

# SHADES OF GURU NANAK'S PHILOSOPHY

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## ABSTRACT

*Guru Nanak's philosophy is not his individual personal reaction to the then prevalent scenario, rather it is the divine intervention through Guru Nanak to assert and establish the real purpose of religion in human history. It is not only the intervention merely, yet also the desire and design of a particular spiritual and moral life standard as revealed by God Himself through Guru Nanak.*

## INTRODUCTION

**T**he great philosophy that was propagated by Guru Nanak was a most organized and clearly defined spiritio-social philosophy of the world. It took its origin with the great will of the creator of this world Himself. This is what we find from the very onset of Guru's commission as the prophet of God. Consequently, Guru Nanak's philosophy is not based upon his own assumptions or borrowings from the already existing faith-traditions. It was rather the clear outcome of the divine intervention, in the form of divine word, in the human history through Guru Nanak. God actually revealed through him to establish the truth about Himself. The religion propounded by Guru Nanak was a divine reaction that took place in the course of time.

Actually, that was the period of history especially in India and around that witnessed an utter chaos in every field of life. Spirituality for the masses was almost non-existent. Religion was what the priest interpreted to the uneducated masses. Social values were what suited to the rigid dominating class. Practically the divine form of religion was almost extinct. Neither spiritual orientation/integration was the purpose of religious life, nor the general social concerns. The prevailing traditional idea of the holy at that time had come to the level of belief in either the incarnated personalities or the natural forces. Surprisingly, that was what came down to the masses not directly from the understanding of religious scripture, rather it was what was informed to them by the then leading priests and scholars. With the result, the real meaning of religion was not informed to the common man. Thus, the common person did not actually have the insight into the meaning and purpose of his life. The religious philosophy propounded by Guru Nanak shows a great and different path to the knowledge and realization of the divine Truth. The major philosophical content of Guru Nanak's philosophy revolves around his philosophy of divine 'Word' (sabd) as the divine existence in the human history.

## A revealed philosophy

Bhai Santokh Singh in his *Gurpartap Suraj Granth* writes; the true religion had been choked by selfishness of priests and indifference of the people. The highly spiritual character of Hinduism was replaced by formalism and was confined to peculiar forms of eating and drinking, rites and rituals, sacrifices and superstitions

and other such mechanical observances. (1) Guru Nanak's philosophy is not his individual personal reaction to the then prevalent scenario, rather it is the divine intervention through Guru Nanak to assert and establish the real purpose of religion in human history. Chaos in the religio-ethical spheres is reacted upon by the divine Lord Himself. It is not only the intervention merely, yet also the desire and design of a particular spiritual and moral life standard as revealed by God Himself through Guru Nanak. Bhai Santokh Singh narrates a story of how Guru Nanak was commissioned for the divine cause. He writes; God intended that religious situation has come to a pretentious mode. It should be stopped. He felt the need to plant a great seed of divine knowledge in the world. That plant He felt should be, for which humble human mind be the earth. The seed be of love. Submission and obedience be the growth. Outer layer as devotion and mercy its roots. The water channels around that plant should be of altruism in which truth will flow. Further that should be irrigated with piety and taken care by patience. With the result of that a great religion should germinate. To collect good attributes would be the leaves of that tree. Its big branch of pleasant wisdom would have the flowers of the great name of Hari (God) and realization of the individual self as a part of God would be the fruit of that tree. Finally it was said;



with the juice of that fruit the nectar would be obtained which will drive away the fear of death, that otherwise cannot be driven away by any other means. By following this divinely designed path the so-called cattles of avarice would not be able to harm humanity. This would be covered by the congregation (sadh-sangat) from all the sides. Birds like saints of God would be indulged in altruism and remembrance of His name.

