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# RELIGIOUS RESPONSIBILITY IN TODAY'S WORLD OF CONFLICT

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## ABSTRACT

*In the world of today socio/political conflicts, fueled by religious zealots, are killing thousands of people. Religious and political leaders should unite forces and help these cultures create a peaceful society. For instance Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, stressed religious responsibility. This notion can help societies respect one another's beliefs through truth, equality, and dignity. This paper reviews the position of various nations on religious responsibility and how it relates to world conflicts and ultimately the search for peace.*

## INTRODUCTION

Every source of news, be it newspaper, radio, television, internet or just simple gossip in the family or friends provides information about chaotic turmoil, violence, and death dominating the world. From every nook and corner of the globe, sounds of confrontational violence are roaring in the name of God. The conflicts, based upon various social, religious, and political reasons are killing, butchering and wounding humans of all ages and gender. The human values of love, compassion, freedom, peace, and dignity recognized in the charter of the United Nations and in the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights'[5] adopted and proclaimed on December 10, 1948 over half a century ago, are probably not worth the paper they were written on. In theory, the words written on those documents should have been followed by every culture. Every country or territory of any political status called upon by the assembly agreed to publicize the text of the Declaration to be disseminated, displayed, read and expounded principally in schools and other institutions. Since then, the world has experienced turmoil and human loss in vain and unfortunately, daily massacres are still common. The contents of 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights' following World War II reflected emotional and truthful views of the United Nations Assembly. However, in practice this Declaration has been much more difficult to achieve.

## PREAMBLE

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

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## Further Reading:

1. Nanakian Philosophy for World Peace (Chapter 26): In: Chahal, D. S. 2008. *Nanakian Philosophy: Basics for Humanity*. Institute for Understanding Sikhism, Laval, Quebec, Canada. Distributors: Singh Brothers, Amritsar.
  2. Chahal, D.S. 2008. Religion and Social Responsibilities for World Peace. pp13-20 of this issue.
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Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, Therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

A year before the dawn of new millennium, preparations for celebrations to welcome the new era were underway in every country. The human psyche, engorged with happiness, was ready to share anything of social, religious and possibly political value with fellow beings. The World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP) based in New York organized a meeting for 5 days in November 1999 to be held in Jordan under the patronage of His Majesty King Abdullah and convened under the theme “Action for Common Living.” Francesca Ciriaci [3] reporting in Jordan Times, Saturday, November 27, 1999 mentioned that it was attended by 800 religious leaders and believers of 15 faiths, including Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Sikhism, Confucius, Taoism, Zoroastrianism and others. Prince Hassan of Jordan commented that ‘religious conflicts’ usually have nothing or little to do with the religion and even less to do with the religious doctrine. He appealed to various religious leaders to understand their ‘religious responsibilities’ and demonstrate values to ameliorate conflicts and create conditions for peace while maintaining their neutral and apolitical status. He emphasized the role of religious communities as “natural mediators” throughout the world especially where governments have lost credibility, trust, and moral authority.

On May 4, 2001 Prime Minister of Malaysia, Datuk Seri Dr Mahithir Mohamed [4] while addressing the World Evangelical Fellowship said, “Once started religious strife has tendency to go on and on, to become permanent feuds. To-day we see such intractable inter-religious wars in Northern Ireland, Between Jews and

Muslims/Christians in Palestine, Hindus and Muslims in South Asia and in many other places. Attempts to bring about peace have failed again and again. Always the extremist elements invoking past injustices, imagined or real, will succeed in torpedoing the peace efforts and bringing another bout of hostility.”

He was not far from the Truth in these factual statements when one considers the religious zealots of the world who invoke wars for their own personal gains. The current killings of people by human suicidal bombs in Iraq and Israel on behest of religious fanatic leaders are the best ever display of ‘religious irresponsibility’. The loss of life in recent past also should be a reminder of similar attitude of religious misconceptions, e.g. Sudan-Darfur in 1986-2003 - to the present, Punjab June 1984 - December 2000, Kashmir 1947 - current, Delhi 1984 and Gujarat 2006 in India, ethnic cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina 1992, Serbia/Kosovo 1999, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and many others.

