, Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh & Rashtriya Sikh Sangat, have narrowly defined a kesadhari turban wearing a true Sikh who can vote in SGPC elections and get admission to medical colleges run by SGPC. These Sikhs run Gurdwaras, supposedly preaching Nanakian Philosophy but more like Hindu worship. They do not understand the teachings of Adi Granth but parade it as Hindus parade their Gods of stone and have replaced Hindu Havan with Akhandpaths, continuous reading of Adi Granth, without anyone listening or comprehending. Accutremments of burning essence, ghee lamps, coconut, flowers and colourful ramallas are the same as in Hindu temples. They have not discovered the gem of a wisdom Guru Nanak preached all his life. A true Sikh is he or she who believes and practices Guru Nanak’s philosophy and does not have a particular outward appearance. Therefore it is essential for a true Sikh to either look different from ill defined Sikhs, as Dr. Harbans Lal does or if he or she looks like them to deny that they are **that type** of Sikhs and stop going to the gurdwaras. Instead have Nanak’s Dharamsal in their own homes and discuss and share with their neighbours and friends his philosophy and live by it. They can respond to a question about their religion as Guru Nanak responded to Qazi *Rukn-ud-din*’s question in Mecca: **“I am a man of The Creator, and belong to no religion”**.

If you want to get an introduction to Nanak’s message to the world please see this link.

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

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From: surinder kanwar [mailto:kanwar238@yahoo.com]

Sent: Wednesday, 31 August 2016 3:29 AM

To: Hardev Singh Shergill <editor@sikhbulletin.com>; 'Gurmit Singh' **Cc:** **Subject:** Re: The Sikh Bulletin: July-August 2016

I believe you might have seen and known one person of India named BABA RAM DEV who is teaching yoga. Like many other so called sadhus he does not cut his hair and also does not shave. If uncut hair and beard is to be considered symbol of Sikhs then in what category such sadhus are to be taken?

Surinder Singh Kanwar
Advocate
20 Wirilda Way, Maidstone
Vic-3012, Australia
Cell - +61-468432632
Tel: (03)93183612

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On Wednesday, 31 August 2016 9:47 PM, Gurmit Singh <GurmitSingh01@bigpond.com> wrote:

Dear Advocate Surinder Singh Kanwar (Melbourne),

Thanks a lot for your feedback for further discussion, though we have no authority to pass any judgement. As I understand, Almighty God (Akall Purkh) has not created different religions but by passage of time, human beings have chosen their way of life under the concept of various Religions/Faiths such as Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Jainism.. Accordingly, their adherents follow their respective Holy Scriptures and Code of Conduct as laid down by their Founders.

Similarly, followers of Sikh Religion obey the Guru's Teachings as enshrined in the Guru Granth Sahib from the Commencing Verse to Mundavani at pages 1 to 1429. All the Sikhs are required to maintain their hair, beard, moustaches, eye-brows, etc. intact from birth to demise, followed by the Sachi Bani, which means like legal tender money, Government's official seal as well as coin's prescribed metal both are essential. Anyone part missing is considered as counterfeit coin, unacceptable.

Even though Baba Ram Dev neither cuts his hair nor shaves his beard and moustaches, he can't be considered as a Sikh because he does not follow the Sikh Guru's teachings. Similarly, Dr. Harbans Lal may have

In-depth study of Gurbani but he regularly cuts his hair and shaves beard & moustaches, which means he does not practice the Guru's Teachings. As per my limited understanding, both continue to practice Hindu religion, and they have not adopted/embraced Sikh religion.

Some Quotes from Guru Granth Sahib:

Jupp Stanza 1: Hukam Razaiee Chalnaa Nanak Likhiya Naal.

Guru Nanak Sahib says that veil of darkness and ignorance could only be dispelled when we act and obey the Almighty God's Divine Command i.e. follow the Laws of Nature from the very beginning of life. (Look, when the baby is born hair also grows together with other body parts and as such, Sikh families should never cut their hair).

□Jupp Stanza 6: Matt Vich Ratan Jawahar Manik Jay Ek Gur Kee Sikh Sunee.
If a person listens to, understands and practices the Teachings of the Guru, then one can acquire all the bounties and virtues in the heart.

□Jupp Stanza 15: Manaiy Taraiy Taaraiy Gur Sikh.

By obeying Guru's Divine Command, the Guru-oriented person also rejoices successful life.

□GGS page 465: Sikhee Sikhiya Gur Vichaar.

The Guru-oriented persons, who have learnt the art of living as devoted Sikhs, along with other instructions & teachings from the Guru, are successful..

□GGS page 601: Soe Sikh Bandhap Hai Bhai Je Gur Kay Bhanaiy
Vich Aavaiy.

The Sikh, who follows the Guru's Command is my true friend, brother and close associate.

□GGS page 667: Gursikh Meet Chaloh Gur Chali...

O Friendly Gursikh! Let us follow the Guru's guidance through the Guru's Command. Let us follow the Guru's Will, by accepting His dictates without a murmur.

□GGS page 44: Sabh Sianapaan Schadd Kaiy Guru Kee Charni Pah.

We could attain the Almighty God's Bliss only by surrendering ourselves and by renouncing all our cleverness.

Also thanks for your Article: Hell-Heaven at page 31 of Punjabi Akhbar, August 2016, Adelaide
– South Australia //
Gurmit Singh (Sydney)

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On Thu, Sep 1, 2016 at 2:27 PM, surinder kanwar <kanwar238@yahoo.com> wrote:

Dear Sardar Gurmit Singh Ji, Sat Sri Akal

I believe to understand and define a SIKH is not an easy proposition. I fully agree with views as explained by S. Hardev Singh Shergill, of Sikh Bulletin that Shri Harbans Lal is a Sikh. At the same time I do not want to drag the discussion, still I feel that some aspect must be made clear. In fact I wish to understand the things and clear the concept in my mind. It is for such reasons I am just writing all these things.

Kindly help me and guide me.

When we talk of Baba Ram Dev, on the contrary to Baba Ram Dev, Navjot Singh Sidhu may not understand gurbani, as most of us do not understand, but he believes in Guru Granth Sahib, at the same time he does Havan etc. He is known as Sikh. I believe he has full right to vote for SGPC elections. I do not know he is to be treated as Sikh or Hindu. You might have seen the appointment of Jathedar Patna Sahib the photo is attached along with other photos of Sikhs as per your definition. I do not know whether they are sikhs or not.

Jupp Stanza 1: Hukam Razaiee Chalnaa Nanak Likhiya Naal.

So far as I understand it means to understand the law of nature and follow the law of nature. In case it covers keeping hair and beard only because it is given by nature then we should live like NAGA SADHUS who live naked, do not wear clothes because they say that god has sent us naked and we should live naked.

Gurbani says:

ਕਬੀਰ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਇਕ ਸਿਉ ਕੀਏ ਆਨ ਦੁਬਿਧਾ ਜਾਇ ॥

ਭਾਵੈ ਲਾਂਬੇ ਕੇਸ ਕਰੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਘਰਾਰਿ ਮੁਡਾਇ ॥25॥

Kabeer preeth eik sio keeae aan dhubidhaa jaae |
bhavai laabae kes kar bhavai gharar muddae |25|

What does it mean? So far as my little knowledge goes it does not simply means JATAN as is generally explained by many persons.



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On Thursday, 1 September 2016 6:11 PM, Devinder Singh Chahal- IUSCanada
<iuscanada@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear S Surinder Singh Kanwar, S Hardev Singh Shergill and S Gurmit Singh,
I agree with S Kanwar that it is very difficult to define a Sikh. The pictures shown with his missive indicate that if these people with beard and turban and playing Holi and some of them carrying a turban as big and heavy that it is difficult for a normal person to carry then I am sure Guru Nanak would laugh at such Sikhs.

Moreover, Guru Gobind Singh would also laugh at the Sikhs who are wearing 5 Ks and a different Khanda than that, , being used currently and punting a TILAK on their forehead.

The new Khanda is the first stage to change original Khanda into Trishul as  is being accepted as Ek Oankaar, Ek Omkaar or Ek Aumkaar which represents OM - God in Trinity which goes against the basic principles of GOD in Nanakian Philosophy.

I THINK TO DEFINE A SIKH IS AS DIFFICULT AS TO BE A TRUE SIKH.

Please go to www.iuscanda.com for studying Gurbani and Sikhism in their right perspective. It covers articles and books on Sikhism explained scientifically and logically.

Regards,

Devinder Singh Chahal

iuscanada.com

Prof Devinder Singh Chahal, PhD

President

Institute for Understanding Sikhism

4418 Rue Martin Plouffe,

Laval, QC, Canada, H7W 5L9

450-681-1254

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On Thu, Sep 1, 2016 at 9:22 PM, surinder kanwar <kanwar238@yahoo.com> wrote:

Thanks for commenting on the views expressed by me. As was suggested I keenly opened the web site ius Canada and the first sentence on it was (**Guru Nanak (1469-1539) founded a scientifically and logically sound religion, Sikhism, for the welfare of the mankind.**)

Now when we claim that Guru Nanak founded religion, this creates the whole confusion.

Editorial of Sikh Bulletin of July August 2016 very nicely explains that Guru Nanak never founded a religion. It was explained earlier in previous issues. Philosophy of Guru Nanak may be termed as Philosophy of Sikhism but it should always be kept in mind that Guru Nanak never founded a religion. In case religion of Guru Nanak is to be understood it is Humanism (A SACHIAI PERSON). When we talk about religion we get involved in Rituals and this leads us into confusion. I shall be very happy to have guidance from all of you.

With best of regards

Surinder Singh Kanwar

Advocate

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From: Devinder Singh Chahal- IUScanada [mailto:iuscanada@gmail.com]

Sent: Friday, September 02, 2016 9:57 AM

To: surinder kanwar

Dear S Surinder Kanwar,

In the following statement pointed out by you I used the word, Sikhism, because many Sikhs were allergic to the use of "Nanakian Philosophy" for the religion founded by Guru Nanak. In fact if you read the philosophy of Guru Nanak then you will find that Guru Nanak has forcefully discouraged rituals in his religion, commonly called Sikhism.

(Guru Nanak (1469-1539) founded a scientifically and logically sound religion, Sikhism, for the welfare of the mankind.

Moreover, if you go for a "scientific and logical religion" that means a religion without any rituals.

Please go further deep into the iuscanada.com.

Regards,

Devinder Singh Chahal

iuscanada.com

EDITORIAL

GURU NANAK'S JAPP BANI IN ENGLISH

[From November-December 2016 SB]

This issue of the Sikh Bulletin joins a short list of special issues of the Sikh Bulletin that we have asked our readers to print and save for sharing with your friends and family, especially the larger family in the diaspora, our non-Sikh English speaking friends. Of course, you may share the PDF format electronically with any one.

Everybody who has understood the beauty and depth of knowledge incorporated in Adi Granth seems to agree that Japp Bani is the essence of Adi Granth. It is also one of five Banis made mandatory for daily recitation for those formally initiated into *Khande-di-Pahul*.

My first initiation into *Khande-di-Pahul* family was in my third grade in 1944 in the village Primary school but the only Bani my mother made me memorize and recite every morning was the first five pauris of Japp Bani. To me it was all mumbo jumbo; I did not understand a word of it. As I mastered Gurmukhi script to be able to read whole Japp Bani, the only books that I had access to practice on were my father's collection from the time he got initiated into *Khande-di-Pahul* in his teen years.

It is a sad reflection on the work **not done** by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee that had sent the team from Amritsar to perform the ceremony in our village for us and residents of the surrounding villages who gathered in large numbers, that within three years of taking *Khande-di-Pahul* I rejected all the religions I was familiar with Sikhism, Hinduism and Islam.

First to go was my birth religion, **Sikhism**, followed by **Hinduism**. Culprits were the granths/books I read. In case of Sikhism it included **Bale-dian Sakhian** and **Bachittar Natak**; in case of Hinduism **Ramayan** and **Mahabharat** among other tall tale granths. I turned off **Islam** in 1947 when they started slaughtering Sikhs and Hindus in what had then become West Pakistan.