The god of water (Varun) is shown to have heard the voice of God expressing the above said intention. He (Varun) was ordered to go to Guru Nanak Dev to convey the pleasant message. Varun carefully listened and obediently followed the message of God. He thus submerged his body in the water of the rivulet where Guru Nanak would go for bathing every morning. That rivulet was very near to the house where Guru Nanak used to live. That was known as the *vein nadi*. In the wee hours of morning the Guru would go there to take bath. On one fine day when the Guru went there to take bath, where Varun had already submerged himself in the water. He took Guru Nanak in the court of God. After reaching there the Guru paid his very humble obeisance to the almighty; the source of eternal peace; God almighty who resides in the trance of those who are attached to him (Yogis) said smilingly; come Nanak come, you are always engrossed in my name. God further said; the purpose for which you have taken your birth in the world is to be accomplished now. So, go and complete your work. This is the age of irreligiosity and all kind of evils. It is very chaotic and dangerous. Human mind has become the house of sinful intentions. They have turned their back from faith and forgot the name of God. They tread only on the path of evil. Go and inspire them to the right path and tell them that loving worship of God is the right way for them. The weight of sins has become unbearable for the creatures of earth. So, go and destroy their sins. The sinners and liars are going to the hell in great number. Those sinners and evil-doers have no relief at all. While having left the path of righteousness they are treading on the path of evil. They are trapped in the illusory pleasures of the world, right after taking their birth in the world. Go and tell them the importance of the light of Name and destroy the pretensions they are indulged in. After hearing these words, the Guru was overwhelmed by the utter love for the All-powerful. Thus, he recited a verse in praise of God.

Being pleased with the love song sung by Guru Nanak, the True Lord recited him the initiatory formula known as the Mul-Mantra. That is the first preamble of the Sikh faith situated at the beginning of the Sikh Scripture; Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) [1]. This very preamble became the basic theological strength for Guru Nanak to establish and spread the message of God. That meant; God the one single absolute is the original cause of creation. It is the everlasting reality and self expressive through His

creation. God has no one equal or above, thus no one to be His enemy or to be afraid from. God is the creator of His own self and beyond any limitation of time and space and can be realized with Guru's grace. After reciting this, God said, Nanak! Go and explain it to the world. The Guru thus bowed before Him in obeisance. After this God said in an utterly soft voice, Nanak! Leave the profession you are complying with and take this mantra to the world. After having pleasant glimpses and after paying his obeisance to God; the destroyer of sorrow, Guru Nanak thus returned to the place from where he was taken from [2].

From the above passage it can be understood that Guru Nanak actually carried the message of God. It was sent for the purpose to assert and establish real divine program in religious and social spheres life. It was the integrated spiritual and ethical view-point in the new religious and social scenario. The religious ideology as propounded by Guru Nanak confirms two sided picture of that time. (i) The general masses on the one hand were worshipping many gods and their worship was centered on their selfish gains only. They were advised to worship a particular god to fulfill a particular personal purpose. That is why there were different powers for different groups of people on the one hand and different gods for different problems of the masses on the other. (ii) Worship for the sake of realization of God was not in practice amongst the masses. Self-realization was totally an unknown idea to the common man. Meaning of religion and purpose of life had certainly no coherence with each other. Guru Nanak's way was actually to establish a monotheistic ideology along with the life system based upon that ideology. It was to infect the faith in the One, the worship of the one and service of the one.

Guru Nanak's Absolute is formless, unborn, timeless and eternal reality. In contrast to the then prevailing system of worship the Guru established the way as actually desired by God Himself. God had wanted that mankind should worship Him through remembrance of His name, so was the message of Guru Nanak to the masses. A rational insight to support this view has been expressed in Japuji (the very first long composition by Guru Nanak) that:

ਬਾਪਿਆ ਨ ਜਾਇ ਕੀਤਾ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥  
ਆਪੇ ਆਪਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਸੋਇ ॥

*God cannot be established, cannot be created.  
He Himself is immaculate and pure.*  
AGGS, Jap # 5, p 2 [1].

