

# INTERFAITH AND WORLD PEACE – SIKH PERSPECTIVE\*

Prof Devinder Singh Chahal, PhD  
Institute for Understanding Sikhism  
4418 Rue Martin-Plouffe, Laval, Quebec, Canada H7W 5L9  
Email: [Sikhism@iuscanada.com](mailto:Sikhism@iuscanada.com)

## ABSTRACT

*Although religions have been around for some millenniums still they failed to maintain peace in the world. Now it is generally accepted that religion is the primary cause of social division, conflict and war in the world. Some scholars have blamed the custodians of religions that they have failed to understand their religions in their real perspective. Interfaith Dialogues around the world have also failed to achieve any understanding among various religions. This paper discusses the method devised by Guru Nanak that all the religions should put forward universally acceptable principles of their religions to be discussed on the common platform provided by the International Interfaith Organizations, which would enable them to formulate some principles to achieve peace on this Earth. This paper further discusses the universally acceptable principles of philosophy of Guru Nanak as Sikh perspective to be considered by the other religions for working out a solution towards maintaining peace in the world.*

## INTRODUCTION

**H**innells and King [7] reported that in today's increasingly polarized world, religion has been represented by some as primary cause of social division, conflict and war, whilst others have argued that this is a distortion of the 'true' significance of religion, which when properly followed promote peace, harmony, goodwill and social cohesion.

On the other hand Dr Parvez Hoodbhoy, a Professor of Nuclear Physics at Islamabad's Quaid-e-Azam University, Pakistan says that if we look into the cause of all the troubles and fights going on in the world the blame will fall on religions because every religion is about absolute belief in its own superiority and the divine right to impose itself upon others [8].

The man has controlled the most dangerous diseases and has evolved nutritious food and wonder drugs through genetically engineered plants, animals and microorganisms to increase his life span. He has also created many automatic machines and robots to make his life easier. He has also advanced so much in other Sciences especially in the fields of computer and space technology that he is trying to travel deep into the space, *i.e.* to the other planets of our solar system or the other solar systems of our own galaxy, the **Milky Way**, and hoping to travel beyond our galaxy into other galaxies of the Universe. Now they are building a space station for various experimentations and observations into the space [11, 12].

In spite of tremendous progress in Science the man has failed to create peace in the world. On the other hand

humans have been practicing religions seriously for more than three millenniums they still failed to maintain peace on this tiny planet, the Earth? [3, 5]

The Council of Parliament of World Religions, Chicago and many other such organizations have been providing venue to all the religions and faiths of the world to sit together on one platform to understand each other. Unfortunately such interfaith Conferences have failed to show any sign leading towards establishment of world peace during the last many years' effort.

## What is the SOLUTION?

## DISCUSSION

### 1. Understanding through Interfaith Dialogues

Although the Interfaith Conferences have failed to achieve any success leading towards any solution for peace still that is the one of the many other approaches which can leads to establish ONE WORLD ORDER AND PEACE. Now we are living in the Communication Age when one can communicate with the other person on the other side of the globe within a fraction of second. Similarly one can reach the other side of the planet within few hours now, which took days or months before. Although with the advances in Science the future of religion seems to be obscure but the increase communication between all parts of the world would increase understanding between various religions of the world through interfaith dialogues. Such interfaith dialogues would definitely lead the humanity to understand world religions in their real

perspective and enabling their followers to resolve the religious conflicts amicably.

## 2. Causes of Failure to Establish Peace

Dr Diane Moore [14], Harvard Divinity, School Harvard University, USA emphasized that the illiteracy of religion is wide spread over the globe. The significant consequence is that it fuels antagonism and hinders respect for pluralism, peaceful coexistence and cooperative endeavors. Therefore, failure to maintain peace on earth may be due to the fact that the custodians of religions have not studied their religion in their real perspective. The application of Science and logic to understand the religious scriptures have settled a few wrong concepts and many more can be settled if studied scientifically and logically. Einstein is right in this respect when he said: “After religious teachers accomplished the refining process indicated, they will surely recognize with joy that true religion has been ennobled and made more profound by scientific knowledge.”

The modern world is looking for peace for the survival of the humanity. It will make a world of difference if all the major religions can sit together and present their philosophy scientifically and logically to understand each other. This should be the first step toward establishment of peace on this Earth. And this solution was presented by Guru Nanak about 540 years ago as follows:

ਗੁਣਾ ਕਾ ਹੋਵੈ ਵਾਸੁਲਾ ਕਵਿ ਵਾਸਿ ਲਈਜੈ॥

ਜੇ ਗਣ ਹੋਵਨਿ ਸਾਜਨਾ ਮਿਲਿ ਸਾਝ ਕਰੀਜੈ॥

ਸਾਝ ਕੀਜੈ ਗੁਣਹ ਕੇਰੀ ਛੋਡਿ ਅਵਗਣ ਚਲੀਐ॥

*If you have a bag of wisdom/philosophy, open it, so that it can be shared by others.*

*If your friends have good philosophy, adopt it.*

*Only adopt good philosophy*

*Leave the others, which are not acceptable.*

AGGS, M 1, p 765 [1].

Guru Nanak further emphasizes that it is very important to evaluate the philosophy/ideas properly before adopting it:

ਪਹਿਲਾ<sup>1</sup> ਵਸਤੁ<sup>2</sup> ਸਿਵਾਣਿ<sup>3</sup> ਕੈ ਤਾ ਕੀਰੈ<sup>4</sup> ਵਾਪਾਰੁ<sup>5</sup> ॥

*It is advised that one must evaluate<sup>3</sup> the things / philosophy<sup>2</sup> first<sup>1</sup>, if convinced, then adopt/follow<sup>4,5</sup> it.*

AGGS, M 1, p 1410.

This is the first step to be followed at the Interfaith Conferences but it does not happen so.

Are the representatives of every religion ready to work according to the above formula provided by Guru Nanak? The irony is that none of the Interfaith Conferences has reached to that stage yet.

Every religion has some basics which could be acceptable universally. As advised by Guru Nanak if we can put together all such basics from major religions of the world we may be able to build some principles which could

become one of the major approaches to maintain peace on this planet, The Earth.