Religions are not sacred. They have not been kind to Humanity. History is witness to the atrocities committed against others by people professing various faiths.

Christianity destroyed nature based societies and their cultures around the globe. With the birth of Martin Luther's **Protestant Reformation** Christianity entered a long period, 1524-1648, of internal conflict culminating in the **Thirty Years' War**. It was one of the longest and most destructive European religious wars resulting in **eight million casualties**.

The **Crusades** were a series of **religious wars** sanctioned by the **Latin Church** between the 11th and 16th centuries, especially the campaigns in the **Eastern Mediterranean** with the aim of capturing **Jerusalem** from **Islamic rule**. Crusades were also fought for many other reasons such as to recapture Christian territory or defend Christians in non-Christian lands, resolve conflict among rival Roman Catholic groups, gain political or territorial advantage, or to combat **paganism** and **heresy**.

Islam spread not by peaceful persuasion but by the sword. Result was serious split worse than between Catholicism and Protestantism, who are now at peace with each other. But in case of Islam, **Sunnis** and **Shias** are still blowing each other up, even in their places of worship, the Mosques.

Judaism, the first and oldest of the three **Semitic faiths**, takes the cake. **Jews** consider themselves **God's chosen people**. Perhaps that explains why they have always been not welcome in any society. After the Second World War even USA, UK and France did not want to accept European Jewish refugees. They just moved them to their '**Promised Land**' in the European colonies in the Middle East. Now **Benjamin Netanyahu Trump** is the **New Moses**. He bad mouths and bristles at **Barack Obama, the 44th President's** stand at the **United Nations**, first among the United States Presidents, that Jewish policy of settlements in Palestinian territories is both illegal and counterproductive to peace. **Rookie Ryan, the Speaker of the Republican House** had nothing to say when **Bush, the Father, the 41st President** had threatened to stop aid to Israel if it did not stop illegal settlement activity.

Hindus committed pogroms against **Buddhists** in India that were no different from **Russian** pogroms against **Jews** in Eastern Europe. As a result **Buddhists** became among the first Indians to accept **Islam** as their faith. The tragedy is that both the **Muslims** and the **Sikhs** who came eight centuries later, both practice **caste system** due to corruption of their faiths by **caste based Hinduism**.

Guru Nanak rejected all faith based religions. That is why his first words after a few days of intense introspection in the jungle, not drowned in the river, were '**na-ko-Hindu**' '**na-ko-Musalman**'. In other words we belong to one family; the humans family. That is why his answer

to *Qazi Rukn-ud-din's* question in Mecca “*Fala Allah mazabo*”? (*What is your religion? was “Abdulla Allah la mazaboo” (I am a man of God and belong to no religion).* That is why to **Ubare Khan of village Jorian near Dera Baba Nanak**, to his question to Guru Nanak whether he was Hindu or Muslim, the Guru replied “*that question was irrelevant since only God is eternal, neither Hindus nor Muslims are.*” That is why Guru Arjan wrote in AGGS, M 5, p 1136 ‘*na-hum-Hindu-na-Musalman*’.

Guru Nanak based his philosophy on **reason, not faith**. But what have Sikhs, supposedly the inheritors of his philosophy, done to it? They have turned **Guru Nanak's** first world **self-taught scientific philosophy** of *live and let live*, based on reason and equality into ritualistic religion, like others, under multiple sects: *Nirmalas, Nirankaris, Namdharis, NanakPanthis, Nanaksarias, Akhand kirtanias, Taksalias, Sehajdhari, Khande-di-Pahuldhari, Ramgarhias, and Ravidasias etc.*

Guru Nanak's was a self-taught 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.

Origins of religion:

Religion was created to bring order to the social organization in the absence of secular codes of conduct and means to enforce their implementation. God did not appear on **Mount Sinai to Moses (1391–1271 BCE)**. Moses himself chiseled the **Ten Commandments** on a slab of stone to put fear of God to control the desperate and increasingly unruly people who would not listen to him.

They worshipped many different Gods. That is why the **First** of Ten Commandments reads “*I am the Lord thy God. Thou shall have no other Gods before me.*” And no God would issue a Commandment like the **Tenth** which reads “*Thou shalt not covet (neighbor's house, wife, servants, animals, or anything else.)*” **What kind of God would commend slave ownership and to treat women as property?**

I personally believe and have stated repeatedly that **Guru Nanak was not chosen by God** like Semitic Prophets because Guru Nanak did not believe in their Gods; **nor did he claim to be a Prophet to whom “GOD” revealed Gurbani**. Gurbani was strictly the product of his ‘*bibek-budhi*’ through the process of observation and interpretation that he urged his followers to always use. In fact he declared himself ‘*lowest of the low*’. No one can be compared with Guru Nanak when it comes to humility.

I also strongly believe that **Guru Nanak (1469-1539)** was perhaps the **first Scientific Philosopher** the world ever produced. His contemporary, University educated **Polish Mathematician and Astronomer Copernicus (1473-1543)** and credited with formulating a model of the Universe that placed the Sun rather than the Earth at the center of the Universe was way behind Guru Nanak in his perception of the vastness of Cosmos.

The tragedy is that Guru Nanak, instead of being born in Renaissance Europe was born in dark and dead India and Panjabis inherited his gem which they have by now reduced to the farces being committed in all the Gurdwaras, in Guru Nanak's name.

What a waste; what a tragedy; how shameful!

Hardev Singh Shergill

SUPPORT FOR THIS EDITORIAL FROM GURBANI

Some examples of Guru Nanak's non-religious but Scientific Philosophy:

[From November-December 2016 SB]

JappBani Pauri 16

ਧਵਲੈ ਉਪਰਿ ਕੇਤਾ ਭਾਰੁ ॥ (3)

ਧਰਤੀ ਹੇਰੁ ਪਰੈ ਹੇਰੁ ਹੇਰੁ ॥ (3)

ਤਿਸ ਤੇ ਭਾਰੁ ਤਲੈ ਕਵਣੁ ਜੇਰੁ ॥ (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.

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.

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.

JappBani Pauri 21

ਤੀਰਥੁ ਤਪੁ ਦਇਆ ਦਤੁ ਦਾਨੁ ॥ (4)

ਜੇ ਕੇ ਪਾਵੈ ਤਿਲ ਕਾ ਮਾਨੁ ॥ (4)

ਸੁਣਿਆ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਮਨਿ ਕੀਤਾ ਭਾਉ ॥ (4)

ਅੰਤਰਗਤਿ ਤੀਰਥਿ ਮਲਿ ਨਾਉ ॥ (4)

ਸਭਿ ਗੁਣ ਤੇਰੇ ਮੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਕੋਇ ॥ (4)

ਵਿਣੁ ਗੁਣ ਕੀਤੇ ਭਗਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥ (4)

ਸੁਅਸਤਿ ਆਥਿ ਬਾਣੀ ਬਰਮਾਉ ॥ (4)

ਸਤਿ ਸੁਹਾਣੁ ਸਦਾ ਮਨਿ ਚਾਉ ॥ (4)

ਕਵਣੁ ਸੁ ਵੇਲਾ ਵਖਤੁ ਕਵਣੁ ਕਵਣੁ ਥਿਤਿ ਕਵਣੁ ਵਾਰੁ ॥ (4)

ਕਵਣਿ ਸਿ ਰੁਤੀ ਮਾਹੁ ਕਵਣੁ ਜਿਤੁ ਹੋਆ ਆਕਾਰੁ ॥ (4)

ਵੇਲ ਨ ਪਾਈਆ ਪੰਡਤੀ ਜਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਲੇਖੁ ਪੁਰਾਣੁ ॥ (4)

ਵਖਤੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਓ ਕਾਦੀਆ ਜਿ ਲਿਖਨਿ ਲੇਖੁ ਕੁਰਾਣੁ ॥ (4)

ਥਿਤਿ ਵਾਰੁ ਨਾ ਜੋਗੀ ਜਾਣੈ ਰੁਤਿ ਮਾਹੁ ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ॥ (4)

ਜਾ ਕਰਤਾ ਸਿਰਠੀ ਕਉ ਸਾਜੇ ਆਪੇ ਜਾਣੈ ਸੋਈ ॥ (4)

ਕਿਵ ਕਰਿ ਆਖਾ ਕਿਵ ਸਾਲਾਹੀ

ਕਿਉ ਵਰਨੀ ਕਿਵ ਜਾਣਾ ॥ (4)

ਨਾਨਕ ਆਖਣਿ ਸਭੁ ਕੇ ਆਖੈ ਇਕ ਦੂ ਇਕੁ ਸਿਆਣਾ ॥ (5)

ਵਡਾ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਵਡੀ ਨਾਈ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਕਾ ਹੋਵੈ ॥ (5)

ਨਾਨਕ ਜੇ ਕੇ ਆਪੇ ਜਾਣੈ ਅਗੈ ਗਇਆ ਨ ਸੋਹੈ ॥ ੨੧ ॥ (5)

STANZA 21-1

NO REWARD FOR BATHING AT HOLY PLACES

People practice pilgrimages, penance/austerity, compassion, and charity;

If there is any reward for such activities then,

it is equivalent to a sesame seed (means an insignificant achievement).

Listening and accepting (Nanakian Philosophy);

and developing love (for humanity) is equivalent to bathing at the holy places, which removes the inner dirt of the mind (the polluted mind).

That Entity has all the virtues;

I (Nanak) have nothing.

Without doing good deeds one cannot become virtuous (devout).

I (Nanak) bow to that Entity.

That Entity is everlasting, beautiful, and bestows joy in every mind.

STANZA 21-2

THE TIME OF THE ORIGIN OF THE UNIVERS

Questions

What was that time, and what was that moment?

What was that day, and what was that date?

What was that season, and what was that month, when the Universe originated?

The Pundits could not find that time, even if it were written in the Puranas.

That time is not known to the Qazis either if it were written in the Kor'an, nor is the month or the season known to them.

Nanak answers

Only that Entity knows it.

More Questions

How can I speak of That (Entity)?

How can I praise That One?

How can I comprehend That One?

Nanak answers

Everyone claims to be wiser than others when describing the Entity.

That Entity is Great and great are Its attributes and every action and reaction is going on according to Its Laws of Nature/Universe.*

Nanak further says:

Anyone, who claims to know everything, will repent in the future (because more and more information will be becoming available about the Universe). 21. Page 4

JappBani Pauri 22

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

JappBani Pauri 33

ਆਖਣਿ ਜੇਰੁ ਚੁਪੈ ਨਹ ਜੇਰੁ ॥ (7)

ਜੇਰੁ ਨ ਮੰਗਣਿ ਦੇਣਿ ਨ ਜੇਰੁ ॥ (7)

*No one has any power to change the Laws of Nature/Universe.
Neither by repeating any mantra nor by keeping silence.*

JappBani Pauri 35

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.

JappBani Pauri 37

ਸਚ ਖੰਡਿ ਵਸੈ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ॥ (8)

ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਵੇਖੈ ਨਦਰਿ ਨਿਹਾਲ ॥ (8)

ਤਿਥੈ ਖੰਡ ਮੰਡਲ ਵਰਭੰਡ ॥ (8)

ਜੇ ਕੇ ਕਥੈ ਤ ਅੰਤ ਨ ਅੰਤ ॥ (8)

ਤਿਥੈ ਲੇਅ ਲੇਅ ਆਕਾਰ ॥ (8)

ਜਿਵ ਜਿਵ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਤਿਵੈ ਤਿਵ ਕਾਰ ॥ (8)

ਵੇਖੈ ਵਿਗਸੈ ਕਰਿ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ॥ (8)

ਨਾਨਕ ਕਥਨਾ ਕਰੜਾ ਸਾਰੁ ॥੩੭॥ (8)

The Formless prevails everywhere in the Universe; meaning the whole Universe is evolving under Its Laws of Nature.

There are many spheres (stars and planets) and the galaxies in this Universe.

If someone tries to describe them all, one would fail to do so since an unlimited number of worlds are being created there.

