

CONTRASTING THE UNIQUENESS OF SIKHISM WITH CHRISTIANITY

Dr Baldev Singh, PhD
316 R Glad Way, Collegeville, PA 19426, USA
email: baldev6@aol.com

ABSTRACT

Sikhism has been distorted in literature largely because of the influence of Vedantic philosophy to represent it as part of Hinduism. Now some Christian theologians are using this flawed literature to compare Christianity with Sikhism. According to the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) [1], Guru Nanak has rejected all the essentials of Hinduism: incarnation of God, caste system, transmigration, karma, hell, heaven, gods, goddesses, and idol worship. Guru Nanak has also rejected the method or approach for attaining salvation preached by the Semitic and the Indian religions. Guru Nanak discusses the subject of evolution of life about five hundred years ago, which is different than that of Christianity but very similar to that of Charles Darwin discovered about 350 years after Guru Nanak.

INTRODUCTION

In September 2004 Colonel GB Singh [4], the author of *Gandhi: Behind the Mask of Divinity* came across a Web site, “Hope for Sikhs” operated by Reverend Tony Zekveld, Canada-based missionary. Expectedly his motives were to witness the Sikhs for the purposes of converting them to Christianity. GB Singh persuaded the Reverend to have an open debate on the Bible - God, soul, and heaven etc. on the pages of *Sikh Spectrum*, an online publication. At that time GB Singh asked me to add my comments on these topics from the perspective of Nanakian philosophy [2]. This particular article is a rejoinder to the claims of Reverend Tony Zekveld [5], which is based on Nanakian philosophy embodied in the Gurbani incorporated in the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) [1].

DISCUSSION

Reverend’s misunderstanding, misinterpretation and ignorance has been discussed as follows:

The Reverend:

1. *“The Granth Sahib states the simple fact that God created the universe. How and why He created no one knows. Furthermore, by the immanence of God, the Sikh means that the universe is “an emanation of God, who willed its existence,” like a spider, which emits its own web from itself. Sikhs, therefore, do not have any difficulty with the scientific theories of evolution.”*

Response:

I find this statement amusing. What is Reverend trying to say? Is he trying to scare ignorant and simple-minded people just because the Sikhs believe in the scientific

validity of evolution? While the Biblical God is opposed to the idea of evolution of life, the Nanakian philosophy supports it. While the fundamentalist Christians oppose the teaching of evolution even in the twenty-first century, Guru Nanak discussed and imparted credence to the subject of evolution of life about five hundred years ago, roughly 350 years before Charles Darwin, and come to think of it, finally, science is catching up with the Nanakian philosophy. Moreover, the Creator according to Guru Nanak is Itself evolving as in the very act of creation of the cosmos when the Transcendent became Immanent—the Invisible became Visible—the Un-manifest became Manifest.

Guru Nanak has expressed his views on the vastness of the cosmos, the time of its creation and how it came into being. When was the cosmos created?

ਕਵਣੁ ਸੁ ਵੇਲਾ ਵਖਤੁ ਕਵਣੁ ਕਵਣੁ ਬਿਤਿ ਕਵਣੁ ਵਾਰੁ॥
ਕਵਣਿ ਸਿ ਰੁਤੀ ਮਾਹੁ ਕਵਣੁ ਜਿਤੁ ਹੋਆ ਆਕਾਰੁ॥
ਵੇਲ ਨ ਪਾਈਆ ਪੰਡਤੀ ਜਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਲੇਖੁ ਪੁਰਾਣੁ॥
ਵਖਤੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਓ ਕਾਦੀਆ ਜਿ ਲਿਖਨਿ ਲੇਖੁ ਕੁਰਾਣੁ॥
ਬਿਤਿ ਵਾਰੁ ਨਾ ਜੋਗੀ ਜਾਣੈ ਰੁਤਿ ਮਾਹੁ ਨਾ ਕੋਈ॥
ਜਾ ਕਰਤਾ ਸਿਰਠੀ ਕਉ ਸਾਜੇ ਆਪੇ ਜਾਣੈ ਸੋਈ॥...

What was the moment or time or date or day or season or month when the cosmos was created? Had the authors of Hindu scriptures or Quran known it, they would have mentioned it. Neither did the yogi know the date or day or month or season. It is only the Creator, Who knows when the cosmos was created.

AGGS, Jap 21, p 4.

How vast is the cosmos?

