CHAPTER-7

GURU NANAK’S IDEA OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND ITS RELEVANCE TO THE MODERN MOVEMENTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Sikhism is the youngest and most scientific religion of the world. The history of Sikhism is in fact the story of struggle for Human Rights. One major Human Rights movement started with the birth of Guru Nanak. During the time of Sikh Gurus, Human Rights were dangerously crushed by despotic Muslim rulers. Muslim foreigner’s attacks were disturbing the whole pattern of society. The people were being demoralized and forced to embrace Islam. Guru Nanak, first Sikh Guru fought for the preservation of Human Rights and raised his voice against social injustice, inequality, religious repression, exploitation of women and degradation of human values. The religious, political and social conditions prevailing in his times were an assault on Human Rights. People were become selfish, narrow minded, proud and cynical. Humanity was being used ever as a mean and never as an end. Inequality, injustice, degradation, hatred, dishonesty, deception and exploitation were vices which eroded the basis of society. In such a horrible, repressive and violent circumstance one cannot dream of existence of Human Rights. Guru Nanak wanted to show the people the path of salvation and awaken them against political, economic and social tyranny.

Guru Nanak strongly advocated Human Rights for human beings. In the Guru Nanak’s vision, all human beings have Human Rights simply due to the very fact of their being human. The state does not grant these rights, but it ensures the non-violation of these rights either by the ruler or from any other quarter. It was not easy task to bring about a change in the mindset of a society as a whole that had forgotten the meaning of self respect, honour and dignity. But Guru Nanak followed a more positive approach by suggesting
how a benevolent ruler should perform his duties and what should be the obligations of ruling elite.

**Right to Resist Oppression**: In Guru Nanak *Bani* subjects have been made conscious of their rights to raise their voice against the oppression of the ruler, who fails to serve the people. They are supposed not to bear oppression under any circumstance. Guru Nanak condemned the brutalities of the rulers of his time. He stood against the rulers without any fear and hesitation. He spoke against the injustice being done by the rulers of his time.

In the Guru Granth Sahib we have several hymns of Guru Nanak, which showed the sorrowful and deplorable pictures of those times, where the administrative officials exploit their citizens and violate the Human Rights like:

> In Kali-Yuga have mankind turned dog-like, carrion its food false hood it barks out gone is righteous thinking those that in life had no faith, in death too foul is their repute.¹

In the poetry of Guru Nanak he denounced with extreme passion the cruelty, the bigotry and the extortionist ways of the kings and their courtiers.

Nanak calls kings ‘Tigers’ and their courtiers ‘Running dogs’ who wake people out of their beds. The king’s servants tear their nails into the bodies of the subjects and suck their blood.

In his writings recorded in Guru Granth Sahib, he condemned in very harsh words the corrupt rulers and dishonest people, who violate the right of the other people. They have been called dogs, butchers, mischief monger, hypocrite and ungrateful. Guru Nanak respected the basic Human Rights of the people. He mentioned:
No man shall coerce another, no man shall exploit another. Everyone, each individual, has an inalienable birth right to seek and pursue happiness and self fulfillment. Love and persuasion is the only law of social coherence and harmony. Corruption according to the Guru Nanak is the root cause for the violation of Human Rights. Guru Nanak advised the people to live an honest life and earn living by honest means.

He enjoined his followers to stand up for their rights as well as for the rights of others. He also warned them the dangerous effects of corruption. He passionately argued that principles as laid down in his new creed should be defended at all costs, even at the cost of one’s life, which are infect, the basic Human Rights. His clarion call the defence of basic Human Rights is crystal clear when he says:

If you desire to join me in this game of love, in defending the principles as I have down in my new creed, then ever remain ready even to sacrifice your life for that causes.

Guru Nanak emphasized a democratic idea when he enjoined upon the monarch to rule with the help of the representatives of his subjects in the discharge of his administrative functions and acquit himself in all fairness with justice, kindness and sympathy. The ruler must do his duty, as a mandate from God:

With devoted heart render service,  
make faith in the holy thy vocation,  
restrain thy mind running evil wards.

Guru Nanak accepted the monarchial form of Government. He condemned the various officers but not the offices themselves. Guru Nanak’s condemnation of oppression, inefficiency and corruption was tantamount to revolt against the authority. According to Guru Nanak, if the ruler’s orders were against justice and equity, it was not obligatory on the people to honour them. Guru Nanak came into contact and conflict with the political order of his times. He suffered at the hands of unjust and cruel kings. This led him to
give deep thought to political system that the people would need for a better social, economic life and moral regeneration and fight for it. All the Sikh Gurus fought against the political tyranny of the Mughals by organizing the Sikhs into a well knit community.

Guru Nanak did not spare the subjects also. He blamed the subjects even more. In the opinion of Guru Nanak it was the fault of the people to obey the orders of the tyrannical rulers without discriminating between the right and the wrong. Guru Nanak did not accept the violation of Human Rights by the rulers, if the ruler violated any human rights of human beings, it is duty of the people to resist him and if the political system is not according to need of the situation, it must be changed and replaced by new one. So the people must be aware of their rights and prepare for the proper use of it whenever the need arises. There are many examples of Sikh Gurus like fifth Guru Arjan Dev ji, ninth Guru Tegh Bhadur ji, tenth Guru Gobind Singh ji who stood against unjust rule and devoted their life in fighting against the oppression. Even the use of arms is asked for the resistance against tyranny and injustice. Guru Nanak revolted against exploiters and advised to serve the cause of the weak and helpless, it is justice.

Similar views regarding the rulers have been expressed by the western political thinkers. According to Saint Thomas Aquinas, “if he becomes tyrant and pursues his personal interests, it becomes the duty of the subjects to resist. It is for this reason that the resistance of tyranny is not only a right but a duty”. Like Saint Thomas Aquinas, T.H. Green also expressed similar views. According to him, “When the laws of the state are tyrannical and the state fails to promote the common good, resistance under these circumstances is not merely a right but it becomes a duty”. Thus we can say that it is the duty of the people to resist against tyranny.

John Locke was a great defender of the Glorious Revolution (in England) of 1688. He was firmly of the opinion that the people must resist oppression.
Right to work and fulfillment of essential needs

In ancient India, there were four values of life like: Dharam, Artha, Kama and Moksh. In the sphere of Artha came this right of the people to have employment and the things of the basic needs. Guru Nanak stresses the people’s right to work when he says that the creator of the universe has himself assigned some work to every being. It implies that God has endowed everyone with the ability of doing some kind of work. To quote Guru Nanak:

Himself the entire world has He created.
He who created it to various tasks has set it.

Thus everyone should engage in some productive work to earn his livelihood. God Himself has assigned certain occupation to everyone in this Universe. According to Guru Nanak, if some one is unable to do any work or has not got any employment, it is duty of others to look after him. For this purpose, the system of ‘daswand’ was started. Guru Nanak gave an idea of earning one’s livelihood through rightful means and to give some part of it as donation or charity.

Guru Nanak emphasized on basic three golden principles: Kirat Karna, Nam Japana, Wand Chhakna, means man should earn his livelihood by honest creative labour, he should keep in mind the name of God and he should share the fruits of his labour with his fellow beings. He instructed his followers to work, earn, spend and give out of their earnings to the needy. This leads a person to the ideal path of life. As it is said by Guru Nanak:

They alone have known the right way, who earns their livelihood through hard work, and share their earnings with those in needs.

The Doctrine of ‘Donation’ will provide the individual with an opportunity to experience the sublime feeling of contentment while contributing his/her part of income for the collective welfare and upliftment of the society as a whole i.e. sharing his/her earning with others voluntarily. The
ethical principle of contentment plays a vital role in human life. It arouses in one’s mind the sense of concern and care for his fellow beings and inspires him to serve human kind whole heartedly.

Guru Nanak says that an individual should set a-part, a portion of his earnings for the well being of the needy. A good human being according to Guru Nanak is one, who lives truthfully, honestly, fights injustice and compassion for the whole humanity and it is the duty of the ruler and other members of the society to see that none should remain naked and hungry. The Guru says that an individual should set apart a portion of his earnings for the well being of the needy.