Such creations are happening as ordained (according to the Laws of Universe).

Nanak says:

That Entity (God) is pleased to see that everything is happening as ordained under Laws of Nature/Universe.

It is as hard to describe this phenomenon as it is to eat steel. 37. Page 8.

Twenty-first Century modernity of Guru Nanak's Fifteenth Century scientific Philosophy:

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.*

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.

To the above we should add that 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.

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), bhanda (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 ਊਠਿ ਸਿਧਾਈ॥
ਭਰਮ ਮੋਹ ਕੇ ਬਾਂਧੇ ਬੰਧ॥
ਸੁਪਨੁ ਭਇਆ ਭਖਲਾਏ ਅੰਧ॥
ਇਹੁ ਤਉ ਰਚਨੁ ਰਚਿਆ ਕਰਤਾਰਿ॥
ਆਵਤ ਜਾਵਤ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਅਪਾਰਿ॥
ਨਹ ਕੋ ਮੂਆ ਨ ਮਰਣੈ ਜੋਗੁ॥
ਨਹ ਬਿਨਸੈ ਅਬਿਨਾਸੀ ਹੋਗੁ॥
ਜੋ ਇਹੁ ਜਾਣਹੁ ਸੋ ਇਹੁ ਨਾਹਿ॥
ਜਾਨਣਹਾਰੇ ਕਉ ਬਲਿ ਜਾਉ॥
ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਿ ਭਰਮੁ ਚੁਕਾਇਆ॥
ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਮਰੈ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਜਾਇਆ॥

*After death air [breath] merges into air, light mergers into light (consciousness is lost when Hukam stops operating in the body) and the earth (lifeless body) becomes one with earth. What support is there for the one who cries over this loss? Who has died? O' who has died? O' enlightened beings get-together and ponder over this question. This is indeed a puzzle!
Pause.*

Without any information about what happened to the dead, the one who was crying also dies. The ignorant fools shackled by doubts and attachments babble about death as if dreaming. This world is the creation of the Creator (Hukam). Coming (birth) and going (death) is controlled by the infinite Hukam. No one dies as no one is capable of dying. The Eternal One does not perish. It is not what people think about "soul." I am awestruck by the one who understands this reality. Says Nanak, the Guru has dispelled my doubts. No one dies or no one comes and goes. AGGS, M 5, p. 885.

On Meat and Vegetables:

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

ਮਾਸੁ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਰਿ ਮੂਰਖੁ ਝਗੜੇ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਣੈ ॥

ਕਉਣੁ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਉਣੁ ਸਾਗੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ ਕਿਸੁ ਮਹਿ ਪਾਪ ਸਮਾਣੈ ॥

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.

Human race is one.

ਏਕੁ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਤੂ ਮੇਰਾ ਗੁਰ ਹਾਈ ॥

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

You are our Guru. AGGS M5, P 611

ਨਾ ਕੇ ਬੈਰੀ ਨਹੀ ਬਿਗਾਨਾ

ਸਗਲ ਸੰਗਿ ਹਮ ਕਉ ਬਨਿ ਆਈ ॥੧॥

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

I get along with everyone. AGGS M5, p 1299

In the light of the above I ask the discerning minds what good have you achieved by reciting five Banis all your life if you did not apply them to your daily chores and interrelationships? Try understanding the meaning behind the verses, modify your behaviour and thought process accordingly and instead of spending time in repeating just them study other parts of Adi Granth.

I would like to close by quoting from my good friend **Dr. Harbans Lal**. *“It is the spiritual tingle produced by reciting those verses that mattered.”* Have you ever experienced that tingle? I never did until now that I have understood, reading in English, what is hidden in five hundred years old poetry of Guru Nanak.

ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਸੁਨਿ ਕਛੁ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਨ ਉਪਜਿਓ

ਪਸੁ ਜਿਉ ਉਦਰੁ ਭਰਉ ॥ SGGs, p.685

When listening to the Guru’s wisdom does not bring about a deep understanding of spiritual wisdom, it is like an animal who is only attending to filling the belly.

ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਕਰੈ ਪਾਈਐ ਨ ਅਮਰ ਪਦ ਜੋ ਲੋ ਜਿਹਾ ਕੈ ਸੁਰਸ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਨ ਚਾਖੀਐ – Gurdas, Kabit ੫੮੫

Any amount of utterance of the word ‘Amrit’ (nectar of life) will never bestow the reciter with immortality; the immortality may be attained only by genuine imbibing of the elixir of amrit through an ingesting action of tongue.

Finally, my message to my Sikh Fathers, Mothers, Brothers, Sisters and especially all the Sikh intellectuals of both sexes is that onus is upon you to spread the real meaning of Guru Nanak’s philosophy to the rest of the world since it started out as your heritage.

Unfortunately, generations of our ancestors have allowed that philosophy to morph into a ritualized religion like all the others that came before. Sooner you stop that better the world would be. If you cannot do this in the **Gurdwaras**, do not go to the **Gurdwaras**; turn your homes into *Dharamsals*. **Instead of wanting to turn the world into Sikhism, toll the bell to announce death of all organized religions and spread the gospel of Nanak that entire humanity is one and religious differences are created by selfish men. As Daljit Singh Jawa puts it 'It is the same light'.**

Next time you read a paper at an **Interreligious Organization** be honest and straightforward in explaining Guru Nanak's Philosophy that no group has a right to be the chosen people of God; we all are. That no one individual can claim to be Son of God; we all are and conceived from father's semen and mother's egg; there is no Virgin Birth. There is no God who is capable of raising any one from dead; everything that is created has to die. No one goes to hell or heaven **after death**; one makes his/her own heaven or hell on this earth; becomes '*jeevan-mukt*' (Saved). That no God makes distinction between men and women; both are created equal; one man and one woman make a couple.

Hardev Singh Shergill

GUEST EDITORIAL
GURU NANAK'S UNIQUE IDEOLOGY
[From January-February 2017 SB]

[Editor's Note: Principal Sawan Singh Gogia's articles have appeared in the Sikh Bulletin from its inception. This article by him encapsulates my view of Guru Nanak's philosophy so well that I present this to the readers as Guest Editorial]

Guru Nanak's ideology is unique in many ways. He was among the first Scientist Philosophers who rejected faith based philosophies with reason based dialogue. He linked the personal salvation of a man with his social salvation and this linkage is of immense and revolutionary importance. Guru Nanak's personal experience is unique and quite different from the other systems prevalent in India. He chose the householder's life for personal growth, raised his voice for the uplift of women and against the cruel rulers and invaders.

Guru Nanak's Concept of 'God'

Guru Nanak's concept of 'God' in other religions is summed up in the basic formula called the commencing verse of Sri Guru Granth Sahib in which Nanak has used the Panjabi word **Kartar**, in English **Creator**, to describe what Christianity calls **God**, Muslims **Allah** and multiple names by Hindus. Panjabi and English languages are members of the **Indo-European language family**. Kartar in Panjabi and Creator in English mean exactly the same thing. Consonants give sound to the words. The **consonants** in **Kartar** and **Creator** are exactly the same in both languages. If you remove the vowels we are left with **KRTR** in Panjabi and **CRTR** in English.

In all religions ‘God’ is shown as masculine but in Guru Nanak’s philosophy Kartar/Creator has no human attributes. Hence in this article word ‘God’ would be replaced by **Kartar/Creator and He, Him and His with It, Its and You.**

For Guru Nanak, Kartar/Creator is both Transcendent and Immanent. Guru Nanak says Kartar/Creator is both visible and invisible. It is invisible because It is Un-manifest and Unapproachable. It is Manifest because It abides within all the beings:

ਸਹਸ ਤਵ ਨੈਨ ਨਨ ਨੈਨ ਹਹਿ ਤੋਹਿ ਕਉ

ਸਹਸ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਨਨਾ ਏਕ ਤੋਹਿ। (SGGS:13)

*'You have thousands of eyes,
and yet You have no eyes.
You have thousands of forms,
and yet You do not have even one.'*

In the eyes of Guru Nanak Kartar/Creator is Creative, Benevolent and Gracious:

ਸਚ ਖੰਡਿ ਵਸੈ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ॥

ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਵੇਖੈ ਨਦਰਿ ਨਿਹਾਲ ॥ (SGGS: 8)

'The Formless Kartar/Creator abides in the realm of Truth. Having created the creation, It watches over it. By Its grace It bestows happiness.'

According to Guru Nanak the world is not only real but it is a meaningful place where only Kartar/Creator's will works and an ideal life for man is to live according to the will of the Kartar/Creator:

ਹੁਕਮੈ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਹੁਕਮ ਨ ਕੋਇ॥ (SGGS: 1)

'Everyone is subject to Its Command, the Laws of Nature; no one is beyond Its Command.'

Universal Love

Guru Nanak led us on the path of universal love and taught us to forget the distinction of caste and creed. He wanted to establish equality and fraternity among human beings. From the start of his mission he laid stress on social equality and brotherhood. His first words after his enlightenment that there is **neither ‘Hindu nor Muslim’** are extremely meaningful. There was no Hindu and no Musalman in His eyes. He advocated that **we are all children of the same Kartar/Creator:**

ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਏਕੋ ਹੈ ॥ ਏਕੋ ਹੈ ਭਾਈ ਏਕੋ ਹੈ ॥ (SGGS:350)

Sahib mera aeko Hai Bhai---

'My Master is One; It is the One and Only symbolized as ੴ, One Kartar/Creator.'

Guru Nanak reiterated his firm belief in the equality of all human beings and their fundamental rights. Guru Nanak writes that Kartar/Creator's light pervades in everyone and is radiant within all:

ਸਭਿ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਹੈ ਸੋਇ।
ਤਿਸ ਦੈ ਚਾਨਣਿ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਹੋਇ। (SGGS: 13)

'Amongst all is the Light-You are that Light. By this Illumination that Light is radiant within all.'

He spoke against caste system both by percept and example. He chose to dine and live with persons of low caste like *Bhai Lalo* and ignored the invitation of a rich landlord, *Malik Bhago*. He believed in humanity and aimed at creating a casteless society. He established the institution of *Langar, Sangat and Pangat* so that his disciples sat and ate together. During his missionary tours, his sole companion was a low caste Muslim, *Mardana*:

ਕਰਮੀ ਆਪੋ ਆਪਣੀ ਕੇ ਨੇੜੈ ਕੇ ਦੂਰਿ ॥ (SGGS:8)

karamee aapo aapane kae naerrai kae dhoor

According to their own actions, some are drawn closer, and some are driven farther away from Kartar/Creator.

He taught us dignity of labor and advocated honest earning, sharing with the needy:

ਘਾਲਿ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥਹੁ ਦੇਇ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹੁ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ ਸੋਇ ॥ (SGGS:1245)

'One who works for what he eats, and gives some of what he has, O Nanak, knows the right way.'

He rejected monasticism and begging:

ਗੁਰੁ ਪੀਰੁ ਸਦਾਏ ਮੰਗਣ ਜਾਇ ॥

ਤਾ ਕੈ ਮੂਲਿ ਨ ਲਗੀਐ ਪਾਇ ॥ (SGGS: 1245)

Gur pir saddai mangan jaae ॥

Guru Nanak was humility personified:

ਨੀਚਾ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਨੀਚ ਜਾਤਿ ਨੀਚੀ ਹੁ ਅਤਿ ਨੀਚੁ ॥

ਨਾਨਕੁ ਤਿਨ ਕੈ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਾਥਿ ਵਡਿਆ ਸਿਉ ਕਿਆ ਰੀਸ ॥ (SGGS:15)

'Nanak seeks the company of the lowest of the low, the very lowest of the low. Why should he try to compete with the high?'