On April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008, Clifford J Levy [6] wrote an article in the section of Europe in ‘New York Times’ entitled “*At Expense of All Others, Putin Picks a Church.*” He described growing dominance of Russian Orthodox Church secondary to association of the head of Russia, President Vladimir Putin and the Patriarch Aleksi II of Orthodox Church. The Government Law requires every religion to register for a temple or Church to pray other than private home or an apartment. Clifford Levy detailed further the plight of Rev. Vladimir Pakhomov, the minister of Methodist church when he went to register. Officials denied the registration this year claiming first that his paperwork was deficient and then adding that the church was a front for unspecified business. Clifford Levy elaborated further that Mr. Pakhomov appealed in court, but lost. He said he could now face arrest for so much as chatting with children about attending a Methodist camp. “They have made us into lepers to scare people away,” Mr. Pakhomov said. “There is this climate that you can feel with your every cell: ‘It’s not ours, it’s American, and it’s alien; since its alien we cannot expect anything good from it. It’s ignorance, all around.” The article is a good example of “Religious Responsibility” when political hierarchy and religious supremacy dominate over minorities suppressing freedom of religion and human rights. The conflict is bound to occur with feelings of anger, frustrations, aggravations, and revenge.

Almost all religions claim their spiritual philosophy is nothing but praise for One God and love for all humanity. If that is so, then why are there down trodden, neglected, hateful, and mistrusting people, who are suffering unsolicited bias and prejudice in the hands of religious leaders claiming knowledge of religious

doctrine? Why are there communal disharmony and ruthless persecutions, oppression/ suppression and unbearable strife in the name of religion?

The degradation of morals, human rights and ethics to the lowest ebb becomes obvious when innocent young people are used as suicidal bombs and human shields. It is rather tragic to learn the explanations by religious and political leaders that ‘since religion is endangered’ by the others, every cruel act of killing human beings is justified; horrendously so in the name of God. Most of the information about worldly conflicts involving different geographic regions is available in the media and other resources. Since the one common denominator in each and every conflict is to “kill the other, dominate and loot the spoils of war/battles,” I will limit my discussion to Indian subcontinent and the principles in Nanakian Philosophy for developing possible concept for peace in the world.

### Historical background of India when Guru Nanak came upon the scene

India had been invaded by Muslim Tyrants beginning with Mahmud Ghazni in 1000 CE. Subsequently, other raiders followed until in 1192 CE, Muhamed Gauree established permanent base of Muslim power in India. His general Qutb-ud-din Aibak succeeded him and settled as first Sultan of Delhi. Following in the path of various other Muslim rulers of Turkish, Afghans, Khiljis, Tughlaqs and Lodhis, the Moghul Zahir-Ud-Din Babur (1482-1530.) invaded India four times (twice in 1519, and once in 1520 and 1526). Babur finally set up his empire on the throne of Delhi in 1526 CE, to be ruled by his successors for 300 years with some interruptions by the Turks (Sher Shah Suri).

Guru Nanak was born in 1469CE. At the time Bahlol Khan Lodhi, (1451-1489CE) the founder of Lodhi dynasty was restoring glory to Delhi Sultanate. He was followed by his son, Sikander Khan Lodhi (1489-1517) and succeeded by Ibrahim Khan Lodhi (1517-1526). Because of Ibrahim’s obnoxious behavior towards other nobles and relatives, his uncle Alam Khan and Governor of Lahore, Daulat Khan, invited Zahir-ud-Din Babur to settle scores with Ibrahim. In the famous battle of Panipat (1526), Ibrahim Lodhi got killed opening the corridor for Babur to establish the Moghul Empire in India.