Similarly ‘Naam Daan Ishanan’ is another common expression or a household phrase among followers of Guru Nanak. While Nam refers to constant remembrance of God, Daan means charity or altruistic deeds, and Ishnan signifies purity of body and mind through moral conduct.

It also brings forth the emphasis laid by Guru Nanak on the individual’s right to work as one will engage in work only if one has right to work. It also implies that one has the right to fulfill one’s essential needs. According to Guru Nanak:

The Lord by His might is the endless creator,
The created being nothing urge against Him.
To creating beings sustenance He provides,
And his ordinance over all makes operative.
Operating His ordinance is He all pervasive.\(^\text{13}\)

It was centuries after Guru Nanak that a western political thinker, Harold J.Laski, observed that, “every citizen has right to work, that does not mean that he has a right to any particular kind of work. The right to work merely means the right to be occupied in producing a share of those goods and
commodities which are useful for society. If a citizen is not given right to work he is virtually denied the right to express his personality”.14

It was Guru Nanak who initiated the advocacy for every human being’s right to work and fulfill his essential needs. Later on the right to work and right to basic need were also added in Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 under articles 23 and 25, according to which everyone has the right to work and free choice of the employment and everyone has the right to fulfill the basic needs of life like food, clothing, housing, medical care and other social services etc. Similarly, the Indian Constitution also granted this right to practice any profession to the people of India.

**Right to freedom**

At the time of Guru Nanak, there was no interaction of common people with themselves on religious ground. Only the Brahmins planned religious activities and the rest was mute spectators of the ritual. Even the Mantras which were recited were beyond understanding of masses. Guru Nanak demolished all barriers in the way of progress of man, whether these were social, political or religious. Guru Nanak forcefully advocated certain rights relating to the freedom which are very essential for the development of an individual. These freedoms are describes as under:

**a. Freedom of Religion**

Many devout Sikhs died for the cause of righteousness and for the protection and preservation of freedom to worship freely, to uphold the Sikh faith and for securing basic Human Rights like justice, liberty, equality and freedom for all the people. Under right to freedom Guru Nanak gave special stress on freedom of religion.

Freedom of religion means every individual is entitled to freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess practice and propagate any religion or faith of his own choice. Any section of the people has the right to establish
and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes, to manage its own affairs in matters of religion. No person can be compelled to pay tax for promotion of any particular religion. With the advent of Islam in India, the religious freedom of the Hindus was lost. Several saints and religious reformers came forward throughout India in order to safeguard the Hindu society. For the sake of the right of freedom of religion, ninth Guru, Guru Teg Bahadar, laid down his life in 1675, in Delhi. Some Brahmins from Kashmir approached him to save them from forcible conversion to Islam by the then rulers. The Guru himself was not a believer of the faith of those Brahmins but he stood for the right to freedom of practicing any religion and laid down his life for the cause.\textsuperscript{15} According to Guru Nanak, the main objective of man is to attain oneness with God, for the achievement of this objective, the right of freedom of religion is very important. The choice should be of the man himself. Guru Nanak’s advocacy for this right of human beings is quite evident from his condemnation of the rulers of his times who deprived the people, especially the Hindus, of this right to practice their religion according to their own choice.

To quote him:

\begin{quote}
This is the age of the Muslim divines. 

\begin{itemize}
\item temples and deities of Hindus are 
\item taxed such is the current practice.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{itemize}
\end{quote}

Similarly like Guru Nanak many western political thinkers also advocated the right to freedom of religion. But this was not true in the case of Plato, a great supporter of justice in his ideal state. He forbids the private religious exercises. But contradictory to Plato, Thomas Hobbes said, sovereign does not have any control over the personal life, the faith and belief and inner feeling of the individual.\textsuperscript{17}

Thus, according to him the individual has complete liberty in the sphere of intellect and conscience, private faith and belief.
The right to freedom of religion advocated by Guru Nanak much earlier was included by the United-Nations Organization in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, according to which every one has right to freedom to choose religion of his own choice without interference of anyone. The Indian Constitution has also granted this right to the people of India.

**b. Freedom of Culture**

Guru Nanak also addressed the freedom of culture which implies that any section of the people have a distinct language, script or culture of its own and they have right to conserve it without interference of anyone. It is not the right of the ruler or officials to impose their own language or culture on the people of the state. Man will be free to follow the culture of his choice and to speak the language in the sphere of culture and language. The Guru advocated the freedom of culture. He was of the opinion that man should be free to follow the culture and language of his own choice. Guru Nanak forcefully condemned the ruler of his time for imposing their culture and language on the public. With the advent of Muslim rulers, the Hindus started acquiring the Islamic way of living. Guru Nanak criticized the Hindus for shedding their own culture and language under the pressure of the ruling class and adopting the culture and language of the ruling class, to please them. To quote Guru Nanak:

\[
\text{In your home the Hindu service you perform,} \\
\text{but outside read books of Muslims} \\
\text{and adopt their ways.}^{18}
\]

Similarly:

\[
\text{Now is the age of the pitcher of Muhammadan ablation,} \\
\text{The Muhammadan call to prayer, Namaz and its prayer-Mat;} \\
\text{The Lord now is figured as wearing blue.} \\
\text{In each home is each one addressed by the Muhammadan honorific of Main.}^{19}
\]
Now it is clear from the above verses that Guru Nanak did not like the imposition of elite culture on the subjects and equally the acceptance of alien culture or language under pressure. In Asa di Var he said:

In Kali-Yuga appeared Atharva-Veda, when God was given the name Allah. In this age people wear blue and is established the rule of Turks and Pathans.\(^{20}\)

So we can say that Guru Nanak was in favour of freedom of culture. Later on Universal Declaration of Human Rights also granted this right according to which cultural right is very much necessary for the free development of individual’s personality. Same right is also granted by the Constitution of India for all the citizens of India.

### c. Freedom of Assembly

For freedom of assembly Guru Nanak said that people should have freedom to assemble, hold meetings and to discuss their problems or complaints and to find out their solutions also. For this purpose the people should have right to hold the public meeting without any interference from quarters of the authority in the state. So every individual must be guaranteed freedom of association and public meetings. Concept of ‘Sangat’ was advocated by Guru Nanak according to which people should have freedom to hold assembly. The organization of the Sangat system by the Sikh Gurus was a revolutionary step. It practically helped in leveling down distinctions of caste, creed and colour in the society removing the barriers of tribes and station. It worked for equality and brotherhood of mankind and elevated the spiritual life of the people.\(^{21}\)

As it is said by Guru Nanak:

How is Sat Sangat, the society of the holy known
the name of the one God is mentioned there.\(^{22}\)
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights also declared this right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association. This right is also added in the Constitution of India for the citizens of India.

d. Freedom of Speech

Freedom of speech implies that everybody has freedom of speech or expression without fear of any sort from the authorities. In modern times, it also includes the freedom of the press and electronic media. Guru Nanak encourages man to listen to something and to say something during the span of his life. As it is said by Guru Nanak:

As long as we are in this world
Nanak, we should hear some what
and speak somewhat of the Lord.\(^{23}\)

It is clear from the above passage that Guru Nanak was in favor of freedom of speech of the people.

This freedom first advocated by Guru Nanak has been granted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Constitution of India.

e. Freedom of choice of occupation

With freedom of speech he also stressed upon freedom of choice of occupation which means that every individual is free to choose any occupation of his choice irrespective of his/her caste, colour, creed, sex or descent. According to Guru Nanak nobody is to be restrained from engaging in any occupation because of his caste. Beside, no occupation determines one’s caste, rather it is one’s deeds that determine his caste.

Creating the beings, He Himself provides them Sustenance.\(^{24}\)
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has granted this right to the people under article 25. This right has also been given to the people of India in the Constitution of India.