ਪਾਤਾਲਾ ਪਾਤਾਲ ਲਖ ਆਗਾਸਾ ਆਗਾਸ ॥
 ਓੜਕ ਓੜਕ ਭਾਲਿ ਬਕੇ ਵੇਦ ਕਹਿਨਿ ਇਕ ਵਾਤ ॥
 ਸਹਸ ਅਠਾਰਹ ਕਹਿਨਿ ਕਤੋਬਾ ਅਸੁਲੁ ਇਕੁ ਧਾਤੁ॥
 ਲੇਖਾ ਹੋਇ ਤ ਲਿਖੀਐ ਲੇਖੋ ਹੋਇ ਵਿਣਾਸੁ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕਕ ਵਡਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਆਪੇ ਜਾਣੈ ਆਪੁ ॥

After an immense and tiring search the authors of Vedas concluded that there are hundreds of thousands nether worlds under nether worlds and skies above skies. The Semitic texts say there are eighteen thousand worlds, but their Creator is One. However, the cosmos is so vast that it is beyond the scope of counting / measurement (i.e. beyond human comprehension)—one would run out of numbers if one were to undertake the counting. Nanak salutes the Great One, as It alone knows the vastness of Its creation.

AGGS, Jap 22, p 3.

How did the cosmos come into being?

Guru Nanak postulates that there was darkness for immeasurable length of time and the Creator with inherent *Hukam* (Cosmic Law or Universal Law) was in transcendent mode filling the void like fog fills space. And then at some moment according to the Cosmic Law, the cosmos was brought into being with infusion of Cosmic-consciousness (also referred to as Spirit, Light and God-consciousness).

ਅਰਬਦ ਨਰਬਦ ਧੁੰਧੂਕਾਰਾ॥ ਧਰਣਿ ਨ ਗਗਨਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਅਪਾਰਾ॥
 ਨਾ ਦਿਨੁ ਰੈਨਿ ਨ ਚੰਦੁ ਨ ਸੂਰਜੁ ਸੁੰਨ ਸਮਾਧਿ ਲਗਾਇਦਾ ॥ ...
 ਜਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਣਾ ਤਾ ਜਗਤੁ ਉਪਾਇਆ ॥ ਬਾਝੁ ਕਲਾ ਆਡਾਣੁ
 ਰਹਾਇਅਏ ॥

For immeasurable length of time there was darkness. Neither there was Earth or sky nor day or night nor moon or sun, except the Creator and Its Hukam. The Creator was in a transcendent mode filling the void like fog fills space. The cosmos was brought into being according to the Hukam without any visible support upholding the vast expanse.

AGGS, M 1, p 1035.

The cosmos sprang from a single command of the *Hukam*.

ਕੀਤਾ ਪਸਾਉ ਏਕੋ ਕਵਾਉ ॥ ਤਿਸ ਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਲਖ ਦਰੀਆਉ ॥

The cosmos sprang from a single act of Hukam generating innumerable currents of creation.

M 1, Jap 16, p 3.

In total content the Creator remains the same (constant), neither It increases nor decreases, which is consistent with what modern physics says about the relationship

between energy and matter expressed by Einstein's formula, $E=MC^2$ —the sum total of energy and mass remains constant.

ਵਡਾ ਨ ਹੋਵੈ ਘਾਟਿ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥

The Creator neither increases nor decreases in totality.

AGGS, M 1, p 9.

According to Guru Nanak, this event—the creation of the cosmos which is a mystery and a matter of wonder, is a support for the Creator as it is pleasing to It to express Itself in the creation.

ਆਪੀਨੈ ਆਪੁ ਸਾਜਿਓ ਆਪੀਨੈ ਰਚਿਓ ਨਾਉ ॥

ਦੁਯੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਸਾਜੀਐ ਕਰਿ ਆਸਣੁ ਡਿਠੋ ਚਾਉ ॥

First, the Creator created Itself and gave Itself an Identity (nau, ਨਾਉ)—cosmos. Second, It created nature and seated therein (transcendently), It takes delight watching it.

AGGS, M 1, p 463.

Evolution

ਸਾਚੇ ਤੇ ਪਵਨਾ ਭਇਆ ਪਵਨੈ ਤੇ ਜਲੁ ਹੋਇ ॥

ਜਲ ਤੇ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣੁ ਸਾਜਿਆ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਮੋਇ ॥

The True One created the air, air produced water and water created the world of life with God-consciousness (Cosmic-consciousness).

AGGS, M 1, p 19.

When it comes to the evolution of life, Guru Arjan couldn't have spoken more clearly than these words about years before Charles Darwin. *Homo sapiens* evolved through countless forms of life like other species - ants, worms, moths, fish, elephants, dears, snakes and domestic animals like horses and bullocks—starting from inanimate matter, the basic elements. Moreover, he goes on to say that basic elements were recycled as inanimate matter like rock and mountains before the creation of “building blocks” for evolution of a living cell.

ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਭਏ ਕੀਟ ਪਤੰਗਾ ॥ ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਗਜ ਮੀਨ ਕੁਰੰਗਾ ॥

ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਪੰਖੀ ਸਰਪ ਹੋਇਓ ॥ ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਹੈਵਰ ਬ੍ਰਿਖ ਜੋਇਓ ॥

ਮਿਲੁ ਜਗਦੀਸ ਮਿਲਨ ਕੀ ਬਰੀਆ ॥

ਚਿਰੰਕਾਲ ਇਹ ਦੇਹ ਸੰਜਰੀਆ ॥ ਰਹਾਓ ॥

ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਸੈਲ ਗਿਰਿ ਕਰਿਆ ॥ ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਗਰਭ ਹਿਰਿ ਖਰਿਆ ॥

ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਸਾਖ ਕਰਿ ਉਪਾਇਆ ॥ ਲਖ ਚਉਰਾਸੀਹ ਜੋਨਿ ਭ੍ਰਮਾਇਆ ॥

Many births (different evolutionary stages of life) created worm and insect. Many births created elephant, fish and deer. Many births created bird and snake. Many births created ox and horse, which are yoked. O human being, now is your time to meet the Lord of the universe, since it took a very long time for the human body to evolve through many evolutionary stages of life. Pause.

The matter constituting the human body was recycled many times as rocks and mountains. Many births resulted in abortion (defective mutations resulting in death of the species). Many births produced plant life. It took innumerable births to produce human body.
AGGS, M 5, p 176.

The Reverend:

2. *“Because Sikhism is a reform movement within Hinduism, this statement from the Mool Mantra must also be understood from the Hindu context. Hindus teach the doctrine of the avatars, the descent of the gods to earth in human form.”*

Response:

Guru Nanak rejects all the essentials of Hinduism: incarnation of God, transmigration, karma, caste system, hell, heaven, idol worship, miracle, demons and gods/goddesses. On the other hand, Reverend’s own faith, Christianity shares several common features with Hinduism like incarnation of God, hell, heaven, miracles, demons, Satan, angels, and other kinds of ghosts. Guru Nanak also rejects the concept of salvation preached by the Semitic and the Indian religions. Above all Guru Nanak rejected all earlier religious traditions when he declared: God is beyond the scope of Hindu and Semitic texts:

ਬੋਦ ਕਤੇਬੀ ਭੇਦੁ ਨਾ ਜਾਤਾ ॥

Neither the Vedas (four Hindu texts) nor the four Kateba [Semitic texts: the Torah, the Zabur (Psalms), the Injil (Gospel), and the Quran] know the mystery of the Creator of the cosmos.

AGGS, M 1, p. 1021.

The above philosophy is strengthened by the other Sikh Gurus as follows:

ਕਥਾ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਬੋਦੀ ਆਣੀ ਪਾਪੁ ਪੁੰਨੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ॥

ਦੇ ਦੇ ਲੇਣਾ ਲੈ ਲੈ ਦੇਣਾ ਨਰਕਿ ਸੁਰਗਿ ਅਵਤਾਰੁ ॥

ਉਤਮ ਮਧਿਮ ਜਾਤੀ ਜਿਨਸੀ ਭਰਿਮ ਭਵੈ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ॥

It is the teachings of Vedas, which has created the concepts of sin and virtue, hell and heaven, and karma and transmigration. One reaps the reward in the next life for the deeds performed in this life—goes to hell or heaven according to the deeds. The Vedas have also created the fallacy of inequality of caste and gender for the world.

AGGS, M 2, p 1243.

ਮਿਹਰਵਾਨ ਮਉਲਾ ਤੂਹੀ ਏਕੁ ॥ ਪੀਰ ਪੈਕਾਂਬਰ ਸੇਖ ॥

ਦਿਲੁ ਕਾ ਮਾਲਕੁ ਕਰੇ ਹਾਕੁ ॥ ਕੁਰਾਨ ਕਤੇਬ ਤੇ ਪਾਕੁ ॥

The Merciful One is the only Emancipator (Maula), not the holy men (pir and sheikh), or Prophet. The Master of every heart, Who delivers justice, is beyond the description of the Quran and other Semitic texts.

AGGS, M 5, p. 897.

However, description of God according to Guru Nanak has been discussed in details later under the 6th question of Reverend.

Reverend:

3. *Reverend has quoted a stanza from “Dasam Granth”, which he ascribes to Guru Gobind Singh whom he erroneously calls “Padshahi 20.” He is also in error when he claims that this stanza is from “Granth Sahib.”*

Response:

Dasam Granth is not the work of Guru Gobind Singh; rather it was the British East India Company, which hired the Mahants (priests/monks) of Takhat Patna to write *Dasam Granth*. *Dasam Granth* has been the favorite tool of Christian missionaries and Hindu writers for the misinterpretation and distortion of Sikhism. That is why Reverend Zekveld has attributed this passage from *Dasam Granth* to Guru Gobind Singh, though he is not sure what he is talking about. The British authorities and missionaries played a major role in the subversion of Nanakian philosophy. After the annexation of Punjab Kingdom, the British authorities kidnapped Maharaja Dalip Singh, merely ten years old boy from his mother, placed him in the custody of missionaries, and then converted him to Christianity. The British took control of Gurdwaras (Sikh places of worship) and made Hindu priests and caretakers their in-charge whereas not a single Hindu temple or a mosque was touched in the entire British Indian Empire.

