

WHERE DOES SIKHI STAND 550 YEARS AFTER GURU NANAK?

ARTICLE

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INTRODUCTION

Sikhi (Sikhism), founded by Guru Nanak (1469-1539), is considered a modern religion. The total population of its followers, “Sikhs”, is about 27 million worldwide. They make up 0.39 percent of the world population; approximately 83 percent (22,815,730) live in India. About 76 percent of all Sikhs live in the north Indian state of Punjab, where they form a majority of the population. [1] Although Sikhi is claimed by the Sikhs as a modern religion in the world, it is continuously misrepresented under the influence of Vedanta and ancient philosophy. Guru Nanak is usually described as a mystic who had a mystical experience at the age of 29 when he came out of the Vayein rivulet after being missing for three days. Emerging from the water, he proclaimed, “There is no Hindu; there is no Muslim.” Chahal et al [2] have refuted such stories in the book, *Nanak: The Guru – Founder of Sikhism*. In this book, they emphasize that Guru Nanak was a very keen observer of Cosmology, Nature and human behavior; and he started to formulate his philosophy from an early age. They also recommend that those who want to know about Nanak and his philosophy should look for it in his bani (hymns/verses/ words).

Today, Sikhi has become an esoteric, miraculous, mystic, and ritualistic religion because of the misrepresentation of Guru Nanak and his philosophy embodied in his bani. In spite of this, Sikhs have shown their ability and capability to be a vibrant community, contributing towards the uplifting of the economy of India and the foreign countries they have adopted. They are teachers in colleges and universities, scientists in various research organizations, and participate in politics at the state, provincial and municipal level. Additionally, there are many Sikhs who are multi-millionaires and have established successful businesses. They also participate at various positions in the army and police of India, Canada, Malaysia, the U.K., and U.S.A.

ABSTRACT

This article briefly discusses what Sikhi is, who is a Sikh, and how Sikhi became a ritualistic religion. It also discusses that ‘Sabd Guru’ became ‘Granth Guru’ with the passing of time. Interpolating and misconstruing the logo, ੴ, Khanda, ੴ, and some phrases of Guru Nanak are also discussed. It exposes that many Sikh and non-Sikh scholars have failed to understand Sikhi in its real perspective, indicating Sikhi has lost its originality. Thereafter, causes of misinterpretation of bani and misrepresentation of Sikhi are discussed. Some Sikhs have forgotten to give credit for preserving the Earth and Environment to Guru Nanak. Finally, there are some suggestions to Sikh scholars to present Sikhi in its real perspective during the celebration of the 550th Birthday of Guru Nanak in the year 2019. The Institute for Understanding Sikhism is also holding an International Conference to find out if the real Sikhi founded by Guru Nanak about 550 years ago could be re-discovered in its real perspective.

Sikhs are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to defend their rights and identity as well as millions of dollars to build magnificent gurdwaras. In the same way, a lot of money is spent to hold *Akhand Paths* (non-stop reading of the *Aad Guru Granth Sahib* - AGGS). In many gurdwaras, as many as 10 to 300 *Akhand Paths* are performed under one roof while nobody is listening (Fig.1). [3] Delicious *langar* (free food) is served in gurdwaras to feed people who are already well fed. *Langar* is also distributed to people in need around the world. On the other hand, very little money is spent to educate both Sikhs and non-Sikhs about Sikhi.

WHAT IS SIKHI?

The following discussion on Guru Nanak’s concept of Sikhi is based on the studies done by Chahal [4] and Chahal, et.al. [2]:

The word, **Sikhi**, has been defined in one phrase by Guru Nanak as follows:

ਸਿਖੀ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਗੁਰ ਵੀਚਾਰਿ ॥

Sikhī sikhī=ā gur vīchār.

ਅਗਰਾਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ 465.



Figure 1. A number of Akhand Paths under one roof with nobody listening.

Sikhi¹ is the teachings² which are based on the enlightening³ philosophy⁴.

AGGS, M 1, p 465. [5]

ਸਿਖਿਆ² (sikhia): Teachings: something that is taught, e.g. Doctrine.

ਗੁਰ³ (gur): A form of ਗੁਰੂ (guru).

According to Bhai Kahn Singh [6], the word 'Guru' originated from 'Gri', meaning to engulf and to enlighten, i.e., the one that engulfs the darkness (ignorance) and enlightens (makes to understand). According to him, 'Guru' in Gurbani is spelled as: ਗੁਰ, ਗੁਰੂ, ਗੁਰੂ (gur, gur, guru). In addition to these spellings, it is also spelled as ਗੁਰਿ (gur). In spite of the different spellings, all of these forms are pronounced as 'Guru' and means as explained above. Therefore, it means enlightening, enlightener, or enlightening philosophy which removes ignorance.

ਵੀਚਾਰਿ⁴ (vichar):

"Philosophy (from Greek φιλοσοφία, *philosophia*, literally "love of wisdom", is the study of general and fundamental problems concerning matters such as existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind and language. The term was probably coined by Pythagoras (c. 570–495 BCE). Philosophical methods include questioning, critical discussion, rational argument, and systematic presentation." [7]

This phrase confirms that Sikhi means 'philosophy'. And 'philosophy' is defined as:

"The rational investigation of the truths and principles of being, knowledge, or conduct." (dictionary.com)

This is what Guru Nanak did.

The irony is the word "philosophy" has never been applied by the Sikh intelligentsia in relation of Sikhi to humanity. So much so that even my use of the word philosophy and the use of questioning and reasoning to understand gurbani by Dr. Karminder Singh Dhillon in his talk delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Global Sikh Council held in Dubai on March 16-19, 2018 was criticized by some. In general, the application of logic, reason, and the scientific method are not allowed by the self-declared custodians of Sikhi in teaching and preaching Sikhi.

The word **Sikhi** is further explained by Guru Nanak as follows:

ਗੁਰੂ¹ ਸਮੁੰਦੁ² ਨਦੀ³ ਸਭਿ⁴ ਸਿਖੀ⁵ ਨਾਤੇ⁶ ਜਿਤੁ⁷ ਵਡਿਆਈ⁸ ||

Gurū samund nādī sabhī sikhī nāṭai jīt vadiāī.

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ 150.

The Guru¹ is like an ocean², in which rivers³ of whole⁴ philosophy⁵ fall in; bathing⁶ in such rivers means practicing Sikhi (enlightenment/enlightening

philosophy), glorious greatness⁸ is achieved⁷.

AGGS, M 1, p 150.

ਗੁਰੂ¹ (gurū) here means 'enlightenment'.

For example, in the West, the 'Age of Enlightenment' was a philosophical movement of the 17th and 18th centuries that promoted science and reason over myth and superstition. [8]

ਗੁਰੂ¹ ਸਮੁੰਦੁ² (*The Guru¹ is like an ocean²*) means 'the ocean of wisdom' in which all rives of enlightening philosophies fall in.

ਨਦੀ³ (*nadi*) branch of philosophy which covers matters such as existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind, and language

What does Guru mean in Gurbani?

The word, ਗੁਰੂ (gurū) has been used to convey various meanings depending upon the context in which it has been used in gurbani. In general, ਗੁਰੂ (gurū)

means enlightener, enlightening, or enlightenment as explained above. Bhai Kahn Singh in *Gurmat Martand* explains 'Guru' as follows [9]:

One that dispels ignorance and teaches the truth, affection, interest, and benefit (human rights). According to him, Nanak is the Guru sent by God to dispel ignorance and preach truth and human rights.

On the other hand, in Hinduism everybody is supposed to have a personal guru. Some Hindu families have their own family guru. Under these traditions, a question came up in the minds of Siddhas: if Nanak is a Guru, then who was his Guru? Therefore, during a discourse with Siddhas, the Siddhas questioned the young Nanak:

Who is your Guru?

ਕਵਣ ਮੂਲੁ¹ ਕਵਣ ਮਿਤ² ਵੇਲਾ³ ||

ਤੇਰਾ ਕਵਣੁ ਗੁਰੂ⁴ ਜਿਸ ਕਾ ਤੁਚੇਲਾ⁵ ||

Kavan mūl kavan miṭ velā.

Ferā kavan gurū jis kā tū chelā.

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ 943.

What is the source of beginning¹ and which type of philosophy² is of this Age³?

Who is that 'guru'⁴ of whom you are a disciple⁵?

