INTRODUCTION

It has always been that peoples wages wars with each other because of being inhabitants of different regions of the globe (even belonging to the same religion) or to have a complete control on the other regions of the world or because of economic disparity or because of different religions or different races. Dr Parvez Hoodbhoy, a Professor of Nuclear Physics at Islamabad's Quaid-e-Azam University, Pakistan says that if we look into the cause of all the troubles and fights going on in the world the blame will fall on religions because every religion is about absolute belief in its own superiority and the divine right to impose itself upon others [5]. The irony is that in every case it is the minority religion, which is a victim whether the trouble is in India, Israel, Palestine, Ireland, Pakistan, and Afghanistan now in USA, Canada, and UK the victim in general is public and sometimes minority because of mistaken identity [3, 4]. It is also clear that such fights are not only confined between majority and minority religions but within the various sects of the same religion in the same country.

RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR WORLD PEACE

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ABSTRACT

People wage wars with each other because of being inhabitants of different regions of the globe (even belonging to the same religion) or to have a complete control on the other regions of the world or because of economic disparity or because of different religions or different races. Most of the time the cause of wars is that: The custodians of every religion have absolute belief in superiority of their religion and consider it as their religious responsibility to impose it on others. I have tried to emphasize in this paper that the Earth belongs to the humanity and God has created necessary environment and all the resources on the Earth to sustain different types of lives. Therefore, it is our first and foremost religious and social responsibility to use its resources properly and protect the Earth for the future generations of the humanity. The other most important fact is that the whole humanity is one; therefore, practicing of altruism and egalitarianism is another most important religious and social responsibility necessary to establish peace on this Earth, the tiny planet in our Solar System. If every religion believes in One God and the whole humanity Its creation then it is religious responsibility of the clergy and the authority of every religion to stop imposing their own absolute belief, superiority, and divine right upon others and start practicing and teaching altruism and egalitarianism to the followers of their religions. This will not only eliminate terrorism from its very roots but will establish ONE WORLD ORDER AND PEACE on this Earth.

Note: This paper is based on the basic principles of philosophy of Guru Nanak in my book: NANAKIAN PHILOSOPHY: Basics for Humanity. IUS, Canada, and Singh Brothers, Amritsar. It was presented at the International Conference on Religion and Human Social Responsibility on February 26-28, 2008 at the Punjabi University, Patiala.
My experience from discussion with various theologians indicates that the failure to maintain peace on earth may be due to the fact that the custodians of various religions have ignored the fact that Science has a great role to enable us to understand religion in its real perspective. I would say that Albert Einstein was right when he stated as follows:

Science without religion is lame.
Religion without science is blind.

If every religion believes in One God and the whole humanity as Its creation then it is religious responsibility of the clergy and the authority of every religion to stop imposing their own absolute belief, superiority, and divine right upon others and start practicing and teaching altruism and egalitarianism to the followers of their religions. This will not only eliminate terrorism from its very roots but will establish ONE WORLD ORDER AND PEACE on this Earth.

**SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES OF NANAKIAN PHILOSOPHY FOR WORLD PEACE**

The following basic principles of Nanakian Philosophy have been picked up from the Bani of Guru Nanak incorporated in the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) [1], the only authentic source. It is found to have all the characteristics of universal acceptability and applicability during the Current Science Age (Space Age/Information Age).

1. **God**
   It is difficult to define God since It is accepted differently in different religions. However, I consider that Guru Nanak has given a concise and precise definition of God right in the beginning of the AGGS as follows:

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

   If one examine this definition critically it will not be difficult to be accepted by the whole humanity including the atheists.

2. **The Earth**
   The Earth belongs to the Humanity. While this Earth was being formed as a planet of our Solar System, God created necessary environment on the Earth to sustain different types of lives. As we know at this time the Earth is the only planet of our Solar System where life is found. However, the possibilities of similar or better type of life on some planets of other Solar Systems of our galaxy or of other galaxies cannot be ruled out [6, 7], because it is beyond our all available technology to reach on such planets and beyond our comprehension to visualize life on the other planets for the time being. In this respect we should be grateful to God for giving us a chance to be a part of the life on the Earth, the tiny planet in one of the billions of Solar Systems of our galaxy, the Milky Way.

   The Earth

   Nights, seasons, days, and weeks; 
   Wind, water, and fire in the center of earth;  
   Amidst all these natural phenomena and resources, the Earth is placed as a venue to practice righteousness. Thereon are various types of living beings. And their names and kinds are uncountable. By their deeds their destinies are judged. The court of the Ever-Existing (God) is true. In that court only nobles are accepted. This honor of acceptance of good deeds is achieved by the blessing of the God. Nanak says:

   Whether one is ordinary or elevated is sent for judgment and is judged in the court of God. 34. 
   AGGS, Jap 34. p 7 [1].

