

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

UNIQUENESS OF GURU NANAK'S PHILOSOPHY

Honourable Prof and Dr Ajaib Singh Brar, Vice Chancellor, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, Dr Jaspal Singh, Vice Chancellor, Punjabi University, Patiala, Speakers, Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I talk about ‘Uniqueness of Guru Nanak’s Philosophy’ it is important to understand these two terms – ‘Philosophy’ and ‘Uniqueness’.

The term, ‘Philosophy’, has been defined in different ways from time to time. I think that Encarta Dictionary’s definition of ‘Philosophy’ as, *the branch of knowledge or academic study devoted to the systematic examination of basic concepts such as truth, existence, reality, causality, and freedom*. This is most suitable definition of ‘Philosophy’ of Guru Nanak’s ‘thought’ since it was promulgated after systematic examination of the prevailing religious concepts such as truth, existence, reality, causality, and freedom.

According to the Encarta Dictionary The term ‘Thought’ used here means: *the intellectual, scientific, and philosophical ideas associated with a particular place, time, or group*.

The term, ‘Uniqueness’, means *the quality of being one of a kind; different from others in a way that makes somebody or something special and worthy of note*.

The evidence of ‘Uniqueness’ of Guru Nanak’s philosophy becomes apparent from the following verse of Guru Arjan when he exclaimed on the examination of the compositions of Guru Nanak received either from his father, Guru Ramdas, or from other sources:

ਪੀਊ ਦਾਦੇ ਕਾ ਖੋਲਿ ਡਿਠਾ ਖਜਾਨਾ ॥

ਤਾ ਮੇਰੈ ਮਨਿ ਭਇਆ ਨਿਧਾਨਾ ॥੧॥ ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 5, ਪ-186 ॥1॥

When I opened it up and examined the inherited property then my mind became enlightened.1.

AGGS, M 5, p 186 [1].

ਪੀਊ ਦਾਦੇ ਕਾ ਖਜਾਨਾ (*Pioo daday ka khajana*) has been literally understood by some scholars as the treasure of the father, Guru Ramdas, and grandfather, Guru Amardas, of Guru Arjan (*Faridkot Wala Teeka*). By accepting this concept we are excluding the Bani of Guru Nanak and that of Guru Angad from this treasure. In fact the ਪੀਊ ਦਾਦੇ ਕਾ ਖਜਾਨਾ (*Pioo daday ka khajana*) is common Punjabi proverb for ‘Inherited Property’. In this case it is the property of the founder of Sikhi – Guru Nanak.



Guru Arjan when understood and practised this ‘Inherited Property’ then he declared that he was liberated from fetters of ignorance and superstitions:

ਫੂਟੇ¹ ਆਂਡਾ² ਭਰਮ³ ਕਾ ਮਨਹਿ⁴ ਭਇਓ ਪਰਗਾਸੁ⁵ ॥

ਕਾਟੀ ਬੇਰੀ⁶ ਪਗਹ ਤੇ ਗੁਰਿ⁷ ਕੀਨੀ ਬੰਦਿ ਖਲਾਸੁ⁸ ॥੧॥ ...

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 5, ਪ-1002.

The egg² of superstitions³ has burst¹ and my mind⁴ has been enlightened⁵

Since the Guru⁷ has liberated⁸ me by shattering the fetters⁶ of ignorance.

AGGS, M 5, p 1002.

The word ਗੁਰਿ ਕੀਨੀ (*Gur Kini*) means Guru did.

But who is that Guru who did this? It is evident from the last phrase of this Verse that the Guru here means Nanak:

ਸਚੁ ਪੂਜੀ ਸਚੁ ਵਖਰੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਘਰਿ ਪਾਇਆ ॥੪॥੫॥੧੪॥

The truth, as the treasure and the merchandize (philosophy), was found from the ‘House of Nanak’.

AGGS, M 5, p 1002.

‘House of Nanak’ means the ‘School of Nanakian Philosophy’. (Philosophy of Guru Nanak is termed as ‘Nanakian Philosophy’) [5, p – 43-54].

Guru Arjan further confirmed that Nanak is the Guru and his Bani (the Word) is a lamp of wisdom (enlightener) for the whole humanity:

ਬਲਿਓ ਚਰਾਗੁ¹ ਅੰਧਾਰ² ਮਹਿ ਸਭ ਕਲਿ³ ਉਧਰੀ⁴ ਇਕ ਨਾਮ⁵

ਧਰਮ⁶ ॥ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ⁷ ਸਗਲ⁸ ਹਰਿ ਭਵਨ⁹ ਮਹਿ ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰੁ

ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ¹⁰ ॥ ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ 5, ਪ-1387.