There is no evidence that *Dasam Granth* was found in Punjab or Delhi in the eighteenth century. There is also no evidence that in the eighteenth century Aad Guru Granth Sahib was not given exclusive preference over the bani (composition) of Guru Gobind Singh. Prior to John Malcolm’s mention of *Dasam Granth* in his *Sketch of the Sikhs* published in 1810, there is no reference to it either in Sikh or non-Sikh sources (Muslim and European). However, by 1890 there were 32 *Dasam Granths* circulating in the Amritsar area. The presently published *Dasam Granth* (1902) was created by the Sodhak Committee made-up of British cronies (1895-1897) to bring it into closer conformity with the “*Granth*” floated by the British in the late eighteenth century prepared by Nirmalas / Mahants (Nawal Singh, Dayal Singh and Sukha Singh) at Takhat Patna [3]. The “*Patna Granth*” was implanted in the East India Company Library by Colebrook and Charles Wilkins and used by John Malcolm to write his *Sketch of the Sikhs* in 1810 [3]. Devanagari version of this “*Granth*” was written in February 1847 after the Sikhs lost the first Anglo-Sikh War (Second treaty with Lahore, December 16, 1846 at Bhairawal when the British became virtual masters of Punjab). Treacherous Sardar Tej Singh (a Brahman) was

the chief of the regency council when this Devanagari Dasam Granth was created. In recognition of his services, the title of Raja was conferred on him on August 7, 1847 [3].

Takhat Patna came under the control of East India Company near the end of eighteenth century. The revenue records of Patna treasury show that Nirmalas / Mahants of Takhat Patna were provided with pension and opium from 1814 onwards by the East India Company [3].

Why did the Christian missionaries convert Maharaja Dalip Singh to Christianity? How much of the brainwashing tactic was applied? Were these missionaries trying to duplicate the lessons learnt from their past successes of first going after converting the King and then expecting the rest of the masses to follow suit? The case in point is the example of conversion of Emperor Constantine and thereafter imposing Christian faith on the subjects through threats and force. Little did the missionaries realize that in Nanakian philosophy the real sovereign is God, and not an earthly monarch! A Sikh owes his/her allegiance to God and Guru. And that is why the abominable act of converting Maharaja Dalip Singh failed to follow through the en-masse conversion of Sikhs, except for a few solitary examples.

The Reverend:

4. "If God is without fear and enmity, then why is it that the Sikh fears doing bad? How do they account for their own deep spiritual unrest? Moreover, how does one account for what we read in their own writings that God cuts the head of the devil? Note these lines from the Padshahi in the Granth Sahib."

The Reverend asks, "Why the Sikhs fear doing bad things if their God is without fear and enmity?" The answer to this question is on the opening page of the AGGS in the first stanza of Guru Nanak's composition Jap. The primary purpose of human life is to be one with God by becoming a *Gurmukh* (God-oriented, which requires living in harmony with God's *Hukm* (Universal Law). Moreover, civilized society demands of its members to be law-abiding and upright citizens. Sikhs, who have been misled about Sikhism, are the ones who suffer from spiritual unrest, not the ones who understand and practice Sikhism. Moreover, if the Reverend would look around, he will find that spiritual unrest is everywhere, especially among the Christians!

ਕਿਵ ਸਚਿਆਰਾ ਹੋਈਐ ਕਿਵ ਕੂੜੈ ਤੁਟੈ ਪਾਲ॥
ਹੁਕਮ ਰਜਾਈ ਚਲਣਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਲਿ॥

How could one become a sachiara (Godlike), a God-oriented and how could one get rid of ignorance and falsehood? "By living in harmony with Hukm (Universal Law)," says Nanak.

AGGS, Jap 1, p 1.

The Reverend:

5. "The concept of "grace" here must also be understood in the context of Hinduism. Because Sikhism is a particular kind of "guru cult," an adequate concept for their term of grace is "darshan" or "the guru's glance".

Response:

Here the Reverend has given a literal interpretation of "grace". Grace in Nanakian philosophy means the benevolence of the Creator towards the creation. The very act of creation is grace. Being born as a human being is grace. The Creator has endowed mankind with superior intellect, critical thinking /discerning intelligence and conscience; this is what grace means:

ਕਰਿ ਕਰਤੈ ਕਰਣੀ ਕਰਿ ਪਾਈ ॥ ਜਿਨਿ ਕੀਤੀ ਤਿਨਿ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਪਾਈ ॥

The Creator created mankind and let it free to do as it wills. But how it was accomplished, only the Creator knows.
AGGS, M 1, p 932.

ਮਾਟੀ ਕਾ ਲੇ ਦੇਹੁਰਾ ਕਰਿਆ ॥ ਉਕਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਲੈ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਪਰੀਖਿਆ ॥

The Creator fashioned human body from the earthly elements and by some method endowed it with life, wisdom and discerning intellect.
AGGS, M 5, p 913.