### Word as God

The existence of God as expressed by Guru Nanak is in the abstract form, as the essence of the world. In more concrete manner it can be said that God expresses His

existence in the world in the form of Word. It is eternal primordial sound that is expressed as word. Word is the manifest form of the unmanifest:

ਸਬਦੇ ਰਵਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਗੁਰ ਰੂਪ ਮੁਰਾਰੇ ॥

ਗੁਰ ਰੂਪ ਮੁਰਾਰੇ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣ ਧਾਰੇ ਤਾ ਕਾ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਆ ॥

*The Sabd is pervading, through the Guru, the embodiment of the Lord.*

*The Guru, the embodiment of the Lord, is enshrined throughout the three worlds, His limits cannot be found.*

AGGS, M 1, p 1112.

And

ਉਤਪਤਿ ਪਰਲਉ ਸਬਦੇ ਹੋਵੈ ॥

ਸਬਦੇ ਹੀ ਫਿਰ ਉਪਤਿ ਹੋਵੈ ॥

*The world is created and destroyed through the Word and into the Word it re-merges.*

AGGS, M 3, p 117.

Thus the worship of that Word form is possible only through the Word itself. It is most subtle and internal method of worship. Through the history of religious phenomenon it is very well understood fact that the way to worship is determined by the concept of divinity in that religious tradition. Guru's spiritual path is not only unique for its faith in Word as the absolute reality rather it also has its uniqueness in regards to its method of worship. This factor separates the Sikh religion from the other faith systems. Guru Nanak's one composition known as Aarti provides the best of example in this regards. The Guru has given marvelous example of his wider perspective of faith and practice. While expressing the existence of God as the essence of the whole creation, the Guru expressed about the use of whole creation as the material to be used for His worship. In that whole phenomenon the unstuck melody; the word plays the vital role. This is to my mind is best ever example for the expression about reality and It's worship.

It is said the concept of word is the only basic and fundamental concept of the Sikh religion. This is the essential and driving force which provides life to the great system known as Sikhism. Having discourses with the Nath-Yogis a clear vision of the Guru comes to the fore. He asserted the divine word to be his eternal guide.

ਪਵਨ ਅਰੰਭੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਮਤਿ ਵੇਲਾ ॥ ਸਬਦੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਧੁਨਿ ਚੇਲਾ ॥

ਅਕਥ ਕਥਾ ਲੇ ਰਹਉ ਨਿਰਾਲਾ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੁਗਿ ਜੁਗਿ ਗੁਰ ਗੋਪਾਲਾ ॥

ਏਕੁ ਸਬਦੁ ਜਿਤੁ ਕਥਾ ਵੀਚਾਰੀ ॥ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਹਉਮੈ ਅਗਨਿ ਨਿਵਾਰੀ ॥

*From the air came the beginning. This is the age of the True Guru's Teachings.*

*The Shabad is the Guru, upon whom I lovingly focus my consciousness; I am the disciple.*

*Speaking the unspoken speech, I remain unattached.*

*O Nanak, throughout the ages, the Lord of the Word is my Guru.*

*I contemplate the sermon of the Sabd, the Word of the One.*

*The Gurmukh puts out the fire of egotism.*

AGGS, M 1, p 943.

Thus Word is the basic concept of the Sikh theology which connects relationship between God and creation, Guru and the Sikh. That is why word is considered the life-line in the Sikh religion. This phenomenon is what differentiates Guru's religion from the then prevalent religious systems. "The doctrine of Sabd (word) is the single basic thought, the governing idea, and the essential doctrine which gives life to the great structure called Sikhism. At times naive and childish meanings have been given to this profound concept of Sikhism, which has different significance in metaphysics, mysticism and practical religion. The words that come closest to its meaning are the Greek *logos*, and the Neo-Platonist's *nous*." [3]

This very concept also became the basic theme for the establishment of the Sikh Scripture; Aad Guru Granth Sahib. Word is the manifest form of the unmanifest (God) in the form of creation. This idea is affirmed in AGGS as; all the three worlds carry the light of word in them.