Nanak person, the Guru, and an image of Infinite God¹⁰, has appeared⁷ in the whole⁸ world⁹ as a light¹ to dispel² darkness (ignorance)² for the whole world³ under one religion of righteousness⁶ of God⁵. AGGS, M 5, p 1387.

ਮ⁵ ਧਰਮ⁶ = ਧਰਮ⁶ is usually interpreted as ‘Religion’ but it also means ‘duty’ / ‘righteousness’. According to Guru Nanak ਨਾਮ is used for an ‘Eternal Entity’ (commonly understood as God in English) for which there is no ਨਾਮ (name). Therefore, here ਇਕ ਨਾਮ⁵ ਧਰਮ⁶ has been interpreted as ‘the religion of righteousness of God’. ਗੁਰੂ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ¹⁰ has been used metaphorically for ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕ (Nanak as a person). The following verse of Guru Arjan explains that he is asking Guru Nanak to impart his wisdom/knowledge :

ਨਾਨਕੁ* ਸਿਖ ਦੇਇ ਮਨ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਸਾਧਸੰਗਿ ਭ੍ਰਮੁ ਜਾਲੇ ॥੧॥
 ਨਾਨਕੁ ਸਿਖ ਦੇਇ ਮਨ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਬਿਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਝੂਠ ਪਸਾਰੇ ॥੨॥
 ਨਾਨਕੁ ਸਿਖ ਦੇਇ ਮਨ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਹਰਿ ਲਦੇ ਖੋਪ ਸਵਲੀ ॥੩॥
 ਨਾਨਕੁ ਸਿਖ ਦੇਇ ਮਨ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਕਰਿ ਸੰਤਾ ਸੰਗਿ ਨਿਵਾਸੇ ॥੪॥
 ਨਾਨਕੁ** ਸਿਖ ਸੰਤ ਸਮਝਾਈ ਹਰਿ ਭਗਤਿ ਮਨੁ ਲੀਨਾ ॥੫॥
 ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ 5, ਪ-79.

The part, “ਨਾਨਕੁ ਸਿਖ ਦੇਇ ਮਨ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ”, is common in all the first four phrases.

Prof Sahib Singh [16] interpreted, ਨਾਨਕੁ ਸਿਖ ਦੇਇ, as ਨਾਨਕ (ਤੈਨੂੰ) ਸਿਖਿਆ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ (Nanak imparts his teachings).

Giani Harbans Singh [12] also interpreted, ਨਾਨਕੁ ਸਿਖ ਦੇਇ, as ਨਾਨਕ (ਤੈਨੂੰ) ਸਿਖਿਆ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ (Nanak imparts his teachings).

The above part is followed by “ਮਨ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ” means “my dear mind”.

Therefore, the logical interpretation of above phrases is as follows:

Guru Arjan says:

(Listen) Oh my dear mind! Guru Nanak imparts his teachings that:*

1. *The company of noble people will eliminate superstitions/doubts.*
2. *Except God, all others are falsehood (perishable expansion).*
3. *Gather only the beneficial/profitable business of understanding God.*
4. *Live in the company of noble people.*

Now Guru Arjan says:

*The teachings of Sant (Guru Nanak) makes us understand how to devote ourselves towards the love for God**.*

AGGS, M 5, p 79.

*In the first four phrases ‘Nanak’ (ਨਾਨਕੁ) is with *onkar* to *kaka* then it represent ‘Nanak’ as ‘Nanak’ but not as a pen-name. In the 5th phrase ‘Nanak’ (ਨਾਨਕ) is without *onkar* to *kaka*, therefore, here ‘Nanak’ is pen-name for

Guru Arjan. But at some places ‘Nanak’ without ‘*onkar* to *kaka*’ is still ‘Nanak’ but not a pen-name.