The Reverend:

6. "The Bible says that if we do not begin with Biblical God, neither will we end up with Him. There may be a way that seems right to you, but its end is the way of death. The Biblical God – He is true and living God. The Bible says that all things were created through Jesus Christ, Who is God, who is called Word. The only way we can know the Biblical God, the true living God is by believing in Jesus. God has revealed Himself in Jesus. He (Jesus) has made Him known."

Response:

Guru Nanak rejected the type of God described in the Bible, as this God is nothing more than a tribal god, an exclusive God. For Guru Nanak the Creator is "One and Only" and Its creation, mankind is also one whereas belief in Biblical God leads to the balkanization or disintegration of mankind. The thoughts of many sages of diverse background that are compatible with the Nanakian philosophy are incorporated in the AGGS, however, there are no quotes from the texts of Semitic and Hindu religions, as these religions are based on the concept of an "exclusive God". In addition to the millions of gods, Hindus also believe in a God who communicates only through the Brahmans and then there is a God for the chosen people, the Jews. Christian God is approachable only through his only son Jesus Christ. For the Muslim, Mohammed is the last and final in a long line of Prophets of Allah (God) and they claim that theirs is the only true

prophetic religion.

God in Nanakian Philosophy

The God described in AGGS is easily understandable to all seekers of “Truth” irrespective of their creed, caste, gender, color, ethnicity and geographical considerations. Guru Nanak did not assign any specific name or gender to God. He used the prevalent names of God in usage by both the Hindus and the Muslims without any distinction along with addressing new names of his own. Most often in the AGGS, God is described by Its attributes like Creator, Formless, Transcendent, Omnipotent, Infinite and Ineffable or simply as True One, One or You or *Oh* meaning that or he / she.

A comprehensive definition of God is given by Guru Nanak at the beginning of the AGGS as follows:

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰਪੁਸਾਦਿ ॥

One and Only That is ineffable (in totality) – Truth is Its name, Creator, Omnipresent, Sovereign, Without enmity, Timeless Entity (unaffected by time), Beyond birth and death, Created by Itself, Enlightener and Bounteous.
AGGS, Commencing Verse, p 1.

Further down on the same page in the beginning of his composition of Jap, Guru Nanak has used the word *Sach*, meaning Truth for God and has emphasized its eternal nature.

ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ ॥ ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥

Truth is primordial, It existed in the primal age, It exists now and It will exist forever,” proclaims Nanak.
AGGS, Jap, p 1.

God is ‘One’. This attribute has further been emphasized as follows:

ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਏਕੋ ਹੈ ॥ ਏਕੋ ਹੈ ਭਾਈ ਏਕੋ ਹੈ ॥

My God is One, hey brother, It is One and Only.
AGGS, M 1, p 350.

ਏਕ ਮਹਿ ਸਰਬ ਸਰਬ ਮਹਿ ਏਕਾ ਏਹ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਦੇਖਿ ਦਿਖਾਈ ॥

The true Guru (God) has made me see that the One is in every thing and every thing is in One.
AGGS, M 1, p 907.

Ineffable God

In the AGGS, God has been described as infinite and ineffable again and again. In totality, God is beyond human reach and comprehension. A finite entity can’t define an infinite entity. To emphasize this point Guru Nanak says:

ਕੇਤੇ ਆਖਿ ਆਖਣਿ ਪਾਹਿ ॥ ਕੇਤੇ ਕਹਿ ਕਹਿ ਉਠਿ ਉਠਿ ਜਾਹਿ ॥

ਏਤੇ ਕੀਤੇ ਹੋਰਿ ਕਰੇਹਿ ॥ ਤਾ ਆਖਿ ਨ ਸਕਹਿ ਕੋਈ ਕੋਇ ॥

How many people are attempting to describe the greatness of God and how many have passed away doing the same? If God were to create as many more as already created, even then they would not be able to describe the greatness of God.

AGGS, Jap 26, p. 6.

Nanakian philosophy categorically rejects the incarnation of God in human or any living form and the concept of virgin birth, resurrection, demons (Satan) and angels (Holy Ghost) and the Biblical concept of soul and sin. The Commencing Verse of AGGS describes God as ਅਜੂਨੀ (Ajuni), meaning God does not come into anthropomorphic form. Guru Arjan echoed and amplified this view of Guru Nanak about God.

ਸਤਗੁਰੁ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਸੋਇ ॥ ਮਾਨੁਖ ਕਾ ਕਰਿ ਰੂਪੁ ਨ ਜਾਨੁ ॥

Satguru (God) is Niranjana — beyond Maya (without material content). Do not believe that It is in the form of man.

AGGS, M 5, p 895.

ਸੋ ਮੁਖੁ ਜਲਉ ਜਿਤੁ ਕਹਹਿ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਜੋਨੀ ॥

May that mouth burn, which says that God incarnates.
AGGS, M 5, p 1136.

