

A Leading Exponent of Sikh Gurus' Educational Philosophy-- Dr. Amrit Kaur Raina



**Interviewed by:
Dr. Devinder Pal Singh
Center for Understanding Sikhism, Mississauga, L5A 1Y7, ON, Canada**

Dr. Amrit Kaur Raina, a renowned educationist, was a profound scholar of Sikhism. Having served as an educationist and administrator for over forty years at various prestigious educational institutions in India, she had also established herself as an eminent writer in the field of a comparative study of religions. Through her literary essays, as published in several reputed research journals, magazines, books, and newspapers, she had been able to create an indelible mark of scholarship on the minds of her readers.

Inspired by the writings of the Sikh Gurus and her father, Prof. Harnam Das, she devoted her life to disseminating the Sikh Gurus' educational philosophy and Gurmat among the masses. Being a prolific writer, with thirty-one books to her credit, in the diverse fields of education, religion, Punjabi, and Hindi literature, she had been honored with the Shiromani Punjabi Sahityakar award (2006) and Haryana Gaurav Puraskar in Punjabi (2016) by Government of Haryana.

A votary of honest living, Dr. Amrit Kaur Raina led a life dedicated to the love of God and selfless service to society. She was a true *karam yogi* who had devoted her whole life to spread the message of education, *Gurmat*, and service to all. She had been honored for her services to the Sikh cause, by several Sikh organizations, including SGPC, Amritsar; Guru Gobind Singh Foundation, Ludhiana; Sukhmani Society, Amritsar; Shaheed Memorial International Sewa Society, Ludhiana; S. D. College, Ambala Cantt; and Gurmat College, Patiala, etc.

Dr. Amrit Kaur Raina often asserted that Sikh Gurus' educational philosophy, their Sikhi ethics, their compositions, and Sri Guru Granth Sahib as a whole are the substance that makes for spirituality befitting the 21st century. Her views on various aspects of Sikh Gurus' Educational Philosophy are presented here for the benefit of readers:

(Note: This interview was conducted in January 2020, before Dr. Amrit Kaur Raina's sudden demise in June 2020)

Dr. Singh: You are an educationist by training and a teacher of literature cum researcher by profession, then how have you become so interested in theology?

Dr. Raina: My father, Late Prof Harnam Das, a great scholar and writer of Sikhism of his times, has been a great motivating force in my life. He encouraged me to remember "*Japji Sahib*" while I was in the 5th class and "*Sukhmani Sahib*" in B.A. It has been the ambrosia of my life. While I was in the 8th class, he started telling me that I have to serve Sikhism and the cause of women's education. When I grew up, both these aims became the mission of my life.

Dr. Singh: As a renowned theologian, you have been a leading exponent of Sikh Gurus' Educational Philosophy; can you share the details of your activities in this field?

Dr. Raina: While studying great western and eastern educationists in B.Ed. In 1960, I asked my father a question – "Is there any educational philosophy of Guru Nanak Dev Ji"? He threw ample light on the subject quoting various references from the Gurbani. I spoke on Guru Nanak Dev Ji's educational philosophy on the eve of Guru Nanak's birthday, which was highly appreciated by our Principal, Dr. R. L. Ahuja.

I took up the educational philosophy of Guru Nanak Dev Ji in my M.Ed. research paper. This research work brought me second prize in an All India Competition, organized by The Sikh Review organization, in 1969. My father encouraged me to take up the educational philosophy of the Gurus for my Ph.D. research work. In 1987, the language department, Punjab, published my Ph.D. thesis on the topic. My several articles on the Gurus' educational philosophy have been published by The Sikh Review research journal, from time to time. I authored a book titled: "*Sikh Guruian Di Vidayak Den*" in the Punjabi language. It was declared as the best book

of the year by the language department, Punjab, and was awarded the "Bhai Gurbaksh Singh Preetlari Award" in 2002.

After retirement, I took up "Guru Granth Sahib as a vehicle of mass education" as a major research project from U.G.C. Punjabi University. Patiala published the project's research report, in 2007, under the title: "*Guru Granth Sahib - Samuhik Sikhiya Sanchar da Sadhan.*" Overall, I have written six books on this subject – three in Punjabi, two in English, and one in Hindi. My research work on the educational contribution by the Gurus has been highly appreciated by Bhai Dr. Harbans Lal, Dr. Sheshgiri Rao, Dr. Pritam Singh, who consider this work as classic. My book's whole text on Guru Nanak Dev Ji's educational philosophy is freely available for readers on the Archives net and various related articles on S.N.P., Sikh book club, and Sikh Digital Library.