**In Nanakian Philosophy ‘Love for God’ is ‘Love for humanity’.

Rai Balwand and Satta Doom (Drummer)

Besides Guru Arjan, Rai Balwand and Satta Doom (Drummer), the Kirtanias (hymn singers) in the Durbar of Guru Arjan, were also aware of the ‘uniqueness’ of the philosophy of Guru Nanak. They declared that Guru Nanak has promulgated ‘unique’ philosophy and challenged many wrong religious beliefs, which has been symbolized as ‘*Changing the course of Ganges contrary to its regular flow*’ in the following verse in the AGGS:

ਹੋਰਿਓ¹ ਗੰਗ² ਵਹਾਈਐ³ ਦੁਨਿਆਈ ਆਖੈ ਕਿ ਕਿਓਨੁ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਈਸਰਿ⁴ ਜਗਨਾਥਿ⁴ ਉਚਹਦੀ⁵ ਵੈਣ ਵਿਰਿਕਿਓਨੁ⁶ ॥
 ਅਗਗਸ, ਰਾਇ ਬਲਵੰਡਿ, ਸਤੈ ਡੂਮਿ, ਪ - 967.

The people of the world say that Nanak, the Controller⁴ (Nath) of the world⁴ has promulgated a philosophy⁶ of highest order⁵ that is like changing¹ the course³ of Ganges²..*

AGGS, Rai Balwand and Satta Doom, p 967.

* ਹੋਰਿਓ¹ ਗੰਗ² ਵਹਾਈਐ³ = ‘Changed the course of Ganges’* is an allegoric expression for entirely changing the prevailing philosophy into a new philosophy of highest order. They also addressed Guru Nanak metaphorically as ਜਗਨਾਥਿ⁴ (the Controller of World) in his praise.

Now somebody may pose a question that why am I putting emphasis on the Bani of Guru Nanak?

It is due to the fact that the next four Gurus, who succeeded to the ‘**House of Nanak**’, declared **Nanak** is **The Guru**, who has formulated “**Unique Philosophy**”.

NANAK AS THE GURU

Chahal [3, 4] and Baldev Singh [11] in their research articles have traced out that Nanak was declared as Guru first by Guru Angad and then by Guru Amardas, and Guru Ramdas in their Bani. Finally, Guru Arjan confirmed this fact in his Bani that **Nanak is the Guru**:

i) Guru Angad

ਦੀਖਿਆ ਆਖਿ ਬੁਝਾਇਆ ਸਿਫਤੀ ਸਚਿ ਸਮੇਉ¹ ॥

ਤਿਨ ਕਉ ਕਿਆ ਉਪਦੈਸੀਐ² ਜਿਨ ਗੁਰੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਉ³ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ 2, ਪ-150.

They, to whom the instructions (of Nanak) has taught and put on the right path, remain imbued¹ to praise and to know God.

What instructions² can be imparted to them, who have Guru Nanak as their Guru³? AGGS, M 2, p 150.

ii) Guru Amardas:

ਨਾਨਕ ਜਿਨ੍ਹ ਕਉ ਸਤਿ ਗੁਰੁ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਤਿਨੁ ਕਾ ਲੇਖਾ ਨਿਬੜਿਆ ॥
ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ 3, ਪ-435.

Those to whom Nanak, the True Guru, has imparted his philosophy their deeds have been accounted for.
AGGS, M 3, p 435.

iii) Guru Ramdas

ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰੂ¹ ਗੁਰੂ² ਹੈ ਪੂਰਾ³ ਮਿਲਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ⁴ ਨਾਮ⁵ ਧਿਆਇਆ⁶ ॥
ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ 4, ਪ-882.

Nanak is the Guru¹ of Gurus², is the Complete³ and True Guru⁴ by meeting him one can realize/comprehend⁶ God⁵.*
AGGS, M 4, p 882.

* ਗੁਰੂ¹ ਗੁਰੂ² 'Guru Guru' means 'Guru of the Gurus' according to Bhai Kahn Singh [13].

iv) Guru Arjan

Finally, Guru Arjan confirmed that Nanak is the "GURU: ਗੁਰੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਜਿਨ ਸੁਣਿਆ¹ ਪੇਖਿਆ² ਸੇ ਫਿਰਿ ਗਰਭਾਸਿ³ ਨ ਪਰਿਆ⁴ ਰੇ ॥ ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ 5, ਪ-612.

Those, who have heard¹ and evaluated² the philosophy of Guru Nanak, do not fall into the abyss of ignorance³.
AGGS, M 5, p 612.

The above verses clearly indicate that Nanak has realized a 'Unique' philosophy and he is accepted as 'The Guru' by the other Sikh Gurus, who succeeded to the 'House of Nanak'.