ਤੂੰ ਲੋਕ ਦੀਪਕੁ ਸਬਦਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਪੰਚ ਦੂਤ ਸੰਘਾਰਹੇ ॥

ਭੈ ਕਾਟਿ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਤਰਹਿ ਦੁਤਰੁ ਗੁਰਿ ਮਿਲਿਐ ਕਾਰਜ ਸਾਰਏ ॥

*The Word of the Sabd is the lamp which illuminates the three worlds; it slaughters the five demons. Quieting your fears, become fearless, and you shall cross over the impassible world ocean. Meeting the Guru, your affairs shall be resolved.*

AGGS, M 1, p 1113.

The importance of the word as Name can be judged from the fact that the word *name* (divine name) occurs in the AGGS 5999 times. In conversation with the Siddhas when Guru Nanak was asked;

ਕਵਨੁ ਸੁ ਗੁਪਤਾ ਕਵਨੁ ਸੁ ਮੁਕਤਾ ॥ ਕਵਨੁ ਸੁ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਜੁਗਤਾ ॥

ਕਵਨੁ ਸੁ ਆਵੈ ਕਵਨੁ ਸੁ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਕਵਨੁ ਸੁ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਸਮਾਇ ॥

*Who is hidden? Who is liberated?*

*Who is united, inwardly and outwardly?*

*Who comes, and who goes?*

*Who is permeating and pervading the three worlds?*

In answer to that he said:

ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਗੁਪਤਾ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਮੁਕਤਾ ॥

ਅੰਤਰਿ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਸਬਦਿ ਸੁ ਜੁਗਤਾ ॥

ਮਨਮੁਖਿ ਬਿਨਸੈ ਆਵੈ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸਾਚਿ ਸਮਾਇ ॥

*He is hidden within each and every heart. The Gurmukh is liberated. Through the Word of the Shabad, one is united, inwardly and outwardly. The self-willed*

*manmukh perishes, and comes and goes. O Nanak, the Gurmukh merges in Truth.*  
AGGS, M 1, p 939.

To sum up this idea it can be said that Guru's philosophy of religious practice is centered on most subtle and abstract poise of stable mind that is concentrated upon the shabad-divine. That is the true sign of the inner spiritual destination. As the Guru said:

ਘਰ ਮਹਿ ਘਰੁ ਦੇਖਾਇ ਦੇਇ ਸੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਸੁਜਾਣੁ ॥

ਪੰਚ ਸਬਦ ਧੁਨਿਕਾਰ ਧੁਨਿ ਤਹ ਬਾਜੈ ਸਬਦੁ ਨੀਸਾਣੁ ॥

ਦੀਪ ਲੋਅ ਪਾਤਾਲ ਤਹ ਖੰਡ ਮੰਡਲ ਹੈਰਾਨੁ ॥

ਤਾਰ ਘੋਰ ਬਾਜਿੰਤੁ ਤਹ ਸਾਚਿ ਤਖਤਿ ਸੁਲਤਾਨੁ ॥

*The True Guru is the All-knowing Primal Being; He shows us our true home within the home of the self. The Panch Sabd, the Five Primal Sounds, resonates and resounds within; the insignia of the Sabd is revealed there, vibrating gloriously. Worlds and realms, nether regions, solar systems and galaxies are wondrously revealed. The strings and the harps vibrate and resound; the true throne of the Lord is there.*

AGGS, M 1, p 1290-91.

In contrast to the then prevailing Indian way of religious practices we find in Guru Nanak's philosophy a very strong paradigm shift from purely outer religious life style to the purely inner spiritual concerns. Any type of religious practice that is based upon merely outer ritualistic performance is futile for the Guru. Any religious practice that does not lead to the love worship of God while remembering His name is not accepted in the house of Nanak.