Householder's Life and Dignity of Labor

Guru Nanak completely rejected asceticism, renunciation and withdrawal from life. After completing his missionary tours, Guru Nanak settled at Kartarpur as a householder and worked as a peasant in this commune. He advised his successor, Guru Angad, to settle at Khadur Sahib with his family. His mission was salvation of the whole society and not the salvation of a few. We find no ascetics among his followers; rather the ascetics were deliberately excluded. Guru Nanak condemned Yogis for being idlers and not being ashamed of begging from householders whose life they criticized:

ਘਰਿ ਘਰਿ ਮਾਗਠ ਲਾਜ ਨ ਲਾਗੈ ॥(SGGS:903)

ghar ghar maagath laaj n laagai ||1|| rehaao ||

'You beg from door to door, and you don't feel ashamed.'

To Guru Nanak truthful living is higher than the truth itself:

ਸਚਹੁ ਓਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਆਚਾਰੁ॥ (SGGS:62)

Sachahu ourai sabh ko oupar sach aachaar

Truth is higher than everything; but higher still is truthful living.

According to Guru Nanak's ideology, our deeds in this world will determine our nearness to the Kartar/Creator.

'Do not touch the feet of a person who calls himself a guru or a spiritual teacher, while he goes around begging.'

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 ਉਪਜੈ 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.

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 ਮੰਗੈ 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.’**

The Institution of Succession

An important feature of Guru Nanak’s ideology is the appointment of a successor who was given clear instructions to organize a society as directed by him. Guru Nanak’s mission of social salvation of mankind and casteless society would have remained unfulfilled if he had not established the institution of succession which ended with the creation of the *Khalsa* by the tenth master who followed in the footsteps of Guru Nanak and faithfully upheld the broad principles of Guru Nanak’s philosophy.

Bhatt Satta and Balvand have rightly said about Guru Nanak’s successors:

ਜੋਤਿ ਓਹਾ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਸਾਇ ਸਹਿ ਕਾਇਆ ਫੇਰਿ ਪਲਟੀਐ ॥(SGGS: 966)

‘They shared the One Light and the same Philosophy, just changed the body’.

Sawan Singh Gogia

EDITORIAL GURU NANAK AND RELIGION

[From March-April 2017 SB]

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 21st 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 **My Journey of Finding Guru Nanak (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."

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”.

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* 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 Shergill

UGLY AMERICANS II MY COUNTRY I CRY FOR THEE [From May-June 2017 SB]

The years were 1958-1960. I spent those two years teaching Geography at the **Air Force Central School, New Delhi**. The Govt. of India was so secretive about its topographic maps that even I, teaching for the Air Force, had no access to them for teaching map interpretation to senior classes. Since Embassy Row was close by, I decided to visit the **US Embassy**. My first pleasant surprise was that this Embassy had a **‘Geography Attaché’** and he had every topographic map of India the British ever published, stacked along the walls of this high ceiling room and I could use any of them, which I did. There was also a big library of audio-visual materials on the United States.

On the way to the Embassy from the Air Force complex was the brand new **Five Star Ashok Hotel**, built in 1956, adjoining the Diplomatic enclave.

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

I had many occasions to visit this hotel. Aside from the impressive building what sticks out most in my memory is **white middle aged American males** with fist full of brand new uncirculated Indian Rupee bills talking with other middle aged white American males and explaining that yes they were checking out that day and this is for the **‘Boys’**. **‘Boys’** were the **fathers** and **grandfathers** who worked at the hotel. One **US\$ was equal to Rs 4.85** at that time. My

teacher's salary at the **Air Force Central School** was **Rs. 195.00** per month which was **Rs 10.00** increase over my salary as lecturer and Vice-Principal at **Khalsa Teacher Taring College Muktsar**, Panjab the year before.

These people were bringing their **then traditional American values, "Slavery & White Superiority"** with them. That is why Indian media dubbed them '**Ugly Americans**'.

Another factor was the stark contrast between old arrogant American tourists flashing their dollars and young European and Australian and New Zealander tourists who typically would have hitchhiked to Pakistan and India from Western Europe through the Middle East, route that I took in my three month long 15,200 mile hitchhiking journey from New Delhi to the University of Washington, Seattle, Washington State, in 1960 with \$18.00. Once in the sub-continent they travelled on well-developed railway network in these two countries without buying a ticket and if the city did not have a youth hostel or YMCA/YWCA, spent nights at the railway station First Class Waiting rooms.

Still another aggravating factor was the official attitude of the US Government fostered by **John Foster Dulles, Secretary of State under Republican President Dwight D. Eisenhower, from 1953 to 1959**. This was the **Cold War** period and United States was applying extreme pressure on newly independent from European Colonial powers Asian and African nations to join their block against USSR and China. His slogan was **'if you are not with us, you are against us'**.

United States stage managed the creation of **CENTO** in the Middle East and **SEATO** in South East Asia to encircle two communist giants, **USSR** and **China** and all countries in the region were supposed to tow the line or else. But two did not. **India under Nehru and Egypt under Nasser** did not comply. They were joined by a Communist country that is no more, **Yugoslavia** under **Tito**. This **Nehru, Nasser, Tito** trio that set up the **Non-Aligned** nations club was punished by the United States. In case of India the United States got its revenge by favouring Pakistan that did their bidding and even winked as Pakistan set upon the goal of going nuclear just as it had winked in case of Israel.

Now in 2017, the dawn of **Trump Era, Ugly American II** is back in the fore front but it is no longer confined to old white males. **It includes every one of Americans who voted for Trump** including **young college educated white women** whom he humiliated by using disgustingly vulgar language as to where he likes to grab them; every black like **Ben Carson**, one of '**his black men**' as he is fond of saying; every rich Indian like **Harmeet Kaur Dhillon**, as if one Indian, **Nikki Haley**, was not enough; **all the elected Republicans in the Senate and the House all the way down from Mitch McConnell and Paul Ryan**, Tweedledum and Tweedledee.



2017 Re-emerged Ugly Americans II, all Top Republicans

Trump has an uncanny ability of shredding social norms of a civilized society. *He has no compunction about brushing aside legal technicalities and feels no shame in demanding his subordinates' loyalty to him and not to the Constitution.* His National Security Advisor **Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster and Dan Coats**, Director of National Intelligence, both seasoned and reputable individuals, until now, were **rendered impotent** when appearing before the Senate committee they refused to publicly acknowledge that Trump had asked them to publicly say there was no collusion with the Russians by the Trump campaign. Only honourable exception in the crowd turned out to be **James Comey**. United States needs more people of Comedy's **character and integrity**, not the ugly kind.

**Elaine Chao**

He humiliated his entire appointed cabinet by demanding they praise and appreciate him in public over national television and like sheep they all complied, including, **Mitch McConnell's Wife Elaine Chao**. **Elaine Chao's** defense of Trump for his spoiled kindergartener bully behaviour in pushing aside the head of **Montenegro** to be at the center front of the group for picture taking and disgusting comments on MSNBC co-host **Mika Brzezinski** were **"He is new at it"** meaning being President. Perhaps she is ignorant of the fact that so were Abraham Lincoln and Barak Obama.

According to **Sikh Free Press**, of April 23, 2017 **Harmeet Kaur Dhillon [P.17]** a lawyer and the first vice chairwoman for the **Republican Party in California**, stood in front of an audience of Republican delegates and supporters, beginning the invocation by expressing the values that both the religion and Americans share, **"Humility, truth, courage and justice for all"**.

Not all Americans share those values; not the ones she was addressing. Out of total **231,556,622** eligible voters only **138,884,643** (57.9%) actually voted. Of these **65,844,954 (48.2%)** voted for **Hillary** and **62,979,879 (46.1)** for **Trump**.

According to **Harmeet** ***'voters will make a decision based on the issues and values that are most important to them'***. However, when asked about Trump's tendency to make off-the-cuff comments about certain groups of people, **Dhillon** declined to answer. ***'I don't want to be a part of any slandering of Trump,'*** she said. **Now the whole world knows what the most important values at least 62,979,879 Americans hold.**

The real electors of Trump were the 42.1% who did not vote in this crucial election; **Shame on them**. The reason Trump won with fewer votes goes back to the time when North, mostly Republican, defeated the slave owning South, mostly Democrat, in their Civil War and gave the vanquished South unfair advantage in electing the President through the practice called **Electoral College**.

During my last two years in India we believed the Republican and Democratic parties to be the two sides of the American dollar. **For both parties America was First;** Today **Trump makes America disdained again.**

Imperceptibly since 1960 I have seen the gradual reversal of roles by these two parties. Lincoln's Republican Party that went to war over issues of slavery with the Democratic South is now the home of **Ku Klux Klan** and former Democratic Party is the champion for immigrants like me and **Harmeet Dhillon**.

Republicans have become party of Putin. Trump/Putin alliance is natural; both are racists and authoritarians. G. W. Bush's Compassionate Conservatism was **FAKE**. **The Senate GOP's health-care bill is real Republican Conservatism. Trump cannot tell the difference, or he is faking it, between fake news and real news. He loves to watch Fox and Friends that distorts the news and heaps Fake Praise on Trump. Mainstream media for this man is Fake News. Fox and Friends were promoters of his theory during Obama's administration that he was a Muslim and born in Kenya.**

Recently Trump seems to have touched a nerve in the main stream media when he tweet attacked Mika Brzezinski, co-host of Morning Joe on MSNBC because this show, although Conservative, is main stream and they joked about **Trump's portrait on a Fake Front Page of Time Magazine** displayed in his businesses. Besides their slogan is that if **he lies, which is almost always, they will report it.**

MSNBC's response to Trump's Twitter attack on Morning Joe co-host **Mika Brzezinski**, because this show does not shower praise on Trump as Fox and Friends do all the time, sums up this man's obsession against truth-telling media. Next day comments in the media ranged from **"disgusting vulgar pig to...It's a sad day for America when the president spends his time bullying, lying and spewing petty personal attacks instead of doing his job"**.

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/06/23/opinion/trumps-lies.html>



Jeff Sessions

Then there is **Jeff Sessions!**

As Asia Samachar [p.18] writing about **Harmeet Kaur Dhillon** reports, ***“her parents supported Republicans after they became naturalized U.S. citizens. Their politics were driven in part by her father’s contempt for trial lawyers because of medical malpractice lawsuits.”*** ***“Harmeet’s parents hosted fundraisers for Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), a conservative with strong views on foreign policy. He, in turn, spoke out against persecution of Sikhs, the report added.”***

Jeff Sessions is an old Southern segregationist Democrat. He was appointed the Attorney General of the United States by Trump. This person, who is supposed to uphold the law of the land, lied under oath during his confirmation hearings in the Senate about his meetings with **Spy Ambassador of Russia**. When his lie was discovered he was forced to **recuse** himself from FBI’s investigation of Trump campaign’s collusion with Russia.

Thirty one years ago Senate had rejected Sessions for a judgeship. A letter by Martin Luther King Jr’s widow Coretta Scott King played a significant role in that decision. Here is the key passage of King’s letter

opposing Session’s nomination as a judge in 1986: ***“Anyone who has used the power of his office as United States attorney to intimidate and chill the free exercise of the ballot by citizens should not be elevated to our courts. Mr. Sessions has used the awesome powers of his office in a shabby attempt to intimidate and frighten elderly black voters.”***

Every American is free to belong, or not to belong, to a political party. **Harmeet’s father, Dr. Dhillon,** chose to join the Republican Party, as Asia Samachar reports, ***“driven in part by her father’s contempt for trial lawyers because of medical malpractice lawsuits.”***

I know that opposing the Trial Lawyers is one of the Republican Party’s talking points and policies. But I do want Dr. Dhillon to know that Trial Lawyers do serve a useful purpose by defending patients who cannot afford to defend themselves against powerful Insurance Companies or Medical Professional Groups when they are wronged by medical practice.

I am talking from my personal experience with Kaiser Permanente of Northern California for botching my left knee replacement in 1994 (joining two pieces of my leg **40** degrees out of alignment) and overdosing me with radiation for my prostate in 2011 without any follow up checkups either by Radiologist or the Urologist. When after one year my bladder failed and started bleeding, without going inside to do the visual check, treated me with antibiotics for many months until I started ending up in emergency five days in a row only to be sent home after a few hours of flushing my bladder and inserting catheter that would get clogged with blood clots. I had to leave Kaiser and under regular Medicare get treated at **Stanford University**. I not only got proper medical care but also found **bladder therapy** that Kaiser never mentioned existed. It was then that I decided to write to three Law firms to take my case but two politely declined without any explanation and one did call me and explained to me that in California non-economic loss limit is only \$250,000.00 and because I was retired and a79 years old without any



dependants they will take my case only if I paid them \$10,000.00 for an expert opinion. I was not going to throw good money after bad and get myself entangled in a law suit with Kaiser Permanente which was both an insurer and provider of health services.