Therefore, I would like to put forward some basics of philosophy of Guru Nanak embodied in his Bani (Word), explained and strengthened by the Sikh Gurus who succeeded to the ‘House of Nanak’ in their Bani which is incorporated in the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) along with that of Guru Nanak. I termed it as ‘*Nanakian Philosophy*’ [6].

## SOME BASICS OF NANAKIAN PHILOSOPHY

### 1. God

It is difficult to define God since It (God) is accepted differently in different religions. Although it is widely accepted in almost all religion that there is one God but still every religion understands God differently than that of others. Not going into details of the concept of God in different religions I come to the concept of God by Guru Nanak. The concise and precise definition of God given by Guru Nanak is incorporated right in the beginning of the sacred book of the Sikhs, Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) [1]. In fact this is not exactly the definition of God but a description which makes the God of Guru Nanak different than that of others:

ੴ १

ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ

ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ੨

ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ੩ ॥

*The One and Only, Oh, the Infinite<sup>1</sup>;*

*Exists; Creator; Without fear (Not governed by any other – Not under any Law of Universe);*

*Without enmity;*

*Timeless (Without effect of time and space);*

*Neither takes birth nor dies;*

*(Never comes into any anthropomorphic form)*

*Created by Itself<sup>2</sup>;*

*Enlightener; and Bounteous<sup>3</sup>.*

If one examine this definition critically it will not be difficult to be accepted by the whole humanity including the atheists. For example, Guru Nanak says God is *Ajooni* (God does not come into anthropomorphic form) and this attribute was also realized by the Nobel Laureate, Elbert Einstein (1879-1955 CE), that “*God does not come into anthropomorphic form*”. There is another attribute of God assigned by Guru Nanak that God is *Nirvair* (without enmity) and Einstein has expressed this attribute as: “*Subtle is the Lord but malicious He is not*”.

Now the question here to ponder upon is that how come the two attributes of God, assigned by Guru Nanak about 540 years ago, have been realized by a scientist who was

unaware of the philosophy of Guru Nanak. This is because the truth is always discovered sooner or later by the discriminative intellectuals. This is the best proof about the universal acceptability of basics of Nanakian Philosophy.

## 2. The Earth

According to Guru Nanak the Earth belongs to the Humanity. While this Earth was being formed as a planet of our Solar System, God created necessary environment on the Earth to sustain different types of lives. As we know at this time the Earth is the only planet of our Solar System where life is found. However, the possibilities of similar or better or less developed type of life on other planets of other Solar Systems of our galaxy or of other galaxies cannot be ruled out [11, 12], because it is beyond our all available technology to reach on such planets and beyond our comprehension to visualize life on the other planets for the time being. In this respect we should be grateful to God for giving us a chance to be a part of the life on this Earth, one of the billions of planets of Solar Systems of our galaxy - the Milky Way. The Earth as described by Guru Nanak in JAP is as follows:

### i) The Earth

ਰਾਤੀ ਰੁਤੀ ਬਿਤੀ ਵਾਰ ॥  
 ਪਵਣ ਪਾਣੀ ਅਗਨੀ ਪਾਤਾਲ<sup>1</sup> ॥  
 ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਧਰਤੀ ਥਾਪੀ ਰਖੀ ਧਰਮ ਸਾਲ<sup>2</sup> ॥  
 ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਜੀਅ<sup>3</sup> ਜੁਗਤਿ ਕੇ ਰੰਗ ॥  
 ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਨਾਮ ਅਨੇਕ ਅਨੰਤ ॥  
 ਕਰਮੀ ਕਰਮੀ<sup>4</sup> ਹੋਇ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ<sup>5</sup> ॥  
 ਸਚਾ ਆਪਿ ਸਚਾ ਦਰਬਾਰੁ<sup>6</sup> ॥  
 ਤਿਥੈ ਸੋਹਨਿ ਪੰਚ<sup>7</sup> ਪਰਵਾਣੁ<sup>8</sup> ॥  
 ਨਦਰੀ<sup>9</sup> ਕਰਮਿ<sup>10</sup> ਪਵੈ ਨੀਸਾਣੁ<sup>11</sup> ॥  
 ਕਚ<sup>12</sup> ਪਕਾਈ<sup>13</sup> ਓਥੈ ਪਾਇ ॥  
 ਨਾਨਕ ਗਇਆ ਜਾਪੈ ਜਾਇ ॥ ੩੪ ॥

*Nights, seasons, days, and weeks;*

*Wind, water, and fire in the center of the Earth<sup>1</sup>;*

*Amidst all these natural phenomena and resources,*

***the Earth is placed as a venue to practice righteousness<sup>2</sup>.***

*Thereon are various types of living beings<sup>3</sup>.*

*And their names and kinds are uncountable.*

*By their deeds<sup>4</sup> their destinies are judged<sup>5</sup>.*

*The court<sup>6</sup> of the Ever-Existing (God) is true.*

*In that court only nobles<sup>7</sup> are accepted<sup>8</sup>.*

*This honor of acceptance of good deeds<sup>10</sup> is achieved<sup>11</sup> by the blessing<sup>9</sup> of the God.*

Nanak says:

*Whether one is ordinary<sup>12</sup> or elevated<sup>13</sup> is sent for judgment and is judged in the court of God. 34.*

AGGS, Jap 34. p 7 [1].

**Note:** ਪਾਤਾਲ<sup>1</sup> (*Patal*): Here '*Patal*' is not a mythical '*Patal*', so -called nether world, it means the center of earth where it is too

hot and everything is in molten form. According to Bachan [2] '*Patal*' is the center of earth also.

Here Guru Nanak is explaining that the earth is a venue to practice righteousness. On this earth God has supplied all the natural resources and necessary phenomena for sustaining all types of living beings. One is judged as an ordinary or elevated one according to the deeds performed. In the court of Ever-Existing (God) only those are honored who have been blessed because of their good deeds. The 'court of God' has been used here metaphorically for the Laws of Nature since every action and reaction is going on under these laws and one gets the result of these laws right here in this life.

The God, after creating the Earth and the necessary environment for sustaining life, declared the earth as the **realm of justice**, where the actions (good or evil) will be considered. The word, "*Dharmasaal*", used in Nanakian Philosophy has been interpreted as the 'realm of justice'; because the word "*dharam*" according to Nanakian Philosophy means Laws of Nature (God) set to control all the actions and reactions going on in the whole Universe and in every living being; and "*saal*" means the venue/place. It is just possible that the "*saal*" may have its common roots in Archaic Punjabi and/or in French 'salle', which means, 'house', 'room', 'hall', 'place'. Therefore, in this 'realm of justice', the Earth, everybody will be adjudged and honored or punished according to their deeds under the Laws of Nature.