Dr. Singh: What is Sikh Gurus' Educational Philosophy, and what are its sources?

Dr. Raina: Sikh Gurus emphasize the harmonious development of the student's personality through their educational system: spiritual, mental, physical, aesthetic, emotional, ethical, and social. Even political awakening, national and international integration, and coexistence have not been ignored. To acquire education is a Sadhana – a sacred act of meditation over godly virtues. It is just like the holy ambrosial nectar of Knowledge (SGGS, Pg 246). Guru Arjun Dev Ji's definition of education emphasizes the spiritual, mental, and ethical development of personality. The body is a temple of God in which are hidden precious pearls of knowledge, which can be developed with the kindly help of the Guru. Their educational system is modern in its outlook since it regards education as making out from inner to outer. The social development of education takes place through "*Vidya Vichari taan par-upkari.*"

The Gurus regard (the holy) book as the Abode of God. It became a curriculum for Sikh ethics and philosophy. Small booklets of Gurbani were made and distributed among the people; this took them on the path of education. To take education to the doors of people, the mother tongue Punjabi was made the vehicle of education. Elementary schools were opened, attached to the Gurdwaras. For social and aesthetic development – evening/morning congregations were started, where Kirtan and Katha were recited. Sangat and Pangat were instituted, which disseminated the teachings of the Gurus among people. The Gurus built up the cities of their ideals, where honest earning, the dignity of labor, training for physical development, eating the

right food, sports & games, training in arms & ammunition were made a part of education for socio-political awakening and defense of the country. Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji wrote "*Patti*" and Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji "*Bavan Akhari*" to teach alphabets to the masses. Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji's biography became the basis of the story-telling method of teaching.

Dr. Singh: What makes the Sikh Gurus' Educational Philosophy unique or special?

Dr. Raina: Gurus were not armchair philosophers. Guru Nanak Dev Ji worked as a peasant and thought like a philosopher at Kartarpur. Sikh Gurus were very pragmatic in their teaching methods. As per their disciples' need, they followed adaptive teaching styles and taught them by "learning by doing" and "activity" methods.

At Amritsar, Harmandir Sahib was built up by the cooperative efforts of Sangat and their monetary contributions. Here, the Guru worked alongside the disciples. Guru Gobind Singh adopted a dramatic technique of selecting the five beloveds to build up a community of brave, fearless soldiers. He sacrificed his all for the sake and defense of his country and people. He drank nectar from the hands of his five beloveds, teaching the lesson of "*Aape Gur Chela*," which is unique in the educational philosophy of Sikh Gurus. Guru Gobind Singh carved his disciples in his image. The Sikhs find themselves deeply attached to Sri Guru Granth Sahib and the Gurus, wherever they may be, and get inspiration from their teachings. For Gurus, books' parroting is not synonymous with education; they wanted practical people, sincere in words, thoughts, and deeds.

Dr. Singh: You have done a comparative study of various religions, e.g., Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism. In comparison to these religions' educational philosophies, what is your assessment of Sikh Gurus' Educational Philosophy?

Dr. Raina: There are specific fundamental higher values of life found in all religions, and these become the basis of their educational system. Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Islam believe that humans are the best creation of God/nature. There is a divine spark in him/her, which needs to be developed with the Guru's help in the form of spiritual advancement, illumination of mind, ethical and moral values. Sikhism is the faith of new-age and is more practical in its approach to life. It is based on the principles of hard, honest labor, making the body fit and robust through good food habits, sports, and military training. Sri Guru Granth Sahib is the eternal Guru –

Shabd Guru of the Sikhs. For them, Bani is the Guru, and Guru is the Bani. For the nectar (love of God) is enshrined in it. (SGGS, p 982). Sikhs are deeply rooted in their religious and cultural ethos. Their practice of hard yet honest labor, sharing of its gains with the needy, and their sense of service to society has enabled them to carve a niche for themselves worldwide.

Dr. Singh: Is Sikh Gurus' Educational Philosophy in conflict or harmony with the cultivation of scientific temper in society?

