Guru Nanak (1469-1539) laid the foundation of 
Sikhi (philosophy) during the 
Period of Renaissance (between 
14th century and 17th century). It was the time, when 
many scientists were challenging some of the wrong 
axioms of the Church in Europe. At the same time, Guru 
Nanak was busy in opposing the ancient mythology and 
rituals, which were prevalent among the peoples of 
South Asia. These people were shackled by these 
outdated ideas for centuries. Thereby they were unable 
to express their free will in any way as their lives were 
controlled by their religious mentors. During this Period 
of Renaissance, in Europe, Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-
1543), a contemporary of Guru Nanak, rejected the 
axioms of the Bible that Sun revolves around the Earth 
and the Earth is the center of the Universe. Based on his 
astronomical observations, he asserted that the Earth is 
not the center of the Universe, rather it revolves around 
the Sun. Thereafter, Galileo Galilei (1564–1642), on the 
basis of his experiments, proclaimed that it is the Earth 
that revolves around the Sun and it is not the center of 
the Universe.

In 1633, Galileo was imprisoned for life, for his 
challenging the axioms of the church that Earth is the 
center of the Universe and Sun revolves around the 
Earth. Since the truth is eternal, it cannot be kept 
concealed forever. Easterbrook [1] had reported that the 
church has finally accepted the truth of those persons. In 
1758, Church lifted the ban on most works supporting 
Copernican theory, and by 1835 dropped its opposition 
to heliocentrism altogether. In 1992, Pope John Paul II 
expressed regret about how the Galileo affair was 
handled. Galileo’s contribution to our understanding of 
the universe was significant not only in his discoveries but in 
the methods he developed and the use of mathematics to 
prove them. He played a major role in the scientific 
revolution and, deservedly so, earned the moniker “The 
Father of Modern Science.” [2, 3]

Martin Luther (1483-1546), another contemporary of Guru 
Nanak, believed in anthropomorphism in Christianity. He was 
an important figure in the great rebellions against the 
Catholic Church of Rome. Over the centuries, the Church 
became corrupt and lived more like worldly kings than 
spiritual leaders. The most controversial fundraising 
technique of the Church was to sell certificates called 
“indulgences” to churchgoers, which would allegedly reduce 
the time that they or a loved one would have to spend 
repenting in purgatory before gaining entrance into heaven.

Luther was fed up with corruption in the Roman Church. 
When he disseminated his 95 Theses throughout Europe, the 
Church ordered him to recant his position, but he refused. 
In January 1521, Martin Luther was officially 
excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church. His 
followers are called “Protestant Christians”. [4, 5]

While in Europe, those who spoke the truth was either 
banned to publish it or were excommunicated, but 
fortunately, Guru Nanak, the greatest rebel of the South 
Asian and the Middle Eastern religions, was spared this fate. 
However, there is a folk tale that when he was about nine 9 
years of age, a Brahman was called for janeu ceremony. 
When the Brahman wanted to put Janeu on Nanak to 
initiate him into Hinduism, whereupon he becomes the 
disciple and Brahman becomes his Guru, and as per religious 
code, from that day Nanak has to consult Brahman to
initiate any task of his life. This system, which would lead him to be shackled in rituals of Hinduism, was not acceptable to Nanak. He was aware that it will never allow him to be a freethinker. Therefore, he wrote verses (bani), against Janeu and in favor of SABD as his GURU. Nevertheless, when Nanak refused to wear Janeu, Brahman was furious and so was his father and all relatives invited to the ceremony. His father was worried about his rebellious nature against Hinduism and he was punished by sending him to his sister at Sultanpur Lodhi, away from parents. At the age of about 15, he was helped by his brother-in-law, Jai Ram, to get a job at Modikhana (store of the Government). He performed his job efficiently, diligently and sincerely. It is not known that how much he learned from Muslim religious leaders while staying at Sultanpur Lodhi, the Center of Islamic Government. However, around 1499, he left for long voyages throughout India and the Middle East. After his return from the Middle East voyage, he settled with his family at Kartarpur in 1521, where he finalized his SIKHI (philosophy) and started preaching it. The bani (hymns, philosophy) of Guru Nanak is original, as it is independent of any other philosophy. It is unique as it is neither similar nor identical to any other philosophy [6]. Guru Nanak discovered, during his dialogues with various religious leaders and while preaching to the gathering of the people, that people easily accepted khota (false/fake/lie/wrong) as khara (real/right) as is evident from his following stanza:

Khoṭe kaho kharā kahai khaire sār na jānai.
Andhe kā naño pārkhu kalī kāl vidānā. ||3||

ਖੋਟੇ ਕਹੋ ਖਰਾ ਕਹਾੜੀ ਕਹਾਈ ਕੀ ਕਹਾਈ ਸਰ ਨਾ ਜਾਣੀ।
ਅਂਢੇ ਖਾ ਨਾ ਦੁਰੀ ਪਾਰਕ੍ਛੁ ਕਲੀ ਕਲੀ ਸੀ ਵਿਦਿਆਨੀ। ||3||

AGGS, M: 1, ਪੇਧੁ 229.

In general, people call fake⁷ as truth² (lie) and do not try to understand⁴ the truth³. They call the ignorant⁵ people as the appraiser⁶, who determines the authenticity in this Dark Age (Age of Ignorance)⁷, which is so strange⁸.

AGGS, M 1, p 229.

Since the philosophy in his bani was quite different and unique than that found in other religions, therefore, he was called ghost and demon as is evident from his following stanza:

Koī ākẖai āḏmī Nānak vecẖārā.
Koī ākẖai bẖūṯnā ko kahai beṯālā. ||4||

ਕੋਈ ਮਾਨੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਵੇਚਹਾਣੀ।
ਕੋਈ ਬੁੱਧੀ ਦੋ ਕੋ ਕਹਾ ਬੇਠਹਾਣੀ। ||4||

AGGS, M 1, p 991.

He further noticed that his bani was not easily understood by the religious leaders and the public. It is evident from his following stanza of from his bani:

Bẖa▫i▫ā ḏivānā sāh kā Nānak vegẖānai.
Ih baṇī mahā purakẖ kī nij gẖar vāsā ho▫e. ||40||

ਭਾਈ ਦਿਵਾਨੀ ਸਾਹ ਦਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਵੇਚਹਾਣੀ।
ਇਹ ਬਾਣੀ ਮਹਾ ਪੂਰਕ੍ਛ ਦੀ ਨੀਜ ਘਰ ਵਾਸਾ ਹੋਈ। ||40||

AGGS, M: 1, ਪੇਠੁ 935.

Only those⁴ rare⁵, enlightened persons⁵, would contemplate⁢ the Word (bani/sabd)⁶.

This Word (bani/sabd)⁶ is of the pre-eminent preceptor⁵, which is imbibed⁸ only in particular/special receptive minds.

AGGS, M 1, p 935 (Oankaar Bani)

Although Guru Nanak was spared the punishment or excommunication for going against established religious concepts, his bani was interpolated, and misrepresented to undermine the originality and uniqueness of his Sikh (Philosophy), under the influence of Vedas and Vedanta philosophies. [7]

During 2019, we have celebrated the 550th Birthday of Guru Nanak on a much wider scale. Both, the Government of India and Pakistan, have spent millions of dollars to build a PEACE CORRIDOR between the two countries, to meet at the House of Nanak at Kartarpur, to learn about his SIKHI. The Prime Ministers of both countries have declared NANAK IS THE GURU AND PIR not only for the Sikhs but for the whole of humanity. This is a great achievement and dedication to Nanak.
On the other hand, during this celebration millions of dollars have been spent to hold hundreds of conferences all over the globe, thousands of papers have been presented, tens of books have been published, thousands of Akhad Paaths were recited, and hundreds of Nagar Kirtans were taken out on the streets, where free food (langar) was served to watching public.

Now, here are some questions to the Sikh intelligentsia to ponder over:

1. Has the Sikh intelligentsia been successful to portray SIKHI founded by Guru Nanak in its real perspective?
2. Is SIKHI still deeply rooted in Vedas and Vedanta philosophies, which started to happen just after the demise of Guru Nanak (1539)?
3. While the Sikh intelligentsia resolves the above questions, the Institute for Understanding Sikhism (IUS) is already working on the Renaissance of Sikhism, founded by Guru Nanak, since 1999. Besides, the year 2020 is particularly dedicated to writing research articles for RENAISSANCE OF SIKHI. Some of the papers highlighting the aspect of Renaissance of Sikh already published are as follows:


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