**Right of equality**

The most important right which was advocated by Guru Nanak was right of equality which implies equality of all individuals in the state. No discrimination made against anybody on account of his/her religion, caste, colour, creed, race, sex or descent etc. In India, since the Vedic period the Hindu society has been divided into four Varnas like Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra, but at that time, people were free to change their Varna. Everyone had the right to adopt the dharma of a particular Varna at his will. After some time, the Varna came to be determined from the birth of an individual, and gradually it took the form of a religious principle. All the four Varnas were classified into four castes. The duty of the Brahmins was to study and to teach the Vedas to perform and officiate at the performance of Yajnas (Sacrifices). The Kshatriyas were to study the Vedas, learn the art of fighting and defend the country. The Vaishyas could read the Vedas and their duty was to carry on trade and industry etc. The Shudras were required to serve all the other Varnas without a question. They were treated just like the slave.

Upanisads regard man’s present caste as pre-determined. It holds that man’s karmas determine his destiny. According to Upanisads Karma are responsible for man’s caste. Caste is a fruit of man’s previous actions, done by him in previous birth. Several bhaktas like Kabir, Ravidas from time to time makes a scathing attack on the caste system. Bhagat Kabir criticized those Brahmins who assume that Moksha can be attained by them alone. According to Bhagat Kabir:

In the womb dwelling, the mortal has no lineage and caste.
From the seed of the Lord, all have sprung.
Say, O Pandit, since when has thou been a Brahmin?
Waste not thy life by repeatedly calling thyself Brahmin.
If thou art a Brahmin, born of Brahmin mother,
Then why hast thou not come by some other way?
How art thou a Brahmin and how am I a low caste?
How am I of blood and how thou art of milk?
Say Kabir, only he who contemplates over the Lord is said to be Brahmin among us.

So, Kabir don’t recognize caste system and demolish all the barriers of colour, caste and creed. Similarly, Nanak taught that all men are equal. Before God, that there is no high, no low, no dark, no fair, no privileged, no outcaste, all are equal.

Guru Nanak also raised his voice against such division of Varna and gave right of equality to all men, without discrimination of caste, creed, sex or nationality. He established the equality by breaking up the caste system, achieved liberty from the age-old customs and traditions and brought about fraternity by striking at the root of the sense of the high and low. Guru Nanak rejected the caste system. According to him all human beings are equal. It is the deed of man that makes him high or low, good or bad. By birth everybody is free to do any job of his/her choice provided that he/she has the ability and competence to do it. To quote Guru Nanak:

Caste and dynastic pride are condemnable nations;
The one Master shelters all existence.
Anyone arrogating superiority to himself of shell be disillusioned,
Saith Nanak: Superiority shall be determined by God.

Guru Nanak believes in equality of the whole humanity and discards any root of division, distinction and discrimination created by Varnadharm. Guru says in Japuji:

Nanak, before the Lord there is no lower or high degree.

Guru advocates the equality of all human beings, irrespective of birth and gender. It rejects all distinction of caste and colour. Guru Nanak rejects
casteism totally and vehemently. Guru Nanak further sets an example when he calls himself the lowest of the low as:

He is the lowest among the lowly,
he is their companion and had nothing
to do with the so called rich elders.\textsuperscript{28}

So, the pride of caste is of no vail as it is said by Guru Nanak:

Know people by the light illumining them
and do not ask for their caste and names
because hereafter, caste is not considered
and no one is differentiated by his caste\textsuperscript{29}.

Similarly:

God does not mind our caste and birth, so let us learn the way of truthful living. For it is one’s deeds that proclaims one’s caste and respect.\textsuperscript{30}

Guru Nanak preached egalitarianism or classless society by obliterating the class distinctions. As Guru Nanak said:

There is one common spiritual message for all Khshriya, Brahmins, Sudra and Vaishas\textsuperscript{31}.

Guru Nanak abolished all the barriers of caste system by introducing the institution of Langar. Guru Angad took special step to popularize the institution of Guru Ka Langar (the community kitchen), where people of all castes and creeds, Sikhs and non-Sikhs are made to sit in one row (signifying equality) and partake a common food. Differences of social status and restrictions of caste were ignored in the kitchen service. It was initiated by Guru Nanak and extended by third Guru, Guru Amar Das Ji (1479-1574). The rules of Langar require that all should sit together at one place and partake of the same food without any distinction of high or the low. This practice has
been carried on and fortified by the rest of the Gurus and is an integral part of Sikhism now. Such an uplifting of lower caste was a novel experiment upon the Indian masses. Guru Nanak says that all men are equal because they all are of one seed, as from the clay we can make pots of different shapes but the clay remains same, so the body of man which is made from five elements, how can one amongst them be higher and another low.

Indian religious thinkers divided men in four Varnas and prescribed different dharmas for them but Guru Nanak does not divide men on the basis of creed, colour, race sex and country. For him, men are of two kind, Gurmukh (God oriented) and Manmukh (Self-oriented). Gurmukh is one who turned his face towards God and work for the welfare of the whole mankind. Munmukh is one who practices deceit, tyranny, falsehood and selfishness to gain worldly end. Guru Nanak intends to emphasize that man must transform himself from ‘Manmukh’ to ‘Gurmukh’ from ‘particularity’ to ‘universality’. Man must comprehend unity in diversity.

Karl Mark born in 1818, about three and half centuries after Guru Nanak, became popular because of his ideology of classless society. But Guru Nanak had already formulated this ideology in 15th century. Guru Nanak talked about matter and spirit both. Guru Nanak had the betterment of masses in mind both materially and spiritually, whereas Karl Marx based his ideology only on the idea of matter.

Guru Nanak with universal approach is aiming at forging common bonds in the human race without discrimination of caste, creed, sex or nationality. The Guru Nanak repeatedly emphasizes contemplation and service to humanity, equality of mankind, love and respect for all human beings, and peace and harmony. Right to equality was firstly advocated by Guru Nanak, later on this right was granted by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights under article 2 according to which everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without the distinction of any kind, such
as race, colour, sex, language. The Constitution of India has also introduced the right of equality.

**Right to Family:**

In the ashram-system, there were four stages of life like:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ashram</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brahmcharya</td>
<td>The learner’s stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grihastha</td>
<td>The house holder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaanaprastha</td>
<td>The abandoner of worldly things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanyas</td>
<td>The anchorite</td>
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Guru Nanak has given the highest place to the Grihastha Ashram. He felt that the duties of last two ashrams can also be performed during this stage. A householder man or woman while performing the domestic duties can also achieve emancipation. His life ought to remain unsoiled like a lotus in the mud. To quote Guru Nanak:

> As the lotus thrusts upwards, and does not drown in the water
> As the duck swims and does not become wet while swimming
> So can we, safely and unaffectedly, cross the ocean of the world
> By attuning our minds to the word of Guru and repeating the holy name of God.\(^{32}\)

Under right to family, Guru Nanak made it clear that salvation can be obtained while enjoying all the pleasures of life and paying duties towards one’s family. Guru Nanak appreciated the married life. All the Sikh Gurus were married man, except the eighth Sikh Guru, who died very young.

Guru Nanak does not prescribe renunciation of world for spiritual pursuits. He encourages man to live an active and purposeful life. Service to the mankind and truthful living are essential to win God’s grace and to attain salvation. He teaches not to run away from the responsibilities but to overcome them. Most of the religions lay undue emphasis on the other worldliness and exhort them to abandon the working world to become ascetics but Guru Nanak advocates spiritual emancipation right in this world, while carrying on the industrious activities. As Guru Nanak said:
Meeting a perfect master, under his perfect guidance a seeker is able to attain salvation, while living normal way of life like smiling, playing and enjoying of wear and food.\textsuperscript{33}

In this way we can say, Guru Nanak has introduced the path of Jogi and Bhogi for seekers of truth. The practice of the Sikh way of life has been laid out by the Gurus in simple and practical manner, emphasizing hard work, honest living, love of fellow humans and through them service of the Almighty.

The Ashram Dharma’s theory of dividing man’s life into four stages was rejected by Guru and its place a healthy psychological re-adjustment with man’s environment within the house hold life was preached and emphasized by the Guru Nanak. An ideal House holder in the eye of Guru is:

The true householder must his faculties restrain
should beg of God to grant him prayer, austerities and self discipline.\textsuperscript{34}

Thus, who disciplines his passions and begs from God alms of meditation, hard work and self-control is an ideal house holder. Guru Nanak advocates the activism of householder, whose prime duty is to serve one’s family and to provide needs to the dependents and for the well being of the needy relations, consistent with one’s capacity and economic means. To fulfill this responsibility one has to work or engage oneself in some trade or profession. In order to follow this spiritually, it is not necessary to renounce the family. As it is believed that God resides in all human beings. So God resides in family members too. By running away from the family means running away from God.