In 1521 CE, when Babur sacked and pillaged the town of Syadpur or Eminabad, Guru Nanak was one of the captives in his prison. Guru Nanak witnessed the massacre and depredations caused by the Babur’s forces, and expressed his feelings as follows:

ਖੁਰਾਸਾਨ ਖਸਮਾਨਾ ਕੀਆ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨੁ ਡਰਾਇਆ ॥  
ਆਪੈ ਦੇਸੁ ਨ ਦੇਈ ਕਰਤਾ ਜਮੁ ਕਰਿ ਮੁਗਲੁ ਚੜਾਇਆ ॥

ਏਤੀ ਮਾਰ ਪਈ ਕਰਲਾਣੇ ਤੈਂ ਕੀ ਦਰਦੁ ਨ ਆਇਆ ॥੧॥  
ਕਰਤਾ ਤੂੰ ਸਭਨਾ ਕਾ ਸੋਈ ॥  
ਜੇ ਸਕਤਾ ਸਕਤੇ ਕਉ ਮਾਰੇ ਤਾ ਮਨਿ ਰੋਸੁ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥  
ਸਕਤਾ ਸੀਹੁ ਮਾਰੇ ਪੈ ਵਗੈ ਖਸਮੈ ਸਾ ਪੁਰਸਾਈ ॥  
ਰਤਨ ਵਿਗਾੜਿ ਵਿਗੋਏ ਕੁਤੀ ਮੁਇਆ ਸਾਰ ਨ ਕਾਈ ॥  
ਆਪੇ ਜੋੜਿ ਵਿਛੋੜੇ ਆਪੇ ਵੇਖੁ ਤੇਰੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ ॥੨॥  
ਜੇ ਕੋ ਨਾਉ ਧਰਾਏ ਵਡਾ ਸਾਦ ਕਰੇ ਮਨਿ ਭਾਣੇ ॥  
ਖਸਮੈ ਨਦਰੀ ਕੀੜਾ ਆਵੈ ਜੇਤੇ ਚੁਗੈ ਦਾਣੇ ॥  
ਮਰਿ ਮਰਿ ਜੀਵੈ ਤਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਪਾਏ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਖਾਣੇ ॥੩॥੫॥੩੯॥  
ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪੰਨਾ ੩੬੦.

*Having attacked Khuraasaan, Baabar terrified Hindustan.*

*“how strange that the Lord Creator takes no blame upon himself,*

*But, sent the ferocious Mughal as messenger of death?  
The people are beaten mercilessly and cry for help, but,  
There is no effect on You, Lord.*

*You are the Creator Lord of All humanity!*

*I will not complain if a strong person kills another  
equally strong brave person,*

*But, when a ferocious lion attacks and pounces upon a  
herd of lambs;*

*Then, is not it up to You, the Master, who should feel for  
them and answer such injustice?*

*This priceless country has been laid waste and defiled by  
dogs, and no one pays any attention to the dead.*

*You Yourself unite, and You Yourself separate; I gaze  
upon Your Glorious Greatness. ॥2॥*

*One may give himself a great name, and revel in the  
pleasures of the mind,*

*but in the Eyes of the Lord and Master, he is just a  
worm, for all the corn that he eats.*

*Only one who dies to his ego while yet alive, obtains the  
blessings, O Nanak, by chanting the Lord’s Name.*

॥3॥5॥39॥ (Translation by Dr Gopal Singh [7])

AGGS, M 1, p 360.

This was the third attack of Babur invading India in 1521. Guru Nanak described events in detail as it happened in that battle and calls Babur as the messenger of death. Having witnessed the massacre of local population, he questioned God as the Creator and Master not feeling any compassion for the slaughtered. Guru Nanak, noticing inequality of force and resources between Babur as a lion and the attacked Indian populace as a flock of sheep, surmised and asked the Master for explanation of His doings? He pondered upon the greatness of the God designating pains and pleasures of the mind. Considering human passion for greed to have more and control everything **Guru Nanak claimed that a human is just like a worm that can only eat designated foods, but, pretentious enough to be egoistic and dominating that cannot become humble,**

compassionate and appreciative of other's rights, unless he/she kills his/her ego. This principle of being 'humble and compassionate' in understanding modesty, equality, dignity, and love for others should account for religious responsibility, and hence basis for peace.