In continuation of the above basic principle of Nanakian Philosophy the importance of air, water and earth; and of days and nights have been expressed as the Guru (teacher), the father, the Mother Nature, and the nurses, respectively, for sustaining life on this planet:

### ii) Natural Resources and Environment

ਪਵਣੁ<sup>1</sup> ਗੁਰੂ ਪਾਣੀ ਪਿਤਾ ਮਾਤਾ<sup>2</sup> ਧਰਤੀ<sup>3</sup> ਮਹਤੁ<sup>4</sup> ॥  
 ਦਿਵਸੁ<sup>5</sup> ਰਾਤਿ<sup>6</sup> ਦੁਇ ਦਾਈ<sup>7</sup> ਦਾਇਆ<sup>8</sup> ਖੇਲੈ ਸਗਲ<sup>9</sup> ਜਗਤੁ<sup>10</sup> ॥  
 ਚੰਗਿਆਈਆ<sup>11</sup> ਬੁਰਿਆਈਆ<sup>12</sup> ਵਾਚੈ ਧਰਮੁ<sup>13</sup> ਹਦੁਰਿ<sup>14</sup> ॥  
 ਕਰਮੀ<sup>15</sup> ਆਪੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਕੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਕੇ ਦੂਰਿ ॥  
 ਜਿਨੀ ਨਾਮੁ<sup>16</sup> ਧਿਆਇਆ<sup>17</sup> ਗਏ ਮਸਕਤਿ<sup>18</sup> ਘਾਲਿ ॥  
 ਨਾਨਕ ਤੇ ਮੁਖ ਉਜਲ<sup>19</sup> ਕੇਤੀ<sup>20</sup> ਛੁਟੀ ਨਾਲਿ ॥੧॥

AGGS, Sloka of Jap, p 8; M 2, p 146.

*Air<sup>1</sup> is like a Guru, water like a father (represent environment and resource), and Earth<sup>2</sup> is like the great<sup>4</sup> mother<sup>2</sup> (which provides all types of resources and food).*

*Both day<sup>5</sup> and night<sup>6</sup> are like male-nurse<sup>7</sup> and female nurse<sup>8</sup>, respectively, and the whole<sup>9</sup> humanity<sup>10</sup> plays in their laps.*

(Means the humanity enjoys these natural environment and resources provided by God. Therefore, it is the duty of humans to practice righteousness.)

(Now) your virtues (good deeds)<sup>11</sup> and vices (bad deeds)<sup>12</sup> are evaluated under<sup>14</sup> the Laws of Nature<sup>13</sup>.

Since people are honored according to their deeds<sup>15</sup>, therefore, some will come near to salvation while others will remain away from it.

Nanak says:

The faces of those nobles<sup>16</sup>, who have comprehended<sup>14</sup> God<sup>13</sup>, glow with happiness and attain liberation from their troubles<sup>15</sup>. And with the association of such nobles many others<sup>17</sup> can attain salvation.

AGGS, Sloka Jap, p 8; M 2, p 146.

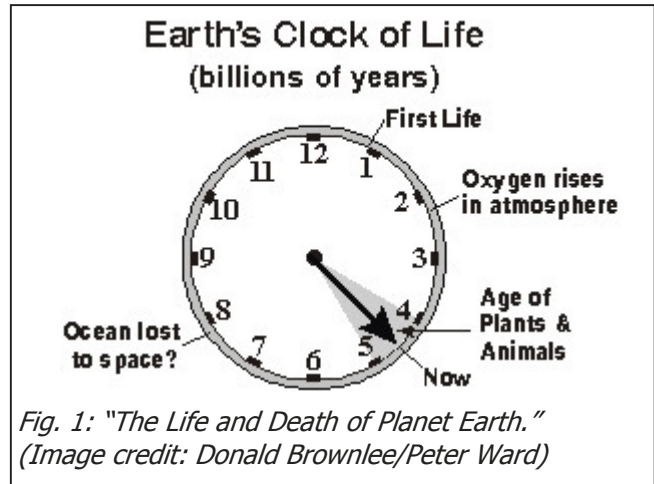
Here it is explained that God has provided all the natural resources, i.e. air, water and Earth; the necessary phenomena - day, night, and seasons; and the necessary environment for all the living beings on this earth. Therefore, the earth provides all types of resources and necessary environment to sustain life. And all these resources and the environment around the Earth belong to the whole humanity to be shared equally. Those, who would practice righteousness will be near or far away from salvation according to the deeds conducted by them.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804 CE) in his essay *Toward Perpetual Peace* claimed that the expansion of hospitality with regard to "use of the right to the earth's surface which belongs to the human race in common" would "finally bring the human race ever closer to a cosmopolitan constitution" [9].

**iii) Age of the Earth**

While we keep ourselves busy in fighting with each other either on religious bases or some other reason we are ignoring the fact that we, the humanity, are not going to live on this Earth forever. According to Vince Stricherz [13] that in its 4.5 billion years, Earth has evolved from it's hot, violent birth to the celebrated watery blue planet that stands out in pictures from space. But in a new book, two noted University of Washington astrobiologists say the planet already has begun the long process of devolving into a burned-out cinder, eventually to be swallowed by the sun.

By their reckoning, Earth's "day in the sun" has reached 4:30 a.m., corresponding to its 4.5 billion-year age. By 5 a.m., the 1 billion-year reign of animals and plants will come to an end (Fig. 1). Therefore, we should not forget that life is going to disappear from this Earth after about 500,000,000 years. Now it is up to us to decide whether we want to disappear before that time by fighting with each other on religious grounds or on some other reasons or we want to live up to the last moment of life of this Earth available to us by maintaining peace. At 8 a.m. the oceans will vaporize. At noon – after 12 billion years –



the ever-expanding sun, transformed into a red giant, will engulf the planet, melting away any evidence it ever existed and sending molecules and atoms that once were Earth floating off into space.