### **Combination of spiritual and moral philosophy**

The central emphasis of his ideology remains spiritual yet not divorced from the social concerns as well. That period of history was actually the period of chaos in every field of life. Although the great saints of north India tried to give the right religio-social direction to the Indian masses even before Guru Nanak, but they tried their reformation move without crossing the traditional boundaries of the time. That is why their success was limited, because the phonetics of the then Hindu priestly class was so strong that it swallowed many reform movements in its stretched hands. But Guru Nanak could save his system because he kept it free from the prevailing narrow and compartmentalized tradition. Secondly, for the Guru along with the spiritual consonance, social consonance was equally important. Both the aspects of life were part and parcel of each other. The Guru was not only inspired to implement the worship of the One-Single-Absolute, yet also his divine duty was to establish a life-style based upon the revealed moral standards. The social message of Guru Nanak was initiated by the divine order for the

purpose to provide the common man a peaceful spiritual and well-organized social life.

Guru Nanak re-affirmed the concept of maintaining human relationship with the divine. The nature of that relationship was re-defined by the Guru. It was (i) to maintain personal/spiritual relationship with the unseen Reality and (ii) to maintain personal/responsible relationship with society. In a way it can be interpreted as; the Guru established the philosophy to maintain personal one-to-one relationship with the Reality on the one hand and one-to-all relationship with the society on the other. It was based upon Guru's theological standpoint that the whole creation is the inflow out of the single one creative energy; God. Thus that One-Single-Absolute is to be worshipped as God the creator and the same is served in the form of society at the same time. The Guru held that in the beginning God was in trance, in a thoughtless position and suddenly an idea occurred to Him to create this world and thus from trance He came in thoughtful position and manifested Himself in the form of nature. So nature is non else than the manifest existence of the One. Guru Nanak's philosophy is thus guiding to maintain both way relationships with God; that is with His unmanifest and manifest form as well.

Guru's philosophy holds that an individual soul is the minutest form of the vital or the original soul (God). Thus its realization lies in mergence into its original source that is God. The ultimate aim of human existence that is to be realized by oneself is purely internal and spiritual. Thus for that attainment a particular type of individual attitude is required. The basis of behavior for human being is to adopt those values that may help one to achieve primal spiritual purity. On its way to the individual spiritual purification the individual Sikh has to adopt certain appropriate values that beget the specifically required destination and that destination passes through the selfless service irrespective of any difference.

We find grounds for the Sikh ethics right from *Jap*; the very first divine revelation through Guru Nanak. In this composition he clearly pointed towards the ultimate aim of the human life. He pointed to certain moral duties in order to enter into the fold of the Sikh faith. He said God is truth but to be able to know the truth one has to follow a particular path of truth as guided by the true Guru. He said; it is God the Truth that is equally prevailing everywhere. But due to the veil of ego we cannot perceive Him. The veil of ego may be defined as the individual personal consciousness of separateness from the Ultimate Reality and behaving in the world according to one's own wishes. In answer to the question that how the truth can be realized; he says that while

remaining in the obedience of the Guru one can adopt the path of truthful living. This is how one can break the wall of ego. When the wall of ego is broken the truth is automatically realized. He himself gives the easiest method to realize the truth in the *Jap*. He says that in the wee hours of the morning if one contemplates upon the true Name of God and His great qualities and understands that the individual soul comes upon this earth according to its previous deeds, and can realize liberation only with the grace of God. This is how one can be able to break the wall of ego and become one with the Truth.

The Guru stressed upon the need to be thoroughly moral in social life before entering on the path to the spiritual journey. In the last stanza of the *Jap*, the Guru has clearly laid down the moral standard for the Sikhs. He asked his followers to adopt the life style of chastity, continence and having divine knowledge as one's weapon to fight the wrongs of the world. He further suggested the Sikhs to remain in the loving devotion to God while constantly living in His fear. The Guru suggested that; the mind of a Sikh should be like an appropriate vessel in which the nectar name of God is poured and in that particular frame of mental and spiritual condition the name of God is contemplated. As the Guru has said in *Jap*:

ਜਤੁ ਪਾਹਾਰਾ ਧਰਿਜੁ ਸੁਨਿਆਰੁ ॥ ਅਹਰਣਿ ਮਤਿ ਵੇਦੁ ਹਥਿਆਰੁ ॥  
ਭਉ ਖਲਾ ਅਗਨਿ ਤਪ ਤਾਉ ॥ ਭਾਂਡਾ ਭਾਉ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਤਿਤੁ ਢਾਲਿ ॥  
ਘੜੀਐ ਸਬਦੁ ਸਚੀ ਟਕਸਾਲ ॥ ਜਿਨ ਕਉ ਨਦਰਿ ਕਰਮੁ ਤਿਨ ਕਾਰ ॥  
ਨਾਨਕ ਨਦਰੀ ਨਦਰਿ ਨਿਹਾਲ ॥

*Let self-control be the furnace, and patience the goldsmith. Let understanding be the anvil, and spiritual wisdom the tools. With the Fear of God as the bellows, fan the flames of tapa, the body's inner heat. In the crucible of love, melt the Nectar of the Name, and mint the True Coin of the Sabd, the Word of God. Such is the karma of those upon whom He has cast His Glance of Grace. O Nanak, the Merciful Lord, by His Grace, uplifts and exalts them. Thus the individual consciousness is streamlined in that particular factory of the word- divine. Time and again he said; devotion to God cannot take place without moral bindings. This ideology stands as the index of the whole of the Sikh way of life.*

AGGS, Jap # 38, p 8.

### Social Philosophy

The Guru's philosophy was a very strong reaction to the then socio-religious conditions also. The Indian social set-up had a hierarchy of cast system at that time. The *Brahmin*, the learned was on the top position. *Kshatrya*; the warrior was on the next. The *Vaish* or businessman was on the third position. The fourth was *Shudra*; the servant of the society. However, the condition of the *Shudra* was worst in the Indian traditional way of life. *Shudra* was considered to be untouchable. He/she was not

allowed to live an equal and respectable place in the social life. Far away from being in a decision making position, a *Shudra* was not allowed even to participate in social relations of the general masses. Against the odds of the above scenario, it was the social principle of the *Guru* that gave equal right to the *Shudra*; the lowest of the low. At *Guru's* place a *Shudra* was given an equal right to worship that was not given to him/her in traditional Indian society. He/she was given equal respectable right to sit and to dine together with the high caste in the *Gurdwara*. That idea was actually impracticable in the society at that time. Thus a Sikh was cautioned not to do any type of discrimination on the basis of social status. But a very important point that is coming to my mind is that while giving equal social rights to the so called low cast the *Guru* did not raze the rights of the Brahmins or the so called high-cast. In fact unchouchability might have started with the sense of cleanliness in the high cast people. But with the passage of time that took the form of religious taboo. Thus the *Guru* made bathing or bodily cleanliness as the very important duty of a Sikh.

The condition of woman was not even better in the society of that time. When the *Guru* started his mission he made remarkable reforms in the Indian society. Generally woman was not considered more than merely a servant. She was not considered eligible for spiritual attainment rather her very presence was thought to be a hindrance on the way to religious life of her counterpart. But the *Guru* gave her equal rights of social respectability and spiritual attainment. She was equally respectable person in the Sikh society. Even at the time of *Guru Amar Das*; the third *Guru*, *Bibi Veero*, a woman, was the head of a centre of religious preaching for the Sikhs. It was a part of twenty-two centers for the dissemination of teachings of *Guru Nanak*. Even at the time of *Guru Gobind Singh*, *Mai Bhago*, a woman, was a general of one segment of *Guru's* army. She was also the in-charge of a brigade that was later deputed to guard *Guru Gobind Singh* at *Nander*. This was the real outcome of *Guru Nanak's* philosophy.