Dr. Raina: The Sikh Gurus' Educational Philosophy is quite in harmony with the cultivation of scientific temper in society as it emphasizes the spirit of scientific investigation like modern scientists. "*Arbad Narbad Dhundu Kara, Patala patal, Jete daane ann ke Jiya baaj na koi,*" "*Jo brahamande soi Pinde.*" Such sayings are based on scientific truth. The Gurus taught their disciples by activity methods to emphasize scientific temper in their students, saying "*a person of real research becomes a creative man. But a talkative one who indulges in mere prattle destroys himself*". (SGGS, p 1255). The Gurus question the dogmas and unnecessary rituals, as is evident from Guru Nanak's denial of the sacred thread (*Janeu*) wearing ceremony. Sidh Gosti is a long discussion between the Sidhas and Guru Nanak Dev Ji. It points out the futility of ascetic life. Guru Nanak's simple yet dramatic way of teaching is full of wit, rationality, and logic. With this excellent approach and his reasoning power, he disarmed the masses at Haridwar and Mecca.

Dr. Singh: Some scholars emphasize that Guru Nanak's teachings depicted a way of life, not a religion. What is your opinion about it?

Dr. Raina: According to a Sanskrit saying – "*Dhiati iti dharma,*" meaning thereby whatever is useful and beneficial in life is dharma. Dharma is a way of life that helps man develop spiritualism and become a higher developed person. As is evident from Guru Arjan Dev's verses: "*you live your life making earnest efforts and make your life happy through rightful earnings. Meet the lord through contemplation and your worries will be dispelled*" (SGGS, P - 522). Sri Guru Granth Sahib is the lighthouse of knowledge. It touches all the phases of life, ethereal as well as worldly. Its principles combine family life with honest labor. It connotes the remembrance of God's name to living a pure life, similar to a lotus, among the impurities of life. All these principles make it a religion par excellence.

Dr. Singh: As per Sikh Gurus' teachings, what is the meaning or purpose of our presence in this universe?

Dr. Raina: In Sidh Gosti, the Sidhas ask Guru Nanak – "Why have you become an ascetic"? He replies – "In search of Gurmukhs, I have become an ascetic." Gurmukh, a Brahm Gyani, or a Khalsa, is an ideal man of the Gurus, whose full description is given in Sidh Gosti and Sukhmani Sahib. Gurmukh attains spiritual illumination by *naam* meditation. He lives a dedicated, disciplined life through *Naam, Daan, Isnaan* – the three pillars of Sikhism. Brahm Gyani, a spiritually enlightened man, is like a fully blossomed flower, who spreads his fragrance around, making this world a beautiful place to live in.

The meaning and purpose of human life are to become Gurmukh – a God-oriented soul to attain God, become one with the formless Lord, and become Sachiyara in the court of God. In the Sach Khand, the drop (human soul) mingles with the ocean (Supreme Soul), the Jyoti (light) mingles with the higher one (the ultimate reality), and perfection is attained.

Dr. Singh: Does Sikh Gurus' Educational Philosophy drive towards the sustainability of humankind on the earth?

Dr. Raina: The Educational Philosophy of the Sikh Gurus is mainly based on Sri Guru Granth Sahib and the gurus' teaching. Sri Guru Granth Sahib, a lighthouse of Indian spiritual, philosophical knowledge, cultural heritage, and musical traditions. It is a storehouse of priceless pearls of wisdom. It enshrines the compositions of six Gurus and thirty *Bhaktas* and saints belonging to different parts of India and diverse castes, creeds, and religions. As enshrined in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the compositions aim at coexistence, national integration, and brotherhood of humans and God's fatherhood. I am sure that these ideas, as expressed in these sacred hymns, can lead to the sustainability of life on our planet if implemented in their true essence.

Dr. Singh: In the light of Sikh Gurus' Educational Philosophy, what can be done to stop human conflicts based on differences in race, religion, caste, color, or creed?

Dr. Raina: The Gurus are non-communal and non-sectarian in their teachings. They believe in "*Ek Pitaa, Ekas ke hum Barak*" - recognize all humankind as one. They proclaim that the temple and the mosque are the same. To teach these ideas in practical form, they organized morning/evening congregations. Bhai Mardana, a Muslim, was the life-long companion of Guru

Nanak Dev Ji. He traveled extensively to spread the message of love, peace, and coexistence. Guru Granth Sahib is the best example of interfaith dialogue. Guru Arjan Dev Ji befriended all. Guru Har Gobind had Muslims in his army, and he built up a mosque for them.