AGGS, M 1, p 943.

Guru Nanak answered that his 'guru' is 'sabd' as follows:

ਪਵਨ¹ ਅਰੰਭੁ² ਸਿਤ³ ਗੁਰ⁴ ਮਿਤ⁵ ਵੇਲਾ⁶ ॥

ਸਬਦੁ⁷ ਗੁਰੂ⁸ ਸੁਰਿਤ⁹ ਧੁਨਿ¹⁰ ਚੇਲਾ¹¹ ॥

Pavan arambh satgur mat velā.

Sabad gurū surat̄ dhun chelā.

The air¹ is the beginning² of every life, and this is the age⁶ of enlightenment⁵ through the True³ Guru⁴.

Note: It appears that Guru Nanak started the Age of Enlightenment during 15th century. It became dominant during the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe. [8]

Who is the true guru?

It has been explained in the second sentence:

The sabd⁷ is the guru⁸ (enlightener), and my keen¹⁰ conscience⁹ is its disciple¹¹.

The next question is:

What is the 'Sabd' which is the 'Guru' of Nanak?

Guru Nanak has described 'sabd' as the 'guru' in stanza #38 of JAP bani as follows:

ਜਤੁ¹ ਪਾਹਾਰਾ² ਧੀਰਜੁ³ ਸੁਨਿਆਰੁ⁴ ॥

ਅਹਰਿਣ⁵ ਮਿਤ⁶ ਵੇਦੁ⁷ ਹਥੀਆਰੁ⁸ ॥

Jaṭ pāhārā dhīraj suniār.

Ahraṇ mat̄ veḍ hathīār.

Self-control¹ should be the furnace² and patience³ of the goldsmith⁴.

Wisdom⁶ should be the anvil⁵, and knowledge⁷ should be the tool⁸.

ਭਉ⁹ ਖਲਾ¹⁰ ਅਗਿਨ¹¹ ਤਪ ਤਾਉ ॥

ਭਾਂਡਾ¹² ਭਾਉ¹³ ਅੰਮਿਤੁ¹⁴ ਤਿਤੁ¹⁵ ਢਾਲਿ¹⁶ ॥

ਘੜੀਐ¹⁷ ਸਬਦੁ¹⁸ ਸਚੀ ਟਕਸਾਲ¹⁹ ॥

Bhāṁo khalā agan ṭap ṭāṁo.

Bhāṁdā bhāṁo amrit̄ ṭiṭ dhāl.

Ghārīṁai sabad̄ sachī taksāl.

Love⁹ for the Eternal Entity (God) should be the bellows¹⁰ to blow air into fire¹¹ to make it super-hot.

The body (mind), full of love¹³, is the melting pot¹² where the above mentioned self-control, patience, wisdom, and knowledge as matter¹⁵ are melted¹⁶ together to coin¹⁷ the sabd (idea/

philosophy)¹⁸ as an Amrit (elixir)¹⁴ in the mint¹⁹ of truth.

ਜਿਨ ਕਉ ਨਦਿਰ²⁰ ਕਰਮੁ²¹ ਤਿਨ ਕਾਰ²² ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਨਦਰੀ²³ ਨਦਿਰ²⁴ ਨਿਹਾਲ²⁵ ॥੩੮॥

Jin kaṁo naḍar karam ṭin kār.

Nānak naḍrī naḍar nihāl. ||38||

Such type of work²² to coin sabd (idea/philosophy) can only be done by those who have the capability²¹ of vision²⁰.

The Eternal Entity (God) is happy²⁵ for such people who have this type of vision^{23,24}. 38.

AGGS, Jap # 38, p 8.

Chahal [4] says that stanza # 38 of JAP bani clearly indicates that the word "sabd" means the idea or philosophy which enlightens a person to discover the right path of life. Therefore, "sabd" is interpreted as "enlightening idea/philosophy".

Guru Nanak declared that 'sabd' is his 'guru'; therefore, it should also be everyone's 'guru'. Nevertheless, Guru Ramdas declared 'bani' is 'guru' and vice versa:

ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਬਾਣੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸਾਰੇ ॥

ਗੁਰੁ ਬਾਣੀ ਕਹੈ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਜਨੁ ਮਾਨੈ ਪਰਤਿਖ ਗੁਰੁ ਨਿਸਤਾਰੇ ॥੫॥

Baṇī gurū gurū hai baṇī vich̄ baṇī amrit̄ sārē.

Gur baṇī kahai sevak jan mānai partakh̄ gurū nistārē. ||5||

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 4, ਪੰਨਾ 982.

Bani is Guru and Guru is bani, and in this bani is the elixir of life.

Guru says bani, and the followers (Sikhs) accept it; thus the Guru will help the follower across the sea of life.

AGGS, M 4, p 982.

Note: ਸੇਵਕੁ (sevak) here means 'follower' but elsewhere means 'Sikh'.

Almost every theologian interprets ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ (Baṇī gurū gurū hai baṇī) as "The bani is the guru and the guru is the bani" but does so without defining 'bani' and 'guru'.

Scholars are also silent about "who is the 'guru' who says 'bani' (ਗੁਰੁ ਬਾਣੀ ਕਹੈ - Gur baṇī

kahai)." It was Guru Ramdas again, who very clearly identified that it is Nanak who says 'bani':

ਜਨੁ¹ ਨਾਨਕੁ² ਬੋਲੈ ਗੁਣ³ ਬਾਣੀ⁴ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ⁵ ਹਿਰ⁶ ਨਾਮਿ⁷ ਸਮਾਇਆ⁸ ॥੪॥੫॥

Jan Nānak bole guṇ baṇī gurbāṇī har nām samāiā. ||4||5||

AGGS, M 4, p 494.

Nanak², the person¹, speaks bani⁴ of distinctive wisdom³; this is the enlightening bani⁵ which is based⁸ on the Laws of Nature/Universe⁷ of the Eternal Entity (God)⁶.

Note: ਬਾਣੀ⁴ (bani): Words, utterance.

According to the above phrases of Guru Ramdas, 'ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ' (gurbani) means the utterance of Guru Nanak. On the other hand, Bhai Kahn Singh [9] says that besides the bani of Guru Nanak, all other bani of Sikh Gurus who succeeded the 'House of Nanak' are also called 'gurbani'. Bhai Gurdas still goes further to say that all bani (including of Bhagats and Bhattas) in the AGGS is 'gurbani' (a note under 'gurbani' by Bhai Kahn Singh).

It appears that there is no unanimity in understanding the word 'ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ' (gurbani). The word, gurbani, was for bani of Guru Nanak according to Guru Ramdas, it became Gurbani for the bani of all Gurus according to Bhai Kahn Singh, thereafter, it became gurbani for the bani of all Gurus, Bhagats, Bhattas and the Sikhs whose bani is included in the AGGS according to Bhai Gurdas. This is a very good example how the original concept of gurbani changed with the time after Guru Nanak.

The most important phrase of the fifth Guru, Arjun, is quoted here, which clearly confirms that Nanak is the Guru and his philosophy (Sikhi) is in his bani:

ਗੁਰੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਜਿਨ ਸੁਣਿਆ¹ ਪੇਖਿਆ² ਸੇ ਫਿਰਿ ਗਰਭਾਸਿ³ ਨ ਪਰਿਆ ਰੇ ॥

Gur Nānak jin suṇiā pekhiā se fir garbhās na pariā re.

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ 5, ਪੰਨਾ 612.

Those who have heard¹ and analyzed² the philosophy of Guru Nanak do not fall into ignorance³ again.

AGGS, M 5, p 612.

Bhai Kahn Singh's Mahan Kosh:

ਪੇਖਨਾ: ਪ੍ਰੇਰਣਾ, ਨਿਹਾਰਨਾ, “ਪੇਖਿਓ ਲਾਲਨ ਘਟ ਬੀਚਿ ਖੋਏ”. ਵਿਚਾਰਣਾ, ਸੋਚਣਾ, “ਬਹੁ ਸਾਸਤ ਸਿਮਿਰੂਤੀ ਪੇਖੈ ਸਰਬ ਢੰਢੋਲਿ” (ਸੁਖਮਨੀ), ਤਮਾਸ਼ਾ, ਖਲ “ਜਿਉ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਅਰੁ ਜਗ ਕਉ ਜਾਨਿ” ਮ: ੭, ਨਜਾਰਾ, ਦਿਰਸ਼ਯ। (Pekhna: Means to evaluate, show, game, scene) ਪੇਖਿ: ਦੇਖਕੇ, ਪੇਰਕਣ ਕਰਕੇ, “ਪੇਖਿ ਦਰਸਨੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਬਿਗਸੇ”। (Pekh: To evaluate. To see)

Therefore, ਪੇਖਨਾ ਜਾਂ ਪੇਖਿ / ਪੇਖਿਆ (Pekhna jan pekh/pekhia) whether 'Khakha' is with or without siari (accent on letter as ਖਿ), it means “to see” as well as ਪ੍ਰੇਰਣਾ (prerana) to evaluate and ਸੋਚਣਾ (sochana) to think. In the above phrase, ਪੇਖਿਆ (pekhia) means ‘evaluated’, ‘understood’.

