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Interfaith and world peace

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Item Type	Article
Authors	Singh Chahal, Devinder
Publisher	Institute for Understanding Sikhism
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Download date	2026-07-16 13:36:08
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/235599

INTERFAITH AND WORLD PEACE – SIKH PERSPECTIVE*

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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

Hinnells 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 ਕਢਿ 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:

ਪਹਿਲਾ¹ ਵਸਤੁ² ਸਿਵਾਣਿ³ ਕੈ ਤਾ ਕੀਚੈ⁴ ਵਾਪਾਰੁ⁵ ॥

It is advised that one must evaluate³ the things / philosophy² first¹, if convinced, then adopt/follow^{4,5} 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 ॥

ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ

ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ २

ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ३ ॥

The One and Only, Oh, the Infinite¹;

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 Itself²;

Enlightener; and Bounteous³.

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 ਪਾਤਾਲ¹ ॥

ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਧਰਤੀ ਥਾਪਿ ਰਖੀ ਧਰਮ ਸਾਲ² ॥

ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਜੀਅ³ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਕੇ ਰੰਗ ॥

ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਨਾਮ ਅਨੇਕ ਅਨੰਤ ॥

ਕਰਮੀ ਕਰਮੀ⁴ ਹੋਇ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ⁵ ॥

ਸਚਾ ਆਪਿ ਸਚਾ ਦਰਬਾਰੁ⁶ ॥

ਤਿਥੈ ਸੋਹਨਿ ਪੰਚ⁷ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ⁸ ॥

ਨਦਰੀ⁹ ਕਰਮਿ¹⁰ ਪਵੈ ਨੀਸਾਣੁ¹¹ ॥

ਕਚ¹² ਪਕਾਈ¹³ ਓਥੈ ਪਾਇ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਗਇਆ ਜਾਪੈ ਜਾਇ ॥ ੩੪ ॥

Nights, seasons, days, and weeks;

Wind, water, and fire in the center of the Earth¹;

Amidst all these natural phenomena and resources,

the Earth is placed as a venue to practice righteousness².

Thereon are various types of living beings³.

And their names and kinds are uncountable.

By their deeds⁴ their destinies are judged⁵.

The court⁶ of the Ever-Existing (God) is true.

In that court only nobles⁷ are accepted⁸.

This honor of acceptance of good deeds¹⁰ is achieved¹¹ by the blessing⁹ of the God.

Nanak says:

Whether one is ordinary¹² or elevated¹³ is sent for judgment and is judged in the court of God. 34.

AGGS, Jap 34. p 7 [1].

Note: ਪਾਤਾਲ¹ (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, "*Dharmsaal*", 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

ਪਵਣੁ¹ ਗੁਰੂ ਪਾਣੀ ਪਿਤਾ ਮਾਤਾ² ਧਰਤੀ³ ਮਹਤੁ⁴ ॥

ਦਿਵਸੁ⁵ ਰਾਤਿ⁶ ਦੁਇ ਦਾਈ⁷ ਦਾਇਆ⁸ ਖੇਲੈ ਸਗਲ⁹ ਜਗਤੁ¹⁰ ॥

ਚੰਗਿਆਈਆ¹¹ ਬੁਰਿਆਈਆ¹² ਵਾਚੈ ਧਰਮੁ¹³ ਹਦੂਰਿ¹⁴ ॥

ਕਰਮੀ¹⁵ ਆਪੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਕੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਕੇ ਦੂਰਿ ॥

ਜਿਨੀ ਨਾਮੁ¹⁶ ਧਿਆਇਆ¹⁷ ਗਏ ਮਸਕਤਿ¹⁸ ਘਾਲਿ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਤੇ ਮੁਖ ਉਜਲ¹⁹ ਕੇਤੀ²⁰ ਛੁਟੀ ਨਾਲਿ ॥੧॥

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

Air¹ is like a Guru, water like a father (represent environment and resource), and Earth² is like the great⁴ mother² (which provides all types of resources and food).

Both day⁵ and night⁶ are like male-nurse⁷ and female nurse⁸, respectively, and the whole⁹ humanity¹⁰ 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)¹¹ and vices (bad deeds)¹² are evaluated under¹⁴ the Laws of Nature¹³.

Since people are honored according to their deeds¹⁵, therefore, some will come near to salvation while others will remain away from it.

Nanak says:

The faces of those nobles¹⁶, who have comprehended¹⁴ God¹³, glow with happiness and attain liberation from their troubles¹⁵. And with the association of such nobles many others¹⁷ can attain salvation.