Soul

Another major difference between Nanakian philosophy and other religions is the concept of soul. In Nanakian philosophy soul is God, the Transcendent One that permeates the entire cosmos and it is called as *jyoti* (light), *atma* or *jio* (spirit), *sabd-surt* (God-consciousness) and moral principles that guide life (conscience). Guru Nanak rejected the idea that soul is something separate from God and that it leaves the body after death to receive punishment or reward depending upon the person whose body it inhabits.

ਇਕ ਦਝਹਿ ਇਕ ਦਬੀਅਹਿ ਇਕਨਾ ਕੁਤੇ ਖਾਹਿ ॥

ਇਕਿ ਪਾਣੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਉਸੁਟੀਐ ਇਕਿ ਭੀ ਫਿਰਿ ਹਸਣਿ ਪਾਹਿ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਏਵ ਨ ਜਾਪਈ ਕਿਥੈ ਜਾਇ ਸਮਾਇ ॥

After death some bodies are burnt, some are buried and some are left to be devoured by animals/birds (dogs). Some are thrown in water while others are thrown in a dry well. There is no evidence / proof where the so-called soul ends after these different methods of disposal of the dead body,” opines Nanak.

AGGS, M 1, p 648.

ਮਤੁ ਕੋ ਜਾਣੇ ਜਾਇ ਅਗੈ ਪਾਇਸੀ ॥ ਜੇਹੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਇ ਤੇਹਾ ਹੋਇਸੀ ॥

Do not believe that the benefits of deeds performed in the current life will be rewarded in the next world.

AGGS, M 1, pp 729-730.

ਸੁਣਿ ਮਨ ਮਿਤ੍ਰ ਪਿਆਰਿਆ ਮਿਲ ਵੇਲਾ ਹੈ ਇਹ ॥
ਜਬ ਲਗੁ ਜੋਬਨਿ ਸਾਸੁ ਹੈ ਤਬ ਲਗ ਇਹ ਤਨ ਦਿਹ ॥

O my mind, my dear friend, this is the time for you to meet the Creator. Moreover, this opportunity will last only as long as the body is healthy and full of vitality.

AGGS, M 1, p 20.

ਸਭਿ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਹੈ ਸੋਇ ॥

ਤਿਸ ਕੈ ਚਾਨਣਿ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਹੋਇ ॥

Within all there is light (God-consciousness) and it is Your light which is in all.

AGGS, M 1, p 663.

ਏਕ ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨੰ ਸਰਬ ਦੇਵਾ ਦੇਵ ਦੇਵਾ ਤ ਆਤਮਾ ॥

ਆਤਮਾ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੇਵਾਸਿ ਜੇ ਕੋ ਜਾਣਾ ਭੋਉ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਤਾਕਾ ਦਾਸੁ ਹੈ ਸੋਈ ਨਿਰੰਜਨ ਦੇਉ ॥

The One Creator, Who takes care of all, is also Atma in all, The Atma is transcendent One. Nanak is at the service of one who understands this mystery; as such a person is God-like.

AGGS, M 1, p 1353.

ਆਤਮ ਮਹਿ ਰਾਮੁ ਰਾਮ ਮਹਿ ਆਤਮੁ ॥

God is in soul and soul is in God.

AGGS, M 1, p 1153.

ਇਉ ਕਹੈ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਮਨ ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰੂਪੁ ਹੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੂਲੁ ਪਛਾਣੁ ॥

O my mind, the Universal light is within you, recognize your roots—the source of your origin—the Primordial Light—Energy.

AGGS, M 3, p 441.

ਸਭਿ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਹੈ ਸੋਇ ॥

ਤਿਸ ਕੈ ਚਾਨਣਿ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਹੋਇ ॥

Within all there is light and it is Your light which is in all.

AGGS, M 1, p 663.

ਸਬਦ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਸੁਖੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਰਾਤਉ ਸੁਖ ਸਾਰੁ ॥

One obtains comfort through sabd-surt (God-consciousness) by imbibing God's excellences, which are the source of bliss.

AGGS, M 1, p 62.

Besides, the Sikh Gurus do not talk about the past life or the life after death, what they talk about and lay stress on is the present life. For example,

ਮਿਲੁ ਜਗਦੀਸ ਮਿਲਨ ਕੀ ਬਰੀਆ ॥ ਚਿਰੰਕਾਲ ਇਹ ਦੇਹ ਸੰਜਰੀਆ ॥

This is your chance to meet the Lord of the universe, meet Him. It took a very long time for the human body to evolve through many evolutionary stages.

AGGS, M 5, p 176.

ਭਈ ਪਰਾਪਤਿ ਮਾਨੁਖ ਦੇਹੁਰੀਆ ॥

ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਮਿਲਣ ਕੀ ਇਹ ਤੇਰੀ ਬਰੀਐ ॥

Take advantage of your human birth, as this is your only opportunity to meet God.

AGGS, M, 5, p 378.