Babur in addition to being a ruthless grim warrior was also very sensitive person with highly developed religious bent of mind. When Babur faced Guru Nanak and listened to his rational and pragmatic narration about God and the Kings, his cruelty towards women and children began to diminish. Babur was stung deeply by the truthful, effective and honest rendition of Bani by Guru Nanak. Guru Nanak told that many egoistic people like him desiring riches and lust for power have been wasted before. He made amends, spared all prisoners (Muslim and Hindus) of further torment, and asked for forgiveness in the name of God. Guru Nanak narrated to his host, Bhai Lalo, in the vivid, passionate and concerned manner accounts of tragic scenes in the battle. Guru Nanak wrote about the incident as he explained in Tilang Raga:

ਜੈਸੀ ਮੈਂ ਆਵੈ ਖਸਮ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਤੈਸੜਾ ਕਰੀ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੇ ॥  
ਪਾਪ ਕੀ ਜੰਵ ਲੈ ਕਾਬਲਹੁ ਧਾਇਆ ਜੇਰੀ ਮੰਗੀ ਦਾਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੇ ॥  
ਸਰਮੁ ਧਰਮੁ ਦੁਇ ਛਪਿ ਖਲੋਏ ਕੂੜੁ ਫਿਰੈ ਪਰਧਾਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੇ ॥  
ਕਾਜੀਆ ਬਾਮਣਾ ਕੀ ਗਲ ਥਕੀ ਅਗਦੁ ਪੜੈ ਸੈਤਾਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੇ ॥  
ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨੀਆ ਪੜਹਿ ਕਤੇਬਾ ਕਸਟ ਮਹਿ ਕਰਹਿ ਖੁਦਾਇ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੇ ॥  
ਜਾਤਿ ਸਨਾਤੀ ਹੋਰਿ ਹਿਦਵਾਣੀਆ ਏਹਿ ਭੀ ਲੋਏ ਲਾਇ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੇ ॥  
ਖੂਨ ਕੇ ਸੋਹਿਲੇ ਗਾਵੀਅਹਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਤੁ ਕਾ ਰੰਗੁ ਪਾਇ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੇ ॥੧॥  
ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੇ ਗੁਣ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਗਾਵੈ ਮਾਸ ਪੁਰੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਆਖੁ ਮਸੋਲਾ ॥  
ਜਿਨਿ ਉਪਾਈ ਰੰਗਿ ਰਵਾਈ ਬੈਠਾ ਵੇਖੈ ਵਖਿ ਇਕੋਲਾ ॥  
ਸਚਾ ਸੋ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸਚੁ ਤਪਾਵਸੁ ਸਚੜਾ ਨਿਆਉ ਕਰੇਗੁ ਮਸੋਲਾ ॥  
ਕਾਇਆ ਕਪੜੁ ਟੁਕੁ ਟੁਕੁ ਹੋਸੀ ਹਿਦੁਸਤਾਨੁ ਸਮਾਲਸੀ ਬੋਲਾ ॥  
ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪੰਨਾ ੭੨੨.

*“As the words from the God (Master) come to me, so I make them known, O Lalo.*

*The brave warrior (Babur) hastened from Kabul with a bridal passion of sin,  
and demands rule over the land (our wealth), by force.  
Ignoring the sense of shame (modesty) and religion (religious responsibility)  
the falsehood rules supreme.*

*With complete disregard to Qazies and Brahmans,  
The devil itself conducts the nuptial vows to perform the service.*

*The Muslim women while in distress are reading Qu'ran and, calling upon Khudaa (God).*

*regardless of heredity and caste, all Hindu women are also waiting for mercy O' God.  
men smeared with saffron of blood are singing the paean of bloody murder.”*

*Nanak hymns praises of the God in this city of corpses’*

*flesh, and proclaimed,*

*The Creator, whose truthful justice assigned every human to its task. is just sitting apart and watching all.  
And, lo, the bodies will be torn into shreds and,  
then Hindustan will know the intent of what I uttered.*

(Translation by Dr Gopal Singh [7])

AGGS, M 1, p 722.