Guru Gobind Singh had many Muslim friends like Pir Buddhu Shah, Nabi Khan, Gani Khan, Rai Kalla, etc., who stood by him through thick and thin. Bhai Kanhaiya served water to the thirsty wounded soldiers irrespective of their religions. Such stories need to be propagated and made part of the curriculum. "*Sarbat da bhala*" camps should be organized in schools to teach cosmopolitan values. Traveling is the best means of education. Interfaith tours should be organized at various places to strengthen the bonds of friendship. The celebrations of special occasions such as Guru Purabs, e.g., Guru Nanak's 550th Prakash Utsav (Birth Anniversary), are the best events to teach the ethical values for the welfare of humanity. Instead of spending money on pomp and show, we should establish economical educational institutions and activities related to the downtrodden's upliftment. As advocated by Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the harmonious synthesis of religions has the potential to act as a tremendous socio-cultural bonding force all over the world.

Dr. Singh: What is the Sikh Guru's perspective on the existence of God? Can faith in God be justified?

Dr. Raina: The commencing verse of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, provides in a nutshell, the concept of God of the Sikh Gurus. God is Absolute, Eternal Reality, Self-Sprung, Creator, Sustainer, and destroyer, "*Thou has thousands of eyes, and yet thou hast no eye.*" The Un-manifest becomes manifest in His creation like *boond mein sagar (ocean in a drop)*. Everybody is illumined by His light (God's essence). Guru Gobind Singh has depicted the martial side of God, who protects the good and destroys evil. God is Formless. Naked eyes cannot see him, but he can be experienced in "*Sahaj Avastha*" by the devotees. In such a state, they share an abundance of ecstasy and bliss and see God everywhere. Even science believes that there is a higher power controlling the world, to whom you may call by the name of God or nature. The whole cosmos is working under that divine power.

Dr. Singh: What is Sikh Gurus' perspective of Spirituality?

Dr. Raina: The Gurus are great spiritual leaders. For humans' spiritual development, they emphasize self-purification by the development of higher values of life, love, devotion, and meditation on God's name. The spiritualism of the Gurus is based on the three elementary principles of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. The "Japu" composition of Guru Nanak Sahib describes the five stages of the spiritual journey. Herein, knowledge, action, and devotion are combined to lead a human towards a balanced spiritual development. Such development helps him/her to reach *Sachkhand - the abode of God*, where the ray (individual soul) is united with the sun (Supreme soul), Light (essence) blends with Light (source), and perfection is achieved.

Dr. Singh: What is Sikh Gurus' perspective about society?

Dr. Raina: The Gurus believe in the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. To remove the barriers of caste, creed, or color and to teach social values of life, they organized various events to spread the message via Sangat and pangat. "*Begampura – shahar ko naau*" is the ideal society of the Gurus, where everybody works hard, lives a happy, contented life, being treated on equal footing. The Gurus built up ideal towns of their dreams, e.g., Kartarpur Sahib, Amritsar, Anandpur Sahib, etc., where people were taught to live a simple, disciplined life based on three principles of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. In Anandpur Sahib, there was a blend of bhakti and Shakti. People were taught to sacrifice their lives for a noble cause and not to surrender before cruel and unjust rulers. The seeds of such bravery, among the disciples, had been sown by the *Babarwani* hymns of Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

Dr. Singh: What are the barriers to the logical and rational interpretation of Sikh Guru's compositions?

Dr. Raina: In modern scientific society, man's life has become mechanical. He has become a worshiper of mammon. He has no time for the inculcation of higher values in life. In Gurdwaras, there is just a mechanical reading of Sri Guru Granth Sahib – especially at times of Akhand Path. There is a shortage of enlightened granthi's to explain the meaning of Guru Granth sahib. People have no time to study good quality literature to understand the apt interpretation of Gurbani. Over time, degeneration comes in every religion, and it becomes ritualistic and dogmatic.

People go to Gurdwaras, donate some money, bow before Sri Guru Granth Sahib, take langar/prasad and come back, thinking their job is done. Recently millions of rupees have been

spent on celebrating the 550th Prakash Utsav (Birth Anniversary) of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. But, we have spent most of this amount on pomp and show. Guru Nanak was a simple man who had lead a simple life in a village. We could have spent this large amount of money for the welfare of society. Today we need people to live the true essence of their religion, not just talk about it.

Dr. Singh: You have been the Head of various educational institutions for more than three decades of your life. Please share some of your experiences/efforts to implement Sikh Gurus' educational philosophy at these institutions?

Dr. Raina: I firmly believe in the educational teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. A truly educated man becomes a benefactor of humanity. One should earn one's livelihood through honest labor, share one's earnings with the needy, and work for women's empowerment by making them enlightened and self-dependent through education.