Guru Nanak (1469-1539 CE) is the founder of *Sikhi* (philosophy of Guru Nanak). It is the uniqueness of his philosophy that he has been accepted as the Guru by next four Gurus to the 'House of Nanak' in their Bani as discussed earlier. It is the 'Uniqueness' of his philosophy, which makes him the 'Unique Philosopher' of the Period of Renaissance (14th – 16th centuries CE) when the scientists were challenging the wrong religious concepts in Europe and he was the first Guru, Prophet, Philosopher and Scientist, who was challenging the wrong religious concepts in South East Asia and Middle East during the same time of Period of Renaissance.

The irony is that majority of the Sikh theologians have ignored the above fact that Nanak was accepted as the Guru by the Sikh Gurus, who succeeded to the 'House of Nanak'. The other fact ignored is that these Gurus preached and strengthened the philosophy of Guru Nanak in their Bani according to Prof Taran Singh [17], the then Professor and Head of Department of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Studies at Punjabi University, Patiala. Although Prof Taran Singh had not gone further to explain his above observations but Prof Chahal [5] carried on his research further and had quoted many examples in his book, *Nanakian Philosophy: Basic for Humanity*, where the

succeeding Gurus have either explained or strengthened Guru Nanak's philosophy in their Bani, which is incorporated in the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) [1].

It is unfortunate that many Sikh theologians are following the traditional understanding of Gurbani preached during 18th and 19th centuries which continued to be so during the 20th and 21st century. They have not only ignored to study Gurbani critically but have been discouraging the others not to do so. I recall the quotes of a scientist and of a philosopher on this issue as follows:

"He who joyfully marches in rank and file has already earned my contempt. He has been given a large brain by mistake, since for him the spinal cord would suffice."

Albert Einstein

"Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect."

Mark Twain

<http://www.quotationcollection.com/tag/uniqueness/quotes>

Einstein is advising us that big brain given to us is to be used to find the right path rather than joyfully march in rank and file of tradition while Twain is advising us that if one is on the side of majority then it is time to stop for a while and think seriously if the majority is on the right track. Most of the wrong concepts are being defended in Sikhi because the majority of the Sikh scholars and writers accept them.

REASONS FOR NOT RECOGNIZING 'UNIQUENESS'

Whenever I ask to Sikh theologians, scholars, researchers and historians about the 'uniqueness' of the philosophy of Guru Nanak many of them had no answer since the 'uniqueness' has been cocooned with the silken thread of ancient mythology, Vedic and Vedantic philosophies which makes it very difficult for many theologians, scholars and researchers to find 'uniqueness' of philosophy of Guru Nanak embodied in his Bani.

Philosophy of Guru Nanak remained unexplored in its real perspective right from the time of demise of Guru Gobind Singh in 1708 till to the beginning of 21st century. In fact it may be traced back as early as during the time of Guru Arjan (1563-1606 CE). In old Sikh literature (including *Janam Sakhis* – biographies), Guru Nanak has been described only as a mystic man of God with all spiritual powers to perform miracles of various types, but has never been represented as a philosopher or a scientist of the Period of Renaissance, who

promulgated unique and universally acceptable philosophy for the humanity. It is due to the fact that the main thrust of earlier theologians and writers remained busy to express the philosophy of Guru Nanak under the shadow of Vedanta and ancient mythology. For example:

Prof Puran Singh [15] wrote in the 1920s that:

“It is to be regretted that Sikh and Hindu scholars are interpreting Guru Nanak in the futile terms of the colour he used, the brush he took; are analyzing the skin and flesh of his words and dissecting texts to find the Guru’s meaning to be the same as of the Vedas and Upanishad! This indicates enslavement to the power of Brahmanical tradition. Dead words are used to interpret the fire of the Master’s soul! The results are always grotesque and clumsy translations which have no meaning at all.”