ਮਾਨਸ ਦੇਹ ਬਹੁਰਿ ਨਹ ਪਾਵਹਿ ਕਛੁ ਉਪਾਉ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਕਾ ਕਰੁ ਰੇ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਕਹਤੁ ਗਾਇ ਕਰੁਨਾਮੈ ਭਵਸਾਗਰ ਕੈ ਪਾਰਿ ਉਤਰੁ ਰੇ ॥

“You won’t be born again, take some measures to obtain salvation right now. Praising the Merciful One, will take you across the ocean of worldly temptations,” says Nanak.

AGGS, M 9, p 220.

ਆਗਾਹਾ ਕੂ ਤ੍ਰਾਪਿ ਪਿਛਾ ਫੇਰਿ ਨਾ ਮੁਹਡਤਾ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਿਝਿ ਇਵੇਹਾ ਵਾਰ ਬਹੁੜਿ ਨਾ ਹੋਵੀ ਜਨਮਤਾ ॥

“Don’t look to the past, make efforts to move ahead. This is the only chance to meet God because you won’t be born again,” this is how Nanak understands.

AGGS, M, 5, p 1096.

Salvation

Attaining of salvation in Sikhism is different than other religions:

ਵਿਚਿ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਸੇਵ ਕਮਾਈਐ ॥ ਤਾ ਦਰਗਹ ਬੈਸਣੁ ਪਾਈਐ ॥

It is service to others that earns seat in God’s court.

AGGS, M 1, p 26.

ਅਨਦਿਨੁ ਜਾਗਿ ਰਹੇ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਈ ॥ ਜੀਵਨ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਗਤਿ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਪਾਈ ॥

He, who remembers God all the time, becomes a jivan mukta by seeking within.

AGGS, M 1, p 904.

In a hymn addressed to Muslims Guru Nanak says, “The mere fact of subscribing to the faith of Prophet Muhammad ensures nothing, neither paradise nor salvation because Allah is inscrutable.”

ਹਕੁ ਪਰਾਇਆ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਉਸੁ ਸੁਅਰੁ ਉਸੁ ਗਾਇ ॥

ਗੁਰ ਪੀਰੁ ਹਾਮਾ ਤਾ ਭਰੇ ਜਾ ਮੁਰਦਾਰੁ ਨ ਖਾਇ ॥

ਗਲੀ ਭਿਸਤੁ ਨ ਜਾਈਐ ਛੁਟੈ ਸਚੁ ਕਮਾਇ ॥

ਮਾਰਣ ਪਾਹਿ ਹਰਾਮ ਮਹਿ ਹੋਇ ਹਲਾਲੁ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥

ਨਾਨਕੁ ਗਲੀ ਕੂੜੀਈ ਕੂੜੇ ਪਲੈ ਪਾਇ ॥

To violate or usurp someone’s right is like eating pork for a Muslim and cow for a Hindu. The Guru/Prophet would support only if the follower does not make unlawful living. Mere talk does not lead to paradise; salvation lies in right conduct. If you add spice to unlawfully earned food, it does not become lawful (Halal). Nanak, falsehood begets only falsehood.

AGGS, M 1, p 141.

ਸਚਹੁ ਓਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੇ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਆਚਾਰੁ ॥

Truth is higher than every thing but higher still is truthful living.

AGGS, M 1, p 62.

ਅਮਲੁ ਕਰਿ ਧਰਤੀ ਬੀਜੁ ਸਬਦੇ ਕਰਿ ਸਚਿ ਕੀ ਆਬ ਨਿਤ ਦੇਹਿ ਪਾਣੀ॥
ਹੋਇ ਕਿਰਸਾਣੁ ਈਮਾਨੁ ਜੰਮਾਇ ਲੈ ਭਿਸਤੁ ਦੇਸਕੁ ਮੂੜੇ ਏਵ ਜਾਣੀ॥

Let your daily actions be the field, sow the seed of Sabd (Word, Truth, and Divine knowledge) and water it daily with truth. Work hard like a farmer and grow a crop of firm belief. O ignorant one, then you would understand the meaning of hell and heaven.

AGGS, M 1, p 24.

The above philosophy is further strengthened by other Sikh Gurus as follows:

ਜੀਵਨ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਸੋ ਆਖੀਐ ਮਰਿ ਜੀਵੈ ਮਰੀਐ॥

ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਮੇਲਿ ਹਰਿ ਜਗੁ ਦੁਤਰੁ ਤਰੀਐ॥

Nanak says, "One crosses the ocean of worldly temptations when the true Guru unites one with God. Such a one who obtains freedom from the influence of haumain (self-centeredness) is called jiwan mukta."

AGGS, M 4, p 449.

ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਕੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਆਤਮ ਹਿਤਾਵੈ॥ ਜੀਵਨ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਸੋਊ ਕਹਾਵੈ॥

He, who abides by God's Will, is a liberated person—one who obtains salvation (jiwan mukta).

AGGS, M 5, p 275.

As you sow so shall you reap?