Like Guru Nanak, Universal Declaration of Human Rights recommended this right of family under article 16. Similarly the Constitution of India has also added this right in its Constitution for the people of India.
Right to Education

Education is essential for bringing about awareness among the human beings and everybody has the right to get education. In ancient India, the right to get education was given only to upper three classes, i.e. Brahmans, Kshatriya, Vaishya. The Sudras who were placed at the lowest caste could not get education. Of the three classes only the Brahmans had the right to teach, Kshatriya and Vaishya could get education, but could not impart it. But according to Guru Nanak all people have right to get education. Guru Nanak laid great stress on the need of education amongst the subjects of his time. Guru Nanak believed that it was because of lack of education that people tolerated the oppressive ways of their rulers. Guru Nanak says in Asa di Var:

The subjects, benefit of understanding,
are carcasses full of straw.\(^{35}\)

The Guru was of the view that had the people got proper education they won’t have followed their corrupt masters. According to Guru Nanak all people have right to get education without any discrimination on the basis of caste, colour, creed and sex. Guru Nanak was of the opinion that one should get enough education so as to develop the faculty of mind. Guru Nanak emphasized the need of education among the people so that they become conscious and aware of their rights and duties.\(^{36}\)

Guru Nanak stressed the inculcation of humanistic values in man through his proper education. How beautifully he sums up the social role of education like:

Education, if truly contemplated, makes a man altruistic.\(^{37}\)

According to Guru Nanak only that education is meaningful and worthwhile which dispels ignorance and leads enlightenment. He said:

Just as darkness disappears when a lamp is lit so is evil removed by reflecting on scriptures (knowledge) just as moon elopes at sunrise so does ignorance vanish with enlightenment (wisdom).\(^{38}\)
So, Guru Nanak stressed the cultivation of intellect, reason and wisdom. According to him:

Through reading, understanding and reflection
one comes to know that truth lies within.\(^{39}\)

So we can say that true knowledge leads to liberation (mukti), bliss (anand) and equipoise (sehaj).

Guru Nanak also emphasized the attainment of Divine knowledge. It is with such knowledge that deliverance is attained. It is with the broom of Divine knowledge that filth of timidity can be removed. From the \textit{Bani} of Guru Nanak we come to know the content of education favoured by him. Guru emphasized that education should be based on right actions, sportsmanship, sense of responsibility, discipline of life and optimism. But it should be God centered. The Guru’s teachings are amazingly modern and progressive, morally as well as sociologically. He befriended the downtrodden and championed women’s right to respect, dignity and equality.

No doubt, the modern education system is doing a great job and raised the material standard of the people but what is most urgently needed is realization of spiritual potentialities of man. The ultimate objective of learned man should be not only to know the truth but implement that knowledge in practical life.

Like Guru Nanak many western political thinkers emphasized on the need of education. Plato laid great stress on the need of education. According to him “To make the society harmonious and to bring about unity in the state, proper education is essential. Education reforms the wrong ways of living by altering the whole outlook of life.”\(^{40}\)

Thus education is a means of self-development, which develops the qualities of an individual. Aristotle also regards the state mainly as an educational institution. The main function of the ideal state of Aristotle is
ethical. It aims at inculcating moral values in man. That state is the best state that enables everyone to lead a good and happy life. And good and happy life, for Aristotle, is moral life.**41**

Like Plato and Aristotle, Harold J. Laski also expressed similar views regarding education. Laski is of the opinion that in the modern world the citizen who lacks education is bound to be the slave of others.42

So we can conclude that according to all these philosophers, education is very much essential for a man to lead a happy and prosperous life. It makes a man decisive or learns to choose between the alternatives. It also makes the society harmonious and reforms the wrong ways of living.

The right of education to the individual first stressed by Guru Nanak has been granted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of United Nations Organizations under article 26. According to which for the fullest development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, education is essential. This right has also been granted to the Indians in the Constitution of India.

**Right to Justice:**

In ancient India, it was the one of the fundamental aims of the state to promote Dharma or justice. In Vedic literature peace, order, security and justice were regarded as fundamental aims of the state. The king or the head of the state was supposed to be the upholder of the law and order. He was to punish the wicked and help the virtuous.

According to Guru Nanak, justice is one of the attributes of God. Injustice has no place in God’s order because He is absolute just. As it is said by Guru Nanak:

> Into the court of the true one, enters not the false (unjust).43

Similarly:
One can run from man’s court; but where is one to go if one runs away from the Lord. So, God being himself truly just, has given the right to justice to all human beings.

The judiciary of Guru Nanak’s contemporary society was almost in the hands of Brahmins and Mullahs. There was no punishment for the administration for social and religious sins. He condemned the unjust ways of Qaziz and Brahmins:

Modesty and righteousness both have vanished and falsehood marched as head O Lalo. The function of Qaziz and Brahmins is over and devil now performs the marriage ceremonies. In such condition of terror and tyranny, where the justice was delivered by receiving bribe, how a person can imagine the existence of Human Rights:

Kings are accustomed to bride and confiscate the right by having it.

The kings not only took bribes for dispensing justice to the people, but they along with their courtiers and servants oppressed and tortured their innocent subjects in order to exempt them from the huge amount of taxes which they might or might not afford to pay. Guru Nanak condemned a greedy person who is interested in own material welfare, amasses wealth and exploits others. Guru emphasized the role of honest means of livelihood in a balanced and orderly society. Guru Nanak warned his followers against ill gotten wealth which corrupts the man.

To ensure peace Guru Nanak preached for protecting the Human Rights of the people, particularly of the lowly and the weak. According to him true religion lies in providing justice to all. Guru Nanak said that true kings are those who respect truth and delivered justice to all. The corrupt religious
teachers as well as corrupt judges were exposed through very harsh and strong words.

Guru Nanak has regretted that the Qaziz who live on bribe and tell lies and the Brahmans who pretend to be pious after having holy dip exploit the creatures of God:

The Muslim judge (Qazi) tells lie and accepts bribe, the Brahmins takes bath but kills Human Rights.  

Guru Nanak was totally against exploitation of any kind. He said that if we have respect for the rights of others around us it will certainly prevent exploitation. Guru Nanak time and again stressed that there can be no justice without social justice. Respect for the rights of others, prevents the exploitation of one by the other. The Guru as worst sin condemns the exploitation of poor by rich in any form as worst sin. He could not tolerate that the earnings raised by the sweat of labour should go into the coffers of the rich and exploiters. As we know Guru Nanak himself preferred to stay at poor carpenter’s (Lalo) home and declined the invitation of a rich merchant Malik Bhagchand to partake of food served from his ill-gotten income. Malik Bhagchand exploits poor and sucks the human blood. Guru Nanak has also criticized those people who never refrained from sucking the human blood. According to him:

If sticking of blood renders the clothes impure,  
how could be pure mind of those people,  
who suck the blood of human beings.  

On the economic front too he challenged the dishonest and corrupt people defining them to be greatest sinners like:

To snatch anybody’s rights is like eating cow meat  
for the Hindu and pig meat for the Muslim.
Further Guru Nanak said:

He, who, in his ego, clings to what is not his, suffers miseries.\textsuperscript{50}

This famous statement says that human beings are counseled to lead a life of contentment and to respect the rights of the person, property and dignity of others. The people’s right to justice must be recognized and its non-violation should be ensured by the state. God himself has given all human beings the right to justice that must be protected by the state.

Various political thinkers and philosophers of western thought have propounded their theories on right to justice from time to time.

Justice is for Plato, at once a part of human virtue and the bond which joins men together in states.\textsuperscript{51}

Saint Thomas Aquinas defines “Justice as the fixed and perpetual will to give to everyone his own rights”.\textsuperscript{52}

John Locke observes that justice lies in not depriving “An individual of his right of preservation of life, health, liberty and possession, his right of equality and right to enforce the law of nature to safeguard his right as well as the rights of his neighbor.”\textsuperscript{53}

Thus we can say that justice is the fundamental right of the people and it must be recognized and protected by the state. The right to justice was also added in Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Constitution of India.

