

NANAKIAN PHILOSOPHY

Basics for Humanity

FOREWORD

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Religion has always played a prominent role in the lives of individuals, communities and nations. Today often one's religious beliefs conflict with new advances in science and technology causing confusion. This conflict can be resolved if science and religion are considered two different approaches to understand reality. Since their aim is the same, so there should be no clash between them. The two, understood properly, can supplement each other. Einstein truly says: "*Science without religion is lame. Religion without science is blind*". Hence enlightened persons apply scientific knowledge to give 'eyes' to religious wisdom. They re-interpret their religion to retain its contemporary relevance.

Prof Dr Devinder Singh Chahal has done this for Sikhism – the youngest among major religions. With his scientific training and firm religious faith, he is eminently qualified to do so. According to him the essence of Sikhism is Nanakian Philosophy which he defines as, "*A philosophy promulgated by Guru Nanak that is embodied in his Bani and has been further*

explained and strengthened by the Sikh Gurus, who succeeded to the House of Nanak, in their Bani, which is incorporated in the Aad Guru Granth Sahib along with that of Guru Nanak."

Prof Chahal repudiates the views of earlier scholars who said Guru Nanak's teachings were based on Vedantic philosophy. He also disagrees with those who think that Guru Nanak merely syncretized Hinduism and Islam as did some saints of the Bhakti Movement. On the contrary, Prof Chahal argues that Guru Nanak propounded original and unique philosophy which can stand the test of scientific scrutiny. Nanakian Philosophy is perennial and universal and most suitable for the humanity of the Current Science Age.

Obviously, orthodox Sikhs object to Prof Chahal's interpretation of Bani. Some consider it even blasphemous. No wonder Prof Chahal remarks, "... *what the Sikhs are doing today is exactly contrary to Nanakian Philosophy.*" Only bigots would question Prof Chahal's credentials and his right to interpret Bani according to his



L to R: Prof Balwant Singh Dhillon, Director of the Conference, Prof Dr Devinder Singh Chahal, the author of the book, Dr Jaswant Singh Neki releasing the book to Prof Dr Jai Rup Singh, Vice Chancellor, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.

people practice or is it what its Holy Granth says?

The present crisis in Sikhism could be easily resolved if the following principle of Nanakian Philosophy is accepted:

ਜਬ^੧ ਲਗੁ^੨ ਦੁਨੀਆ^੩ ਰਹੀਐ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਿਛੁ^੪ ਸੁਣੀਐ^੫ ਕਿਛੁ ਕਹੀਐ^੬ ॥
ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: ੧, ਪੰਨਾ ੬੬੧.

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

AGGS, M 1, p 661.

The well educated Sikh theologians and Sikh intellectuals as mentioned earlier have to get together may be for several meetings for several years, to resolve the present crises being faced by the Sikhs of the world.

CONCLUSIONS

- The current ethics (*Sikh Rehit Maryada*) is more than half a century old and it needs to be revised.
- Now the Sikhs are dwelling in different parts of the world with different political circumstances and environmental conditions, therefore, there is a need to formulate ethics which are scientifically and logically correct and have universal acceptability since we are living in Current Science Age and nobody is going to follow any ethics, which would be contrary to the philosophy embodied in the Gurbani and are wrong when tested scientifically and logically.
- The only authentic source of information to formulate religious ethics for the Sikhs is the Aad Guru Granth Sahib and the latest scientific information about the specific ethics.
- The Gurbani is to be interpreted properly in collaboration of well-educated theologians and experts in various fields of Physical and Natural Sciences as mentioned in the text.
- Besides formulation of ethics for the Sikhs at large there is a dire need to formulate ethics for the so-called authorities on Sikhism.

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at large like to follow the concepts that have already been accepted by the Sikhs in the past although not founded on or recommended in any Bani of any Sikh Guru, incorporated in AGGS. And the majority of the Sikhs will put all their forces to defend such concepts imprinted in their brains.

He has picked up the relevant question of Sikhism that are in the minds of rational Sikhs who are feeling concerned about the future of the religion. He has covered most of the burning issues with proper focus and methodology, dealt in proper historical, spiritual perspectives with the help of primary sources. This book will be very useful for the researchers as well as for the academicians dealing in Gurbani and Sikhism.