Contrary to the Christian belief that human beings are born sinners, Nanakian philosophy makes it abundantly clear that the Creator blesses human beings with God-consciousness. It is only when one loses touch with God-consciousness and becomes alienated--then that one commits a sin.

ਇਉ ਕਹੈ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਮਨ ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰੂਪੁ ਹੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੂਲੁ ਪਛਾਣੁ ॥

O my mind, the Universal light (God-consciousness) is within you, recognize your roots—the source of your origin.

AGGS, M 3, p 441.

People do not become virtuous or sinners by calling them so. It is their deeds that determine whether they are virtuous or sinners. It is their deeds that determine their union or separation from God. One reaps what one sows:

ਜੈਸਾ ਕਰੇ ਸੁ ਤੈਸਾ ਪਾਵੈ ॥

ਆਪਿ ਬੀਜਿ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਖਾਵੈ ॥

One gets what one does, and what one sows, so shall one reap.

AGGS, M 1, p 662.

ਦਿਨੁ ਰੈਨਿ ਅਪਨਾ ਕੀਆ ਪਾਈ ॥

ਕਿਸੁ ਦੇਸ ਨ ਦੀਜੈ ਕਿਰਤੁ ਭਵਾਈ ॥

We earn what we do day and night. Why blame others, it is our own doings that lead us astray.

AGGS, M 5, p 745.

ਚੰਗਿਆਈਆ ਬੁਰਿਆਈਆ ਵਾਚੈ ਧਰਮੁ ਹਦੂਰਿ ॥

ਕਰਮੀ ਆਪੋ ਆਪਣੀ ਕੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਕੇ ਦੂਰਿ ॥

Good and bad deeds determine the relationship with God. According to their deeds some are drawn closer to God, whereas others move away.

AGGS, Jap Sloka, p 8.

How to become Truthful?

The above question is very common, which usually asked. Guru Nanak replies to live harmony with the Laws of Universe:

ਕਿਵ ਸਚਿਆਰਾ ਹੋਈਐ ਕਿਵ ਕੂੜੈ ਤੁਟੈ ਪਾਲ॥

ਹੁਕਮ ਰਜਾਈ ਚਲਣਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਲਿ॥

How could one become a sachiaara (Godlike), a God-centered being (gurmukh) and how could one get rid of ignorance and falsehood? "By living in harmony with Hukam (Universal Law)," says Nanak.

AGGS, Jap 1, p 1.

The Sidhas questioned Guru Nanak. How could one get rid of ignorance and falsehood? Guru Nanak replied as follows:

ਤੇਰਾ ਕਵਣੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਜਿਸ ਕਾ ਤੂ ਚੇਲਾ॥

ਸਬਦੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਧੁਨਿ ਚੇਲਾ ॥

"Who is your Guru or whose disciple are you?" "Sabd (Truth, Divine knowledge) is the Guru and my mind, which is focussed on the Sabd and comprehends it, is the disciple." Replied Guru Nanak.

AGGS, M 1, pp 942-43.

CONCLUSIONS

The God as presented in the Aad Guru Granth Sahib is rational, benevolent, loving, merciful, forgiving and the Creator of all. It embraces all seekers of "Truth" with a bear hug, irrespective of their creed, caste, gender, color, ethnicity and geographical consideration.

ਸਭੇ ਸਾਝੀਵਾਲ ਸਦਾਇਨਿ ਤੂੰ ਕਿਸੈ ਨ ਦਿਸਹਿ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਜੀਉ ॥

All are partners in Your commonwealth and You do not look at anyone as a stranger.

AGGS, M 5, p. 97.

ਨਾ ਕੋ ਬੈਰੀ ਨਹੀ ਬਿਗਾਨਾ ਸਗਲ ਸੰਗਿ ਹਮ ਕਉ ਬਨਿ ਆਈ ॥

Enmity to none, nor we consider anyone stranger, getting along with all is our creed.

AGGS, M 5, p. 1299).

(Continued from page 38)

It is no wonder that Sikh congregational prayer ends with a plea for the well being of the whole world (ਸਰਬੋਤ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ, sarbat da bhala).

REFERENCES

1. AGGS= Aad Guru Granth Sahib. 1983 (reprint). Publishers: Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar. (M = Mahla, i.e. succession number of the Sikh Gurus to the House of Nanak. P = page of the AGGS).
 2. Chahal, Devinder S. 2002, Nanakian Philosophy-The term defined. *Understanding Sikhism*, Res. J. 4(2); 17-22.
 3. Mann, J, S. 2003. Fresh Look at Text and History of Daasam Granth. Guru Nanak Memorial Lecture, Punjabi University, December 9, 2003.
 4. Singh, G.B. 2005. Biblical God, *Sikh Spectrum*, (www.sikhspectrum.com), August-October.
 5. Zekveld, Tony. 2005. A Comparison between the Two Credos: Christian and Sikh. *Sikh Spectrum* (www.sikhspectrum.com), August-October 2005.
-