“The disappearance of our planet is still 7.5 billion years away, but people really should consider the fate of our world and have a realistic understanding of where we are going,” said UW astrophysicist Donald Brownlee. “We live in a fabulous place at a fabulous time. It’s a healthy thing for people to realize what a treasure this is in space and time, and fully appreciate and protect their environment as much as possible.”

**3. Status of Man among the Living Organisms**

The next most important point in Nanakian Philosophy is to understand the status of man among the living organisms on this Earth. The human has been declared as of the highest order developed through long evolutionary processes. Not going through the long history of Darwin’s Theory of Evolution I come to origin of man according to Nanakian Philosophy. Although there is no direct information about the origin of man in Nanakian Philosophy, however, the following phrase of Guru Amardas indicates where the man comes from:

**i) The Roots of Man:**

ਮਨ ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰੁਪ ਹੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੂਲੁ ਪਛਾਣ\* ॥

AGGS, M 3, p 441.

(\* This stanza was first uttered by Guru Nanak as admitted by Guru Amardas: ਇਉਂ ਕਹੈ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਮਨ ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰੁਪੁ ਹੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੂਲੁ ਪਛਾਣੁ ॥)

Many of the Sikh theologians interpret ਮਨ (*mann*) as ‘soul’ as has been accepted right from the time of Plato and ancient philosophy of India (Hinduism). Therefore, the above phrase is usually interpreted as follows:

“My soul, thou art the embodiment (image) of Divine light, so know thy source.”

If we look into the following information its interpretation would be entirely different than that. Humans share many genes with yeasts, worms, fruit flies, and lettuce, about 90% with mice and about 99% with chimpanzees. Pollard [10] reported that Chimpanzees are the closest living relatives of humans and share nearly 99 percent of our DNA. The efforts to identify those regions of the human genome that have changed the most since chimps and humans diverged from a common ancestor have helped pinpoint the DNA sequences that make us human. She further said that the findings have also provided vital insights into how chimps and humans can differ so profoundly, despite having nearly identical DNA blueprints.

Keeping in view the above information it becomes evident that man can trace back his roots (*mool*) to primate (chimpanzees) to mice to plants (lettuce) to microorganisms and ultimately to DNA – composed of 5 elements (Hydrogen, Carbon, Oxygen, Nitrogen and Phosphorus). The first element originated from Energy was Hydrogen which gave rise to other elements found on this Earth. Therefore, the primordial source of life is Energy, which is called '*Jyot*' in Gurbani. This Energy (*Jyot*) gave rise to matter (the whole Universe) according to the equation of Energy ( $E = mc^2$ ). This information leads us to the evolution of man through successive stages of evolution from DNA molecule to single-celled to multi-cellular form to higher life of plants and animal culminating at highest form, the man, of evolution.

Gurbani had also explained the evolution of man through different stages of various living forms starting from the smallest organism as indicated in the following Sabd starting as:

ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਭਏ ਕੀਟ ਪਤੰਗਾ ॥...AGGS, M 5, p 176.

However, the sequence of evolution described in the above Sabd is not exactly according to modern theory of evolution of man.

It is further mentioned in the Gurbani that man is at the highest level of evolution and he is the commander of all the living beings on this earth:

ਅਵਰ ਜੋਨਿ ਤੇਰੀ ਪਨਿਹਾਰੀ ॥

ਇਸੁ ਧਰਤੀ ਮੀਹ ਤੇਰੀ ਸਿਕਦਾਰੀ ॥

*All other beings (excluding human) are at your service.*

*You are the commander on this Earth.*

AGGS, M 5, p 374.

Now keeping in view the above related verses, the first verse (ਮਨ<sup>1</sup>\* ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ<sup>2</sup> ਸਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੂਲੁ<sup>3</sup> ਪਛਾਣ<sup>4</sup> ॥) can be interpreted scientifically and logically as follows:

*"Hay Man (mind)<sup>1</sup>! Recognize<sup>4</sup> your roots<sup>3</sup>.*

*Your roots are from the primordial Energy (*Jyot*)<sup>2</sup>, the God."*

\*ਮਨ (*Mann*) in Nanakian Philosophy means 'mind', 'brain', and sometimes represents 'man' but not 'soul' as is translated by some theologians.

Finally, it could be concluded that after passing through long process of evolution starting from the Energy (*Jyot*) man has attained human form, the highest form of evolution and has become the commander of all the living beings. The above stanzas clearly indicate the evolution of man but not creation of man as man usually understood in many religions.

Recently, scientists have almost completed the sequencing of human genome, *The Book of Life*. The impact of 'The Book of Life' is expected to be enormous. It would help us to find out that an individual is prone to what diseases and problems: Alzheimer's disease, heart problems, cholesterol, addiction to tobacco, alcohol, etc. It would also help to do the gene therapy to control the diseases that are caused by certain genes. Transfer for human gene in pigs to produce different organs for transplants into humans will be a big biological business in the future [4].

Bill Clinton, US President has expressed mapping of human genome as follows: "*Today we are learning the language in which God created life. We are gaining ever more awe for the complexity, the beauty, the wonder of God's most divine and sacred gift.*" [4]. Bill Clinton further said that: "*If the project (The Book of Life) proves anything, it is the most important fact of life on this Earth is our 'common community'*" [CNN.com, June 27, 2000]. The human being, as a common community, is the basic principle of Nanakian Philosophy that was taught during 15<sup>th</sup> century by Guru Nanak. Scientists have now discovered this fact that all the human beings are a '*common community*'.

The man being at the top of the evolution and being a commander of all living beings is advised to practice altruism and egalitarianism for fellow humans in Nanakian Philosophy.

#### 4. Altruism

Altruism is most important feature of Nanakian Philosophy. It has been represented that the education of a person is only good or worth if it is used for the service and up lift of the humanity. It has also been mentioned many times in the AGGS that any type of service that is far the welfare of the humanity is considered the service to God. Therefore, unselfish concern for the welfare of the humanity (altruism) is the first and foremost principle of Nanakian Philosophy as explained in the following verses: ਵਿਦਿਆ<sup>1</sup> ਵੀਚਾਰੀ<sup>2</sup> ਤਾਂ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ<sup>3</sup> ॥

Nanak Says:

*That education<sup>1</sup> is worth<sup>2</sup>, which is applied<sup>3</sup> to the welfare<sup>3</sup> of the humanity*

AGGS, M 1, p 356.