Dr Taran Singh [17], the then Head of Department of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala, has reported that the Sikh and non-Sikh writers of 18th to 19th centuries had accepted that Gurus’ philosophy is Vedic and is not different than that of Brahmanic or Hindu philosophy:

“ਵਿਆਖਿਆਕਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਯਤਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਤੌਰ ’ਤੇ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਗੋਚਰ ਕਰਨ ਨਾਲ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇਉਂ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕਹਿਣ ਨੂੰ ਅਠ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਕੰਮ ਕਰ ਚੁੱਕੀਆਂ ਹਨ, ਪਰ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੇਧਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਅੰਤਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਫਰਕ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰ-ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਜਾਂ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਫਿਲਾਸਫੀ ਦਾ ਨਿਰਣਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਚੇਤੰਨ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਯਤਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਯੋਜਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਿਹਾ। ਜਿਥੋਂ ਤੀਕ ਇਸ ਸਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਪਰਾਪਤੀ ਹੈ, ਉਸ ਦਾ ਨਿਰਣਾ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਭ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਗੁਰ-ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਵੈਦਿਕ ਹੀ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਫਿਲਾਸਫੀ ਆਮ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੀ ਜਾਂ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਫਿਲਾਸਫੀ ਤੋਂ ਭਿੰਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। [17 - in Foreword].

While commenting on the work of *Sampardaya Parnali* (School of *Sampardaya* – a sect of Nirmla Sikhs) on the exegesis of *Faridkot Wala Teeka* by Bhai Badan Singh, Taran Singh gives very important information about the main objective of this *Sampardaya* as follows [17, p- 21]:

ਵੇਦ ਤੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ: ਸਾਰੀ ਸੰਪ੍ਰਦਾਈ ਵਿਚ ਵੇਦ, ਓ - ਮੰਤ੍ਰ ਤੇ ਅਦਵੈਤ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਦੀ ਪਰਤਖ ਅਨੁਸਾਰਤਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਯਤਨ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮੂਲ ਮੰਤਰ ਤੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਵੇਦ ਵਿਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਨਾ ਸਿਧ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਏ।

“There appears a clear-cut similarity among Vedas, Om-Mantra and Doctrine of Oneness in the whole Sampardaya School (of annotation) and effort was not to place Gurbani against Vedas.”

The *Faridkot Wala Teeka* had become a prototype *Teeka* (interpretation/exegesis) of the AGGS since all the

scholars (Prof Sahib Singh, Manmohan Singh, Sant Singh Khalsa, Gopal Singh, Trilochan Singh Talib and many more) of 20th century followed strictly its exegesis in their translations/interpretations of the AGGS. The contemporary Sikh and non-Sikh theologians are also following the exegesis from *Faridkot Wala Teeka* in their translations/interpretations of the AGGS in various languages without making any critical study of Gurbani to get rid of the influence of Vedanta. Unfortunately there are no schools of Sikh theologians and researchers which are interpreting the AGGS in its real perspective.

Therefore, it has become difficult for some theologians and researchers of the modern world to find the ‘uniqueness’ of the philosophy of Guru Nanak from his Bani incorporated in the AGGS.

As I understand the main cause is whenever any scholar or researcher had tried to portray some truth which goes against the traditions s/he is either criticized by the majority or is excommunicated by the so-called authority on Sikhi without verifying the facts. In 1938 Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha [14] had observed the similar reason (about 72 years ago):

“It is very regretful that there are very few intelligent researchers, however, there are many enemies of them.”

He further said:

“The number of persons, who would declare the writers and speakers of truth as the atheists, is too large.”

In these days they are either called as pseudo-scholars or pseudo-scientists and sometimes as heretics (anti-Sikhi). Let us discuss a quote of Arthur Schopenhauer (1788 - 1860):

“All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident.”

The above statement is so right among the old stalwart Sikh theologians under the influence of Vedic and Vedantic philosophies that when the ‘truth’ about the ‘uniqueness’ of philosophy of Guru Nanak is put forward then some of them ridicule it while the others violently oppose it. I think that the third stage of ‘truth’ is long way to be recognized by Sikh theologians.

SOME EXAMPLES OF UNIQUENESS AND UNIVERSAL ACCEPTABILITY

Now I would like to discuss some examples of ‘Uniqueness and Universal Acceptability of Guru Nanak’s Philosophy’:

ਅਜੂਨੀ (Ajuni): *Ajuni* means that ‘Entity’ (commonly called ‘God’ in English) which is free from birth and death as mentioned in the ‘Commencing

Verse’ (commonly called ‘Mool Mantra’).

But it is well-established concept in the Gita that although God is free from birth and death cycle but God still can appear in the form of human again and again when the cruelty on humanity is on the increase [9]:

"yada yada hi dharmasya glanir bhavati bhārata
abhyutthanam adharmasya tadatmanam sṛjamy aham."
Verse 7

"Whenever there is decline in dharma, O Bharata, and a rise in adharma, I incarnate Myself."