Eugene Robinson says **'Fake Hero president is an insult to our Founders'**. No, He is a **beast** and is **an insult to entire humanity, including the people who have voted for him.** They should **redeem themselves** by openly expressing their regret at the choice they made at the ballot box. If they do not America may have to wait for another generation or two for these people to complete their journey on this beautiful place we call Earth. **Since 1960 until now I was delighting in the choice that I had made and found two countries, United State and Canada, marching towards the world that Guru Nanak envisioned. Now only one is left, Canada. That is real SAD!**

Hardev S Shergill

**EDITORIAL
ABOUT THIS ISSUE
[From July-August 2017 SB]**

How the time flies! It was five years ago at this time when this issue of the Sikh Bulletin, about a Sikh Family in Diaspora, my family, was ready to be emailed, that the shocking news of white terrorist attack at the Gurdwara in Oak Creek, Wisconsin came out. That issue had a relevant Editorial already but Oak Creek deserved its own Editorial, so it had two Editorials.

On the 5th anniversary of that racially motivated attack the same issue is going out with three Editorials, two original and one from **May-June 2017 issue of Sikh Bulletin**, all about President Trump who has unleashed racial hatred in this country that was simmering just below the thin facade of decency in interracial relations. Seeds for this racial discrimination were planted when the US Constitution was prepared. Majority of the Founding Fathers, all White Males, were slave owners and in spite of the declarations in the Constitution about equality of all, the racial discrimination still plagues this Republic. This Home of the Brave and Free is not free for everybody. The last racist Senator, from South Carolina, Strom Thurmond (December 5, 1902 – June 26, 2003) has not been gone long.

Prior to Trump's election I was hoping that another generation time period would thin the numbers of diehard racist whites but recent events on August 12, 2017 in Charlottesville, Virginia, shattered that hope. All of the stick and torch bearing were young, the new crop of White Terrorists.

Children are born without any preconceived biases. It is their parents who turn them into racial terrorists. The current Crop of white adults and seniors got a boost and respectability from Donald Trump's shameless rhetoric.

First two articles in this issue are case studies of two young men of Oak Creek Wisconsin, one a twelve year old who had lived in this country for less than three months when his father, a Granthi at the Gurdwara, was murdered by a white terrorist and the other a bit older whose Granthi father was crippled for life by the White Racist Terrorist bullets and yet, like the Black victims of shooting in Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston by White Racist Terrorist Dylann Roof, he, Raghvinder Singh 'forgave' the White Racist Terrorist.

Among other reasons, the story of my family in North America was given as an example of what most Sikh families in Diaspora face, discrimination by native Whites and financial exploitation by Holy men in white Cholas from India.

In light of Trump's election our period of trials and tribulations has been extended. But there is a cure. Only 57.9% of eligible voters actually cast their ballots. That means whopping 42.1% did not exercise their franchise that citizenship confers on them. Of the number that voted only 46.1% voted for Trump, majority of whom were White but minorities, including well to do Sikhs also vote Republican. 2018 and 2020 elections are coming; let us hope commonsense will prevail.

Hardev Singh Shergill

**SIKHI IS NOT A RELIGION
NOR IS IT BASED ON MIX OF
HINDUISM & ISLAM**

[From September-October 2017 SB]

Speaking at the occasion of 2017 Vaisakhi Celebrations at the **Gurudwara Guru Nanak Darbar Dubai**, **Navdeep Singh Suri, India's ambassador to U.A.E. said this:**

"Sikhism itself is distinguished as being perhaps the most modern Indian religion, only four hundred years old, but more important modern in its thinking and outlook. It is a religion that evolved as the best of prevailing Islam and Hinduism, taking the better of two faiths and creating a synthetic faith which truly attempts to create a non-discriminatory, equal, casteless society".

Bhai Ardaman Singh, a Sikh scholar of yore, in his book 'Thoughts of Bhai Ardaman Singh' writes, ***"In Sikhism, certain philosophical interpretations are common with Hindu thought, like life after death,...while such concepts as Oneness of God...Sikhism is nearer to Islam than to Hinduism."*** Unfortunately, **he is dead wrong on both counts.**

As for the comparison with Hinduism Dr. Baldev Singh's book, explodes that myth. <http://sikhbulletin.com/Books/GurmatGuruNanaksPanthofEnlightenment.pdf> Comparison with **Islam** and the other two Middle Eastern religions, **Judaism** and **Christianity**, all three the people of the **Book** and believers in **One God**, is also not kosher. Although all three believe in One God and share historical personalities, **each one of them has their own separate One God.**

EDITORIAL

[From November-December 2017 SB]

SIKHO KUJH SIKHO BJP IS KILLING YOU WITH KINDNESS 'FAKE KINDNESS' BECAUSE THEY THINK OF YOU AS FOOLS AS GANDHI & NEHRU DYNASTY DID

RSS; RSS & RAW stand for **R**ashtriya **S**wayamsewak **S**angh; **R**ashtriya **S**ikh **S**angat; and **R**esearch and **A**nalysis **W**ing of India's Intelligence Agency, respectively.

One thing they all have in common is their membership/staffing; they are all extreme **Right Wing Hindus**, comparable in the present day USA to **Donald Trump's** blind, all white, supporters who call themselves **Evangelical Christians**, although there is nothing **Christian** about them, **but they are Republicans, the party of the disgraced**, with membership like **Judge Roy Moore** of Alabama, their current Senate Candidate, who allegedly chased after and molested teenage girls, less than half his age, when he was **District Attorney in Alabama**. Thankfully he was defeated by Doug Jones, a Democrat, first Democratic victory in Alabama since 1994 when an elected as a Democrat then Senator switched affiliation to Republican party.

Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS), (Hindi: "National Volunteer Organization") also called **Rashtriya Seva Sangh**, was founded in 1925 by **Keshav Baliram Hedgewar** (1889–1940), a physician living in the Maharashtra region of **India**, as part of the movement against British rule. Later it developed a political wing, **Bharatiya Jana Sangh**, a member of which assassinated Gandhi for opposing expulsion of Muslims from India to Pakistan when Muslims in Pakistan started expelling Hindus and Sikhs from Pakistan. That morphed into present day **BJP** (Indian People's Party).

An avowedly religious government of a secular country decided to spend **Rs. 100 Crore** to celebrate religious Anniversary of a minority community whom they disdained. But there was a hidden message behind this madness. Money was not given to **RSS, Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh**; but to **RSS, Rashtriya Sikh Sangat**. All they had to do was to have the brother of Hindu RSS President grow his hair uncut and get baptised into Khalsa by the **Damdami Taksal** whom they had bought lock stock and barrel.

Half of that money went to RSS and other half to **Tohra** and **Badal** to shut their mouths. Some of the **RSS** money was used to print copies of **Dasam Granth** renamed **Sri Guru Dasam Granth Sahib Ji**, courtesy **Hazoor Sahib Gurdwara/Takhat**. One third of those pages are devoted to **Sri Charitropakhyan** also called **Triya Charitar**.

I prefer to call this Granth "Kanjari Kahani in Kanjar Kavita".

Below is one quote from this Granth that RSS is promoting:

Sri Dasam Granth Sahib Ji Page 1358:

ਪੇਸਤ ਭਾਂਗ ਅਫੀਮ ਮਿਲਾਇ ॥

ਆਸਨ ਤਾ ਤਰ ਦਿਯੋ ਬਨਾਇ ॥

ਚੁੰਬਨ ਰਾਇ ਅਲਿੰਗਨ ਲਏ ॥

ਲਿੰਗ ਦੇਤ ਤਿਹ ਭਗ ਮੇ ਭਏ ॥੨੪॥ P. 1358

Followeing is the English translation of the above stanza:

*She blended opium, marijuana and wine,
and, then,
executed numerous sexual postures.
Embracing, they kissed each other
and he pushed his
genital in her vagina. (24)*

Should you be interested in the rest of the hymn below please ask your Granthi or a Sikh Scholar from Punjabi University Patiala, who are devotees of Dasam Granth, to translate the rest for you:

ਭਗ ਮੇ ਲਿੰਗ ਦਿਯੋ ਰਾਜਾ ਜਬ,
ਰੁਚਿ ਉਪਜੀ ਤਰਨੀ ਕੇ ਜਿਯੋ ਤਬ ।
ਲਪਟਿ ਲਪਟਿ ਆਸਨ ਤਰ ਗਈ,
ਚੁੰਬਨ ਕਰਤ ਭੂਪਨ ਕੇ ਭਈ ॥੨੫॥
ਗਹਿ ਗਹਿ ਤਿਹ ਕੇ ਗਰੇ ਲਗਾਵਾ,
ਆਸਨ ਸੋ ਆਸਨਹਿ ਛੁਹਾਵਾ ।
ਅਧਰਨ ਸੋ ਦੋਉ ਅਧਰ ਲਗਾਈ,

ਦੁਹੂੰ ਕੂਚਨ ਸੋ ਕੂਚਨ ਮਿਲਾਈ ॥੨੬॥ (ਚਰਿਤਰ ੪੦੨)

(ਚਰਿਤ੍ਰ ਨੰ: ੪੦੨, ਦਸਮ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਪੰਨਾ ੧੩੫੭-੫੮, ਛਾਪਕ: ਭਾਈ ਚਤਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀਵਨ ਸਿੰਘ, ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ)

[Sri Charitropakhyan](#) covers pp 809-1386 of this Granth i.e. 577 pages out of its total 1428 pages. [Chaupai](#) (hymn of supplication), one of the daily prayers of practicing Sikhs, is on pages 1386-1388.

Hazoor Sahib and Takhat Patna Sahib had already placed **Dasam Granth (Page total 1428)** at par with Guru Granth Sahib. Three Takhats in Panjab are next in line. Is it a coincidence that Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji at present has 1430 pages and Sri Guru Dasam Granth Sahib Ji has 1428 or did Guru Gobind Singh keep his Granth two pages short out of respect for the first Granth because he is supposed to have given that to Sikhs too? If at some future date Sikhs come to the realization that **Mundavani**, the last entry in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, is a kachi (fake) Bani that Granth will still have one page more than its rival Dasam Granth.

Abuse of women, which is manifested in **Charitropakhyan** in **Dasam Granth**, is not an isolated phenomenon. It is a very **hot topic in today's United States**. In this country the women have risen to the occasion and big and powerful men in various fields of this country's life are

falling like flies. May be **President Donald Trump, a Christian**, would also join this exclusive club in due course since he has publicly admitted to abusing women. **Christians** and the other two Semitic religions, **Judaism** and **Islam**, trace their origin of abusing women to the **Tenth Commandment** that **equates women with house, servants, animals, slaves and anything else that a man owns.**

It reads:

Thou shalt not covet (neighbor's house, wife, servants, animals, or anything else)

What RSS is doing now is nothing new. Brahmins and Rajputs, two upper castes of Hinduism, did the same thing to the Buddhists, to Guru Nanak, Guru Arjan, Guru Teg Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh. BJP is in the same position as Muslim Rulers.

Congress party that has ruled India uninterrupted until the first BJP victory in 1998 always found token Sikhs, weak in character, in its cabinets whom they could manipulate. Most recent example was first Sikh **Prime Minister Manmohan Singh**. In 2004 when Prof Gurtej Singh and I stopped over in **Bangkok, Thailand** as part of our six week long trip around the world to hold weekend conferences in six countries where Sikhs in diaspora have made their homes, the management of the historical Gurdwara in Bangkok told us of their experience with **Prime Minister Manmohan Singh** when he had come there for a Suth-East Asian Conference. He did not acknowledge their request for a short visit to this Historical and only Gurdwara in Bangkok or may be he was overruled by his handlers.