This is also the motto of the Punjabi University, Patiala, India.

ਜੇਤੇ ਜੀਅ<sup>1</sup> ਤੇਤੇ ਸਭਿ ਤੇਰੇ ਵਿਣੁ ਸੇਵਾ<sup>2</sup>\* ਫਲੁ<sup>3</sup> ਕਿਸੈ ਨਾਹੀ ॥  
*All those living beings<sup>1</sup> (on this earth) are Yours.  
 Without service<sup>2</sup>\*, no one obtains any reward<sup>3</sup>.*  
 AGGS, M 1, p 354.

What does ਸੇਵਾ<sup>2</sup>\* (Sewa/Service) mean here?

Guru Nanak explains ਸੇਵਾ (service) as follows:  
 ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ<sup>1</sup> ਸਬਦੁ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ<sup>2</sup> ॥ ਹਉਸੈ<sup>3</sup> ਮਾਰੇ<sup>4</sup> ਕਰਣੀ<sup>5</sup> ਸਾਰੁ ॥  
 ਜਪੁ ਤਪੁ ਸੰਜਮੁ<sup>6</sup> ਪਾਠੁ<sup>7</sup> ਪੁਰਾਣੁ<sup>8</sup> ॥  
 ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਅਪੰਰਖਰੁ<sup>9</sup> ਮਾਨੁ<sup>10</sup> ॥

*The service<sup>1</sup> to the Guru is to comprehend<sup>2</sup>  
 the philosophy<sup>2</sup> of the Guru.*

What is that philosophy?

*Getting rid<sup>3</sup> of ego<sup>4</sup> and to do good deeds<sup>6</sup> is the  
 service to the God.*

What is the benefit of good deeds and getting rid of ego?

*Consider<sup>13</sup> doing good deeds and knowing the God is  
 more than<sup>12</sup> (highest of all) that of all your meditation<sup>7</sup>,  
 austerities<sup>8</sup>, self-discipline<sup>9</sup> and reading<sup>10</sup> of Puranas<sup>11</sup>.*  
 AGGS, M 1, p 223.

The main principle of the Nanakian Philosophy given here is that getting rid of ego and doing good deeds for the humanity are the greatest service of all. Finally, Guru Arjan sums up altruism in Nanakian Philosophy as follows:

ਸਫਲੁ<sup>1</sup> ਜਨਮੁ<sup>2</sup> ਹਰਿ ਜਨ ਕਾ ਉਪਜਿਆ ਜਿਨਿ ਕੀਨੋ ਸਉਤੁ<sup>3</sup> ਬਿਧਾਤਾ<sup>4</sup> ॥  
 ਸਗਲੁ<sup>5</sup> ਸਮੂਹੁ<sup>6</sup> ਲੈ ਉਧਰੇ<sup>7</sup> ਨਾਨਕ ਪੂਰਨੁ<sup>8</sup> ਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ<sup>9</sup> ਪਛਾਤਾ<sup>10</sup> ॥

Nanak says:

*Successful<sup>1</sup> are those lives<sup>2</sup> (devotees),  
 who consider that everyone is the child<sup>3</sup> of God<sup>4</sup>.  
 Those, who have realized<sup>10</sup> the perfect<sup>8</sup> God<sup>9</sup>,  
 take along with them all<sup>5</sup> their colleagues<sup>6</sup> across  
 the sea of life<sup>7</sup>.*

AGGS, M 5, p 532.

## 5. Egalitarianism

### a. Oneness and Sameness (Equality)

Guru Nanak preached the Oneness, Omnipresence, Omnipotence, and Omniscience of the God and the sameness of all the peoples. Every human is equal to each other as explained in the following stanza:

ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਉਚਾ<sup>1</sup> ਆਖੀਐ ਨੀਚੁ<sup>2</sup> ਨ ਦੀਸੈ ਕੋਇ ॥  
 ਇਕਨੈ<sup>3</sup> ਭਾਂਡੈ<sup>4</sup> ਸਾਜਿਐ<sup>5</sup> ਇਕੁ ਚਾਨਣੁ<sup>6</sup>\* ਤਿਹੁ ਲੋਇ<sup>7</sup> ॥  
 ਕਰਮਿ<sup>8</sup> ਮਿਲੈ ਸਚੁ<sup>9</sup> ਪਾਈਐ ਧੁਰਿ<sup>10</sup> ਬਖਸੀ<sup>11</sup> ਨ ਮੇਟੈ<sup>12</sup> ਕੋਇ ॥੬॥

*Call everyone exalted<sup>1</sup>; none appears to be low<sup>2</sup>;  
 Everyone has been moulded<sup>5</sup> from the same<sup>3</sup> matter<sup>4</sup>;  
 And the same source of light<sup>6</sup> shines<sup>7</sup> in all.*

Finally, Guru Nanak explains:

*Such actions<sup>3</sup> are developed through nature<sup>10</sup> (heredity)*

*and the Grace<sup>11</sup> of God<sup>9</sup>, which cannot be erased<sup>12</sup>.6.*  
 AGGS, M 1, p 62.

\*ਚਾਨਣ: ਜੋਤ (Jyot): Energy.

### b. Caste-system

If basically we all are same, being the creation of the only One, the God, then why should we have any hatred among ourselves? Guru Nanak realized that this hatred was mostly due to caste-system prevailing before and during his time. Most scholars say that Guru Nanak revolted against the caste-system; in fact, he revolted against any type of discrimination based on the creed, color, country of origin, social status, sex, etc. Although we may find slight morphological differences [11] in peoples of different regions of the world, which developed due to the different ecology of those regions, but we all share the same physiological processes to maintain the life and were created by the same one Father, the God. Most probably we all might have one same mother originated somewhere in Africa according to the latest research on the origin of man.