**Right of Women**

Guru Nanak also raised a forceful voice against injustice towards women. He had pleaded for the full rights to women. The condition of women at the time of Guru Nanak was very deplorable. According to him woman has the same rights as man has. There is no scope of any discrimination against women because of their sex. They are fully at par with men.
The position of women in Indian society during early Vedic period was good accepting the stray incidents of unwelcoming the female child. But it was not a general practice and the sacred writings were against it. During the early Vedic period, even widow remarriage used to take place. Women freely participated in religious rites and practices. Women were given education to train them to lead successful married life.

It was only afterwards that the position of woman started deteriorating. She was deprived of the right of practice religion. Woman started being treated as property. During this period there was a relative downfall in the position of women. The birth of girl was considered to be the cause of all sufferings and hardships. Their rights and privileges were curtailed to a great extent.

Manu has expressed his views regarding woman as “In childhood a female must be a subject to her father, in youth to her husband and when her lord is dead to her sons; a woman must never be independent.” Similarly, by a girl, by young women or even by an aged one, noting must be done independently even in her own house. So woman was never fit for independence. She was so humiliated that she was considered no better then a dog.

Sankarcharya had called women the gateway of hell. Tulsidas had classed them with the cattle and anti-culture and had prescribed rough behaviour for them.

In ancient Rome also, the condition of women was not better. According to Roman law, “the children, the wife and the slave of a Roman head of a house were equally subject to his unrestricted power and equally outside the jurisdiction of the state.”

Siddhas and Nathas considered women as the source of many evils. The effects of such thinking are visible even today in Indian society where the
women even in 21\textsuperscript{th} century have not attained the desired equality of status with man. Before Guru Nanak, the thinker like Socrates and Aristotle has a very little to say in favour of social status of women. Aristotle says that male is by nature superior and female inferior, woman is weak and incapable of independence of character. Her best condition is quiet home life. Milton too is unhappy over the role of women behind the expulsion of Adam from the Garden of Eden. Tennyson considered the women unfit for academic pursuits and says she is fit only for home life and man is born to command and women to obey those commands.\textsuperscript{58}

At the time of Guru Nanak, Muslims had imprisoned their women within the four walls of the house, open air and other outside gifts of nature were denied to them. They were allowed under a thick covering of burqua. The birth of a daughter in a family was sign of misfortune. In the days of Jahangir sati pratha was practiced. The widows were burnt alive along with the pyre of their husband, even forcibly against their wishes. The Hindus considered the women a very inferior thing, a sort of possession and device for sexual pleasure. She was kept with in the four walls of the house\textsuperscript{59}. She was denied of her rights and was treated as a slave. In Islam women were not admitted to prayers in a mosque with their man folk. Guru Nanak could not tolerate this sad plight of Indian women. He strongly advocated that women must enjoy the same rights as men enjoy. Guru Nanak unequivocally condemned the low status given to the woman of his time and said:

“In a woman man is conceived, from a woman man is born, with a woman he is engaged and then married, through a woman new friendships are formed, from the woman one continues his race, when one woman dies another is sought, one’s tradition through woman is carried on, why call her low, from whom the kings and men of power are born.”\textsuperscript{60}

Guru Nanak denounced the idea of considering a woman impure during the period of her menstrual cycle. He attaches no impurity to it as it is a
natural cycle. He attaches impurity not to the natural bodily functions but to the bad qualities and bad habits like that of telling lies he says:

As occurs women’s menses again and again,  
so abides falsehood in the liar’s mouth.  
That ever brings ignominy to him.  
The mind’s sutak is avarice the tongue’s falsehood,  
The eye’s sutak coveting other womenfolk’s beauty and other’s wealth.  

He also condemned the idea of attaching impurity at the time of delivery of a child and the period after it. There was a system to keep the mother separate from the rest of the family for the specific period after the child birth. In this way Guru Nanak does not find any logic in the idea of sutak and discards it only as an illusion of mind. To quote Guru Nanak:

All belief in sutak (i.e., impurity contracted by touch is illusion) that induces in man worship of someone other than God.  
Birth and death occurs by Divine ordinance  
and all beings come and go by Divine will.  
All food and drink are pure.  
For, God himself has granted these  
for our sustenance.  
They who realize this truth,  
by the Guru’s, guidance,  
are not affected by this sort of impurity.”

Guru Amar Das ji, the third Sikh Guru and disciple of Guru Nanak, forbade the practise of Sati and give right of life to woman after the death of her husband. Sikhism and Islam does not approve of Sati, both are in favour of widow remarriage. Guru Arjun Dev ji encouraged widow remarriage. Guru Gobind Singh ji allowed women to come forward to drink Amrit and go to battlefield along with men. In Sikhism, men and women sit in a Gurdawara facing each other. They jointly offer prayers and sing hymns. Sikh woman
enjoy the privilege of conducting service in a Gurdwara and reading the scriptures. There are several examples in Sikh history like Bibi Bhani, Mata Gurjri, Mai Bhago, Mata Sundri etc. who worked and co-operated with men sometimes with greater vigor.

Guru Nanak took initiative for the advocacy of the women’s Rights and later on Universal Declaration of Human Rights declared under it article 2. Similar provision has been made in the Constitution of India.

**Relevance of Guru Nanak Dev’s Human Rights in the Modern Movements of Human Rights**

If we are able to breathe the air of freedom today, it is only because of great sacrifice of martyrs like Guru Arjan Dev Ji, Guru Tegh Bahaduar and Banda Singh Bahadur, who gave their blood and experienced extreme torture, suffering and hardship for the sake of dharma and freedom.

Banda Singh Bahadur laid the foundation of democratic system of rule, which changed into ruling misls and finally the establishment of Sikh Raj under the command of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Banda Singh Bahadur was enemy of cruel ruler, chieftains and landlords who treated general public as slave. By starting currency in the name of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind, he won successful war of freedom from slavery of Punjab from Mughal rule. He abolished the Zamindari System of land prevailing under the Mughals and declared the actual cultivators as owners of land.

Banda Singh Bahadur took upon himself the duty of serving the people and protecting the weak and helpless. He meant to tell the people at large that welfare state of their dreams had been established to the exclusion of the tyrannical government of the Mughal governors. He tacitly meant to convey to them that unjust officials have been substituted by the just deserving and competent. He wanted to make them alive to the consciousness created in the
masses for their rights and awaken them to strong sense of resistance and defiance to oppression.\textsuperscript{63}

Thus he was not only a great warrior but also an able administrator. He dismissed Muslim officers because they had become very cruel and corrupt. In their places, able Hindus, Sikhs appointed who had ever become the victims of the tyranny of the Mughals. He had great compassion for the administration and gave them right of equality. This awakened in them a new sense of self-confidence. He was known for his impartial and prompts justice. While dispensing justice he never discriminated between the high and low. He always respected women, even though they belonged to the enemy camp. He had given orders to his soldiers not to molest women and gave them full respect.

Similarly like Banda Bahadur, Maharaja Ranjit Singh also followed the footsteps of Gurus and gave complete freedom of expression to his subjects in his polity though he was born and brought up in Sikh faith. But he did not proclaimed Sikhism as the religion of the state. He did not make any conscious effort to propagate it. His broad religious outlook was reflected in his according due respect to all religions. He was known for religious tolerance, social harmony, justice, and equality. Ranjit Singh’s state was the most progressive state in India. He gave grants irrespective of religion and caste.\textsuperscript{64}

In his administrative jobs there was no discrimination on the basis of caste, creed and religion. Besides the Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus were also given equal opportunities. He allowed men from religion other than their own to rise to commanding positions of authority. So in his state, he gave right of religion and equally to all people without any discrimination. In the Khalsa kingdom the ideals and duties of the ruler were to serve the people selflessly. He holds steadfastly to the values of justice, equality, freedom and human dignity through actions and deeds. Thus the Sikhs established their rule in the name of Guru Nanak in 18th century in Punjab.
Therefore the Sikhs are always known for heroic deeds and high character. Even the Muslim Qazi Nur Muhammad son of Qazi Abdullah belonged to village Gunjab paid the highest tribute to the character of Sikhs of eighteenth century.