In 1984 when Indra Gandhi attacked Darbar Sahib the **Sikh President of India, Giani Zail Singh**, neither raised his voice against that genocide nor did he resign.

Hukam Singh the only **Sikh Speaker of Lok Sabha** gave up the publication of his **Spokesman English Weekly** that he could have used to obtain fairness from the government for Sikh minority.

Baldev Singh, India's **first Defense Minister**, in name only, did not back up the demand of Sikh Generals of Indian Army to drive out the Pakistan Army invaders of Jammu and Kashmir. All they had asked for was a few hours more time to drive the enemy beyond the State's borders because the **real Defense Minister was Jawahar Lal Nehru**, the Prime Minister. Result is the mess in Kashmir that India is still bogged down in even after seventy years. **Please see the links below relevant to this editorial:**

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

<http://sikhbulletin.com/Files/RSS-RSS-SSA.pdf>

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

<http://sikhbulletin.com/Files/RSSAndSSASikhBulletinNov1999.pdf>

BJP, with Parkash Singh Badal's help, has managed in a few years, to finish Sikhism that was not tied in the knot of uncut hair and transferred it into a cult of Kesadhari Hindus, for the protection of very Janeu that Nanak as a child refused to wear, who instead of worshipping stone statues, like their Hindu cousins, worship a book instead.

Hardev S Shergill

EDITORIAL



Mata Chand Kaur 1950
She died the following year age 105

No two people in our extended family, descendants of **S. Ganda Singh and Mata Chand Kaur**, his Grandparents and my Great Grandparents, have such a close relationship as Uncle **Gurbax** and me. When I say he was my **Role Model and my Idol**, it is literally true. That explains the fact that I followed him through same schools and colleges as he went through with the exception of First and Second Year and Master' Degree colleges, as explained in the Preface. Another astonishing character similarity that I have found out, only after reading his bio, is the topic of this editorial. It is our impulse to **Speak Truth to Power**. This we did independently of each other. I did it first because my circumstances were different and he did it when his time came.

He spent his entire life in India. He was surrounded by people like himself but he was different from most of them in many ways: **honesty, integrity and sincerity of purpose**.

That was recognized by other similar people and they sought him out. That is why when he was accepted as a Lecturer by his alma mater, **Khalsa College Amritsar**, a position that he coveted, as soon as he graduated from there, someone else saw him needed more at **S. N. College Banga**. He accepted the challenge. When people in Chandigarh felt that they need him to start the College in **Chandigarh**, he accepted that even though there was unfinished job at Banga. Same thing happened again when the management committee of **Amritsar Khalsa College** came to him to accept Principalship of his alma mater to save it from downward spiral, he accepted that tough assignment.

My career turned out different because I chose to come to totally different land and culture where nobody knew me. But Speak Truth to Power I did.

My first experience came in **1962** when I graduated from **Western Washington State College**, [Now **Western Washington University**] **Bellingham, Washington**. Upon completing my course work one quarter ahead of rest of the students, I applied to Immigration Department for permission to do summer job, as was permitted per INS rules. For that I had to get a document signed by the appropriate College official, in my case, the Head of the Department. He refused to sign and added that as soon as I graduate I should go back to India. I was perplexed by his attitude. I spoke about that to a classmate of mine, a local Bellingham guy, who knew that Head well. He confided that the Head was an active member of the **Ku Klux Klan** (White Racist Organization that had history of lynching blacks) and Bellingham was a city where no black man could spend the night. Only other thing that I had heard until then was that no Black man could spend the night in entire State of Oregon. At that time, I had not heard that in **1907** good people

of Bellingham had driven all the **East Indians, mostly Sikhs**, working in the saw mills of the town in the middle of the night. I will find out about that for the first time in **2007** when people of Bellingham, now with a Gurdwara and lots of Sikhs farming on both sides of the border, were performing reconciliation ceremonies.

To go back to my story, this fellow student of mine advised me that I should go see the **Dean**, who happens to be a good friend of the **Head** but I have nothing to lose. I did and the Dean gladly signed my letter. That summer I got a job with the company that had contract to provide and service the audio-visual equipment at the **Seattle World's Fair** with my office in the basement of the **Space Needle**. It was while working there that I found out about changes in Canada's immigration policy. People with education and skills were being accepted on their own merit. I immigrated to Canada on **August 11, 1962** without a visa, just **Immigration Minister's letter**, that caused some consternation at the border because this was not done. Matter was resolved when I asked them to call the Immigration office in Vancouver. This was a workday.

I got my first teaching job in the interior of British Columbia, without interview, in August **1962**. Soon after X-mas break in early **1963** I had to discipline a student, who had never misbehaved before, and got hauled before the Principal and the School Superintendent. That was a very unnerving experience. The Superintendent threatened me that not only he was not going to renew my teaching contract next year, he was going to make sure that I never got to teach anywhere in British Columbia. I shared my experience with a senior teacher colleague who told me that the day before the same student was also disciplined by the Industrial Arts teacher that brought outraged father to the Principal's office but that information was not shared with the faculty nor that teacher was threatened as I was. He suggested I should inform **Teacher's Union office** in Victoria. Which I did and they did **discipline the Superintendent**. **That experience, later in 1973, led me to fight for protection of College Faculties as the President of Douglas College Faculty Association, New Westminster, B. C. Canada.**

In British Columbia all the School Board Superintendents assemble in the Vancouver area during the **Easter** break to hire staff for the coming year. **Langley, B. C.** advertised a position that I liked and it was **30 miles from Vancouver**, ideal distance for me to call home, not in the city but close to it. First thing I narrated to the Superintendent was my inability to provide a recommendation letter from my previous employer. That was of no concern to this Superintendent. Apparently, that Superintendent was known in the profession for his quirkiness. I got the job and that is also where I joined the local **Lions Club**. I found that a good way of getting to know and do some good for the community I lived in. Between **1963 and 1968** I was to start six new Lions Clubs, in Revelstoke, Port Hardy, Port McNeill, Port Alice, Holberg and Alert Bay, becoming **Charter President of the first two**.

But my stay in **Langley**, which I was hoping to be permanent, lasted only two years. School boards' policy was that once a teacher passed the first-year probationary period their job became permanent. Towards the end of the first year the School Board advertised a position for **District Audio-Visual Director**. This specialty was very new. I was the graduate of its second year from Bellingham college. **I probably was the only person in entire Canada with M. Ed. in Audio-visual Education**. The University of British Columbia Teacher Training Faculty had started sending one of their faculty to University of Oregon for a three summers M. Ed. Program. My

School Board, instead of giving me the job gave it to a young graduate from UBC hired the year before and enrolled him in the same three summers course in Portland Oregon at their expense. Not unlike India, connections mattered here too. The successful candidate was related to one of the School Board Members.

The following year, in September **1965**, I moved to **Revelstoke**, ski country and also got married. I had learned to ski on slopes of **Mt. Baker, WA.** while going to school in Bellingham. In **1966** Easter break I found two advertisements in my field. I headed to **Vancouver** and first interview I sought was with the **Superintendent of Squamish School Board**. He came out very welcoming and friendly man complimenting me profusely on my education and experience but he determined that for my own good he was not going to offer me the job. Upon inquiry his answer was that ‘**my countrymen**’ who worked in the town’s lumber mills were all illiterate and I would not like to be associating with them and I might be embarrassed. Wow! That was clever of him **but I gave him a piece of my mind and stormed out of his office.**

Next advertisement was from the Superintendent of **Campbell River-Courtney School District**. He also supervised five small one town School Districts at the North end of the Island where there were no public roads. They were **Alert Bay**, an Indian fishing village, **Port McNeill**, headquarters of **MacMillan Bloedel Logging Company** that controlled the entire North Vancouver Island, **Port Hardy**, non-Indian fishing village, **Holberg**, **Canadian Air Force Base** and **Port Alice**, a Pulp Mill town. They advertised for one **District Librarian** and one **Adult Education Director**. This Superintendent was a gentleman, completely opposite of the Squamish guy. My racial origin made no difference to him. But what may have piqued his interest was my suggestion that since his population base was so small and I can do both jobs, why not combine the two jobs and hire me to do them. He responded by saying that he will have to get back to me after consulting with those School Boards. He consulted and I finally got the job I wanted.

That year’s budget had already been decided but I waited for the following year to make my suggestions. After a year, the time came and I submitted my budget. I got nothing more than the year before and it was less than my salary. I could not in good conscience carry on. Policy was that a teacher can either resign at x-mas or end of school in June. I submitted my resignation effective **December 31st 1967.**

Lower Mainland of British Columbia, Vancouver and the surrounding area in the delta of Fraser River, was the most attractive part of B. C. to live in. Teaching positions always went to people who had obtained some experience in the interior. By now I had enough experience to think that I could easily get a job effective **September 1968** in one of the Lower Mainland School Districts and travel by Volkswagen Westphalia camper from the factory in Germany to India and return by tracing my hitchhiking trail of 1960. But that was not to be. B. C. schools had always been short of teachers. Every summer the School Boards used to go to England to recruit teachers. However, since Australia’s school year is the Calendar year, this year for the first time School Boards brought a chartered plane full of Australian teachers during **X-mas 1967.**

I paid a visit to the Superintendent of the largest School District, Vancouver. After listening to me about what I would like to do he decided to call up the Principal of one High School he

thought had ideas similar to mine. I went to see him directly. He too wanted to use the School Buildings and their facilities beyond 3PM for adults in the community but his old-fashioned lady Librarian would have nothing of it. She was entitled to retire on June 30th that year but there was a catch. Teachers contract with the city allowed retiring teachers to opt for annual waivers to keep on working.

The School Superintendent put me on Substitute call list and I started getting called every day, but lower pay and no benefits. In couple of weeks the Social Studies teacher in a Model High School where they were experimenting with Team Teaching, had a heart attack and I got assigned as his replacement for undetermined period of time. As the days passed my dream of driving to India and back was running into trouble but I did not want to go until I had a job guarantee for **September 1968**.

1968 Easter break came. I started looking at ads in the **Toronto newspapers** because the alternative was a teaching job in Ontario where Geography was taught as an independent subject. I submitted an application to **York County Board of Education** north of Toronto.

A few days later when I was in a classroom in that Model School substitute teaching, an office employee showed up asking me to take a telephone call in the Principal's office. It was the Superintendent from North York offering me the job, without interviewing me. I accepted. Upon coming home my wife told me that the Superintendent of Vancouver School Board had called and wanted me to call back. I did, the following morning. The old Librarian Lady had submitted her resignation and the job that I coveted was mine. Without hesitation I told him that sorry, I had accepted a teaching job in Ontario, yesterday. How ironic. Such events have life altering consequences.

The reason I instinctively stated that was because I knew the teacher's code was to treat verbal contract as good as written unless both parties agreed otherwise. I did have the choice of telling Vancouver Superintendent that agreement yesterday was verbal but I am prepared to ask if that Superintendent could release me from that contract, which I am sure he would have. In that instant what impressed me about the Ontario Superintendent was that he first called my home, my wife gave him Vancouver School Board number, they gave him the telephone number of the school where I was teaching. In good conscience I could not ask him to release me from my verbal contract even though it was life altering for me.

By this time, it was too late for me to execute my intended plan and too hot in India for my wife to enjoy this visit. I bought an around the world ticket, traveling for four months, visiting India for the first time since leaving there eight years earlier and arrived back in Vancouver four days before reporting to work in Ontario. Our possessions fitted in the smallest U-Haul trailer that we hitched to our car and drove across Canada when the Trans-Canada Highway was still under construction.

Between 1962 – 1976 I was to move 8 times to climb the ladder by zig zag means than straight up but never got a job in Audio-visual education field.

I found my final nest 31 miles from Sacramento, capital of world's eighth largest economy, where my children could get all the education they wanted by commuting from home and not miss what I had missed as a child, home life. Uncle and I share that too. He lives on top of a 5600 ft high hill in Dagshai in the Himalayas and I live on top of the first 1000 ft high ridge of Sierra foothills of Northern California, looking down at skyline of Sacramento 30 ft above sea level, quite a change for both of us from the Thar desert of our childhood.