And ਗਰਭਾਸਿ (garbas) has been used metaphorically as ‘ignorance’, since when the developing embryo is in the womb, it is ignorant about the outside world. Its only link is with the mother, who supplies all the necessary nutrition through her blood for its growth.

Moreover, Guru Arjun explains that Nanak is also **Sat Guru and perfect way of life is his Sikhi** in the following phrase: ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤਿ ਗੁਰਿ ਭੇਟਿਐ³

ਪੂਰੀ ਹੋਵੈ ਜੁਗਤਿ⁴ ॥

ਹਸੰਦਿਆ⁵ ਖੇਲੰਦਿਆ⁶

ਪੈਨੰਦਿਆ⁷ ਖਾਵੰਦਿਆ⁸

ਵਿਚੇ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ⁹ ॥੨॥

Nānak satgur bhēti³ ai pūrī hovai jugat.
Hasandī⁵ ā kḥelandī⁶ ā painandī⁷ ā
khāvandī⁸ ā vichē hovai mukat. ||2||
ਅਗਰਾਸ, ਮ: 5, ਪੰਨਾ 522.

Guru Arjun advises that:

Those who have accepted³ Nanak as their true¹ Guru² (true enlightener) find the perfect way of life⁴ (Sikhi).

That is:

One can get salvation⁹ by following the philosophy (Sikhi) of Guru Nanak while laughing⁵ (being happy), playing⁶ (right games), dressing⁷ (proper dress – but not

deceptive one) and eating⁸ (properly).

AGGS, M 5, p 522.

I hope that the above discussion clearly explains “ਸਿਖੀ” (Sikhi) is a ‘philosophy’ as well as “ਸਬਦੁ” (sabd) is ‘guru’. However, Guru Ramdas and Guru Arjun have declared Nanak as ‘guru’. It is also evident that the Sikhi (Philosophy) of Guru Nanak is embodied in his bani (words), which is based upon his ਸਬਦੁ (sabd), which in turn has been coined through self-control, patience, wisdom and knowledge. It is evident that Nanak is the Guru and his bani is ‘Sikhi’ as accepted by Guru Ramdas and Guru Arjun. Consequently, I have assigned an academic term, “Nanakian Philosophy” to the philosophy of Guru Nanak. [10]

With the passing of time, the ‘Sabd Guru’ steadily lost its value in Sikhi. The ‘Sabd’ of Guru Nanak was named as ‘Bani’ by Guru Ramdas after 1574, then bani of Guru Nanak and other Gurus became ‘Gurbani’. Thereafter, the ‘Granth’ containing the bani of Sikh Gurus, Bhagats, Bhattas and devout Sikhs was declared as ‘Pothi Parmeshar of Thaan’ (Place of dwelling of God) in 1604 by Guru Arjun. Finally, the ‘Pothi’ was declared “Granth Guru” by Guru Gobind Singh in 1708 [11] and “Sikhi” became a well organized religion.

Who is a ਸਿਖੁ (SIKH)?

Guru Nanak describes ‘Sikh’ as follows:

ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ¹ ਨੀਰੁ² ਗਿਆਨਿ³ ਮਨੁ⁴ ਮਜਨੁ⁵

ਅਠਸਠਿ⁶ ਤੀਰਥੁ⁷ ਸੰਗਿ⁸ ਗਰੇ ॥

Amritū nīr giān man majan aṭhsath tīrath sang gahe.

The one⁴ who bathes⁵ in the life-giving¹ water² of wisdom³ gets⁸ the benefit of bathing at sixty-eight⁶ sacred places⁷.

ਗੁਰੁ⁹ ਉਪਦੇਸਿ¹⁰ ਜਵਾਰ¹¹ ਮਾਣਕ¹² ਸੇਵੇ¹³

ਸਿਖੁ¹⁴ ਸੁ ਖੋਜਿ¹⁵ ਲਹੈ ॥੧॥

Gur updes javāhar mānak seve sikh so kḥoj lahai. ||1||

ਅਗਰਾਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ 1328.

The above enlightening⁹ philosophy/

teachings¹⁰ are like gems¹¹ and jewels¹² and the one who can research/discover¹⁵ that fact is a Sikh¹⁴ and also practises¹³ it. AGGS, M 1, p 1328.

The word, ਸਿਖੀ (Sikhi) has also been used as the plural of ਸਿਖੁ (Sikh) by Guru Ramdas:

ਉਪਦੇਸੁ¹ ਜਿ ਦਿਤਾ² ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ³ ਸੇ

ਸੁਣਿਆ⁴ ਸਿਖੀ⁵ ਕੰਨੇ ॥

Updes jē dītā satgurū so sunīā sikhī kanne.

ਅਗਰਾਸ, ਮ: 4, ਪੰਨਾ 314.

The Sikhs⁵ listened⁴ to the teachings/philosophy¹ imparted² by the True Guru³. AGGS, M 4, p 314.

Note: Here the ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ³ (True Guru) is Nanak as described by Guru Arjun above.

The word ‘Sikh’ also has other meanings, explained as follows:

ਸਿਖ (Sikh) as “teachings/philosophy”:

ਮਤਿ¹ ਵਿਚਿ ਰਤਨ² ਜਵਾਰ³ ਮਾਣਿਕ⁴

ਜੇ ਇਕ⁵ ਗੁਰ⁶ ਕੀ ਸਿਖ⁷ ਸੁਣੀ⁸ ॥

Maṭ vich raṭan javāhar mānik je ik gur kī sikh sunī.

By listening⁸ (accepting and practicing) to even one⁵ of the basic principles of the enlightening⁶ philosophy⁷, one's mind¹ becomes filled with gems², jewels³, and rubies⁴ (wisdom).

AGGS, Jap # 6, p 2.

ਸਿਖ (Sikh) as “advice/philosophy”:

ਸੁਣਿ ਸੁਣਿ¹ ਸਿਖ² ਹਮਾਰੀ³ ॥

Suṇ suṇ sikh hamārī.

ਸੁਕ੍ਰਿਤੁ⁴ ਕੀਤਾ ਰਹਸੀ ਮੇਰੇ⁵ ਜੀਅੜੇ⁶

ਬਹੁੜਿ⁷ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਵਾਰੀ⁸ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

Sukritū kītā rahsī mere jīaṛe bahur na āvai vārī. ||1|| rahāo.

Guru Nanak says:

Oh my⁵ Mind⁶! Listen¹ to my³ advice/philosophy², do good deeds⁴ now (in this life) since there is no life⁸ again⁷ to do so.

AGGS, M 1, 154.

The above discussion indicates that when ਸਿਖੁ (Sikh) is spelled with *onkar* on *khakha* (ਖੁ), it means the one who researches/discovers the enlightening philosophy and practices it. On the other hand, when ਸਿਖ (sikh) spelled with *khakha* (ਖ) as *mukta*, without *oankar*, it means teachings/advice/philosophy.

SIKHI MISREPRESENTED

The “Sikhi of Guru Nanak has been misrepresented by his followers, Sikhs, and Non-Sikhs to make it an esoteric, miraculous, mystic, and ritualistic religion called “Sikhism” as discussed below.

The Sikh Became Ritualistic

According to Guru Nanak, a ਸਿਖੁ (Sikh) is one who researches/discovers the “enlightening philosophy” as discussed earlier. Now that same Sikh has been assigned a number of duties and rituals to perform by Guru Ramdas:

The Sikhs must repeat Naam himself and make others do so:

ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਦਇਆਲੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਤਿਸੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ਸੁਣਾਵੈ ॥

Jis no dāiāal hovai merā suāmī tis gursikh gurū updes sunāvai.

ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਯੂੜਿ ਮੰਗੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਕੀ ਜੇ ਆਪਿ ਜਪੈ ਅਵਰਹ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਾਵੈ ॥੨॥

Jan Nānak dhūr mangai tis gursikh kī jo āp japai avrah nām japāvai. ||2||

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 4, ਪੰਨਾ 306.

Guru Ramdas says:

The Eternal Entity (God) bestows Its teachings and will be kind only when the Sikh of the Guru repeats Naam himself and inspires others to do so.

Consequently, Nanak will beg for the dust of the feet of that Sikh.*

AGGS, M 4, p 306.

*Nanak here is a pen name for Guru Ramdas.

Guru Ramdas also assigned a number of rituals* to be performed by Sikhs:

ਗੁਰ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਜੇ ਸਿਖੁ ਅਖਾਏ ਸੁ ਭਲਕੇ ਉਠਿ

ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਵੈ ॥

ਉਦਮੁ ਕਰੇ ਭਲਕੇ ਪਰਭਾਤੀ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਕਰੇ

ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰਿ ਨਾਵੈ ॥

ਉਪਦੇਸਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਜਪੁ ਜਾਪੈ ਸਭਿ

ਕਿਲਵਿਖ ਪਾਪ ਦੇਖ ਲਹਿ ਜਾਵੈ ॥

ਫਿਰਿ ਚੜੈ ਦਿਵਸੁ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਗਾਵੈ

ਬਹਦਿਆਉਠਦਿਆ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਵੈ ॥

ਜੇ ਸਾਸਿ ਗਿਰਾਸਿ ਧਿਆਏ ਮੇਰਾ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਸੇ

ਗੁਰਸਿਖੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਨਿ ਭਾਵੈ ॥

ਅਗਗਸ, ਮ: 4, ਪੰਨਾ 305.

Gur satgur kā jo sikh akhāe so bhālke uṭh har nām dhiāvai.

Udam kare bhālke parbhātī isnān kare amrit sar nāvai.

Updes gurū har har jap jāpai sabh kilvikh pāp lokh leh jāvai.

Fir chārai divas gurbānī gāvai bahdīā uṭh dīā har nām dhiāvai.

Jo sās girās dhiāe merā har har so gursikh gurū man bhāvai.

Manmohan Singh translate this as follows [12]:

He who calls himself a Sikh of the Great True Guru should rise early and meditate on God's Name.

He should make efforts early in the morning, take a bath, and have ablution in the tank of nectar.

By repeating the Lord God's Name under the Guru's instruction, all his sins, misdeeds, and accusations are wiped off.

Afterwards, at sunrise he sings gurbani, and whilst sitting or standing, he meditates on God's Name.

The Guru's disciple, who with every breath and morsel contemplates over my Lord God, becomes pleasing to the Guru's mind.

AGGS, M 4, p 305.

The translation of Manmohan Singh, of SGPC, shows how a number of rituals were assigned by Guru Ramdas. However, Dr. Karminder Singh Dhillon, one of the reviewers, has reported how incorrect the literal translation of Manmohan Singh is:

The first verse says “rise early and

meditate on God's name” The second verse says “take bath and have ablution” It should be take a bath first! The literal translation “ablution in the tank of nectar” is problematic because this “tank of nectar” was not built by Guru Ramdas at the time of composing this sabd. So obviously the words “bhalkey”, “uth” “parbhatee”, “ishnan”, “amritsar”, etc. need to be interpreted in the metaphoric sense in relation to one's spiritual life and not physical life.

Even by ignoring the interpretation of the above stanza, it clearly indicates that some rituals* have been assigned by Guru Ramdas to be performed by a Sikh.

***Ritual:** a religious or solemn ceremony consisting of a series of actions performed according to a prescribed order.

As discussed above, ‘sabd’ was declared as ‘bani’ then ‘bani’ as Guru by Guru Ramdas (AGGS, M 4, p 982). After the compilation of bani of six Sikh Gurus, Bhagats, Bhattas, and some Sikhs into a ‘pothi’ (book), Guru Arjun declared this pothi as the *Parmeshar ka Thaaan* (Dwelling place for God) in 1604. In continuation of changing the ‘sabd’ to ‘bani’ to ‘Guru’ to ‘pothi’ which was *parmeshar*, it was declared as just ‘Guru’ by the 10th and final Guru, Gobind Singh, in 1708 after adding the bani of his father, Guru Teg Bahadur. Henceforth, ‘pothi’ became ‘Guru Granth’. Consequently, he ‘Guru Granth’ became an idol for worshiping, and various rituals are performed around it. [13] Now it is not only worshiped, but hundreds of *Akhand Paths* (non-stop recitation by paid persons) are performed in various gurdwaras (including at Harmandir Sahib at Amritsar) around the world. The irony is that no one is listening (Fig. 1 above).

INTERPOLATION AND MISINTERPOLATIONS

Interpolation and misconstruction of the bani of Guru Nanak and his philosophy has been going on since the demise of Guru Nanak. For example:

ੴ TO ੴ

The ੴ designed by Guru Nanak has been the most misunderstood part of the Commencing Verse by many Sikh theologians, scholars, and researchers for a long time. It is widely accepted as ਏਕੁ ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ (*Ek Oankaar*) or ਏਕੁ ਓਮਕਾਰੁ (*Ek Aumkaar*) by Sikhs at large since Bhai Gurdas declared ਓ (open oora) as ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ (*Oankaar*) in *pauri 15, vaar 3*. Chahal has discussed ੴ as an original logo designed by Guru Nanak that has nothing to do with ਏਕੁ ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ (*Ek Oankaar*) or ਏਕੁ ਓਮਕਾਰੁ (*Ek Aumkaar*) [10, 14-17]. Now more documents have been used to re-affirm his previous findings that ੴ stands for ਏਕੁ ਓਬੇਅੰਤੁ (*Ek Oh Beant'*) - One and Only in revised edition of his book, *JAP: The Essence of Nanakian Philosophy*. [18] Here the interpolation and misrepresentation of ੴ into ੴ done by Dharam Parchar Committee of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), Amritsar has been reported. The interpolated and misrepresented ੴ into ੴ appears on a monthly magazine, *Gurmat Gian*, published in Hindi by the Dharam Parchar Committee of SGPC. It indicates how strongly the Dharam Parchar Committee of SGPC is involved in Vedantic philosophies to interpret ੴ as ਏਕੁ ਓਅੰਕਾਰੁ (*Ek Oankaar*) or ਏਕੁ ਓਮਕਾਰੁ (*Ek Aumkaar*). Fig. 2.

Seminar on Mool Mantra

The University Grants Commission sponsored a seminar on the so-called mool mantra, which was organized by the Department of Guru Nanak Studies, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar in March 1973. The proceedings of the seminar were edited by Professor Pritam Singh, retired Professor and Head, Department of Guru Nanak Studies,

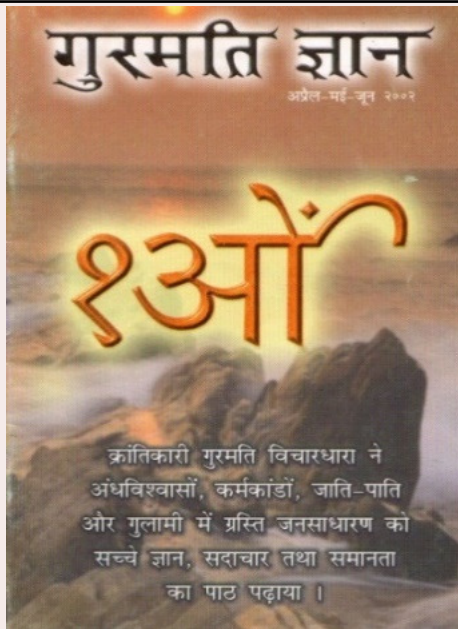


Figure 2: ੴ has been interpolated and misrepresented as ੴ on the title page of *Gurmat Gian*, Monthly Magazine in Hindi.