Guru Nanak in the above-referred Sabd clearly stated that every human has been assigned tasks according to his/her station. He further cautions human for the responsibility of sufferings and conflicts. It is up to human to assume responsibility for the actions and not blaming God for every calamity. Being a keen observer he noticed every aspect of nature, be it physical beauty or sadness due to suffering. Analyzing the plight of women directly or indirectly affected in the battle Guru Nanak wrote important historical accounts of their physical conditions, mental, and religious aspirations:

ਜਿਨ ਸਿਰਿ ਸੋਹਨਿ ਪਟੀਆ ਮਾਂਗੀ ਪਾਇ ਸੰਧੂਰੁ ॥  
ਸੇ ਸਿਰ ਕਾਤੀ ਮੁੰਨੀਅਨਿ ਗਲ ਵਿਚਿ ਆਵੈ ਪੂੜਿ ॥  
ਮਹਲਾ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਹੋਦੀਆ ਹੁਣਿ ਬਹਣਿ ਨ ਮਿਲਨਿ ਹਦੂਰਿ ॥੧॥  
ਆਦੇਸੁ ਬਾਬਾ ਆਦੇਸੁ ॥  
ਆਦਿ ਪੁਰਖ ਤੇਰਾ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਆ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਦੇਖਹਿ ਵੇਸ ॥੧॥  
ਰਹਾਉ ॥  
ਜਦਹੁ ਸੀਆ ਵੀਆਹੀਆ ਲਾੜੇ ਸੋਹਨਿ ਪਾਸਿ ॥  
ਹੀਡੋਲੀ ਚੜਿ ਆਈਆ ਦੰਦ ਖੰਡ ਕੀਤੇ ਰਾਸਿ ॥  
ਉਪਰਹੁ ਪਾਣੀ ਵਾਰੀਐ ਝਲੇ ਝਿਮਕਨਿ ਪਾਸਿ ॥੨॥  
ਇਕੁ ਲਖੁ ਲਹਨਿ ਬਹਿਠੀਆ ਲਖੁ ਲਹਨਿ ਖੜੀਆ ॥  
ਗਰੀ ਛੁਹਾਰੇ ਖਾਂਦੀਆ ਮਾਣਨਿ ਸੇਜੜੀਆ ॥  
ਤਿਨੁ ਗਲਿ ਸਿਲਕਾ ਪਾਈਆ ਤੁਟਨਿ ਮੋਤਸਰੀਆ ॥੩॥  
ਧਨੁ ਜੋਬਨੁ ਦੁਇ ਵੈਰੀ ਹੋਏ ਜਿਨੀ ਰਖੇ ਰੰਗੁ ਲਾਇ ॥  
ਦੂਤਾ ਨੋ ਫੁਰਮਾਇਆ ਲੈ ਚਲੇ ਪਤਿ ਗਵਾਇ ॥  
ਜੇ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਦੇ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਜੇ ਭਾਵੈ ਦੇਇ ਸਜਾਇ ॥੪॥  
ਅਗੇ ਦੇ ਜੇ ਚੇਤੀਐ ਤਾਂ ਕਾਇਤੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਸਜਾਇ ॥  
ਸਾਹਾਂ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਗਵਾਈਆ ਰੰਗਿ ਤਮਾਸੈ ਚਾਇ ॥  
ਬਾਬਰਵਾਣੀ ਫਿਰਿ ਗਈ ਕੁਇਰੁ ਨ ਰੋਟੀ ਖਾਇ ॥੫॥  
ਇਕਨਾ ਵਖਤ ਖੁਆਈਅਹਿ ਇਕਨਾ ਪੂਜਾ ਜਾਇ ॥  
ਚਉਕੇ ਵਿਣੁ ਹਿੰਦਵਾਣੀਆ ਕਿਉ ਟਿਕੇ ਕਢਹਿ ਨਾਇ ॥  
ਰਾਮੁ ਨ ਕਬਹੂ ਚੇਤਿਓ ਹੁਣਿ ਕਹਣਿ ਨ ਮਿਲੈ ਖੁਦਾਇ ॥੬॥  
ਇਕਿ ਘਰਿ ਆਵਹਿ ਆਪਣੈ ਇਕਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਪੁਛਹਿ ਸੁਖ ॥  
ਇਕਨਾ ਏਹੋ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਬਹਿ ਬਹਿ ਰੋਵਹਿ ਦੁਖ ॥  
ਜੇ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਸੋ ਥੀਐ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਿਆ ਮਾਨੁਖ ॥੭॥੧੧॥  
ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪੰਨਾ ੪੧੭.