Hardev S Shergill

EDITORIAL

[From May-June 2018 SB]

PUNJAB THE LAND OF THE GURUS AND THE SIKH HOMELAND

Salute to the land of five Rivers – The Punjab. When Indira Gandhi ruled 18 states, Punjab wasn't in those 18.

Now when Modi is ruling 19 states, Punjab isn't in those.

When British ruled all over India, Punjab was the last one to come under that rule and immediately started struggle for freedom.

In the freedom struggle against British, the contribution of Punjabis is more than 80%.

When Mughal ruled India and converted Hindus to Islam, one and only one, Punjab stood against them and Guru Teg Bahadur Ji (9th Guru & father of Guru Gobind Singh ji) laid down his life at Chandni Chowk in Delhi for their support & Guru Gobind Singh sacrificed all his four sons of the age of 7,9,14 & 17 years against the conversion to Islam. His Elder two sons (Sahibzade) sacrificed their lives in war against Mughals at Chamkaur Sahib (Pb) & younger two sons (Sahibzade) were bricked alive at Sirhand (Pb) by the Mughal ruler of that State.

Even when Sikander conquered all, only King Porus of Punjab dared to stop him.

So, Only Punjabis do what others can't do and are always ready to fight against Jabar and Julam. Be proud to have been a Punjabi.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was one of the greatest emperors in Indian history, Sher-E-Punjab, Lion of Punjab.

Born: November 13, 1780, Gujranwala, Pakistan

Died: June 27, 1839, Lahore, Pakistan

Blinded in one eye, injured in one arm, yet built up the great Sikh empire.

United the disparate Sikhs into a kingdom and built an empire that covered Punjab, Kashmir, Ladakh, the entire North West.

Served by able men like Hari Singh Nalwa, Dewan Mokam Chand, Veer Singh Dhillon, Zorawar Singh.

Also built a modern army, even recruited European officers to bring in the latest techniques of warfare.

That's why British Rulers couldn't annex Punjab during his lifetime. Because of him, Punjab was the last State which came under British rule in 1849.

But alas no one teaches about his legacy in India.

Because of him, Punjab was the most literate state at that time. Even though he recruited European officers he ensured they followed a strict code of conduct, no beef, no smoking and no alcohol.

As a matter of fact, Ranjit Singh banned cow slaughter in his empire.

A devout Sikh, who never differentiated on religion. Both his court and army had equal number of Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims - a true secular king.

His finance minister was a Hindu Brahmin, his Prime Minister was a Dogra, his foreign minister a Muslim.

He also renovated the Golden Temple, gave it the gold plates, and gave equal amount of gold to then Hindus and Muslims too, for renovation of their shrines and temples.

Built Gurudwaras at Patna and Nanded, in honor of Guru Gobind Singh, both of which are considered among the Panch Takhts.

A great warrior, an equally able and wise ruler, a truly great human being too.

Ranjit Singh is the only king in the history of world to have conquered Afghans, which even modern militaries of USA and Russia couldn't achieve, and eventually blocked entry of Mughals. Floating on the Internet

[Two worst enemies of Panjab and Sikhi, since the 1947 partition of Panjab, have been Gurcharan Singh Tohra and Parkash Singh Badal. The former sold his soul to Congress, leaving the latter with the choice of only BJP. At a Moga conference of Akali Dal he declared it the 'Panjabi Party' so that Hindus could join. Hindus of Panjab became the first group of people in the world to renounce their mother tongue, Panjabi, purely for political reasons. RSS zealots spread out through Panjab villages in early 1950s telling non-Sikhs that when census takers ask them about what language do they speak at home, their answer should be '*asin tan ji Hindi bolde aan*'.]

[I heard with my own ears in the Chamarley of my Nanke Village, Sakruli, Hoshiarpur. Editor]

EDITORIAL

[From July-August 2018 SB]

SIKH VALUES

Sikh values are human values and according to Guru Nanak they are the same no matter what religion or no religion you practice. To the Muslims, Brahmins and Yogis he gave the same advice; treat others as you will want to be treated; live the life of a **householder** [Catholics of the world this word of wisdom is for you and your POPE and BISHOPS]; share your earnings with those in need and cannot help themselves; being the most intelligent life form, being on top of animal kingdom pyramid, it is your responsibility to protect the lesser life forms and their **physical environment**. That is why Guru Nanak compared air, water and earth to Guru, Father and Mother, three most important relationships in Indian culture and any other culture.

To paraphrase Dr. Devinder Singh Chahal: "...the Brahmins infiltrated Sikhism to weaken and distort the message of Guru Nanak by misinterpreting the philosophy in his bani and tilting towards Vedantic interpretation; his life and his mission have been misrepresented in publications such as Bachittar Natak, renamed Dasam Granth, Sikh history and literature; the

ancestry of the majority of people living in the present-day Punjab was initially all non-religious.” Chahal.

To the above I might add that the most negative contribution towards distortion of Guru Nanak’s philosophy has been done by Benaras Hindu University in Varanasi. At the 21st Conference of the Indian National Congress in Benares in December 1905, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya publicly announced his intent to establish a university in Varanasi. He requested **Attar Singh of Mastuana**, Panjab, to lay the foundation stone of Banaras Hindu University at Varanasi in 1914. **Attar Singh’s** early education, before joining the army, came from the Nirmala sect. In the army he became Amritdhari and after leaving the army he became a self-appointed Sant-Baba, perhaps a pioneer in gifting that title to any Sikh scoundrel to fleece the gullible.

To quote Col. Manmohan Singh Scout:

“Siri Chand, Datu, Mohan, Prithiya, Meharban, Harji, Meenas, Gurditta, B. Gurdas, B. Buddha, RamRai plus, many more including 32 claimants of Gurgaddi at Bakala, Hindalias etc. were mostly the rotten brats of our own Gurus who, with the tacit support of Hindoos and Hakims sabotaged the lofty plans of Nanak's followers. They were defiant and openly opposed the Gurus without any impunity! Furthermore, blatant backbiting against Gurus and Gursikhs by Hindus of high caste was done by Pt Hardayal, mythical Bala, Datu's following, Mohan's gang, Prithiyas mafia and his highly placed contacts, Chandu, those Hindoos who managed summons against Adi Granth for which Ram Rai had to go with our scripture, those Hindoos who got summons executed against G. Harkishan, the raja of Jaipur in whose guardianship 8 years old boy guru was permitted to work with smallpox infected terminal patients i.e. sure invitation to death for him(!), Kashmiri Hindoos putting our Ninth Guru in a very precarious situation (!), the Hindoo hill rajas plotting against Tenth Master, betrayal of 'faithful' Pt Gangu with Sucha Nand's final nail in the coffin are some of the Guru period proofs; the most recent incident being of LK Advani advising Indira to screw Sikhs and Hindutva Hindoos in the garb of congress affecting Sikh genocide or now a judge enquiring about importance of the turban etc. are enough to prove the covert role of our Hindoo brothers please!

When it comes to the inherent latent hatred against Sikhs and Sikhi in ordinary common Hindoo, please remember their slogan of 60's "ਸਾਡੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਹਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ!" (Our mother tongue is Hindi, recited in Panjabi). They won't stand for water or Chandigarh for Panjab, or Punjabi language in HP or Haryana the erstwhile Panjab!!

EDITORIAL

[From September-October 2018 SB]

TENTH COMMANDMENT

Semitic God (Jewish, Christian, Islamic) recorded the 10th Commandment in Exodus 20:17:

“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s.”

When the 10 Commandments are listed again in Deuteronomy 5, the order of the items not to be coveted is slightly different (**wife before house**), which argues against breaking this into two commandments as the Catholics do.

Deuteronomy 5:21 says: “You shall **not covet** your neighbor’s **wife**; and you shall not desire your neighbor’s **house**, his **field**, his **male servant**, his **female servant**, his **ox**, his **donkey**, or **anything** that is your neighbor’s.”

In modern terms, coveting often includes our neighbor’s cars, electronic gadgets, money, prestige, etc.

The heart of the matter

Jesus Christ made clear in the Sermon on the Mount and throughout His teachings that God’s law involves more than just our actions. Really obeying the 10 Commandments involves our thoughts and attitudes and approaches.

Even before Christ expanded on the laws, this 10th Commandment added depth to all the commandments by drawing attention to our hearts and motives. Coveting, and all sin begins in our hearts. “But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man” (Matthew 15:18-20).

The above Tenth Commandment narrative is the core of Christian Faith, as practiced in the United States of America. Women of America have been so brainwashed into accepting their inferiority to men that it has become part of their DNA.

That is why people like Roy Stewart Moore of Alabama can be elected as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Alabama by the women of Alabama after being removed from office by the Federal Government for displaying Ten Commandments in his office in violation of the Law. That is also why he was supported by the women of Alabama for the United States Senate in spite of being accused of sexual abuses of minor women.

That is why **Donald Trump** can be elected **President of the United States by women** even after his public denigration of women as objects, not persons to be respected; as and when he takes fancy to someone he grabs her by her p...y.

That is why the **white Evangelical Christian Women** in the United States are supporting **Donald Trump** and fund the imperial life style of their pastors by buying them planes and multiple residences because that is what their Christian God wants them to do, so say the priests.

That is why they do not question why in the United State there are laws governing women's body but not of men.

That is why there are more women than men standing behind trump when he is telling lie after lie and clap the most. Once in a while in **all white faces there is a black face** that Trump likes to point out as **'my black man'**.

In Jan 1521 Pope Leo X excommunicated Martin Luther for posting his 95 Theses to the door of the castle church in Wittenberg because of Pope Leo's policy of granting indulgences to the wealthy. Pope was literally offering salvation in heaven for those who would donate funds to rebuild St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, in this life.

That lit the flame of Reformation and birth of today's unlimited variety of private Protestant churches and Donald Trump's election as the President of the United States, supported primarily by the so-called Evangelical Christians.

This also degenerated into **European wars of religion**, a series of [religious wars](#) waged in 16th and 17th century [Europe](#),^[1] devastating the continent and killing over 10 million people. The wars were fought in the aftermath of the [Protestant Reformation](#) (1517), which disrupted the religious order in the Catholic countries of Europe.

To begin with Semitic God was One but in practice as the time went on there came to be three Semitic Gods or three interpretations of the same God.

Jewish God promised the land of Palestine to the Jewish people only and ordered them to observe **Sabbath on Saturdays**. God defined Jews only those born to a Jewish mother. That is why the close followers of Jesus, known as Apostles, had to flee their homeland because they were not considered Jews being followers of the blasphemous Jesus.

One Apostle, St. Thomas, brought Christianity to Parur, Kerala in A.D. 52. During his encounter with high caste Hindus offering water to the East for their deceased ancestors, his response was unlike Nanak's. Nanak started throwing water to the West to teach worshippers the error of their ways. But not St. Thomas. He gave an early example to what this new religion was to become, a collection of superstitions.

St. Thomas, upon coming upon Hindus throwing water to the East, declared, that ‘his God is stronger than their God’ because He will accept his water. When he threw handful of water into air, lo and behold, water did not fall back; it stayed suspended in the air as crystals.

Christian God sent his own son, Christ, born to a virgin Jewish mother, and ordered them to observe **Sabbath on Sundays**. On top of it, God ordained that only followers of Christ can achieve salvation.

Muslim God sent Mohammad who declared himself to be the last Semitic Prophet super ceding all those who came before him and ordered them to observe **Sabbath on Fridays**.

As is clear from the Tenth Commandment that all three Semitic religions treat **women as property** and not an equal human being. They also impose dress codes on women although they differ in each religion from scarf and veil in Judaism and Christianity to Hijab, niqab, and burka in Islamic countries.

This religious injunction against women is the root cause of what is happening in the UNITED STATES TODAY. It took one hundred years of struggle by the women to get their right to vote upon passage of 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution on **August 18, 1920**.