GNDU, under the title, *The Ultimate Reality – As Guru Nanak Saw It*. It took 12 years to publish the proceedings under a new title, *The Sikh Concept of the Divine*, in 1985 [18]. Most of the proceedings go against the basic principles of Nanakian Philosophy about *The Ultimate Reality*. For example, during this seminar, instead of looking into the originality and uniqueness of the logo ੴ, coined by Guru Nanak, it was confirmed by stalwart Sikh and non-Sikh scholars, that it is based on *Oankaar* or *Omkaar* (OM), the Trinity system of Vedantic philosophy. [19]

In this seminar, Parma Nand [20] undermined the originality of Nanakian Philosophy by declaring that *Oankaar* or *Omkaar* had already been used in various Upanishads. Therefore, ੴ (*Oankaar*) is not a new word coined by Guru Nanak, but instead borrowed from the Upanishads. The only thing Guru Nanak did was to add the numeral '1' to confirm the oneness of God, which is also found in the Upanishads. Thus, Parma Nand also failed miserably to

comprehend the teachings of Guru Nanak.

Commencing Verse (ਅਰੰਭਿਕ ਵਾਕ - *arambic vaak*)

The complete Commencing Verse which appears in the AGGS is as follows:

ੴ¹
ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ
ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ²
ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ³ ॥

It has been divided into three parts for its further study. The First part, ੴ, is the main heading, which is followed by two other parts as its attributes. It was Bhai Gurdas ([21] in *Pauri 15, vaar 3*), who declared ੴ as *Ek Oankaar*, which represents the Trinity of God according to Upanishads. The whole Commencing Verse was declared the Mool Mantra according to Vedas' system of Mantra by Bhai Gurdas also.

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ has been interpolated/misconstrued as ੴ ਸਤਿਨਾਮ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ

The Commencing Verse appears in the beginning of the AGGS and at the beginning of every new section, new raga, and new subsection throughout the AGGS, either in its full form or in an abridged form. The shortest abridged form is ੴ ਸਤਿ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥ (*Ek Oh Beant' 1sat 2gur parsadi*.³) which appears 523 times in the AGGS.

It is unfortunate that the interpolated and misconstrued form, ੴ ਸਤਿਨਾਮ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ॥, (*Ek Oankaar satnam Vaheguru*) is now found in almost every gurdwara, including the Darbar Sahib Complex, Amritsar and at the beginning of many publications by some scholars, sants, and organizations. Regrettably, the *sangat* (congregation) is persuaded by many sants, preachers, *kathakaars* (interpreters) to chant it repeatedly in gurdwaras.

Who changed **ੴ ਸਤਿ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥** (Ek Oh Beant ¹sat² gur parsād.³) into **ੴ ਸਤਿਨਾਮ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ॥**, (*Ek Oankaar satnam Vaheguru*)? In spite of all my efforts, I could not find who could have done this.

Khanda Changing to Trishul Like

The commonly used Khanda has been misconstrued to look like Trishul – the first stage in making it a complete Trishul of Lord Shiva:



The first picture is of a Khanda, which is usually in and around almost all Gurdwaras and also on the turbans of Sikhs and letterheads of Sikh organizations.

The second picture is of a misconstrued Khanda showing a crescent, a double edged Khanda in the center, and two pointers downward at the bottom of the crescent. (Credit to this picture: <http://www.sikhmuseum.com/nishanmistakencrescent.html#shiva9>) This appears to be the first stage to change it into a complete Trishul of Lord Shiva as shown in the third picture.

Now this misconstrued Khanda that looks like Trishul is adorned on the turbans of not only Nihang Singhs but many other Sikhs, young and old.

It is not known who designed or misconstrued the first symbol that looks like Trishul. Nevertheless, the misconstrued Khanda in the second picture is being popularized by some organizations. The misconstrued Khanda is becoming popular, and the first symbol is disappearing. A detailed study on these Khandas will be reported by Prof. DS Chahal in the future.

Recent Example of Ignoring Guru Nanak’s Contributions about ‘Mother Earth Day’

The concept of **Earth Day** was first proposed by John McConnell in 1969 at a UNESCO Conference in San Francisco. McConnell proposed March 21, 1970, the first day of spring in the Northern Hemisphere, which was accepted by Secretary General U Thant at the United Nations. [22] However, U.S. Senator, Gaylord Nelson proposed April 22, 1970. Later on, it was designated as **International Mother Earth Day** in 2009 by a consensus resolution adopted by the United Nations. [23]

Guru Nanak’s contributions about the importance of air, water and the Earth, are worth celebrating on Earth Day. No Sikh ever recognized this fact; however, it was recognized by McConnell in 1969, exactly 500 years after Guru Nanak. McConnell (1915-2012) is peace activist with passion for peace, religion, and science. [24] Ironically, Sikhs took another 40 years to recognize Guru Nanak’s contributions when the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) initiated a program to help the world’s religious traditions to create long-term plans to improve their relationship with the environment in 2009.

Under that program, Sikhs started their own **EcoSikh** project for the celebration of **Sikh Environment Day**, not on March 21 or April 22, but on March 14. This date was chosen because it was thought to be when Guru Har Rai, the seventh Guru, succeeded the House of Nanak [25], but the Encyclopedia of Sikhism

[26] and Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar say the true date is March 3, 1644. [27] This honor was given to Guru Har Rai simply for his passion of preserving flowers. Because on one occasion, his long robe broke a few flowers from a bush, which made him very sad. Guru Nanak is the one who made humanity aware of the fact that air is the Guru, water is the father, and the Earth is the Great Mother who provides everything humanity needs. And Nanak said it is the duty of humanity to practice righteousness and protect Earth and the environment from pollution.

THE SIKH CLERGY AND SIKH INTELLIGENTSIA FAILED TO REPRESENT SIKHI (NANAKIAN PHILOSOPHY) IN ITS REAL PERSPECTIVE TO WORLD PHILOSOPHERS AND HUMANITY

Ishar Singh [28] noticed that Nankian philosophy had not been presented to the world prior to 1969, the time of the celebration of Guru Nanak’s 500th Birthday Anniversary. He further said that the responsibility, perhaps, lies on the shoulders of the Sikh intelligentsia who have failed to make adequate efforts to understand Nanak’s philosophy. If one looks into the efforts of Sikh scholars during the celebration of the 500th Birthday of Guru Nanak, one would hardly find any literature propagating the philosophy of Guru Nanak in its true perspective. Chahal [10] was the first who tried to interpret the bani of Guru Nanak logically and scientifically in order to bring out his authentic philosophy. He also gave an academic term, *Nanakian Philosophy*, to the philosophy of Guru Nanak embodied in his bani and incorporated in the *Aad Guru Granth Sahib* (AGGS). [10] Bouquet [29], McLeod [30], Khushwant Singh [31], and many others have declared that Sikhi (Sikhism) is a hybridization between Islam and Hinduism.

According to Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha [9], the Sikh literature of the 18th and 19th centuries was written according to the

level of intelligence and beliefs of the writers.

Prof. Puran Singh [32] wrote in the 1920s:

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

Dr. Gopal Singh [33] observed that due to improper understanding of the Guru’s Word, the *Adi (Aad) Granth* started to be worshipped more than read and uttered as a magical formula or a mantra for secular benefits since it was declared GURU by Guru Gobind Singh in 1708. Consequently, understanding of ‘sabd’ (words) as Guru has been lost forever.

The *Sikh Marg Web Site* has observed that:

“Misunderstanding regarding the principles, concepts and philosophy of a religion exists, usually not only in the minds of those who are not members of it but also in the minds of those who profess to be its true followers, or even champions and preachers of that faith. In case of Sikhism this is particularly so. Most of what is said, followed and preached by majority of the Sikhs about Sikhism, cannot be considered a part of the Sikh faith, rather some of it is anti-Sikhism. We have developed our own interpretation of Sikhism by watching the behavior and actions of political and religious leaders which quite often may not agree with the principles of the faith.” [34]

Brar [35], while writing an article *“Sikhism in the 21st Century: The Challenging Road Ahead”* in *Sikh Marg Web Site*, reported the current situation

of Sikhism in Western countries as follows:

“At this time the Sikh religion is firmly in control of the older generations from Punjab and its religious institutions around the world are run as virtual extensions of Punjab and the Punjabi mentality. Many issues are not dealt with because they never had to be dealt with in the past and it is always easier to maintain the status quo rather than try to find new answers. What will happen ten or fifteen years down the road when the Sikh religious institutions around the world are run by a new generation which were not born in Punjab or have very little contact with Punjab? A lot of these potential problems that Sikhs will be facing are still in their infancy right now. Either Sikhs can choose to ignore them today as they have been to a large extent, which means that they will become major crises for the religion tomorrow, or they can start planning and trying to develop solutions. We are approaching a major crossroads as a religion which will either see Sikhism become truly a major world religion as the Gurus wished or we will see it wither away and become extinct over time. The choice is clearly in our own hands.”