*They whose lustrous hair shone in plaits and filled with vermillion in the parting,  
Their hair was sheared with scissors and mouths were chocked with dust.*

*Yes, they who were reveled in their palaces, now find not a seat in the common.*

*Hail to Thee, O' God, All Hail.  
 O Primal God, I know not Your end for You change the  
 scene of Your play many times.  
 When these beauties were married, their glamorous  
 spouses sat by their side.  
 They were carried in palanquins and bangles inlaid with  
 ivory dangled round their arms.  
 While greeting them, water was waved over their heads  
 and they fanned with glass studded fans.  
 A hundred thousand coins were offered to them when  
 they sat and when they stood.  
 And they chewed nuts and dates, and enjoyed the bridal  
 couch.  
 But, to-day around their necks is the noose, and their  
 necklaces of pearls are broken.  
 Both the riches and beauty have become their enemies,  
 Which had lured them away to enjoy life's manifold  
 pleasures.  
 Now, the soldiers have been told to dishonor them and  
 carry them off,  
 If the God wills, He blesses with glory, if He so Wills, He  
 punishes man as well.  
 But, if one were to foresee and fore-think, why should he  
 be punished thus?  
 The kings have lost their heads and indulged in  
 revelries.  
 But, now that the writ of Babur prevails, not even the  
 princes get their bread to eat.  
 The Muslims have lost their prayer time and the Hindus  
 of their worship.  
 And, how can the Hindu women without a bath and  
 plastering their kitchen square,  
 anoint their forehead with the saffron-mark?  
 They, who remembered not Ram, in their time, are not  
 accepted now even if they shout "Allah."  
 Some Warriors return to their homes and from them  
 others ask about the whereabouts of their kins.  
 In the lot of some it is writ, that (with their spouses  
 gone) they will wail in anguish their whole lives.  
**Nanak says:**  
**"That what the God willed has come to pass, else what  
 could the man do of himself?**  
*"Where are the stables now, where the horses, where  
 are drums, where the flutes?  
 Where are the sword-belts, where the chariots where the  
 red dresses (of the soldiers) pray?  
 Where are the looking glasses, where the beautiful  
 faces, no, I see them not before me.  
 This world belongs to Thee, O God: Thou are its Master.  
 (Translation by Dr Gopal Singh [7])  
 AGGS, M 1, p 417.**

The narrative written by Guru Nanak is self-explanatory about the chaotic environments of India in 1521. Again, the emphasis of responsibility in religious and social conflicts is not upon the God but the human itself. A

human injures another human. The God as a Creator has done Its job in creating nature and now it is all up to humanity to save it, manage it, live in peace and enjoy the creation OR kill each other and live in hell, choices are all ours.