ਫਕੜੀ ਜਾਤੀ<sup>1</sup> ਫਕੜੁ ਨਾਉ<sup>2</sup> ।

ਸਭਨਾ ਜੀਆ ਇਕਾ ਛਾਉ<sup>3</sup> ॥

ਆਪਹੁ ਜੇ ਕੋ ਭਲਾ<sup>4</sup> ਕਹਾਏ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਤਾ ਪਰੁ ਜਾਪੈ ਜਾ ਪਤਿ<sup>5</sup> ਲੇਖੋ<sup>6</sup> ਪਾਇ ॥੧॥

*Pride in social status<sup>2</sup> and personal glory<sup>3</sup> are useless<sup>1</sup>  
 since every living being is under one Law and Order.*

*One may call oneself as a noble man<sup>8</sup> but nobility<sup>6</sup> is  
 achieved when one's good deeds are accepted<sup>2</sup>.*

AGGS, M 1, p 83.

### c. Sharing of Material Wealth

Sharing of earning for the uplift of the humanity:

ਘਾਲੀ<sup>1</sup> ਖਾਇ<sup>2</sup> ਕਿਛੁ<sup>3</sup> ਹਬਹੁ ਦੇਹਿ<sup>4</sup> ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹੁ<sup>5</sup> ਪਛਾਣਹਿ<sup>6</sup> ਸੇਇ ॥

AGGS, M 1, p 1284.

"Nanak Says:

*The one who earns<sup>2</sup> with his sweat of brow<sup>1</sup> and  
 shares<sup>4</sup> some of his earning<sup>3</sup> for the welfare of the  
 humanity has recognized<sup>6</sup> the real path of life<sup>3</sup>.*

It is not only sharing of the earnings but sharing of the philosophy/knowledge/wisdom with that of others and accepting the best ones and discarding the worst ones as recommended in Nanakian Philosophy is also part of egalitarianism as discussed earlier.

## 6. Truthful living

Everybody understands that the truth is of the highest order in the morality but Guru Nanak emphasizes that it is actually the truthful living that is highest of all:

ਮਨਹਠੀ<sup>1</sup> ਬੁਧੀ<sup>2</sup> ਕੇਤੀਆ ਕੇਤੇ ਬੇਦ<sup>3</sup> ਬੀਚਾਰ<sup>4</sup> ॥

ਕੇਤੇ ਬੰਧਨਾ ਜੀਅ ਕੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਮੋਖ ਦੁਆਰ ॥  
ਸਚਹੁ ਓਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਆਚਾਰੁ ॥੫॥  
ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ ੧, ੫-੬੨.

*Stubborn-minded<sup>1</sup> intelligent<sup>2</sup> have contemplated<sup>4</sup> the Vedas<sup>3</sup>.*

*There are so many rituals in Vedas in which one is entangled<sup>5</sup>, but only Guru-oriented<sup>6</sup> person get salvation<sup>7</sup>.  
Who is the Guru-oriented person? Guru Nanak explains it as follows:*

*Although truth<sup>8</sup> is higher than everything; but higher still is truthful<sup>9</sup> living<sup>10</sup>. 5.*

### 7. Good Deeds – The Highest Religion

The above principle of Guru Nanak has further been explained by Guru Arjan that practicing righteousness on this earth is the highest religion of all:

ਸਰਬੰ ਧਰਮੰ ਮਹਿ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਸਣੰ ਧਰਮੁ ॥  
ਹਰਿ ਕੋ ਨਾਮ ਜਪਿੰ ਨਿਰਮਲੰ ਕਰਮੁੰ ॥

AGGS, M 5, p 266.

*Amongst all<sup>1</sup> the religions<sup>2</sup>, the highest<sup>3</sup> religion of the human is to do good<sup>5</sup> deeds<sup>6</sup> that is equivalent to the repetition<sup>4</sup>\* of God's name."*

\*In some religions repetition of God's name or of certain deity or certain mantra is considered the highest of all religious duties. And many Sikh theologians also interpret it literally so. But according to Nanakian Philosophy all such acts are of no avail. Conducting good deeds is the highest social responsibility rather than repetition of God's name or of any deity or any mantra.

### 8. Jealousy

Jealousy is another factor of hatred between two groups, between two communities, between two religions, between two races, between two nations, between two countries etc. Most of the time the jealousy is due to the economic factor that one group is more prosperous than the others because of their special traits and virtues. Instead of feeling jealous that creates hatred, that group should develop friendship with the other groups to raise them to their levels. Nanakian Philosophy explains that jealousy could be controlled by keeping the company of good peoples. Once we get rid of jealousy then nobody is an enemy or a stranger for us:

ਬਿਸਰਿੰ ਗਈ ਸਭ ਤਾਤਿ ਪਰਾਈ ॥

ਜਬ ਤੇ ਸਾਧਸੰਗਤਿ ਮੋਹਿ ਪਾਈ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

ਨਾ ਕੋ ਬੈਰੀ ਨਹੀ ਬਿਗਾਨਾ ਸਗਲੰ ਸੰਗਿ ਹਮ ਕਉ ਬਨਿ ਆਈ ॥੧॥

ਜੋ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕੀਨੋ ਸੋ ਭਲ ਮਾਨਿਓ ਏਹ ਸੁਮਤਿ ਸਾਧੂ ਤੇ ਪਾਈ ॥੨॥

ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਰਵਿੰ ਰਹਿਆ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਏਕੈ ਪੇਖਿ ਪੇਖਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਬਿਗਾਸਾਈ ॥੩॥੮॥

*I have totally forgotten<sup>1</sup> to be jealous of others prosperity<sup>2</sup> since I have found the company of noble people<sup>3</sup>. Pause.*

*Now no one is my enemy<sup>4</sup> or stranger<sup>5</sup> to me, therefore, I can get along with<sup>7</sup> everyone<sup>6</sup>. 1.*

*I accept<sup>9</sup> what is being done<sup>8</sup> by God under Its Laws of*

*Nature since I have attained this wisdom<sup>10</sup> from the company of the noble people<sup>11</sup>. 2.*

*I also realized that The One God<sup>13</sup> is pervading<sup>12</sup> in everyone and to see<sup>14</sup> them happy<sup>15</sup>. 3. 8.*

AGGS, M 5, p 1299.

**9. Egoism/Egotism:** According to the Nanakian philosophy egoism/egotism is the biggest factor in human nature that leads him toward his destruction. Getting rid of the nature of egoism/egotism is the greatest achievement of all for self-improvement and to maintain peace with others:

ਆਪੁੰ ਵੰਵਾਏ ਤਾ ਸਭ ਕਿਛੁ ਪਾਏ ॥

ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦੀ ਸਚੀ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਏ ॥

AGGS, M 3, p 115.

