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:

When I opened it up and examined the inherited property then my mind became enlightened.1
AGGS, M 5, p 186 [1].

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

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:
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’ (ਨਾਨਕ) 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:

Now Guru Arjan says:

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:

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**

The teachings of Sant (Guru Nanak) makes us understand how to devote ourselves towards the love for God**. AGGS, M 5, p 79.

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

What instructions can be imparted to them, who have Guru Nanak as their Guru?

AGGS, M 2, p 150.

ii) Guru Amardas:

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

Nanak is the Guru of Gurus, is the Complete and True Guru by meeting him one can realize/comprehend God.

AGGS, M 4, p 882.

iv) Guru Arjan

Finally, Guru Arjan confirmed that Nanak is the GURU: Guru Nanak, the True Guru by meeting him one can realize/comprehend God.

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 Sikh (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:

“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 Sikh 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 and Vedantic philosophy, 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
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]:

The above statement is so right among the old stalwart Sikh theologians under the influence of Vedantic philosophy 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’:

अजूनी (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 bharata abhyutthanam adharmasya tadatmanam srjamy 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:

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

The God is free from birth and death and is not involved in worldly affairs.

AGGS, M 1, p 931.

(II) is free from birth and death and is not involved in worldly affairs.

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:

That mouth be burnt, which says that God comes in anthropomorphic form (takes birth in human body).

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. अजूनी (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:

एक दास रहें मनुष्य मिश्रिति वै न चीति रुपाणि।

AGGS, M: 1, p 1-1410.

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 saints, Sadhu, Pandits, faith-healers, fortune-tellers, palm-readers, and other such ....

निर्वाभ (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, निर्वाेर (Nirvaer), of God was also mentioned in the ‘Commencing Verse’ and it is explained as follows by Guru Nanak:

The One, existing since the Ages, is always without enmity.

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: अधि शक्ति को ब्रह्म अन्तः \[1\]

I want to say something but cannot say. Since You (God) are the Nature, therefore, I cannot appraise (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 ‘उज्ज्वल कृत्वि (You are Nature).

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

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?

hukmY AMdir sBu ko bwhir hukm n koie

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.

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