And

"paritranaya sadhunam vinasaya ca duskrtam
dharma-samsthapanarthaya sambhavami yuge yuge."
Verse 8

For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of dharma, I am born in every age.

Contrary to this in Nanakian Philosophy God does not come into any human form since It neither takes birth nor dies:

ਜਨਮਿ¹ ਮਰਣਿ² ਨਹੀ ਧੰਧਾ³ ਪੈਰੁ⁴ ॥ ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ 1, ਪ-931.

(It is free from birth¹ and death² and is not involved in worldly affairs^{3,4}.

AGGS, M 1, p 931.

Then Guru Arjan explains the above uniqueness of God described by Guru Nanak as follows:

ਜਨਮ¹ ਮਰਣ² ਤੇ ਰਹਤ³ ਨਾਰਾਇਣ⁴ ॥ ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ 5, ਪ-1136.

The God¹ is free³ from birth¹ and death².

AGGS, M 5, p 1136.

In continuation of the above phrase Guru Arjan further strengthened the basic principle of uniqueness of Nanakian Philosophy, ‘God does not come into anthropomorphic form’, in very strong words as follows:

ਸੋ¹ ਮੁਖ² ਜਲਉ³ ਜਿਤ⁴ ਕਹਹਿ⁵ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ⁶ ਜੋਨੀ⁷ ॥੩॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ 5, ਪ-1136.

That¹ mouth² be burnt³, which⁴ says⁵ that God⁶ comes in anthropomorphic form⁷ (takes birth in human body). 3.

AGGS, M 5, p 1136.

Spinoza (1632-1677 CE), a philosopher, also rejected the concept of God in anthropomorphic form after about 200 years of Guru Nanak [18]. And Einstein (1879-1955), a scientist, has also realized this attribute described by Guru Nanak that the **God does not take anthropomorphic forms (human form)** after about 400 years of Guru Nanak [6].

In a Nationwide Survey conducted by Harris Interactive it has been reported that 48% of the population of USA think of God as a spirit or power that can take on human form

(anthropomorphic) **while 27% think God as a spirit or power that does not take on human form** and 10% do not believe in God (Shannon Reilly and Bob Laird, USA Today, October 24, 2003).

Had this survey conducted in India the percentage of people believing in God and taking on the human form (anthropomorphic form) would have been over 90% since they are still suffering under the heavy burden of ancient philosophy.

What could be the reason that Guru Nanak’s philosophy promulgated more than 541 years ago in India had no effect on the majority of the Indian population, however, in USA, Einstein - a scientist, a Nobel Laureate, and Spinoza, a Dutch philosopher, and 27% of USA people accept this attribute, **ਅਜੂਨੀ (Ajuni) (God does not take anthropomorphic form)**, given to God by Guru Nanak about 541 years ago.

The simple answer is that:

The custodians of Sikhi failed to disseminate the philosophy of Guru Nanak scientifically and logically to the humanity. On the other hand some of the Americans (including other Westerns) are open-minded who critically examine the matter before accepting. This is one of the basics of Nanakian Philosophy, which is accepted widely in the world:

ਪਹਿਲਾ ਵਸਤੁ ਸਿਵਾਣਿ ਕੈ ਤਾ ਕੀਚੈ ਵਾਪਾਰੁ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪ-1410.

One must evaluate the things / philosophies, if convinced, then adopt / follow it. AGGS, M 1, p 1410.

Although this principle is widely used by rationalistic people while others fall into the traps of saints, Sadhu, Pandits, faith-healers, fortune-tellers, palm-readers, and other such

ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ (Nirvaer): Many people believe that God could be revengeful and causes floods, tsunamis, earthquakes, deadly diseases, famines, etc to punish the mankind. But according to Guru Nanak God cannot be revengeful to punish the humanity since God is without any enmity with anyone. This attribute, **ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ (Nirvaer)**, of God was also mentioned in the ‘Commencing Verse’ and it is explained as follows by Guru Nanak:

ਜੁਗਿ¹ ਜੁਗਿ¹ ਥਾਪਿ² ਸਦਾ³ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ⁴ ॥ ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ 1, ਪ-931.

The One, existing² since the Ages¹, is always³ without enmity⁴. AGGS, M 1, p 931.