The so-called **Evangelical Christians** who support Trump and were primarily responsible for his victory, have no fear of their God in their heart. They also have rather loose commitment to the Ten Commandments. Recently when a reporter was interviewing multi-millionaire Pat Robertson, Priest to the Presidents, after the assassination of Saudi **journalist, Jamal Khashoggi**, his response was to caution Americans against allowing the United States’ relationship with Saudi Arabia to deteriorate over **Khashoggi’s death**:

“For those who are screaming blood for the Saudis — look, these people are key allies,” Robertson said. While he called the faith of the Wahabis — the hardline Islamist sect to which the Saudi Royal Family belongs — “obnoxious,” he urged viewers to remember that “we’ve got an arms deal that everybody wanted a piece of...it’ll be a lot of jobs, a lot of money come to our coffers. It’s not something you want to blow up willy-nilly.”

This multimillionaire Priest chooses to ignore the 5th Commandment, "[Thou shalt not kill](#)".

Not giving women their right to vote by the Founding Fathers has led to the brainwashing of American women to the point that vast majority of them believe a clearly lying man, like Donald Trump, over a woman.

Case in point is the current life time appointment of **Brett Kavanaugh** to the **US Supreme Court**, in spite of sworn testimony of **Dr. Christine Blasey Ford**, who passed a lie detector test and swore under oath that when she was 15 years old, Kavanaugh attempted to rape her. Thanks to the Tenth Commandment, **Susan Margaret Collins, the 66 years old Senator from Maine**, had no qualms about believing lying man, **Brett Kavanaugh**, over a grieving fellow woman and voted for the Man.

This should hardly surprise anyone since women like **Susan Collins** voted overwhelmingly to elect **Donald Trump** as **President of the United States** in spite of his public statements as to where he grabs women from their private parts for his gratification.

On top of it this President of the United States is a congenital liar, a devil in carnate. What can one expect from a man who will say, “If Ivanka weren’t my daughter, perhaps I’d be dating her.” Some of Donald Trump’s favourite words for women: Fat, Pig, Dog, Slob, Disgusting animal, Horseface for Stormy Daniels, Bimbo and beautiful pieces of ass ...

No sane country in the world should adopt US Constitution as a model for their nation because of the actions or lack thereof, by the following worse Americans ever.



Donald Trump
President



Mitch McConnell
Senate Leader



Paul Ryan
Speaker

United States’ system of government is designed to endure even a President as dangerous as Donald Trump, because the founders believed that Congress would serve as a check on an unethical president. That’s what should have happened. But instead, this Republican Congress has failed to play its constitutional role, putting party over country again and again. As explained in the [Washington Post](#) recently, for nearly two and a half centuries, the Congress has served as a restraint upon the executive and vice versa – until now.

Republicans, with the honourable exception of late **Senator John McCain**, have brought shame to **Lincoln’s Party**, the Republican Party. Republican and Democratic parties have completely switched roles since I started studying American political system back in 1950’s. Republican candidates for reelection have in recent days suddenly started supporting health insurance for **‘existing conditions’** that was introduced by President Obama and ever since Republicans made seventy attempts to abolish that protection. **Republicans of today have neither principals nor shame.**

On October 22nd 2018, Cesar Sayoc 56, a Florida man with long criminal record, member of Republican Party and Trump supporter, mailed 14 bombs to as many Democratic leaders, including Past President Obama. Luckily, they were all intercepted before they could cause injury or Death. Even after that Trump did not mend his ways.

Today, October 27th 2018, an Evangelical Christian gunman armed with an assault rifle killed 11 people at Tree of Life Pittsburgh synagogue during Saturday-morning services in what the Anti-Defamation League called "likely the deadliest attack on the Jewish community in the history of the United States."

Trump's daughter, Ivanka, is married to a Jew.

Hardev S shergill

EDITORIAL

TIME TO SPREAD GURU NANAK'S PHILOSOPHY ACROSS THE WORLD

(From the November-December 2018 Sikh Bulletin)

"Guru Nanak (1469-1539 CE) originated a unique philosophy and challenged the existing concepts about God, heaven/hell, reincarnation/transmigration, idol worship, caste system, astrology, mantra systems, etc. in Southeast Asia."

Amen! Halleluiah! This **quote came to me from a Sikh Scholar** who is doing a great service to the cause of Sikhi and I could not help but compliment him and told him that I agreed with his quote whole heartedly. **To that I added**, that **Guru Nanak was not a prophet in the sense of Biblical or Muslim prophets** who claimed to speak to or spoken to by God, directly as in the case of Moses or indirectly, as in the case of Mohammed, who had an Angel as an intermediary. When Bani talks about '*dhur-ki-bani*' it is not God talking to Nanak; **Sikhi is not a 'revealed' religion; it is born out of Guru's life experience**; it is Guru's own inspiration and thought process that **inspires him to seek and speak fundamental truths**. He wrote back that he was pleased to read my response but observed, **"No Sikh scholar could dare to say what you have said."**

He is right and therein lies the tragedy. I am not afraid to say it precisely because I am not a scholar. The tragedy is that Sikh scholars are too fearful of consequences if they break with the established tradition; as Mr. Tohra had explained away the un-sikh practice of denial of sewa to the women at Darbar Sahib because of the long-established tradition. The fact that Guru Nanak had broken many traditions going back centuries was inconsequential. [From January-February 2009 Sikh Bulletin Editorial]

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, world's most powerful Diplomat, gave the following message after his visit to Darbar Sahib on **October 3, 2018**:

I want to express my deep respect for the religion of the Sikh people and this wonderful Golden Temple, in which the spirit of peace, tolerance and ecumenism is present. I prayed here as a Catholic but, all people, from all religions in the world, can pray in this holy place.

There are unfortunately not many temples in the world where this is possible, and this makes me feel very happy to be here and very proud to be invited. And, at the same time, it increases my admiration for the Sikh communities everywhere: the Sikh community in India, the Sikh community in my part of the world, in Europe, in North America, everywhere where Sikhs are contributing to the development of our world.

I want to express to my hosts my deep gratitude and wish you all the best – to the wonderful practice that the Golden Temple represents, receiving everybody, sharing with everybody the food, but, more than the food, sharing this wonderful spirit of peace, of harmony, of understanding that we badly need in today's world.

Similar comments are made by everyone who visits Darbar Sahib. But **what the world is ignorant about is the true meaning of Guru Nanak's Philosophy, which was never intended to be taught as a religion** but was surely given to all humanity as a, **'Jeevan-Jaach.'** **Sikhs have failed as its custodians.**

In **1996** 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.

For the last **twenty-two years** I have attempted to learn about and spread the word of Guru Nanak's philosophy to the best of my ability through the pages of **The Sikh Bulletin** that commenced publication in **November 1999** at Roseville, California, USA.

This issue marks the **19th anniversary** of publication of the Sikh Bulletin, in print from 1999 to 2005 when we had to close the Gurdwara for lack of sangat. It was mailed to twenty-two countries. Since **2005** it has gone out in electronic format and attained much wider circulation with help from our readers in other countries passing it along to the people on their mailing lists.

On **January 3rd 2019** I will be **85 years old** and had been pondering whether to make this the last issue or go for another year to complete two decades of publication. Then **Dr. Devinder Singh Chahal** announced plans for celebration of **Guru Nanak's 550th anniversary in 2019**. Dr. Chahal is the **Sikh Scholar** who is quoted in the beginning of this editorial. He is also the person from whom I have learned the most.

Then on August 28, 2018 a very positive development, of great significance for the future of Sikh Bulletin, took place in the form of the following email with an attachment, which is published following this editorial:

“Hardev Veerji, thank you for writing this article. I am so happy to read it... Once again, thank you for a brilliant piece. Can you please include my email address in your distribution list for Sikh Bulletin? I will be most grateful.”

Rabb Rakha, Harpreet Kaur

My response:

“Preet Ji: Thank you for your kind words. The second attachment has some supplemental material to the first one that you have read. Our website is www.sikhbulletin.com”.

*I am 84 years old. One cannot teach new tricks to an old Dog. **What Nanak needs are much younger people who can use modern social media to spread his message of tolerance, love, brotherhood, togetherness and common humanity of the highest form of life in the animal kingdom, us all.** If you and your friends can start sending out bits of these attachments on the social media it would work wonders. Much obliged by your initiative to communicate with me.”*

*Best regards,
Hardev Singh Shergill*

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The biggest surprise came on August 30th 2018 in the following email:

*“Shergill Ji it is great to hear from you. **Preet is my beloved wife.** She has been reading the SB and has been appreciative of your work, **but your last article on Guru Nanak moved her to want to convey her appreciation to you personally.**”*

*“I am honored that you consider me suitable to take over the responsibility of keeping SB going; It’s going to be very tough to fill your shoes; but I want SB to live on. After all, how many publications are out there promoting Guru Nanak's spirituality **in the authentic way that SB works.**”*

“I am sure you have already worked on the Nov Dec 2018 Issue. I am sending you an article on Guru Nanak for that issue.

“I can be co-editor for as long as you see fit. Am prepared to resume full responsibility from whatever point you want me to.

As for your condition - I am on board. You can view my articles and videos on this site: www.sikhivicharforum.org

The one thing that will come across is that I consider Guru Nanak's banee to be the basis of his spirituality for the entire humanity - which is not only unique and new - it is also a deep critique AGAINST religion - which is a clergy construct. Guru Nanak poured damning critique on the clergy - Teenay Ujarrey Ka Bandh - the clergy of all three existing religions are the ROOT cause of the UPROOTING (Ujarrey) of spirituality from humanity.

Guru Nanak's spirituality / philosophy is what I prescribe to.

Sikh Religion is something I don't identify with because:

- (i) it was never meant to exist;
- (ii) it was created by a group that was rooted in Vedic / Snatan / Udasi / Nirmala thought;
- (iii) it is maintained by a group that was **NOT supposed to exist** in the first place - Sikh Clergy.

Sikh spirituality is found in the SGGS ji. Sikh Religion is found in our Gurdwaras, institutions, dogma, ritual, practices etc. Sikh Spirituality and Sikh Religion are actually antonyms in the sense that one negates the other.

The Chahal Conference papers can be published in the May/ Jun and July August 2019 issues. I expect that there will be enough material for use in 2 issues. The other 4 issues we can work on together.

Remain in Chardee Klaa as always. My article for the Nov /Dec issue is attached.”

Warm regards, Karminder

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The above email by Karminder Singh was in response to the following email to him by me:

On Thu, Aug 30, 2018 at 7:21 AM Hardev Singh Shergill <editor@sikhbulletin.com> wrote:

*Many years ago (2013) when my health insurer, Kaiser Permanente, almost killed me with over dose of radiation, I had approached Dr Sarjeet Singh Sidhu, your colleague, to take over publication of the Sikh Bulletin but he did not think he will be able to do justice due to constraint of time availability. **Would you consider taking that responsibility?***

*I was considering Nov-Dec 2018 to be the last issue until **Dr Chahal came up with the 550th anniversary of Guru Nanak project.** Now the last issue will be Nov-Dec 2019, culminating 20 years of publication of the Sikh Bulletin that I had never dreamed of nor planned.*

If you agree we could jointly put out the remaining issues of 2019 and you take over full responsibility from 2020.

I have only one condition:

Guru Nanak's philosophy should never be presented as a RELIGION. It should be presented as "Jeevan Jaach" for the whole mankind.”

*

To the Readers of and the contributors to the Sikh Bulletin:

I am grateful to you all, both who liked the limited knowledge I was able to bring to you and those who felt offended by my views. Mostly we had a civil dialogue. That is what Guru Nanak

preached and practiced all his life, **civil dialogue**. I can assure you, unequivocally, that unlike me who was totally ignorant of authentic Gurbani and had to search for truth like searching for a needle in a haystack of literature on Gurbani, you will be getting an original thinker scholar of Gurbani in Dr. Karminder Singh Dhillon whose articles have appeared in the Sikh Bulletin since the **July-August 2007** issue which is reprinted on page 9. I assure you, you will not be disappointed.

Best Regards, Hardev Singh Shergill