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

Here Guru Nanak is explaining in this stanza that the earth is a venue to practice righteousness. On this earth God has supplied all the natural resources and necessary phenomena for sustaining all types of living beings. One is judged as an ordinary or elevated one according to the deeds performed. In the court of Ever-Existing (God) only those are honored who have been blessed because of their good deeds. The ‘court of God’ has been used here metaphorically for the Laws of Nature since every action and reaction is going on under these laws and one gets the result of these laws right in this life.

The God, after creating the Earth and the necessary environment for sustaining life, declared the earth as the realm of justice, where the actions (good or evil) will be considered. The word, "Dharmsaal", used in Nanakian Philosophy has been interpreted as the ‘realm of justice’ here; because the word "dharam" according to Nanakian Philosophy means Laws of Nature (God) set to control all the actions and reactions going on in the whole Universe and in every living being; and “saal” means the venue/place. It is just possible that the “saal” may have its common roots in Archaic Punjabi and/or in French ‘salle’, which means, ‘house’, ‘room’, ‘hall’, ‘place’. Therefore, in this ‘realm of justice’, the Earth, everybody will be adjudged and honoured or punished according to their deeds under the Laws of Nature.

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

Life of the Earth

It must be understood that the Earth we see today was formed about 4.5 billion years ago and it is not a permanent place for the humanity to live forever.

According to the estimates of Donald Brownlee and Peter Ward [8] in their book, The Life and Death of Planet Earth, the Earth’s "day in the sun" has reached 4:30 a.m., corresponding to its 4.5 billion-year age. By 5 a.m., the 1 billion-year reign of animals and plants will come to an end. At 8 a.m. the oceans will vaporize. At noon – after 12 billion years – the ever-expanding sun, transformed into a red giant, will engulf the planet, melting away any evidence it ever existed and sending molecules and atoms that once were Earth floating off into space (Fig. 1). Therefore according to them the life will be complete wiped out from the surface of our Earth after about 500,000,000 years.

Donald Brownlee [8] of University of Washington said: "We live in a fabulous place at a fabulous time. It's a healthy thing for people to realize what a treasure this is in space and time, and fully appreciate and protect their environment as much as possible."

The message here is that as long as we are here let us live in peace.
3. Status of Man among the Living Organisms

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

4. Freedom of Expression

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

The service to the Guru is to comprehend the philosophy of the Guru.

What is that philosophy?

Getting rid of ego and to do good deeds is the service to the God.

The service to God is to comprehend the Sabd (Nanakian Philosophy) and practicing what is recommended in there. The main principle of Nanakian Philosophy given here is that getting rid of ego and doing good deeds for the humanity are the greatest service of all.

Finally Guru Arjan sums up altruism in Nanakian Philosophy as follows:

Nanak says:

Successful are those lives (devotees), who consider that everyone is the child of God.

Those, who have realized the perfect God, take along with them all their colleagues across the sea of life.

5. Altruism

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

All those living beings (on this earth) are Yours.

The service to God is to comprehend the Sabd (Nanakian Philosophy) and practicing what is recommended in there. The main principle of Nanakian Philosophy given here is that getting rid of ego and doing good deeds for the humanity are the greatest service of all.

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Those, who have realized the perfect God, take along with them all their colleagues across the sea of life.
b. Caste-system
If basically we all are same, being the creation of the only One, the God, then why should we have any hatred among ourselves? Guru Nanak realized that this hatred was mostly due to caste-system prevailing before and during his time. Most scholars say that Guru Nanak revolted against the caste-system; in fact, he revolted against any type of discrimination based on the creed, color, country of origin, social status, sex, etc. Although we may find slight morphological differences [6] in peoples of different regions of the world, which developed due to the different ecology of those regions, but we all share the same physiological processes to maintain the life and were created by the same one Father, the God. Most probably we all might have one same mother originated somewhere in Africa according to the latest research on the origin of man.

Pride in social status\(^2\) and personal glory\(^3\) is useless\(^1\) since every living being is under one Law and Order. One may call oneself as a noble man\(^1\) but nobility\(^6\) is achieved when one’s good deeds are accepted\(^4\).

AGGS, M 1, p 62.

c. Sharing of Material Wealth
Sharing of earning for the uplift of the humanity:

It is not only sharing of the earnings but sharing of the philosophy/knowledge/wisdom with that of others and accepting the best ones and discarding the worst ones as recommended in Nanakian Philosophy is also part of egalitarianism as explained in \# 5-d:

d. Sharing of Intellectual Wealth (Multiculturalism)
Guru Nanak developed a novel system of sharing intellectual wealth (wisdom) with other communities that may be equated to the multiculturalism adopted in Canada. Most of the peoples take the multiculturalism in a very narrow term as taking part in folk dances, social functions, religious holidays, etc. of other communities. Guru Nanak emphasizes that one should not only share the material or cultural values of other communities, but should also adopt their virtues:

If you possess \(^5\) (a bag of) wisdom/philosophy\(^1\), open it to be shared\(^6\) with others. If your friends\(^4\) have good principles/philosophy then one should share/adopt\(^6\) it. Only share/adopt\(^6\) good principles/philosophy\(^7\) and leave the others, which are not acceptable\(^8\).