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

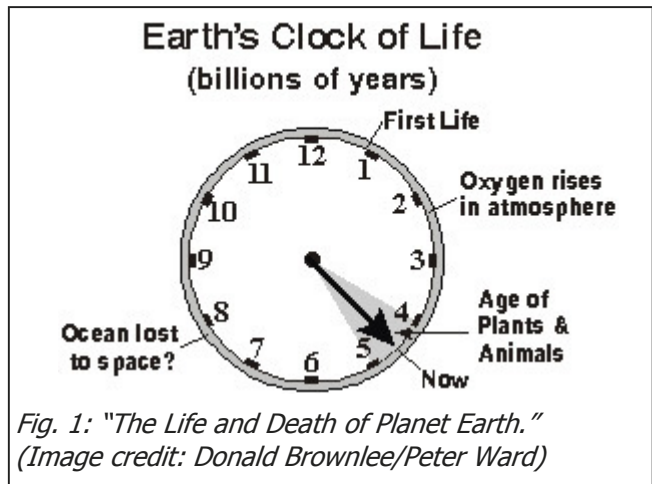
Here it is explained that God has provided all the natural resources, i.e. air, water and Earth; the necessary phenomena - day, night, and seasons; and the necessary environment for all the living beings on this earth. Therefore, the earth provides all types of resources and necessary environment to 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 ਸਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੂਲੁ ਪਛਾਣੁ* ॥

AGGS, M 3, p 441.

(* This stanza was first uttered by Guru Nanak as admitted by Guru Amardas: ਇਉਂ ਕਹੈ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਮਨ ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰੂਪ 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 (ਮਨ¹* ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ² ਸਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੂਲ³ ਪਛਾਣ⁴ ॥) can be interpreted scientifically and logically as follows:

"Hay Man (mind)¹! Recognize⁴ your roots³.

Your roots are from the primordial Energy (Jyot)², 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 15th 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: ਵਿਦਿਆ¹ ਵੀਚਾਰੀ² ਤਾਂ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ³ ॥

Nanak Says:

That education¹ is worth², which is applied³ to the welfare of the humanity

AGGS, M 1, p 356.

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

ਜੇਤੇ ਜੀਅ¹ ਤੇਤੇ ਸਭਿ ਤੇਰੇ ਵਿਣੁ ਸੇਵਾ* ਫਲੁ² ਕਿਸੈ ਨਾਹੀ ॥

All those living beings¹ (on this earth) are Yours.

Without service², no one obtains any reward³.*

AGGS, M 1, p 354.

What does ਸੇਵਾ* (Sewa/Service) mean here?

Guru Nanak explains ਸੇਵਾ (service) as follows:

ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ¹ ਸਬਦੁ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ² ॥ ਹਉਮੈ³ ਮਾਰੇ⁴ ਕਰਣੀ⁵ ਸਾਰੁ ॥

ਜਪੁ ਤਪੁ ਸੰਜਮੁ⁶ ਪਾਠੁ⁷ ਪੁਰਾਣੁ⁸ ॥

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਅਪੰਰਪਰਾ⁹ ਮਾਨੁ¹⁰ ॥

The service¹ to the Guru is to comprehend² the philosophy³ of the Guru.

What is that philosophy?

Getting rid⁴ of ego⁵ and to do good deeds⁶ is the service to the God.

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

Consider¹³ doing good deeds and knowing the God is more than¹² (highest of all) that of all your meditation⁷, austerities⁸, self-discipline⁹ and reading¹⁰ of Puranas¹¹.

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:

ਸਫਲੁ¹ ਜਨਮੁ² ਹਰਿ ਜਨ ਕਾ ਉਪਜਿਆ ਜਿਨਿ ਕੀਨੋ ਸਉਤੁ³ ਬਿਧਾਤਾ⁴ ॥

ਸਗਲੁ⁵ ਸਮੂਹੁ⁶ ਲੈ ਉਧਰੇ⁷ ਨਾਨਕ ਪੂਰਨੁ⁸ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ⁹ ਪਛਾਤਾ¹⁰ ॥

Nanak says:

Successful¹ are those lives² (devotees), who consider that everyone is the child³ of God⁴. Those, who have realized¹⁰ the perfect⁸ God⁹, take along with them all⁵ their colleagues⁶ across the sea of life⁷.