Though this article was written about 15 years ago, gurdwaras in India and the West are still not run by the younger generation.

Chahal [36, 37] has discussed this issue in 1996 and again in 1999 at the time of Vaisakhi. The progression and regression of Sikhism from 1469 to 1999 has served as a base for the representation of Sikhism and the interpretation of gurbani in their real perspective to Sikhs and non-Sikhs. A tentative line of action was suggested for further action, but nothing happened, even during 2016 - 2017 at the time of the celebration of the 350th Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh.

The Sikh community the world over celebrated the 350th Birth Anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708) in

2016. The yearlong celebrations, which commenced in January 2016, were concluded during the first week of January 2017 at Patna Sahib in Bihar, and were comprised of a number of religious, academic, humanitarian, and other events. The Central Government of India, as well as the Governments of Bihar and Punjab, have contributed immensely to this cause. The Union Finance Ministry allocated a package of Rs100 crore (US\$16 million) for the celebrations. The Bihar government spent Rs100 crore (US\$16 million) on beautifying Patna Sahib, the Capital of Bihar and on the arrangements and celebrations. [38] The way in which Sikhi and Guru Gobind Singh were represented during the 350th birthday of Guru Gobind Singh is yet to be discovered.

ORIGINALITY IN BANI OF GURU NANAK IS LOST DURING LAST 550 YEARS

A lot has already been discussed about the loss of originality of Sikhi; nevertheless, I would like to quote the views of some famous scholars who promoted the theory of the lack of originality in the philosophy of Guru Nanak:

Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, President, Sahitya Akademi, has belittled Nanakian Philosophy in the foreword to the book, *Guru Nanak: Founder of Sikhism*, (published by the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee - DSGM) written by Dr. Trilochan Singh, who is held in high esteem as a Sikh scholar. [39] This book was written on the eve of the celebration of the 500th Birthday (*parkash divas*) of Guru Nanak. It is ironic that Trilochan Singh failed to notice Chatterji’s following statement belittling the Guru:

“The people of the Punjab (and along with those of the rest of India) became immediately conscious of the value of Guru Nanak’s advent and his teachings after he began to preach to them; and **Guru Nanak built up and organised during his life time a very important religious persuasion which was broad-based on the foundations of Vedatic Monotheistic Jnana and Puranic Bhakti.**

The faith preached by Guru Nanak was nothing new for India, it was basically the old monotheistic creed of the ancient Hindus as propounded in the Vedas and the Upanishads - the Vedanta with its insistence upon Jnana or Knowledge of the One Supreme Reality. And this monotheistic basis was fortified, so to say, to put the matter in a simple form by Bhakti or faith as inculcated in later Puranic Hinduism. The Sikh Panth was nothing but a reformed and simplified Sanatana Dharma of medieval times."

The book, *Selections from the Sacred Writings of the Sikhs*, is part of the Indian Series of the Translations Collection of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) [17]. It was published in accordance with an agreement between UNESCO and the Government of India, to further mutual appreciation of the cultural values of East and West. This book was printed in 1973 just after the celebration of Guru Nanak's 500th Birthday. This book was written by prominent Sikh theologians, scholars, and historians such as Trilochan Singh, Jodh Singh, Kapur Singh, Bawa Harkrishan Singh, and Khushwant Singh. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan undermined the philosophy of Guru Nanak in the introduction to this book as follows:

"At a time when men were conscious of failure, Nanak appeared to renovate the spirit of religion and the humanity. **He did not found a new faith or organize a new community. That was done by his successor, notably the fifth Guru.** Nanak tried to build a nation of self-respecting men and women, devoted to God and their leaders, filled with sense of equality and brotherhood for all. The Gurus are the light-bearers to mankind. They are the messengers of the timeless. **They do not claim to teach a new doctrine but only to renew the eternal wisdom. Nanak elaborated the views of Vaisnava saints."**

It is clearly apparent that Dr. Radhakrishnan failed to comprehend Nanakian Philosophy correctly and refused to accept that the Guru taught a

new philosophy based on unique and universally acceptable principles. He further undermined the philosophy of Guru Nanak by saying that Nanak elaborated the views of the Vaisnava saints; however, Guru Nanak emphatically condemned the Vaisnava views in his writings.

Probably under the influence of the above statement of Dr. Radhakrishnan, Arnold Toynbee wrote about Guru Nanak in the same UNESCO's book as follows [40]:

"Perhaps Nanak himself would have modestly disclaimed the title of 'founder'. He might have preferred to say that he was merely bringing to light, and gathering the cardinal religious truth and precepts that had been scattered, in explicit form or implicitly, through the religious legacies of a number of forerunners of his."

Arnold Toynbee has gone a step further than Radhakrishnan by putting words in the mouth of Guru Nanak to disclaim that he is the founder of a unique philosophy, instead claiming he explicated the philosophy of his forerunners.

Considering the various references discussed earlier, it becomes rather obvious that Nanakian Philosophy has not only been misunderstood by theologians, but even well-educated scholars mentioned above have failed to comprehend the originality of Nanakian Philosophy.

Influence of Vedanta in old Sikh Literature

Taran Singh [41], the then Head of the Department of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala, admits that:

"ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਹਰ ਪੱਖ ਵਿਚ ਚੰਗੀਆਂ ਦੁਲਾਖਾਂ ਪੁੱਟੀਆਂ ਹਨ । ਭਾਵੇਂ ਸੋਧ ਇੰਦੇ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕਰ ਸਕੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥਿ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਸੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਚੀਨ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸੱਚ ਦੇ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਤੋਂ ਭਿੰਨ ਨਹੀਂ, ਪਰ ਇਹ ਬੜੀ

ਪ੍ਰਬਲ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਹੈ ।" (In Foreword)

Tentative English translation:

It appears that universities have taken good steps in the research of *Gurbani*, although **their research could only establish that the truth in the AGGS is not different than the truth of ancient India**, but this is a powerful achievement.

Dr. Taran Singh [41] has also reported that the Sikh and non-Sikh writers of the 17th to 19th centuries had accepted that the Gurus' philosophy is based on Vedantic philosophy:

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

Tentative English translation:

After careful study of the work of all the interpreters, it becomes apparent to us that although 8 different schools have already worked on this project, they had no basic differences in their approach and also no differences in their findings. They had no objective to promote the Gurus' philosophy in its originality. **Whatever they have achieved, it is evident that they** have accepted the Gurus' philosophy as Vedic philosophy and also that it is not different than that of Brahmanism and Hindu philosophies.

Besides the above views of modern and famous scholars, Taran Singh [41] and Joginder Singh [42] also reported that right from the very beginning, the old schools of Sikhism were interpreting *Gurbani* and representing Sikhism

according to Vedantic philosophy.

Illiteracy about Sikhi (Sikhism)

Recently, illiteracy about Sikhism has also been recognized by the custodians of Sikhism, Sikh scholars, and Sikhs at large. S. Avtar Singh Makkar [43], the then President of Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar, has realized the illiteracy about Sikhi (Sikhism) among Sikhs, although the scholars of other world religions show a great interest in knowing Sikhi:

“ਸਾਡੇ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਲਈ ਜੇਥੇ ਇਹ ਮਾਣ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਨੇ, ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਭਰ ਦੇ ਧਰਮ-ਖੇਤਰ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੇ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ, ਅਧਿਆਪਕਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਧਰਮ-ਸ਼ਾਸਤਰੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਲ ਖਿੱਚਿਆ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਉਹ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਬੜੀ ਗੰਭੀਰਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਸਮਝਣ ਹਿਤ ਸਰਗਰਮੀ ਵਿਖਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਇਥੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਲਈ ਇਹ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਾ ਅਤੇ ਖਤਰੇ ਦੀ ਘੰਟੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਵੱਡੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੀ ਇਸ ਅਨਮੋਲ ਵਿਰਾਸਤ ਤੋਂ ਅਨਜਾਣ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ।”

Tentative English Translation:

For all of us (the Sikhs) it is a matter of pride that Sikh *dharam* (religion) has received the attention of scholars, students, and religious preachers from the field of the religions of the world, and they are expressing their seriousness in activities to understand Sikh *dharam*. **But for all of us (the Sikhs), it is an issue of worry and a warning of danger that a large number of families connected with Sikh *dharam* are becoming unaware of this invaluable heritage.** (In Foreword)

Similarly, Dr. Jodh Singh, Prof. of *The Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, Punjabi University, Patiala has discovered that the objective of many scholars is to amalgamate Sikhi into Hinduism [43]:

“ਪ੍ਰਾਚੀਨ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸੰਸਕਾਰ ਜੁੜੇ ਹੋਏ ਖਾਸਤੋਰ ਤੇ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਬਹੁਤਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਨਿਵੇਕਲੀ ਪਛਾਣ ਨੂੰ ਧੁੰਧਲਾਉਣ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਨਵਾਂ ਧਰਮ ਮੰਨਣ ਤੋਂ ਇਨਕਾਰੀ

ਹੋਣ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਚ ਆਏ ਪੈਰਾਫਿਕ ਨਾਂਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਥਾਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਵਲੀ ਨੂੰ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਨਵੇਂ ਧਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਰਲਗੱਡ ਕਿਰਨ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ ਅਰੰਭੀ ਹੈ।”

Tentative English Translation:

Many of the scholars associated with ancient Indian philosophy, especially Indian scholars, have begun to amalgamate Sikh *dharam* into Hinduism by fogging its unique identity and refusing to accept Sikh *dharam* as a new *dharam* by exploiting the use of ancient names (of God) and (of sacred) places mentioned in the *Aad Guru Granth Sahib*.

Dr. Jodh Singh has further warned that serious efforts are being made to erase the uniqueness and originality of Sikhi from religious literature. They are trying to return Sikhs to their original status of the time before Guru Nanak by subduing them:

“ਅਜੋਕੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਪਰਤੱਖ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਉਤੇ ਅੰਦਰੋਂ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਹਰੋਂ ਦਬਾਅ ਪਾਏ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਪੈਰੋਕਾਰ ਆਪਣੀ ਸੁਤੰਤਰ ਪਛਾਣ ਭੁਲਕੇ ਉਥੇ ਜਾ ਖੜਨ ਜਿਥੋਂ ਇਹ ਚੱਲੇ ਸਨ। ਅਜਿਹੇ ਕਾਨੂਣ ਬੰਨ੍ਹਣ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸਾਂ ਹੋ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਰੋਲ ਘਚੋਲਾ ਖੜਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕੇ ਜਿਸ ਕਾਰਨ ਇਹ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਥਿੜਕ ਜਾਣ ਅਤੇ ਮੁੜ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ, ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਗੁਲਾਮੀ ਦਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਜੀਣ ਲਈ ਮਜਬੂਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਣ।”

Tentative English Translation:

In these days, it is evident that a lot of pressure from within and without is being put on the followers (of Sikhi) so that after they forget their independent identity, they go back to the original status wherefrom they started. Such laws are being enacted to create confusion in their minds so that they slip away from the principles of the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji* and they are forced to fall back to the slavery of old religious, social, and political ways of living again.

It is an encouraging sign that the custodian of Sikhi (Sikhism), S. Avtar Singh Makkar, President of SGPC, Amritsar, and a famous Professor of *The Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, has recognized the illiteracy about Sikhism and the cause of this illiteracy. Currently, the illiteracy about Sikhism is also being felt among the young Sikhs of the Science Age. They often claim that they do not understand Sikhi (Sikhism) the way it is being taught in the gurdwaras and represented in Sikh literature.

Alas, when the contemporary Sikh scholars, for unknown reasons, have exhibited their failure in comprehending the original nature of Nanakian Philosophy, it certainly seems like an insurmountable task to explain the quintessence of Guru Nanak's philosophy to the masses.

CAUSES OF MISREPRESENTATION OF SIKHI (SIKHIISM)

The major cause of misrepresentation of Sikhi (Sikhism) is because of a lack of comprehension of the philosophy embodied in the bani (words) of Guru Nanak. This situation was realized by Guru Nanak himself: ਬਾਣੀ¹ ਬਿਰਲਉ² ਬੀਚਾਰਸੀ³ ਜੇ ਕੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ⁴ ਹੋਇ ॥

Baṇī birla¹ bīchārsī³ jē ke gurumukh⁴ ho^e.
ਇਹ ਬਾਣੀ⁵ ਮਹਾ ਪੁਰਖ⁶ ਕੀ ਨਿਜ⁷ ਘਰਿ ਵਾਸਾ ਹੋਇ ॥੪੦॥

Ih baṇī mahā purakh⁶ kī nij ghar vāsā ho^e.
||40||

ਅਗਰਾਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ 935.

Only the rare² Guru-oriented⁴ will deliberate and contemplate³ on the word¹ (philosophy).

This is the word⁵ (philosophy) of the pre-eminent preceptor⁶ that is to be imbibed in one's own mind⁷.

AGGS, M 1, p 935.

It is true that very few Sikhs are deliberating gurbani in its real perspective. But the majority of them will readily accept any wrong concept preached or taught without verifying the facts, even during the current Science Age. Guru Nanak has described this

inherited character of humans as follows:
ਖੇਟੇ ਕਉ ਖਰਾ ਕਰੈ ਖਰੇ ਸਾਰ ਨ ਜਾਣੈ ॥

ਅੰਧੇ ਕਾ ਨਾਉ ਪਾਰਖੂ ਕਲੀ ਕਾਲ ਵਿਡਾਣੈ ॥੩॥

Khote ka-o kharā kahai khare sār na jāṇai.

Andhe kā nā-o pārkhū kalī kāl vidāṇai. ||3||

ਅਗਸ, ਮ: 1, ਪੰਨਾ 229.

In general, people are unable to distinguish between wrong and right.

They call ignorant people the appraisers, who determine authenticity.

AGGS, M 1, p 229.

Similarly, Guru Arjun also said that, in general, people easily accept false statements to be true, do wrong things, and follow the path that is crooked:

ਝੂਠੁ¹ ਬਾਤ² ਸਾ ਸਚੁ³ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਤੀ⁴ ॥

Jhūṭh bāt sā sach kar jāṭī.

ਸਤਿ⁵ ਹੋਵਨੁ ਮਨਿ⁶ ਲਗੈ ਨ ਰਾਤੀ⁷ ॥੨॥

Sat hovan man lagai na rāṭī. ||2||

ਬਾਵੈ⁸ ਮਾਰਗੁ⁹ ਟੇਢਾ¹⁰ ਚਲਨਾ ॥

Bāvai mārag tedhā chalnā.

ਸੀਧਾ¹¹ ਛੇਡਿ ਅਪ੍ਰਠਾ¹² ਬੁਨਨਾ¹³ ॥੩॥

Sīdhā chhōd apṛṭhā bunnā. ||3||

ਦੁਹਾ ਸਿਰਿਆ¹⁴ ਕਾ ਖਸਮੁ¹⁵ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ¹⁶ ਸੋਈ ॥

Duhā siriā kā khasam parabh soī.

ਜਿਸੁ ਮੇਲੇ¹⁷ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੇ ਮੁਕਤਾ¹⁸ ਹੋਈ

॥੪॥੨੯॥੯੮॥

Jis mele Nānak so mukṭā hoī.

||4||29||98||

ਅਗਸ, ਮ: 5, ਪੰਨਾ 185.

One takes⁴ it to be true³ what is false^{1,2}, What is truth⁴ is not⁷ imbibed in one's mind⁶.

One (usually) takes the forbidden⁸ and crooked¹⁰ path⁹.

One abandons the right¹¹ method but weaves¹³ the wrong¹² pattern.

Nanak Says:

Although both ways¹⁴ (right and wrong) are happening under the Laws of Nature^{15,16},

Only those who are introduced¹⁷ to the right path are liberated¹⁸.

AGGS, M 5, p 185.

Due to this inherent weakness of humans

as explained above, Sikhs at large take information given in the early writings of Sikh theologians and historians as true. Moreover, discontented and depressed people in general are more inclined to believe in mythical works coated with various allurements. And there was no dearth of such people then and even now. The following quotes from non-Sikh philosophers are almost the same as what Guru Nanak and Guru Arjun said about 400 years before them:

"The public will believe anything, so long as it is not founded on truth."