AGGS, M 1, p 765-766.

7. Evaluation of Things/Philosophy
It is also encouraged to evaluate every things/ philosophy/ideas properly before adopting it. Every individual\(^3\) have contemplated\(^5\) first \(^4\) to evaluate. It is advised that one must evaluate\(^1\) the things / philosophy\(^5\) first\(^4\), if convinced, then adopt\(^5\) it.

AGGS, M 1, p 1410.

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

Stubborn-minded\(^1\) intelligent\(^2\) have contemplated\(^5\) the Vedas\(^5\). There are so many rituals in Vedas in which one is entangled\(^6\), but only Guru-oriented\(^6\) person get salvation\(^7\).

Who is the Guru-oriented person? Guru Nanak explains it as follows:
Although truth is higher than everything; but higher still is truthful living. AGGS, M 1, p 62.

9. Good Deeds – The Highest Religion
The above principle of Guru Nanak has further been explained by Guru Arjan that practicing righteousness on this earth is the highest religion of all:

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

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

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

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

company of the noble people. 2. I also realized that The One God is pervading in everyone and get happiness to see them all. 3. 8. AGGS, M 5, p 1299.

Nanak says:
Politeness and humility are the essence of virtue and goodness. AGGS, M 1, p 470.

Do not call anyone bad and don’t argue with a fool. I have discovered after studying the word (Nanakian Philosophy).

AGGS, M 1, p 473.

My dagger is to be the dust of all men’s feet (means service to the humanity). No evil doer can withstand against these weapons. The Perfect Guru (Nanak) has given me this understanding.
Therefore, Guru Arjan preferred to be sacrificed to keep up the principle of non-violence rather than to take up arms when he was ordered to change the teachings of Sikh Gurus incorporated into the AGGS to favor the rulers of that time. Similarly, Guru Teg Bahadur sacrificed himself rather to take up arms to resolve the problem of human rights that the then rulers were violating. Since then, the Sikhs have maintained this tradition of non-violence. There are many examples of observance of non-violence for resolving religious issues with the government in the history of the Sikhs. Some glaring examples of observance of non-violence by the Sikhs are found during the struggle of independence of India. From a practical point of view the Sikh Gurus and the Sikhs were the first to adopt non-violence during the beginning of 17th century to resolve the differences between the rulers and the ruled.

13. Fearing of none and Threatening to none:
Sometimes the politeness, humility and practising of non-violence by a particular nation or a community is taken as its weakness to be exploited by the other deceitful nation or community. Thus, to safeguard the so-called weakness, Guru Teg Bahadur established the following two principles: The first principle is that one should be strong enough not to be afraid of anyone and being strong, should not threaten others:

\[ \text{Nanak says:} \]
\[ \text{A person who does}^{5} \text{ not threaten}^{1} \text{ anybody and does not accept}^{2} \text{ the threat of anybody that person is described}^{3} \text{ as the wise/intellectual}. \]

AGGS, M 9, p 1427.

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

\[ \text{Nanak says:} \]
\[ \text{Think about the future, look not on the past over the shoulders}. \]

AGGS, M 5, p 1096.

\[ \text{Nanak says:} \]
\[ \text{Because there is no birth again}. \]

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

CONCLUSIONS

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

REFERENCES

(Continued from page 22)

Mr Fowler in reference to the person’s faith wrote, “Faith is a person’s or group’s way of moving into the force field of life. It is our way of finding coherence in and giving meaning to multiple forces and relations that make up our lives. Faith is a person’s way of seeing him or herself in relation to others against a background of shared meaning and purpose.” [4].

We see different kinds of religions practicing various components in variable forms, whereas people of faith having close relation with the transcendent have universal character to understand and unite with each other. Similar to bipolar character of the Faith, religious history of the world reveals us that the religions also have double power. They can unite the groups or societies or separate and divide them mercilessly.

Still, the faith and religion have the power to unite the people together around the same central ethical values. The faith is not just for religious rules, at the same time belief to some basic ethical values.

Faith means to believe in freedom for human beings from the all kind of dishonorable situation for own and the ‘others’. Faith means also to be responsible for the ‘others’ and ‘own’ now and future. As is summarized by Blitz [2]. This kind of responsibility helps to produce and establish the qualities it takes to be free to succeed, to be an individual whose choices and actions are un-mastered and unconstrained. And I argue that responsibility arising from faith looks for a common good. And genuine responsibility is not counter to, but, rather, flows from a deep grasp of one’s self interest.

And as saying Paul Tillich: Faith is an ‘Ultimate Concern’. And Faith is courage to be as human being mutually towards God. (Tillich, Courage To Be) It is our responsibility as scholars of religious studies to find solutions together so that humanity can be saved from becoming its own enemy.

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