Qazi Nur Mohammad accompanied Ahmad Shah Abdali in his invasion in 1764. This is what he has to say about Sikhs who fought bitterly against his master. Qazi Nur Mohammad has written the account of seventh invasion of Anmad Shah Abdali. A bigoted writer who has got strong prejudice against Sikhs paid such a glowing tribute to their character, which is a matter of pride for Sikhs. He writes:

Leaving aside their mode of fighting hear you another point in which they excel other fighting people. In no case they would slay a coward or any obstacle in way of fugitive. They do not plunder the wealth and ornament of women be she a well to do lady or maid servant. There is no adultery among the dogs nor are these mischievous people giving the thieving. Whether a woman young or old they call her Buddya and old lady and ask her to get out of the way. The word Buddya in Indian language means an old lady. There is no thief at all among these dogs nor is there any house breaker born amongst these miscreants.

Thus it is clear that Nur Muhammad, a Muslim Qazi appreciated the character of Sikhs though he belonged to the rival group. Similarly, when Ahmed shah Durrani was returning after his victory over Delhi, the Sikh bands attacked him near Goindwal and liberated about 2200 Hindu women from the clutches of the Afghan. The Sikhs bands pursued the Afghan forces upto river Attock.

Thus above writings shows that the Sikhs of 18th century were protector, defender and respectful towards ladies. They were not corrupt and against any kind of destruction even in the critical times. They thought for the preservation of Human Rights of women belonging to other castes.
As Rattan Singh Bhangua in his Panth Parkash mentioned that how Sikhs saved the daughter of a helpless Brahman belonging to Jalalabad and honored her as ‘Panth Ki Beti’, which is the example of altruistic and heroic deed.  

**Role of Sikhs in India’s Freedom Struggle:**

The total contribution of Sikhs in India’s struggle for freedom is surprising. Out of 121 patriots hanged 93 were Sikhs, of 2626 awarded life imprisonment 2147 were Sikhs of 1300 martyred in Jallianwala Bagh 799 were Sikhs. Considering that Sikhs were hardly 1.5 percent of the total population of India at the time, their sacrifices amounted to 90 percent. Thus the Sikh community is community that suffered most. They sacrificed their life and everything for the rights of others.

During the five years of Akali Movement, 4000 persons suffered death, 2000 were wounded and 30000 men and women were jailed. The pension and jagirs of many were withdrawn, fines were imposed and property was confiscated. In the case of many others many lost their jobs, soldiers were court-martialled for wearing kirpan or a black turban. Printers, publishers and editors suffered for their sympathy with the movement. As a contemporary put it, the British authorities soon come to believe that Gurdwara reform movement was a subversive movement which aimed at overthrowing the British Raj and which therefore, it was necessary to suppress. For Sardual Singh Caveeshar, freedom of religion and freedom of the country went together. He regarded the Akali movement as only an offshoot of the national movement. The national spirit impregnated the Sikh hearts through and through; they desired to assume responsibility as much for the control and management of the temples as for the administration of the country.

Therefore, Gurdwara’s of Sikhs which were under the control of Mahants made them adulterers and corrupt. They considered income of
Gurudwaras as their individual income and they began to misuse it. Their immoral activities violated sanctity of Gurudwaras. The Sikh could not endure violation of sanctity of Gurudwaras and they started reform movement. In this movement many Sikhs got martyrdom and many were wounded. Sikhs had to give many sacrifices and the victory was of Sikhs. Eventually, the Government was obliged by passing Gurdwara Act in 1928 and handed over management of Gurdwaras to Shiromani Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee.

Master Tara Singh, who pulled down the Muslim League flag atop the Punjab assembly at Lahore and tore it, which saved half of the Punjab for India. Otherwise the entire Punjab would have gone to Pakistan with River Yamuna as the dividing line between India and Pakistan. It was the great contribution of Master Tara Singh in the history of India’s freedom struggle.

Contribution of other Sikhs like Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru was marvelous in the struggle of freedom. Their objective was the freedom of India from foreign rule and restructuring of society on socialist principles. However their approach was militant. They favored violence in the cause of justice. They murdered J.P. Saunders, who was thought to be responsible for Lajpat Rai’s death on 17 December, 1928 and threw bomb in the Legislative Assembly in Delhi on 8 April, 1929. Because of this reason Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru were hanged on 23 March 1932. Therefore they wanted systematic reconstruction of society after a complete destruction of the existing order.

The Sikhs of the Punjab never allowed the white rulers any respite. They kept them engaged with one morcha after another and those agitations produced a galaxy of eminent freedom fighters who earned a great name in national struggle for India’s independence. Some of them are Baba Kharak Singh, Master Tara Singh, Sardar Pratap Singh Keisrah, Giani Gurumukh Singh Musafir, Sohan Singh ‘Josh’, Sardar Sardul Singh Caveeshar, Giani Zail
Thus it can be concluded that there were so many incidents of defiance of the foreign rule by the Sikh soldiers and political activists. They are as loyal as they are valiant. They fought the war of India’s independence with help of their countrymen whether they were Hindus or Muslims.

**Muslim League and Riots of Calcutta**

In December, 1906 Muslim leaders from all over the sub-continent assembled in Dacca to attend to all India Mohammadan to establish a central political organization for Muslims called ‘All India Muslim League’. The Muslim League was established with the primary aim of protecting the political rights of Indian Muslims and presenting their demands and problems before the British Government.

Direct Action Day, also known as the Great Calcutta killing, was on 16 August 1946, a day of widespread riots and manslaughter in the city of Calcutta (Now known as Kolkata) in the Bengal province of British India. The Muslim league and Indian National Congress were two largest political parties in the constituent assembly of India in 1940s. In 1946 a plan to divide the British Raj India into Hindu Majority India and an Muslim Majority Pakistan was proposed. The congress rejected the alternative proposal outright. Muslim League planned general strike on 16 August to this rejection and to assert its demand for separate Muslim homeland.

The protest triggered massive riots in Calcutta. In Calcutta within 72 hours, more than 4000 people lost their lives and 100000 residents in the city of Calcutta were left homeless. Violence in Calcutta sparked off further religious riots in the surrounding regions of Noakhali, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and North Western Frontier Province. These events sowed the seeds for the eventual partition of India. The Sikhs of Calcutta did a notable
humanitarian job at the time of great killing by saving many innocent lives. During Calcutta riots the main offenders were the Sikhs.

**Partition of 1947:**

We all know the riots of 1947 were the worse that the Sikhs faced in the last century. Sikhs in 1947 lost all their property, money and many lost their lives. They choose to live in India and did not change their religion to secure their property, money or lives. The Sikhs were massacred by the Muslims of that area. But they sacrificed themselves to keep Sikhi alive. The ultimatum was given to the Sikhs either to embrace Islam or to face death. Most Sikhs preferred death to the shameful surrender of faith and died.

**Massacre of the Thena-Khalsa area of Rawal Pindi March 1947:**

When the Sangat was doing Shri Rehrars Sahib Path, many thousand Muslims came and surrounded the building. The Sikhs had been given anchor to accept Islam or else they get ready to die. But the Sikh responded that they will never give up Sikhi and will never become Muslims. When Muslims tried to abduct the Sikh woman they jumped into a well to avoid getting dishonoded by Muslims. Near about 90 women jumped into well and after this bloody massacre, Muslims get scared and started running away. In this way the Sikh women saved their honour and did not accept Islam and continued the tradition of martyrdom initiated by the Sikh Gurus.

Communal riots occurred in various cities of West Punjab such as Rawal Pindi, Multan, Amritsar, Lahore and Gujranwala where thousands of Sikhs and Hindus were reported to be killed and number of Sikh Women were abducted who were raped, dishonored in the presence of their family members. Their houses were burnt and property was looted. Quite after Gurdwaras were burnt down and Sikh scripture desecrated. During the partition, the massive exchange of population that attended the partition of the
sub-continent and condition under which it took place is most unprecedented in the history.\textsuperscript{74}

As a result of the partition, there was a sharp decline in the morals of the people. The serious economic crisis created by the forced migration provided a climate for immorality. The prevailing law lessens common in the east and west Punjab removed all social restraints and scruples. About fifty thousand women were abducted in both the Punjabs. The violent communal riots, murders and heinous crimes brought the people’s morals to the lowest ebb.