Here again Einstein realized this attribute of God described by Guru Nanak, after 400 years of Guru Nanak when he (Einstein) remarked: **"Subtle is the Lord but malicious He is not."** [6, 10].

‘Kudrat’ (Nature) is God

‘Kudrat’ (Nature) has been described by Guru Nanak in many ways in his Bani. In the following phrase ‘Kudrat’ (Nature) has been accepted as God by him:

ਕਹਣਾ ਹੈ ਕਿਛੁ¹ ਕਹਣੁ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥

ਤਉ² ਕੁਦਰਤਿ³ ਕੀਮਤਿ⁴ ਨਹੀ ਪਾਇ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

I want to say something¹ but cannot say.

Since You² (God) are the Nature³, therefore, I cannot appraise⁴ (Comprehend) You.

AGGS, M 1, p 151.

It is very hard for some theologians to accept God as Nature. But the phrase clearly mentions that ‘ਤਉ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ’ (You are Nature).

Guru Nanak in Raga *Maru* further indicates that God is Nature as follows:

ਆਪਿ ਅਲੇਖੁ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਹੈ ਦੇਖਾ ॥...ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਕਰਨੈਹਾਰ ਅਪਾਰਾ ॥

Although the God cannot be seen, is visible as Kudrat (Nature)...

The Kudrat (God) Itself is the Creator (God) with infinite potential (capacity for immense development).

AGGS, M 1, p 1042.

God as Nature has not been studied properly by Sikh theologians and researchers. The seventeenth century philosopher, Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) after about 200 years of Guru Nanak, said [18]: **God is Nature**. To Spinoza, Nature is the true expression of God. And each of us is part of it. Unfortunately it was not understood by the clergy and he was excommunicated from the Jewish community in Amsterdam and he was also condemned by Christians for being atheist.

According to Green the ‘**Nature is everything**’ [7]. In Nature there is mass, energy, atoms, molecules, life, thought, people, societies, galaxies and perhaps even multiple universes as speculated.

When a question was posed to Albert Einstein, do you believe in God? His answer was:

I believe in God of Spinoza.

Had Einstein (1879-1955), who happened after about 400 years of Guru Nanak, read Nanakian Philosophy about Nature as God he would have said:

Yes! I do believe in God of Guru Nanak.

Bradley [2] summarized his observations about the views of scientists about God as follows:

“Einstein’s “God” is not at all like the God that most people think of when they hear the word. Neither is the “God” of a famous cosmologist and mathematician, Stephen Hawking, whose talk of “*The Mind of God*” has

given comfort to many religious believers. Hawking also is a pantheist when asked:

“Yes, If by God is meant the embodiment of the ‘laws of the universe’.”

Is this not the same principle declared by Guru Nanak about 5 centuries ago?

ਹੁਕਮੈ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਹੁਕਮ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥

Every action and reaction is under the Laws of Universe, nothing is outside of these laws.

I think this is enough to demonstrate some ‘**uniqueness**’ in the philosophy of Guru Nanak as an incentive for the researchers and theologians. Now it is time for deliberation by the scholars to explore further ‘**Uniqueness of Guru Nanak’s Philosophy**’.

I wish them a great success in their endeavour.

Thank you very much.

Prof Devinder Singh Chahal, PhD
President

Institute for Understanding Sikhism

4418 Martin-Plouffe, Laval, Quebec, Canada H7W 5L9

Email: Sikhism@iuscanada.com

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have compiled the papers without making any changes keeping in view the originality of the author and differences in approach due to different backgrounds may be sorted out during discussion and before publication of these proceedings.

The faculty members of the department feel honored to welcome the distinguished dignitaries on the dais, and all those esteemed scholars associated with the *Institute for Understanding Sikhism*, Canada who have come from Canada, U.K., U.S.A., and Malaysia to participate in the conference. We also welcome the eminent scholars from different Universities and Institutions of India who have come from Mumbai, Varanasi, Pune, Madurai, New Delhi, Mohali, Malout, Patiala, Beas and from different colleges of Punjab to participate in the conference. We also welcome the Deans of various faculties, Heads and faculty members of various departments, administrative officers, staff, students of Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. We feel confident that the deliberations and discussions here will provide innovative direction to the researchers for understanding the teachings of Guru Nanak and their relevance in the modern context. Once again we welcome you all and seek your blessings for the success of this conference.

(Continued from page 12)

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