Guru Nanak, in his 70 years of life, helped people understand the value of human life, love, compassion, and living with the creation. Wherever he traveled in India and abroad, people believed his truthful sermons and basic human values. He believed, preached, and practiced Truthful living and the people trusting him became his followers. He comprehended false and ritualistic procedures of religious practices in Hinduism and Islam. Through his teachings (ਸਿਖਿਆ) of Truth about the Creator, the creation, and the responsible role of human beings, he established a unique sect of followers (ਸਿਖ Sikhs) that adapted his principles in truthful living (ਸਿਖੀ Sikhi), thus creating a new religion Sikhism. Since he was teaching significant attributes of a teacher, people started calling him Guru. In one of his Sabds, he wrote:  
 ਗੁਰੂ ਸਮੁੰਦੁ ਨਦੀ ਸਭਿ ਸਿਖੀ ਨਾਠੈ ਜਿਤੁ ਵਡਿਆਈ ॥  
 ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪੰਨਾ ੧੪੯.

*The Guru is the ocean and all his teachings are the rivers  
 by bathing wherein greatness is attained.  
 AGGS, M 1, p 149.*

Guru Nanak clearly described status of a 'Sikh', the religion 'Sikhi', the teachings as 'Sikhyaa' and the teacher as the 'Guru' in another Sabd as follows:

ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਮੁ ॥  
 ਜਾ ਕਾ ਕੀਆ ਸਗਲ ਜਹਾਨੁ ॥  
 ਸੇਵਕ ਸੇਵਹਿ ਕਰਮਿ ਚੜਾਉ ॥  
 ਭਿੰਨੀ ਰੈਣਿ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾ ਮਨਿ ਚਾਉ ॥  
 ਸਿਖੀ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਗੁਰ ਵੀਚਾਰਿ ॥  
 ਨਦਰੀ ਕਰਮਿ ਲਘਾਏ ਪਾਰਿ ॥  
 ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ਪੰਨਾ ੪੬੫.

*Unfathomable and formless Creator whose existence is  
 True by name,  
 and that prevails in the whole universe,  
 is served by the servers whose destiny is awakened.  
 Those persons fond of God are not bothered by dark  
 events of life.  
 Pondering over the Guru's teachings one learns that,  
 because of merciful blessings one crosses over ocean of  
 pretentious life.  
 AGGS, M 1, p 465.*

### **Guru Nanak and His Philosophy**

Guru Nanak (1469-1539) as the founder of Sikhi, completed his education, established his genius supremacy with the teachers and other elders, got employment for a

short period of time, was married and had two sons. Guru Nanak was not just another Sufi, Saint, Bhagat or a detached devotee of the God, but a divine person deeply concerned with the pains and suffering of the people. He wanted to awaken demoralized, depressed, dependent, and desperate people by understanding the cruel and manipulative tactics of the religious leaders, teachers, and ruling officials/kings. He was a social reformer, an activist, a superb singer-poet and an unmatched philosopher of the time. He was a wonderful uniting force between contending religious leaders of Hinduism and Islam and promulgated his philosophy that there is no religious divide in the humanity and the God. He forged rather a breed of humanity in the world based on morality, honesty and fundamental human rights that was supported by the concept of One God and One Humanity. He believed in the God blessing humanity with essential faculties (ਕੁਦਰਤਿ—Nature) to survive, sustain, and organize itself with love, redemption, and reclamation of individual rights and community ethics. He clearly defined human responsibilities to itself, surroundings and other aspects of nature. He firmly believed in the principle that a *human is responsible for its own actions*.

Guru Nanak is the one who claimed the Earth as great mother and expression of the God's highest Grace with human life as the most benevolent gift to the humanity.

He promulgated the message of "TRUTH" to rest of the world. His salient teachings include:

### 1. God is ONE

HUMANITY is also one. Practice one's faith and respect others'.

Life of a householder being married with due restraint of mind for spiritual evolution is not sinful.

Equality among humans—casteless society and women having equal status to men.

*Sehaj* (Equipoise) for Spirituality - Bliss or enlightenment

*Naam* - name of God as an embodiment of God.

*Ishnan* - personal and social cleanliness of physical and mental attitude.

*Daan* - sharing materialistic and spiritual knowledge with others.

Truthful living - "Truth is higher than everything, but higher still is Truthful Living."

