

INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE FOR MAKING A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE TO ESTABLISH PEACE – SIKH PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

My submission to the audience is to accept the premise that according to the philosophy of Guru Nanak there is, was, and will always be one God for everyone (JAP, Guru Nanak in the AGGS at page 1) and we are human beings first before we are members of any faith community.

According to the philosophy of Guru Nanak we, human beings, are a part of his creation with similarities and differences physically, mentally and spiritually. We are shaped by our families, communities, schools, work places, media, and places of worship. From our childhood, we are taught to differentiate and discriminate. We consider it as a sign of growth and development. We develop our likings and dislikings in our daily dealings. The topic before us is “*How can we make this type of world more peaceful*”.

We are categorized by faiths we practice, country of origin, color of our skin, our gender and age, our caste, economic status, etc. To minimize these differences, we look for guidance from our personal experiences, our educational backgrounds, and our religious and family values. In this presentation, we will concentrate on solutions as presented in the Sikh scriptures, the holy Guru Granth Sahib:

1. We need to enhance our spirituality which will impart inner peace and thus give us strength and confidence. The Sikh Gurus emphasize *simran* to achieve inner peace.
2. Self-less service is equally important to reduce ill effects of differences. People in general are appre-

ciative when you serve them selflessly. It creates trust and good will between service giver and receiver. Serving others is serving God. *Langar* (community meal) is a great institution which demonstrates service to the homeless, poor, needy, or any other hungry individual. Everyone partakes the same food - sitting at the same level irrespective of caste, gender, social status, religion or wealth - and experiences a sense of equality.

3. Be a good human being and control your lust, anger, greed, attachment, and ego. This is a panacea for the foundation of a peaceful world. To complete this structure, we have to support with compassion, mercy, contentment, and calmness.
4. Let us develop a code of good behavior and adopt qualities such as kindness, respectful conversation in an agreeable manner, modesty, humility, contentment.
5. Let us resolve to help the homeless, hungry, poor and destitute, the sick, and stressed individuals. Help prevent domestic violence, raise funds for new schools in poor neighborhoods, hold meetings and conferences, befriend a lonely person and an elderly individual.

Finally, as we all believers in One God, let us beg for His grace and pray for peace, unity, and justice for all. May I request that each one of us think of a project or activity or a deed that you can initiate to make a difference in the world?