Guru Amardas says:

*By destroying<sup>2</sup> egoism<sup>1</sup> one can achieve everything<sup>3</sup>.*

*This can be achieved by contemplating<sup>5</sup> on the teachings of Guru (Nanak)<sup>4</sup>.*

### 10. Tolerance

Once it becomes clear about the Oneness of the God and sameness of the whole humanity; and we eliminate egoism; follow the path of truthful living; and overcome the jealousy then developing fellowship of humanity would be easier if we have a spirit of tolerance and accommodation of ideas of others. When Guru Nanak had some discussions with the Siddhas, they claimed to belong to the highest class, so-called 'Aayee Panthi', then Guru Nanak advises them that the whole humanity belongs to the highest class according to the evolution of human:

ਆਈ ਪੰਥੀ ਸਗਲ ਜਮਾਤੀ ॥

*The whole humanity belongs to the highest class, the 'Aayee Panthee'.*

AGGS. Jap 28, p 6.

**11. Non-violence:** The politeness and humility are the major factors that lead to the development of the principle of non-violence. Thus, cultivation of politeness and humility is the first and foremost characteristic of Sikhism:

ਮਿਠਤੁ ਨੀਵੀ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਗੁਣੰ ਚੰਗਿਆਈਆਂ ਤਤੁ ॥

Nanak says:

*Sweetness<sup>1</sup> (politeness) and humility<sup>2</sup> are the essence<sup>3</sup> of virtue<sup>3</sup> and goodness<sup>4</sup>.*

AGGS, M 1, p 470.

ਮੰਦਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਨ ਆਖੀਐ ਪਤਿ ਅਖਰੁ ਏਹੋ ਬੁਝੀਐ ॥

ਮੁਰਬੈ ਨਾਲਿ ਨ ਲੁਝੀਐ ॥

*Do not call<sup>2</sup> anyone bad<sup>1</sup> and don't argue<sup>6</sup> with a fool,<sup>5</sup> I have discovered<sup>4</sup> after studying the word<sup>3</sup>.*

AGGS, M 1, p 473.

ਗਰੀਬੀ ਗਦਾ ਹਮਾਰੀ ॥

ਖੰਨਾ ਸਗਲ ਰੇਨੁ ਛਾਰੀ ॥

ਇਸੁ ਆਗੈ ਕੇ ਨ ਟਿਕੈ ਵੇਕਾਰੀ ॥

ਗੁਰ ਪੂਰੇ ਏਹ ਗਲ ਸਾਰੀ ॥

*Humility<sup>1</sup> is my mace<sup>2</sup>.*

*My dagger<sup>3</sup> is to be the dust of all<sup>4</sup> men's feet<sup>5,6</sup> (means service to the humanity).*

*No evil doer<sup>9</sup> can withstand<sup>8</sup> against<sup>7</sup> these weapons.*

*The Perfect Guru<sup>10</sup> (Nanak) me this understanding.<sup>11</sup>*  
AGGS, M 5, p 628.

This philosophy was not only developed by the Sikh Gurus merely for teaching to the Sikhs but to be practised by them (the Gurus) and by the Sikhs. Therefore, Guru Arjan preferred to be sacrificed to keep up the principle of non-violence rather than to take up arms when he was ordered to change the teachings of Sikh Gurus incorporated into the AGGS to favor the rulers of that time. Similarly, Guru Teg Bahadur sacrificed himself rather to take up arms to resolve the problem of human rights that the then rulers were violating. Since then, the Sikhs have maintained this tradition of non-violence. There are many examples of observance of non-violence for resolving religious issues with the government in the history of the Sikhs. Some glaring examples of observance of non-violence by the Sikhs are found during the struggle of independence of India. From a practical point of view the Sikh Gurus and the Sikhs were the first to adopt non-violence during the beginning of 17<sup>th</sup> century to resolve the differences between the rulers and the ruled.

### 12. Fearing of none and Threatening to none:

Sometimes the politeness, humility and practising of non-violence by a particular nation or a community is taken as its weakness to be exploited by the other deceitful nation or community. Thus, to safeguard the so-called weakness, Guru Teg Bahadur established the following two principles: The first principle is that one should be strong enough not to be afraid of anyone and being strong, should not threaten others:

ਭੈ ਕਾਹੂ ਕਉ ਦੇਤ ਨਹਿ, ਨਹਿ ਭੈ ਮਾਨਤ ਆਨ ॥

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨਿ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਤਾਹਿ ਬਖਾਨਿ ॥੧੬॥

*Oh mind (man)<sup>5</sup>! Listen<sup>4</sup>!*

*A person who does<sup>2</sup> not threaten<sup>1</sup> anybody and does not accept<sup>3</sup> the threat of anybody that person is described<sup>7</sup> as the wise/intellectual<sup>6</sup>.*

AGGS, M 9, p 1427.

The first principle of Nanakian Philosophy is that one should be strong enough not to be afraid of anyone and being strong, should not threaten others as described above. The second principle is the establishment of power to keep up the above principle to maintain the politeness, humility and peace. Therefore, possession of power is also necessary to cut off the fetters of slavery if one falls into it: ਬਲੁ ਛੁਟਕਿਓ ਬੰਧਨੁ ਪਰੇ ਕਛੁ ਨ ਹੋਤ ਉਪਾਇ ॥

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਅਬ ਓਟੈ ਹਰਿ ਗਜ ਜਿਉ ਹੋਤੁ ਸਹਾਇ ॥੫੩॥

ਬਲੁ ਹੋਆ ਬੰਧਨ ਛੁਟੇ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਹੋਤੁ ਉਪਾਇ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਤੁਮਰੈ ਹਾਥੈ ਮੈ ਤੁਮ ਹੀ ਹੋਤ ਸਹਾਇ ॥੫੪॥

Nanak says:

*One falls into shackles<sup>3</sup> when one loses<sup>2</sup> his all powers<sup>1</sup>; then he cannot do<sup>5</sup> anything<sup>4</sup>.*

*Under such circumstances one looks for help<sup>6</sup> of God<sup>7</sup> as has been mentioned in mythology that God helped<sup>9</sup> the elephant<sup>8</sup> caught by an octopus. 53.*

However, Nanak explains his philosophy in the next stanza as follows:

*When one regains his power then one can break the shackles and he can achieve whatever he likes.*

*When one is working under these Laws of Nature then God<sup>10</sup> comes to help (means every thing happens according to the Laws of Nature). 54.*

AGGS, M 9, p 1429.