9. Humility- Tolerance, Forgiveness and Control of EGO—(Haumay).

### Nanakian Philosophy

The term "Nanakian Philosophy" coined by Prof Devinder Singh Chahal [2] is defined as, "the philosophy promulgated by Guru Nanak that was taught and enriched by other nine Sikh Gurus, who succeeded to the House of Nanak, is Nanakian Philosophy." This

philosophy practiced, disseminated and further enriched was then compiled in a Holy Granth called 'Aad Bir or Aad Pothi' by Guru Arjan and in 1604 enshrined in Darbar Sahib, Amritsar, Punjab, India. Guru Gobind Singh later added the Bani of his father Guru Teg Bahadur and completed the Holy Granth that is now called Aad Guru Granth Sahib [1] as the sole embodiment of GURU for the Sikhs in 1708.

In the last couple of decades of his life, Guru Nanak settled in his village, Kartarpur, Punjab, India. His disciples from various corners of the world started gathering to listen his genius sermons and practice in their lives as householders. During their stay with Guru Nanak they learned and practiced the tenets of i) *Kirat Karna* (Earnest Living), ii) *Vand Chhaknaa* (Sharing with others), and iii) *Naam Japna* (Contemplation on God's Name).

The routine followed was:

- i) Regular disciplined devotion involving individuals or *Sangats* (congregations).
- ii) To rise early (before 4:00AM), after bathing devote ambrosial hours in meditation.
- iii) Since the sermons were written in musical measures, *keertan* was performed in the early hours of morning and in the evening after day's work.
- iv) Obvious from his written sermons in Aad Guru Granth Sahib, (There was no Granth during his time.) he delivered instructions regularly emphasizing the greatness of One God and His gracious revelations upon perils of human conditions and paramount necessity of meditation on the Divine name.
- v) Asceticism was sternly rejected and replaced by a disciplined worldliness.
- vi) Significance of earnest labor, living to support one's family and sharing with the less fortunate.

Guru Nanak believing in One loving God for the whole humanity promulgated the 'Truth' that:

- A. Everybody is born free without blemish of 'Sin', casteless and having equal 'Rights' and freedom of thought, dignity, life and liberty.
- B. 'Religious responsibility' is to live in Peace and harmony, respecting each other's Faith. Piety to him was through sharing and helping fellow beings in understanding the 'Sabd—the Word' and practicing it in life.
- C. 'Acceptance of the Will of the God'; not only for preaching but adapting and living with it. [It is hard to accept 'what it is', but when tried, its wonderful]
- D. Belief in direct approach of Man with God without any intermediary, Thus avoiding Idol worship, ritualism and asceticism.

Religious Responsibility for achieving ‘Peace in the World’ and maintaining it through love, compassion, oneness, tolerance, sacrifice, equality and dignity calls upon not only the religious leaders but social and political leaders as well. The Natural resources blessed upon the Earth are aplenty for survival and sustenance of every creature. The human blessed with faculties to search, create, and control progress can contribute to the oneness and equality of humanity. The Prophets of every religion gave humanity enough sermons to be applied in daily life and live happily. It is not impossible to achieve Peace in the World and live together enjoying nature, IF and THIS IS THE BIGGEST IF human ever learns to apply the TRUTHFUL principles of the Prophets.

**In conclusion**, I would like to say that I have written another article like many others reminding humanity about the needs for achieving and maintaining Peace in the World, BUT, will any body listen?  
**“NOT IN THE LIFE OF HUMANITY”**

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## Footnote

1. *This paper has looked at idol worship generally from the viewpoint of monotheists who insist that the Divine is One, Formless and does not incarnate. That does not necessarily mean that the view is correct or flawless. Christianity, for example, though claiming to be monotheistic has its Trinity and God did come to earth in human form.*
2. *SGGS (Sri Guru Granth Sahib) and Adi Granth are used synonymously with AGGS.*
3. *For Sikhs, Guru Nanak makes it clear that God is Nirankar, i.e. Formless.*
4. *In the versions printed by the SGPC it is Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji in the Punjabi version and Guru Granth in English version but not Adi Granth, though Cole and Sambhi refer to it as such.*

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