By God's grace, I became the Principal of S. D. College for Women, Mansa, in 1970 at 32. It was an academy with 50 students on its rolls. I left a permanent job to serve the cause of women's education in the backward area of Mansa. I got the college affiliated within a year. All the staff members and the management of the institution worked as a team with great missionary zeal. Our focus was on the cultivation of work culture among the students and their all-round development. The annual results were outstanding. The strength of students went up to 200+ and kept on increasing every year. The stakeholders considered our college as the best in the region. By the time I retired in 1997, the number of students at the college had reached 1000.

Though it was Sanatan Dharma College, we celebrated Guru Nanak's Prakash Utsav every year. On this occasion, the activities included Shabad Kirtan, Poetry recitation, Declamation contests based on the philosophy of Guru Ji. Langar was usually prepared and distributed by the students of the college. I nurtured the college like my child. There was no bungling of funds. The college gave liberal concessions to needy students to help them to cope with their economic hardships. The tuition fee was kept low, and the college refrained from charging unnecessary funds from students. Besides doing the college's teaching and administrative work, I was also a member of various social bodies for the upliftment of society. I still hold an emotional bond with the college.

Inspired by Guru Amar Dass Ji's famous saying: "The Gurmukhs are never old," even now, at 82, I am running a play-way school for children. It has been built up with my lifelong savings,

and with my children's help, on our ancestral land. A nominal fee is being charged from the students just to meet the school expenses. In the school, each day begins with the prayer – Nanak Naam Chaddi Kala. Guru Nanak Dev Ji's birthday is celebrated every year with the help of Haryana Punjabi Sahitya Academy, Panchkula.

Dr. Singh: Recently (2018), you have published a book titled: Sidh Ghosti – Viakhia Te Darshan. How is your interpretation of Sidh Ghosti composition different from its previous descriptions by others?

Dr. Raina: A creative person cannot remain without self-expression. Everyone has got one's way of thinking and writing. Late Prof. Harnam Dass, my father, wrote an explanation of Sidh Gosthi, but he couldn't get it published. While editing it, I couldn't understand the inherent meanings of specific terms "*Shabd, Naam, and Sahaj Awastha.*" I made an in-depth study of Sikh theology and then wrote three/four introductory chapters. My father had his way of writing; his interpretations were based on Sri Guru Granth Sahib's in-depth study. He meditated for many days and then wrote. Thinking that his painstaking labor of love should not go futile, I got it published, without caring what others had written already.

Dr. Singh: In 2019, you published a book titled: Japji Amrit (Poetic Translation of Japji in Punjabi). As you know, the original 'Jap' composition is written in poetic form in Punjabi itself, so what is unique/special about your poetic translation of 'Jap' hymns?

Dr. Raina: Basically, my father was a poet. His poetry is a spontaneous overflow of powerful emotions. Many of his poetry books are still unpublished. I have got three of his books published. These are *Geeta Amrit* (Three Editions), *Dham Pad* (pub. by LDP, Patiala in 2001), and now *Japji Amrit*. These are poetic translations of Geeta, Dhampad, and Japji, respectively. In the *Japji Amrit* book, the whole Japji composition of Guru Nanak has been explained in 215 verses. Each verse has been described in a couplet as follows:

“*Naam Da Sunan haive apni Surat Naam te lana*”

“*Naam Da Sunan haive Gurmukh hoke shabd kamana*”

“*Naam Da Sunan haive Kewal Naam Parayan Hona*”

“*Naam Da Sunan Naam seyo hai Jeevan Sura milana*” (*Japji Amrit*, p 46)

Dr. Singh: What is the Sikh Gurus' perspective on religious/spiritual experience? Can you share any of your unique religious/spiritual experiences?

Dr. Raina: The Gurus were great spiritual leaders. After Guru Nanak's disappearance in Vein River for three days, he came out with a message – *Na ko Hindu, Na Musalmaan*. He proceeded on long journeys, as ordained by God, to teach his lesson of love and peace to the world. While writing *Babarwani*, he says – "I am writing as ordained by God." At another place, he says, "*Mardania, play the chores on your rabab; the bani is dawning.*"

Shri Guru Gobind Singh also recalls the reminiscences of his previous life in *Bachitar Natak*. I am just an ordinary person trying to discharge my duties well, but I believe in the *hukam* (Divine Will) and Grace of God. Whenever I am in a difficult situation, I pray to God. My prayers always get the answer, and I get the strength to face the heavy odds of my life in the spirit of "*Charh di Kala.*" *Guru mere sang sada hai nale* – this firm faith in God has sustained me throughout life. Sometimes I do have premonitions.