### 13. Freedom of Expression

There is complete freedom of expression in Nanakian Philosophy. And discussion can only be held if one listens to others and expresses one's views to the others:

ਜਬੈ ਲਗੁ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਰਹੀਐ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਿਛੁ ਸੁਣੀਐ ਕਿਛੁ ਕਹੀਐ ॥

*As long as<sup>1,2</sup> one lives in this world<sup>3</sup> one must listen<sup>5</sup> to others<sup>4</sup> and express<sup>6</sup> oneself to the others (to find the truth).*

AGGS, M 1, p 661.

### 14. Praise of Woman

Guru Nanak has highest praise for women and also has indicated her importance in raising the future humanity in the following verses:

ਭੰਡਿ ਜੰਮੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਨਿੰਮੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਮੰਗਣੁ ਵੀਆਹੁ ॥

ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਭੰਡਹੁ ਚਲੈ ਰਾਹੁ ॥

ਭੰਡੁ ਮੁਆ ਭੰਡੁ ਭਾਲੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਬੰਧਨੁ ॥

ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਜੰਮਹਿ੧੩ ਰਾਜਾਨ ॥

ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੀ ਭੰਡੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਭੰਡੇ ਬਾਬੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਭੰਡੇ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਏਕੈ ਸੋਇ ॥

ਜਿਤੁ ਮੁਖਿ ਸਦਾ ਸਾਲਾਹੀਐ ਭਾਗਾ ਰਤੀ ਚਾਰਿ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਤੇ ਮੁਖ ਉਜਲੈ ਤਿਤੁ ਸਚੈ ਦਰਬਾਰਿ ॥੨॥

AGGS, M 1, p 473.

*From the woman<sup>1</sup> is our birth<sup>2</sup>; in the woman's womb<sup>4</sup> one grows<sup>3</sup>; to the woman one is engaged<sup>5</sup>; to the woman one is wedded<sup>6</sup>.*

*One be friends<sup>7</sup> with woman and starts one's life<sup>8</sup>.*

*When woman is dead<sup>9</sup> and another woman is sought<sup>10</sup> and with woman we are attached<sup>11</sup> and raise a family.*

*Why call woman evil<sup>12</sup> that gives birth<sup>13</sup> to kings<sup>14</sup>?*

*From the woman is born<sup>15</sup> a woman, without woman there is none.*

Nanak says:

*There is only One<sup>16</sup>, the Eternal, who is not dependent upon woman.*

*That person, who always praises<sup>17</sup> the One, is very fortunate.*



*That person's face glows<sup>18</sup> in the court<sup>20</sup> of God<sup>19</sup> (means contented).*

### 16. Benign Sovereignty

If everybody abides by the above principles laid out in Nanakian Philosophy, it would definitely lead to the development of the benign sovereignty as conceived by Guru Arjan, under which the whole humanity would live in peace on this planet, the earth:

ਹੁਣਿ ਹੁਕਮ<sup>1</sup> ਹੋਆ ਮਿਹਰਵਾਣਾ<sup>2</sup> ਦਾ ॥ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਕਿਸੈ ਰਵਾਣਦਾ<sup>3</sup> ॥

ਸਭ ਸੁਖਾਲੀ<sup>4</sup> ਵਠੀਆ<sup>5</sup> ਇਹੁ ਹੋਆ ਹਲੇਮੀ<sup>6</sup> ਰਾਜੁ ਜੀਉ ॥੧੩॥

*Now, the Merciful<sup>2</sup> God has issued a command<sup>1</sup> of benign<sup>6</sup> rule<sup>7</sup> that no one will chase and attack<sup>3</sup> anyone and everyone will live<sup>5</sup> easily<sup>4</sup> in peace. 13.*

AGGS, M 5, p 74.

### FINAL MESSAGE

Here is a message, based on Nanakian Philosophy, from Guru Arjan, which can be widely accepted by the whole humanity of Current Science Age:

ਆਗਾਹਾ<sup>1</sup> ਕੂ ਤ੍ਰਾਪਿ<sup>2</sup> ਪਿਛਾ<sup>3</sup> ਫੋਰਿ ਨ ਮੁਹਡੜਾ<sup>4</sup> ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਿਤਿ<sup>5</sup> ਇਵੇਹਾ<sup>6</sup> ਵਾਰ ਬਹੁੜਿ<sup>7</sup> ਨ ਹੋਵੀ ਜਨਮੜਾ<sup>8</sup> ॥੧॥

Nanak says:

*"Think<sup>2</sup> about the future<sup>1</sup>,*

*look not on the past<sup>3</sup> over the shoulders<sup>4</sup>.*

*Make<sup>5</sup> the present life<sup>6</sup> a great success*

*Because there is no birth<sup>8</sup> again<sup>7</sup>."*

AGGS, M 5, p 1096.

This verse clearly indicates that there is no life after death. Since this is the only life, therefore, try to get best use of this life for uplift of the humanity, including you.

### CONCLUSIONS

I have tried to demonstrate that Nanakian Philosophy has universal acceptability. Similarly, if the representatives of other religions put forward their principles for the evaluation of their universal acceptability by the Joint Committee of representatives of all the religions, then the representatives of all the religions should sit together to recommend universally acceptable ethics to be followed by the whole humanity. This would be first great step forward to the establishment of fellowship of the humanity by resolving our differences and hatred then peace can easily be established on this Earth. Ultimately it would result reduction in the expenditure on arm race. The saving thus accrued could be spent on science and religion to exploit their potentials for the welfare of the humanity. Consequently, the humanity can easily be saved from its extinction from the atomic warfare and can live peacefully forever.

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14. *Why Religious Literacy is important in Today's World* - An International Symposium for Educators, Scholars and policy makers was held at Moyse Hall, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada on October 2, 2009.

\*Paper presented at the Council of Parliament of World Religions Conference held at Melbourne, Australia on December 3-9, 2009.