### Inter-Faith Dialogue

The *Guru* was not only concerned about religio-social problems. He was equally concerned with the overall situation of religion of his time. For his divine purpose he toured to far off places to have dialogue with the leaders and common masses of different faiths. History speaks for itself for the originality and uniqueness of *Guru Nanak's* philosophy behind inter-faith discourses. Throughout the history of religious phenomenon in the world we find that although the religious leaders did have interfaith discussions but those were either for proselitization or to convince the others to their religious fold. No one in the history of mankind ever had dialogue

to persuade the fellow beings to return to their innermost spiritual realm as directed by their own religious guides. Shakracharya had inter-faith dialogue to convince people of other faiths to accept his view-point. Nanu Pandit had dialogue to defeat his opponents to establish his supremacy. Muslim rulers used even sword to proselytize. Christians today are trying hard to establish Christian supremacy and exclusivism through inter-faith dialogue. But it was Guru on the contrary who tried to convince mankind as a whole about the individual and inner absolute concerns. Diversity of religious or cultural pattern had never been the concern for the Guru, he rather stressed upon the intensity of spiritual yearning and love worship of the One-Single-Formless divine reality. The path suggested by the Guru was through connection with the inner and eternal divine word.

It is common belief that interfaith dialogue was initiated in the western world, but it actually took its birth in India. Ideologically and academically inter-faith dialogue was initiated in the west in nineteenth century. However, it got its actual, ideological and practical start in India in the fifteenth century. The initiator was the great Guru of human history known as Guru Nanak. To maintain the spiritual and social integrity Guru Nanak initiated inter-faith dialogue. In the religious history of mankind this was the first example of its own kind that interfaith program was initiated in such an organized manner by the prophet of a particular religion.

It was Guru Nanak who created the history of this kind. He accepted the truth of other's religions with complete purity and simplicity of his mind. He meant what he said about other's faith and he expressed it in his behavior towards them. Even though the Guru may or may not have agreed to certain systems, yet, he has very minutely expressed his concern about the innermost subtle elements of each religious and cultural tradition. This way we see a very unique combination of different religious, cultural and ideological concerns being represented in Guru's philosophy. It was perhaps the best way to establish a peaceful relationship between different religio-cultural groups. For the Guru every religion is divinely revealed and needs to be respected as the divine word. The interfaith attitude that was adopted by Guru Nanak prevails in the AGGS. It creates integrity between different religious ideologies and their divine connections. This attitude perhaps has occurred for the first time in human history that the Guru has never said anybody to adopt or accept Guru's religion. He rather inspired people to recognize the true essence of their own original religion and their own social obligations. No one is criticized in Guru's system for having faith in particular religion or culture. The basic concern of inter-faith discussions in Guru's system is (i) to make the followers recognize the innermost underlying real spirit of religion and (ii) to

remind them their social responsibilities, which they had forgotten. The real purpose for the Guru was to remind the masses about the practical use of their own religious realities. Guru Nanak accepted the truth that any religion can be the medium for liberation of soul. We see no references in the AGGS where people belonging to other faith were humiliated for simply having difference of faith neither we find any reference from Guru's side to pressurize anyone to change their religion. Rather they had to face criticism from the Guru for not practicing the real and essential postulates necessary to maintain real relationship with God. He never compromised with any person of any faith tradition as far as love worship for God was concerned.

### CONCLUSIONS

Thus, it can be said; the religion propounded by Guru Nanak was a divine reaction that took place in the course of time. Guru Nanak's philosophy is not his individual personal reaction to the then prevalent scenario, rather it is the divine intervention through Guru Nanak to assert and establish the real purpose of religion in human history. This very preamble became the basic theological strength for Guru Nanak to establish and spread the message of God. The religious ideology as propounded by Guru Nanak confirms two sided picture of that time. Guru Nanak's Absolute is formless, unborn, timeless and eternal reality. God had wanted that mankind should worship Him through remembrance of His name, so was the message of Guru Nanak to the masses. God cannot be established, cannot be created. The existence of God as expressed by Guru Nanak is in the abstract form, as the essence of the world; that is in the form of divine Word. This phenomenon is what differentiates Guru's religion from the then prevalent religious systems. Along with the spiritual consonance, social consonance was equally important. Guru Nanak re-affirmed the concept of maintaining human relationship with the divine. Guru Nanak's philosophy is thus guiding to maintain both way relationships with God; that is with His unmanifest and manifest form as well.

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