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 ਉਚਾ¹ ਆਖੀਐ ਨੀਚੁ² ਨ ਦੀਸੈ ਕੋਇ ॥

ਇਕਨੈ³ ਭਾਂਡੈ⁴ ਸਾਜਿਐ⁵ ਇਕੁ ਚਾਨਣੁ⁶* ਤਿਹੁ ਲੋਇ⁷ ॥

ਕਰਮਿ⁸ ਮਿਲੈ ਸਚੁ⁹ ਪਾਈਐ ਧੁਰਿ¹⁰ ਬਖਸ਼ੀ¹¹ ਨ ਮੋਟੈ¹² ਕੋਇ ॥੬॥

Call everyone exalted¹; none appears to be low²;

Everyone has been moulded⁵ from the same³ matter⁴;

And the same source of light⁶ shines⁷ in all.

Finally, Guru Nanak explains:

Such actions⁸ are developed through nature¹⁰ (heredity)

and the Grace¹¹ of God⁹, which cannot be erased¹².6.

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 ਜਾਤੀ¹ ਫਕੜੁ ਨਾਉ² ।

ਸਭਨਾ ਜੀਆ ਇਕਾ ਛਾਉ³ ॥

ਆਪਹੁ ਜੇ ਕੋ ਭਲਾ⁴ ਕਹਾਏ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਤਾ ਪਰੁ ਜਾਪੈ ਜਾ ਪਤਿ⁵ ਲੇਖੈ⁶ ਪਾਇ ॥੧॥

Pride in social status² and personal glory³ are useless¹ since every living being is under one Law and Order.

One may call oneself as a noble man⁸ but nobility⁵ is achieved when one's good deeds are accepted².

AGGS, M 1, p 83.

c. Sharing of Material Wealth

Sharing of earning for the uplift of the humanity:

ਘਾਲੀ¹ ਖਾਇ² ਕਿਛੁ³ ਹਬਹੁ ਦੇਹਿ⁴ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹੁ⁵ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ⁶ ਸੇਇ ॥

AGGS, M 1, p 1284.

"Nanak Says:

The one who earns² with his sweat of brow¹ and shares⁴ some of his earning³ for the welfare of the humanity has recognized⁶ the real path of life⁵.

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:

ਮਨਹਨੀ¹ ਬੁਧੀ² ਕੇਤੀਆ ਕੇਤੇ ਬੇਦ³ ਬੀਚਾਰ⁴ ॥

ਕੇਤੇ ਬੰਧਨਾ ਜੀਅ ਕੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਮੋਖ ਦੁਆਰ ॥
ਸਚਹੁ ਓਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਆਚਾਰੁ ॥੫॥

ਅਗਸਤ, ਮ ੧, ਪ-੬੨.

Stubborn-minded¹ intelligent² have contemplated⁴ the Vedas³.

There are so many rituals in Vedas in which one is entangled⁵, but only Guru-oriented⁶ person get salvation⁷.

Who is the Guru-oriented person? Guru Nanak explains it as follows:

Although truth⁸ is higher than everything; but higher still is truthful⁹ living¹⁰. 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 ਜਪਿ ਨਿਰਮਲੰ ਕਰਮੁ ॥

AGGS, M 5, p 266.

Amongst all¹ the religions², the highest³ religion of the human is to do good⁵ deeds⁶ that is equivalent to the repetition⁴ 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:

ਬਿਸਰਿ 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 ਰਵਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਏਕੈ ਪੇਖਿ ਪੇਖਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਬਿਗਾਸਾਈ ॥੩॥

I have totally forgotten¹ to be jealous of others prosperity² since I have found the company of noble people³. Pause.

Now no one is my enemy⁴ or stranger⁵ to me, therefore, I can get along with⁷ everyone⁶. 1.

I accept⁹ what is being done⁸ by God under Its Laws of

Nature since I have attained this wisdom¹⁰ from the company of the noble people¹¹. 2.

I also realized that The One God¹³ is pervading¹² in everyone and to see¹⁴ them happy¹⁵. 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:

ਆਪੁ ਵੰਞਾਏ ਤਾ ਸਭ ਕਿਛੁ ਪਾਏ ॥

ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦੀ ਸਚੀ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਏ ॥

AGGS, M 3, p 115.

Guru Amardas says:

By destroying² egoism¹ one can achieve everything³.

This can be achieved by contemplating⁵ on the teachings of Guru (Nanak)⁴.

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 ਗੁਣ ਚੰਗਿਆਈਆ ਤਤੁ ॥

Nanak says:

Sweetness¹ (politeness) and humility² are the essence⁵ of virtue³ and goodness⁴.

AGGS, M 1, p 470.

ਮੰਦਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਨ ਆਖੀਐ ਪਤਿ ਅਖਰੁ ਏਹੋ ਬੁਝੀਐ ॥

ਮੁਰਬੈ ਨਾਲਿ ਨ ਲੁਝੀਐ ॥

Do not call² anyone bad¹ and don't argue⁶ with a fool⁵, I have discovered⁴ after studying the word³.

AGGS, M 1, p 473.

ਗਰੀਬੀ ਗਦਾ ਹਮਾਰੀ ॥

ਖੰਨਾ ਸਗਲ ਰੇਨੁ ਛਾਰੀ ॥

ਇਸੁ ਆਗੈ ਕੋ ਨ ਟਿਕੈ ਵੇਕਾਰੀ ॥

ਗੁਰ ਪੂਰੈ ਏਹ ਗਲ ਸਾਰੀ ॥

Humility¹ is my mace².

My dagger³ is to be the dust of all ⁴men's feet^{5,6} (means service to the humanity).

No evil doer⁹ can withstand⁸ against⁷ these weapons.

The Perfect Guru¹⁰ (Nanak) me this understanding.¹¹
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 17th 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 ਦੋਤ ਨਹਿ, ਨਹਿ ਭੈ ਮਾਨਤ ਆਨ ॥

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨਿ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਤਾਹਿ ਬਖਾਨਿ ॥੧੬॥

Oh mind (man)⁵! Listen⁴!

A person who does² not threaten¹ anybody and does not accept³ the threat of anybody that person is described⁷ as the wise/intellectual⁶.

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 ਕਛੂ 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 shackles³ when one loses² his all powers¹; then he cannot do⁵ anything⁴.

Under such circumstances one looks for help⁶ of God⁷ as has been mentioned in mythology that God helped⁹ the elephant⁸ 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 God¹⁰ 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^{1,2} one lives in this world³ one must listen⁵ to others⁴ and express⁶ 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 ॥

ਸੇ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ ॥

ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੀ ਭੰਡੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਭੰਡੇ ਬਾਬੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਭੰਡੇ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਏਕੋ ਸੋਇ ॥

ਜਿਤੁ ਮੁਖਿ ਸਦਾ ਸਾਲਾਹੀਐ ਭਾਗਾ ਰਤੀ ਚਾਰਿ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਤੇ ਮੁਖ ਉਜਲੈ ਤਿਤੁ ਸਚੈ ਦਰਬਾਰਿ ॥੨॥

AGGS, M 1, p 473.

From the woman¹ is our birth²; in the woman's womb⁴ one grows³; to the woman one is engaged⁵; to the woman one is wedded⁶.

One be friends⁷ with woman and starts one's life⁸.

When woman is dead⁹ and another woman is sought¹⁰ and with woman we are attached¹¹ and raise a family.

Why call woman evil¹² that gives birth¹³ to kings¹⁴?

From the woman is born¹⁵ a woman, without woman there is none.

Nanak says:

There is only One¹⁶, the Eternal, who is not dependent upon woman.

That person, who always praises¹⁷ the One, is very fortunate.

That person's face glows¹⁸ in the court²⁰ of God¹⁹ (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 ਹੁਕਮ¹ ਹੋਆ ਮਿਹਰਵਾਣ² ਦਾ ॥ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਕਿਸੈ ਰਵਾਣਦਾ³ ॥
ਸਭ ਸੁਖਾਲੀ⁴ ਵਠੀਆ⁵ ਇਹੁ ਹੋਆ ਹਲੇਮੀ⁶ ਰਾਜੁ⁷ ਜੀਉ ॥੧੩॥

Now, the Merciful² God has issued a command¹ of benign⁶ rule⁷ that no one will chase and attack³ anyone and everyone will live⁵ easily⁴ 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:

ਆਗਾਹਾ¹ ਕੂ ਤ੍ਰਾਪਿ² ਪਿਛਾ³ ਫੇਰਿ ਨ ਮੁਹਡੜਾ⁴ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਿਤਿ⁵ ਇਵੇਹਾ⁶ ਵਾਰ ਬਹੁਤਿ⁷ ਨ ਹੋਵੀ ਜਨਮੜਾ⁸ ॥੧॥

Nanak says:

*"Think² about the future¹,
look not on the past³ over the shoulders⁴.
Make⁵ the present life⁶ a great success
Because there is no birth⁸ again⁷."*

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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- number of the Sikh Gurus to the House of Guru Nanak, p = Page of the AGGS).
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*Paper presented at the Council of Parliament of World Religions Conference held at Melbourne, Australia on December 3-9, 2009.