Edith Sitwell (1887-1964)

And

"A lie can travel halfway around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes."

Mark Twain (1835 - 1910)

Exactly what Sitwell said is happening with Sikhs of the 21st century since they will believe anything said by *Sants*, *Babas* (so-called sages), Sikh preachers, and *Kathakaars* (interpreters) in gurdwaras without verifying their authenticity.

On the other hand, if anybody says the truth, that is declared as blasphemy by the custodians of religions. As quoted by Robert Green Ingersoll (1833-1899):

*"This crime called **blasphemy** was invented by priests for the purpose of defending doctrines not able to take care of themselves"*

George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) was right when he said that:

"All great truths begin as blasphemies."

However, Arthur Schopenhauer (1788 - 1860) says that after truth faces strong oppositions, it will be accepted in the end:

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

The best example of this type of crime (blasphemy) committed in Europe is

Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) who declared that the Earth is not the center of the Universe and the Sun does not revolve around the Earth. This was first discovered by Copernicus (1473-1543), but he could not dare to say so and face the dire consequences.

In Sikhism there are many who have been punished and excommunicated by the Jathedar of Akal Takhat under the disguise of blasphemy for speaking the truth. In spite of this fact, there is no such recommendation for excommunication in the bani of Guru Nanak. Many Sikh scholars do not dare to say the truth about the philosophy of Guru Nanak embodied in his bani and how it has been interpolated and or misinterpreted by the followers of Guru Nanak after his demise because of the Draconian Law of excommunication used by the Jathedar of the Akal Takht. The true picture of Sikhi founded by Guru Nanak and what happened thereafter will not be discovered until this Draconian Law is declared a practice of anti-Sikhi.

Now the question before us is:

IS THE PHILOSOPHY OF GURU NANAK ORIGINAL AND UNIQUE?

My study of the bani of Guru Nanak indicates that it is logical, original, and unique when it is interpreted critically, logically, and scientifically. Besides, it is also evident that though the philosophy was formulated during the 15th and 16th centuries, it has universal acceptability and applicability during the 21st century [44]. Some non-Sikh scholars have also expressed similar views about Guru Nanak's philosophy. For example, the statement by Rajanish Kumar, Director of Language Department, Punjab, about the universality of Guru Nanak's message is noteworthy [45]:

"Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh religion, has unflinching faith in the divineness (or divinity) of man. For the emancipation of mankind, he undertook hazardous and difficult journeys from place to place and covered most of East and Southeast. His aim was to rekindle the dormant divine potentialities in man all over the universe. During his long

sojourns he met people of different faiths and creeds and left an indelible impression on them all. This is a testimony to the universality of the message of the Great Guru."

Besides the earlier remarks of Arnold Toynbee, the world-renowned historian, it is worth mentioning his observations about the future of the religion and the Sikh scriptures [40]:

"Mankind's religious future may be obscure; yet one thing can be foreseen: the living higher religions are going to influence each other more than ever before, in these days of increasing communication between all parts of the world and all branches of the human race in this coming religious debate, **the Sikh religion, and its scriptures the *Adi Granth*, will have something of special value to say to the rest of the world.**"

If the above statement of Arnold Toynbee is correct, then how could one re-discover the Sikhi founded by Guru Nanak in its originality and uniqueness to say to the rest of the world?

HOW TO RE-DISCOVER THE ORIGINALITY OF SIKHI FOUNDED BY GURU NANAK

Toynbee admits that, "*Mankind's religious future may be obscure*"; I agree with him to a great extent. I also agree with his second observation that "*...the Sikh religion, and its scriptures the *Adi Granth*, will have something of special value to say to rest of the world.*"

To achieve this task, let us follow the advice of Guru Nanak:

ਖੇਜੀ ਉਪਜੈ ਬਾਦੀ ਬਿਨਮੈ ਹਉ ਬਲਿ ਬਲਿ ਗੁਰ
ਕਰਤਾਰ ॥

"*The researcher progresses while the other (discursive and aimless) perishes; (Nanak) sacrifices himself on the Guru, the Creative Force.*"

AGGS, M 1, p 1255.

Therefore, the Sikh intelligentsia has to conduct serious research to re-discover the originality and uniqueness in the philosophy of Guru Nanak embodied in his bani.

The second part of his observation, "*...the Sikh religion, and its scriptures the *Adi Granth*, will have something of special value to say to the rest of the world*" and

the above advice of Guru Nanak inspired me to conduct research to explore if there is any originality and uniqueness in the philosophy of Guru Nanak which could have special value to the rest of the world. In continuation of this mission for over 30 years, I have applied current scientific knowledge and logic to highlight that Nanakian Philosophy is the noble and profound work of Guru Nanak and is relevant for the people of today. As suggested by Albert Einstein:

"After religious teachers accomplish the refining process indicated, they will surely recognize with joy that true religion has been ennobled and made more profound by scientific knowledge."

The Institute for Understanding Sikhism (IUS), Laval, Québec, Canada has already held some conferences during the last 20 years of its existence to re-discover Nanakian Philosophy embodied in the bani of Guru Nanak. Now the years 2018 and 2019 are dedicated to re-discover the originality and uniqueness of the philosophy of Guru Nanak embodied in his bani on the eve of the 550th Birthday of Guru Nanak. An International Conference to celebrate the 550th Birthday of Guru Nanak has also been arranged on May 11, 2019 in Montreal to re-discover Sikhi, founded by him, in its real perspective.

SUMMARY

- 'Sikhi' according to Guru Nanak is "Enlightening Philosophy". However, it has become esoteric, mystic, miraculous, and ritualistic religion known as 'Sikhism'.
- 'Sikh' according to Guru Nanak is one who researches enlightening philosophy/wisdom and practices it. However, the Sikh of today has become a most ritualistic person. 'Sikh' also means teachings/philosophy.
- The logo, ੴ, designed by Guru Nanak has been interpolated and misconstrued as *Ek Oankaar* or *Ek*

Omkaar. However, *Oankaar* or *Omkaar* represents the Trinity of God and Guru Nanak does not accept the Trinity of God.

- The commonly used symbol ੴ (*Khanda*) by the Sikhs is also being misconstrued to look like *Trishul* of Shiva.
- The common phrase of Guru Nanak, ੴ ਸਤਿ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥ (Ek Oh Beant¹ sat² gur parsād.³), which appears 523 times in the AGGS, has been interpolated as ੴ ਸਤਿਨਾਮ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ॥, (*Ek Oankaar satnam Vaheguru*)? The word, ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ (*Vaheguru*), has never been used by any Sikh Guru whose bani is incorporated in the AGGS. This phrase is commonly found written in many gurdwaras and also in the Darbar Sahib, Amritsar.
- The organizers of **EcoSikh** started to celebrate **Sikh Environment Day** on March 14, the date when Guru Har Rai, the seventh Guru, succeeded the House of Nanak. They neglected to give credit to Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhi, for his passion for peace, religion, and science who made humanity aware of the fact that air is the Guru, water is the father and the Earth is the Great Mother who provides everything needed by humanity.
- The Management Committee of the EcoSikh is requested to give credit to Guru Nanak before April 22, 2019 on his 550th Birthday. And Earth Day should also be celebrated on April 22 every year along with rest of the world.
- The attempt of some Sikh and non-Sikhs to show that there is no originality in Sikhi has been exposed. It indicates that they failed to comprehend Sikhi in its real perspective.
- Causes of misinterpretation and misrepresentation of Sikhi have been discussed.
- The influence of Vedantic philosophy on Sikh scholars has been reported.

- Illiteracy about Sikhi among the Sikhs has been recognized by custodians of Sikhi.
- Finally, a new approach of application of logic and scientific information to interpret bani to re-discover Sikhi, as founded by Guru Nanak, has been recommended.

It is hoped the Sikh intelligentsia will re-discover the Sikhi of Guru Nanak in its real perspective during 2019, the year of the 550th Birthday of Guru Nanak.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr Kulbir Singh Thind, USA; Dr Kaminder Singh Dhillon, Malaysia; Dr Avtar Singh Dhaliwal, USA; and Dr Devinder Pal Singh, Canada for going through the MS and giving some suggestions. I am really thankful to Ms. Komal Sidhu, M.A., Speech-Language Pathologist, USA for editing the article two times.

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