The partition of the Punjab caused an upheaval in the social structure. The refugees found themselves aliens in their new surroundings. The very places, the physical and geographical environment and the people among whom they were required to spend their lives and develop new relationships were unfamiliar. This created a feeling of frustration and discontentment among the refugees. In the West Punjab, this led to the evil practices of beggary, prostitution, delinquency and crime.\textsuperscript{75}

Thus, the partition of 1947 brings a lot of sufferings for the people of Punjab. The partition was a great holocaust. Man had become brutal and beast. The colours of rivers in both Punjabs had turned red. Everywhere there were bloodshed, murders, kidnappings and loot. In Pakistan, Non-Muslims had to rush towards India (east Punjab) leaving their lands, house, shops and industries etc. The same condition was of business of Muslims in East Punjab (India). They went to Pakistan leaving everything. Majority of refugees in both Punjabs had reached camps established by Governments.

\textbf{Kashmir Attack:}

When Pakistanis attacked on Kashmir, the Sikhs were much in demand by all commanders on all the sectors of war. In the Chhamb sector where the Pakistanis had launched their major offensive with full armored
division covered by the Air Force, the Sikhs showed their metal by capturing 10 enemy’s posts in 36 hours, by inflicting a crushing defeat on the enemy in chhamb sector. The Kashmir was saved from falling into the hands of Pakistani raiders. No less was the glory that they won in the battle of Burki and the battle of Punchh area and the Haji-Pir pass.76

Similarly the battle scarred areas of 1200 miles long zigzag from Barmer to Kargil brings to one’s memory the drudgeries of the western desert warfare which were surpassed by these fantastically superb Sikh warriors, and the agonies of the sub-zero temperatures of Zozila and Dras areas which were happily endured by the tough Sikh heroes.77 Therefore the Sikhs in army played their role of the defenders of the country as against any aggressor from outside.

**Tsunami and Role of Sikhs:**

There is no doubt that maximum Sikhs have forgotten the message of their forefathers, but still there are some Sikh organizations working for the welfare of the humanity. Ghanaia is an international relief efforts establishment by united Sikhs in 2003 to provide impartial aid and assistance to victims in disaster situations. Ghanaia stands for giving humanitarian aid, necessities and assistance impartially to all that is inspired by Sikh saint Bhai Ghanaia Ji who served the army of the 10th Sikh Guru Gobind Singh. He served water, medicine etc. to ailing war soldiers and victims without prejudice, seeing the same God in all beings. All regardless of social status or religion knew him for service. Thus the Sikh Gurus who were forced to fight many battles in defense of religious freedom, thought that comparison and concern for others must extend even to foes on the battle field.

On December 26, 2004, the world witnessed one of the deadliest natural disasters in recent history. The Tsunami left millions with shattered lives, hundreds of thousand dead and as many lost homes, school, business
and means of livelihood especially in Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka and India. The Tsunami affected millions of lives and livelihood. Thousands of people are still missing and more than a million have been displaced. The aim of Ghanaia Tsunami relief project is to provide immediate personal hunger aid, ready to eat cooked food in the form of Langer. It is their goal to immediately feed the displaced and homeless victims of this tragedy to prevent malnutrition and further health deterioration.

At Harmandir Sahib, the Golden Temple in Amritsar, free meals are provided all days. Everyday anyone is welcome to eat at any time at Langer hall on Gurdwara ground. Many teams of Langer organizers and cook arrived in Tsunam-Hit-area to set up free kitchens, so that survivors could receive nourishment of body and spirit. System of Langer gave up clear message that Sikh Gurus have not established another Dharma to bring division in human beings but they were all for unity.

**Role of Sikhs in Haiti Earth Quake**

Sikhs from all over the world reached Haiti to help with a reach and rescue mission. An earthquake measuring 7.0 hit Haiti around 10 miles south of capital city port-an prince bringing widespread devastation to the entire country. The earthquake, said to be the most powerful to affect Haiti in 200 years, struck at 4:53 p.m on Tuesday 12th January, 2010 at a depth of five miles.78

In this natural disaster millions have been affected by earthquake and thousand are feared buried under rubble of fallen building. People had lost their houses and means of livelihoods. They were waiting for medical expertise and other supplies. Haiti suffered from extreme poverty and many other problems.

Many Sikh organizations volunteer teams arrived Haiti to provide the necessities to the affected people. They serve Langer to the survivors of the
earthquake. The volunteer teams purchased food, water, medical facilities etc. and helped them in their difficult time. Thus the tradition of service to others which was started by Sikh Gurus is still continued by their Sikh followers.

In spite of great contribution of Sikhs in protection and promotion of Human Rights we are sliding down from the lofty principles of Sikhism. Modern conditions are not better than the ones described by Guru Nanak.

Administration is still corrupt and diplomatic which instead of protecting the people exploits them. Greasing palm is a normal practice about which Guru Nanak talked in his time. Inequality, injustice has still existed in the society. Powerfull and developed countries are dominating the weak countries. Modern materialistic civilization disturbed the balance of human existence. Democratic countries are not democratic in its real sense. The policy of ruling now is a ‘Danda Niti.’ Guru Nanak’s divine message and practical life can provide guidance to solve the issues which have become a challenge to the humanity. The present crisis is due to the lack of faith in spirit of man and this leads him to the distortion of value, escapism and collapse of man in despair, frustration and helplessness which nurtured the social conflict, exploitation, hatred, enmity and violence. Most of the nations are facing war like situations on the issues of religion, race, colour, creed etc. The need of the hour is to propagate and practice the message of Guru Nanak in order to create the democratic way of thinking in human lives.

We have entered in an era of development and modernity. Development in the field of information and communication has narrowed the distance. The whole world has assumed the nature of a Global Village. International trade has greatly expanded that is why interdependences of countries have grown up. In the world’s economic horizon international institution like World Trade Organization (WTO) determines the policies and these policies are mere puppets in the hands of developed countries. The main objective of globalization is to find out consumer and create markets. The aim is not welfare of humanity but to make maximum profit, whereas Guru Nanak
stressed upon the welfare of all humanity based higher moral values. In this world market man’s capability and knowledge is also being sold like raw material. Unquenchable desire for more material progress has reduced man to a machine. This is a mad race of amassing more and more wealth and sources. Consequently instead of organized and common interest, personal interest of selfishness is given the priority. In such circumstances, in spite of being accomplished in knowledge and science, globalizations are creating such new values which are taking the humanity to its decline. But Guru Nanak taught the highest moral value based on justice, truth, generosity and love. He inspired man for hard work and clean earning by discarding greed and selfishness. Guru Nanak’s message is still relevant to free us from the negative effects of globalization.

Similarly, media through its channels can create and distribute sufficient literature regarding Sikh philosophy, history, culture and ethics etc. We must have a Sikh media cell, independent TV channels, and independent newspapers in English, Hindi and Punjabi.

Western culture through its channels openly exhibiting sex and violation and our young generation is being attracted towards it. They are forgetting their own way of living. Guru Nanak at time of Mughals criticized Hindus for adopting Mughal culture. Guru Nanak very much struggled to change the whole situation and awared the Indians about their own culture and language. So media can perform its vital role to save our culture and language.

No doubt that Government is doing various efforts to promote education. It has raised our material standard but what is most urgently required is to realize the spiritual potentialities of man. The ultimate objective of the learned man should be not only to know the truth but also the implementation of that knowledge in practical life. Only then we can be really educated people.
Today’s politics is totally materialistic, which gave rise to material greed and leading a man into the deserts of desires and making them enemies to each other. Modern civilization by its deadly tools, obscene literature, and means of entertainment is driving the younger generation into sensuality and lust. The modern spiritual contractors fire such immoral feelings among them and run false religious formalities for their own selfish interests.