Dr. Singh: German philosopher and economist Karl Marx had once said, "Religion is the opium of the people." Is Sikh Gurus' philosophy a new variety of this opium?

Dr. Raina: After completion of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, and on paying tribute to this ancestral lighthouse of knowledge, Shri Guru Arjun Dev said: "*When I opened the treasure house of my forebears, how immensely my mind was pleased with this spiritual heritage, neither pearls nor the rubies are the price for this brim-full overflowing storehouse, which is inexhaustible and beyond measure.*" (SGGS, p185-6)

The teachings of Shri Guru Granth sahib for the last 550 years have been a source of inspiration and encouragement to millions of people. By their examples and their sublime writings – the Gurus have breathed a new spiritual, mental, ethical, and physical vitality in the minds of their disciples, who have turned the pages of history. True religion can never be opium, but when it gets degenerated in the hands of pseudo-saints (babas), e.g., Ram Rahim, Asaram, etc., it does become opium.

Dr. Singh: Guru Nanak's Educational Philosophy is 550 years old; do we need it in the twenty-first century? Why should educationists care about it?

Dr. Raina: Guru Nanak's Educational Philosophy is based on higher moral values of life. It emphasizes the overall development of personality. It urges us to follow the outstanding concepts, e.g., honest work and worship, "*Shabd Guru*," "*Pothi Parmesar ka thanu*" (Book is the abode of God), "*sarbat ka bhala*," "He prayeth best who loveth best," the blending of Bhakti and Shakti, fatherhood of God and brotherhood of humans. It encourages us to maintain a noble relationship between a teacher and a taught. Universal education through the mother tongue is another essential feature of this philosophy. These are some of Guru Nanak's Educational Philosophy's redeeming attributes, which has got an abiding element of universal truth, making it significant for our times.

In modern times we are caught up in a social maelstrom. There is a crisis of values. The exploitation in the name of religion is the order of the day. In general, life has become more mechanical. Although man has reached the moon, yet he doesn't know how to live peacefully on earth. We can lessen the severity of our troubled times if we try to integrate/implement the concepts, programs, and methodology of education, as envisaged by the Gurus, in our prevalent education system. Even in the twenty-first century, Guru Nanak's Educational Philosophy is as fresh and life-giving as ever.

Dr. Singh: In comparison to other educational philosophies, where do you place Sikh Gurus' Educational Philosophy?

Dr. Raina: Humanism, Idealism, Pragmatism, Naturalism, and Realism are the main philosophies of education in the present times.

(i) Humanism – is cosmopolitan in outlook. It aims at the greatest good of the greatest number through all-round development of personality via universal education.

(ii) Idealism – believes that there are spiritual spark and hidden potentialities in humans leading him/her to spiritual, mental, and ethical development.

(iii) Pragmatism – pragma means action. Let the child learn through his efforts. It encourages investigations, learning by doing, and activity methods. "*Aapu Deepo Bhav*" (Be your light) - Truth changes with time.

(iv) Naturalism – gives the slogan back to nature. Let the child learn through the inspirational power of nature. He should be educated according to his/her natural potentialities and not forced to become this and that.

(v) Realism – believes that this world is divine (really like God) and should be made a befitting place to live in. It doesn't believe in escapism.

The Sikh Gurus' educational philosophy is humanistic and cosmopolitan in outlook, working for the greatest good of the most significant number through universal education. It is idealistic concerning education's aims as it believes there are a divine spark and hidden potentialities in each human being, which should be developed to make him/her spiritually, mentally, ethically sound. It is natural and straightforward in outlook as it believes in the inspirational, educative power of nature. The world is divine (really like God), and so it should be made a befitting place to live in and not forget ones' responsibilities or become escapists. Thus, we find the strains of modern philosophies in the educational philosophy of Gurus infused together to give it a modern harmonious shape.

Dr. Singh: Thanks, Dr. Amrit Raina, for sparing your time, for this enlightening talk.

Dr. Devinder Pal Singh, M.Sc. Ph.D., Director, Centre for Understanding Sikhism, is a teacher by profession and a writer by choice. He specializes in writing on scientific, environmental, and religious topics. He has about 24 books, 1500 articles, and 70+ T.V./Youtube presentations to his credit in these fields to date. He lives in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada.

Email: drdpsn@hotmail.com

Website: drdpsinghauthor.wordpress.com