The incident of 1984 proved a watershed in the history of the Sikhs. There is sorrow in the heart of the Sikhs, because the people who protected the rights of others now find their own Human Rights being violated in spite of the fact that protective laws are there at national and international level. The situation at the international level has become graver with the passing of the law by French Parliament in 2005, which bans the turban of the Sikhs in the school of France. After France the turban controversy has spread to Belgium, Ireland and America in 2007, which is the matter of serious concern for the Sikhs all over the world. The Sikhs are troubled all over the world because their basic human religious rights regarding turban are being violated through the process of law in many countries in total contravention to the laws of the United Nations. Since in U.N’s charter in 1945 many declarations and numerous covenants on the subject of Human Rights have been issued, but their implementation is most unsatisfactory. It needs serious consideration of the United Nations to save the people, like the Sikhs from continuous harassment and humiliation of public place due to violation of their basic Human Rights.79

Present century provides all modern facilities to man but he has lost moral values, mutual love, social and family relationships. In the modern scientific age man is confined, self centered, selfish and materialistic. In this materialistic age man is engrossed in pseudo-attachments and relationships have been ended. Joint family system is extinct. Emotional ties between parents and children are getting weak. Man has become victim of extreme stress and mental tension. No way to spiritual peace is visible. Old parents
become a burden to their children. They are being sent to old age homes, where they live miserable or pitiable life. Distance between husband and wife is expanding. Divorces are on the rise. In other words family relationships are being broken due to the lack of moral virtues and selfish egos of the individuals. Man has fallen down from moral values and is heading towards animal behavior. Bomb blasts in various countries give us examples of such tendencies in the thinking of modern man. In these blasts how innocent people are dying. All these are signs of diabolical thinking of present day man.

In the modern age, there is discrimination in the name of religion and language against which Guru Nanak raised his voice. Guru Nanak opposed a contradicted spread of religion through political power. He advocated religious freedom and multi religious system of India. But the politics of today have created such circumstances that there is conflict between man and man. These impostors exploit religion for their own ends. Their followers became fanatical and thus religion becomes instrumental in keeping the people bondage and superstitious. These cunning and crafty people misuse religion and people some times become disgusted with religion. Following Guru Nanak as a model guide can avoid such conflicts.

In spite of the abundance of knowledge, comforts and luxuries, there are conflicts among nations, races, religions, groups and sects. Man's scientific discoveries and inventions could not provide peace to him. Growing competition of nuclear weapons is posing a major threat to the world peace. Apart from this major threat the world at large is passing through number of other crises. Day by day gulf between the haves and have nots is increasing. Capitalist counties are trying to dominate the poor and developing countries. America’s policies of globalization are widening the economic and social differences.

Most of the societies of the world have forgotten peaceful message given to them by their sages and seers. In such circumstances, it is only
religion that could play a positive role in balancing the human life. The message of Guru Nanak is very much relevant in this respect. There is needed to keep knowledge and values together which seems to be divorced from each other. At present in spite of message of Guru Nanak the people are quarrelling or even killing one another in the name of religion. They are just blind fanatics not religious. So Guru Nanak gave us a distinct philosophy and a new way of life which should be adopted by modern man.

The biggest problem of the world is lack of understanding. Guru Nanak preaches understanding among different communities and people with different ideologies and lay emphasis on settling differences through mutual understanding. If the ideology of mutual understanding is accepted, the danger of destruction which we are facing would be ended. Today collective leadership is being done away. Instead of ‘Wahe Guru’ we are addressing ardas to ‘Guru’. In doing so we are reverting to ‘Avtarwad’. Guru Sahib’s pictures find place even higher than Guru Granth Sahib. This is pure idol worship. Priest class is emerging in the form of Dera, each Deras having its own Maryada. 80

Now we will discuss about the role of Sikh organizations in present situation. The main objective behind the Gurudwara Management Act (1925) was to release the control of Gurdwaras from the hand of priest class. These Pujaries enjoyed the patronage of the British Government. In 1925 SGPC, a democratically elected committee of the Sikhs controlled over the Gurdawras. There was a time when the S.G.P.C. succeeded in maintaining the purity of Sikh tenets and spiritual tradition with the guidance of stalwarts like Bhai Kahan Singh, Bhai Jodh Singh, Bhai Vir Singh, and Principal Teja Singh etc. They were learned men who commanded respect because of their great contribution in the field of Sikh theology. 81

But the current politico-religious organizations of the Sikhs like the Shiromani Akali Dal, SGPC are being dominated and dictated by hegemonic
leadership of an individual. Now the commands of Sikh institutions are in those hands that do not seem to be much bothered about principles of the Sikhism. Most of the members of S.G.P.C are busy either in politics or in personal gains. They are not performing their real duties as religious preachers. Similarly the missionaries from various Sikh institutions have ‘Money’ as the basic aim and not the establishment of Sikhism. This tendency has to be checked. Guru Gobind Singh study circle, a leading Sikh organization is doing a tremendous job to save Sikhism. A concerned effort is needed from all Sikh agencies.

Akal Takht is known as the nerve centre of the Sikh socio-religious concerns. It has been venue of the Sarbat Khalsa. The grand collectivity of Sikh community in the mystical presence of the Guru, there is also the doctrine of ‘Gurumatta’, the decisions taken in the name of Guru through good will and consensus. During the life time of the Gurus there was no need to appoint a Jathedar to Akal Takht as the religio-political authority was vested in the Guru. With the conferment of Guruship on the Granth and the Panth by the tenth master the institutions of ‘Sarbat Khalsa’ and ‘Gurmatta’ took firm roots in Sikhism. At these meetings vital matters including dangers confronted by the country and the community, were deliberated and ‘Gurumatta’ were passed. These Gurumattas strengthened the feelings of cohesion and co-operation among the Sikhs and filled their dropping hearts with fresh dynamism and vigor.82

Now we find very strong mutual differences among the national leaders of the Panth. Therefore most of the Sikhs now feels that Guru Panth needs to be revealed and strengthened to overcome the problems of Sikh community all over the world. Without Panth we cannot spread message of the Granth. Guru Panth directs all Sikh leaders to resolve their mutual differences and make them to move together in the Panth of Gurmat. Today, politicians misuse their powers to torture, kill, control or convert the followers of other faiths. But the religious leaders should stand against the politicians taking
away the Human Rights of the people. Religion becomes meaningless if it is not practiced to protest the weak and protest against rulers who take away the Human Rights of the people. This is what Guru Nanak undertook more than five centuries ago and bought a religious revolution for the service of the people. All the religious and political leaders need to sacrifice their ego and selfish interests for this purpose. We also observe that all communities of different colors and features everyday partake Langar together as equal without discrimination. This is an encouraging practice to realize the right of equality introduced by Guru Nanak.

Guru Nanak directed to give highest place to women in society but in the present time woman is being dishonored and humiliated. Female foeticide is the example of this. The girl child is being killed in the very womb of the mother. But the Sikh way of life opposes this and Sikhism does not allow keeping relation with a man who kills a girl child. So the social boycott should be done who so ever carry out such practice.

AIDS is another social evil which is crippling the society day by day. The main cause of which is immorality and low character. When a man or woman makes extra marital relations with other than wife or husband it ends the very existence of family. Feeling of such woman whose husband has illicit relations with other woman have been expressed in Bani of Guru Nanak.

Crimes against women are increasing. They are becoming victim to dishonour, disgraced, domestic violence and rape. The rises of woman race ensure the bright future of humanity. In this context, Guru Nanak’s thinking can play a vital role. He advocated the empowerment of women.

Guru Nanak in 15th century lighted the torch of his thoughts, which illuminates or radiates the heart of everyone even today. Guru Nanak perhaps is the only poet of the world who by the power of his poetry gave birth to a brave race in India. He brought about a strong rebellion, which took firm determination to uproot tyranny and oppression from whole of the country.
Guru Nanak gave us a unique philosophy that is scientifically and logically sounds having universal acceptability. Guru Nanak his nine successors worked to redefine the religions, political and social values for mankind. Modern age has created such problem that needs immediate solution. In this context Guru Nanak’s message is relevant to play creative role. So man needs to have a fresh look at the whole situation. It is the dire need of the hour to understand and implement the philosophy of Guru Nanak. This is the only way to save humanity from degeneration.

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