

## Stephen Hawking's Ideas and Sikh View of Creator & Creation in Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS)

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### Introduction

Issac Newton, the father of modern Physics, wanted to prove the existence of God on the basis of his universal laws but failed. The materialistic viewpoint of creation based on Newtonian Mechanics dispenses with the idea of God. Most of the scientists avoid to bring in God in their theories of natural phenomena. When French mathematician Pierre Laplace presented his copy of "Celestial Mechanics" to Napoleon in 1802, he was accosted by the query: "Why there is no mention of God as Creator of the Universe even once in your book while Newton spoke of God in his book"? Laplace replied boldly: "*Sir: I have no need of that hypothesis*".

But the modern theories of Physics are not so antagonistic to the existence of God in nature. On the contrary, almost all religions dwell on an intrinsic faith in the existence of God as the creator of the universe. Sikh view of creator and creation is enunciated in the holy scripture, Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS).

However, modern science had kept a certain distance from this area, considering it mostly out of its direct purview. Stephen Hawking, on the other hand, had the unique distinction of making a claim to have developed a scientific theory to disprove or at least show the dispensability of God even with regard to the creation of the universe out of nothing. Hawking was an atheist but he did not try to impose his atheism on his family and friends. In his last book [1], "*Brief Answers to Big Questions*", he writes:

- "I think the [universe was spontaneously created out of nothing](#), according to the laws of science".
- He was a vocal champion of [the Big Bang theory](#) — the idea that the universe began by exploding suddenly out of an ultra-dense singularity smaller than an atom.
- The only role for an all-powerful deity might be setting the initial conditions of the universe so that those laws could take shape — a divine creator who caused the Big Bang to bang, then stepped back to behold His work.
- The universe also began as a singularity, time itself could not have existed before the Big Bang.
- "For me this means that [there is no possibility of a creator](#), because there is no time for a creator to have existed in".
- While his view of the universe might render a divine creator and the laws of nature incompatible, it still leaves ample space for faith, hope, wonder and, especially, gratitude.
- To Hawking and many like-minded scientists, the combined laws of gravity, relativity, quantum physics and a few other rules [could explain everything](#) that ever happened or ever will happen in our known universe.
- "If you like, you can say the laws are the work of God, but that is more a definition of God than a proof of his existence".

- "Did God create the quantum laws that allowed the Big Bang to occur?" Hawking wrote. "I have no desire to offend anyone of faith, but I think science has a more compelling explanation than a divine creator".

There are two prevailing views about creation. One view is that the universe came into existence itself without any role for creator God. The other view is that there are signs of designing and planning in the universe (Intelligent Design); therefore, it must have been created by a superpower. However, Stephen Hawking proposed hypothesis of creation without a creator on the basis of his theoretical interpretations of Einstein's theory of relativity. Sikh viewpoint does not endorse Hawking but believes in a Creator (*Karta Purkh*) who creates the Universe.

### **Sikh View of a Creator in SGGS\_**

What is the Sikh view of Creator? In the opening lines of SGGS, Guru Nanak defines his concept of God, the creator as follows [2]: "Creator is one and non-dual. It is manifested in Truth, Existence and Being. The creator person is without fear or hatred, beyond time and space, self-existent, transcendental cosmic spirit made manifest by the grace of the Guru.

Guru Gobind Singh elaborates the concept of Creator further in his writings [3]: "God, the creator has no colour, shape or physical form. He is timeless, changeless, infinite, limitless and incomprehensible. None can define Him; neither nature nor culture can delineate His Being".

Guru Nanak's view of God as creator is unique. Space and Time are the two categories of manifestation of creation of Universe but God as creator is beyond space and time. God is present before creation of space and time, in space and time, and even after space and time. He is Eternal (*Akal*) and Infinite. The truth of primordial existence of God before the creation of time and space is also explained by Guru Nanak in the opening text of Japu in SGGS [4]: "God existed before the beginning of time and space; Existed throughout the various ages in the past; Exists in the present; and Will exist in the future". Thus the enigma of God's existence faced by Hawking "*because there is no time for a creator to have existed in*" is resolved by Guru Nanak.

God, as the Creator, is the Totality, the Integrated whole, the Unity, the One. Unless God has all these characteristics, the intelligent planning and the working of teleology are not possible in this world [5]. According to Swedenborg [6]: "The unity of God may be inferred from the creation of the universe, because it is a coherent and uniform work from first to last; and also because it depends upon one God, as a body upon its soul. The universe has been so created, that God may be present everywhere therein, keep the whole and every part of it under His direction and thus maintain it in perpetual unity".

Sikh view is emphatic that God first creates Himself and then Nature (*Qudrat*) as His manifestation [7]: "*He Himself created Himself; He Himself assumed His Name. Secondly, He fashioned the creation; Seated within the creation, He beholds it with delight*". Guru Nanak eulogizes Nature in its various manifestations [8]: "*Nature is all that appears and hears, Nature is the world as seen, felt and appreciate. Nature is all the spaces, and Nature is totality of forms. Glory to Thee who dwelleth in Nature, Infinite and Eternal, Thy limits and frontiers are unknowable*".

The Sikh philosophy dialectically unites the ideas of God and the world. Transcendence shows that God is prior to and distinct from the world. Immanence of God represents God's connection with the world. In a manner of speaking, God is one but has dual nature, Transcendental and Immanent. Guru Nanak has identified the manifest reality with Nature [9]: *"Nanak, the beneficent Lord alone is True, and He is revealed through his Nature"*.

The compiler of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Guru Arjun Dev, emphasises the role of God as Creator of the universe in his famous text *Sukhmani* in SGGS [10]: *"He Himself created His own expanse. All things are His; He is the Creator"*.

### **Sikh View of Creation in SGGS**

Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith, critically examined the theories of creation of the universe prevalent in India before his advent, from pre-historic times to the end of 15<sup>th</sup> century. SGGS, the Sikh holy book, compiled in 1604, deals with the problem of origin of life and creation of the Universe in the most scientific manner. The revelatory nature of scientific vision of Guru Nanak is based on the premise that there is a Creator of the Universe. Nothing can happen without the Will of Creator (God). Guru Nanak in SGGS elaborates different stages of creation and his ideas are forerunner of the Big Bang model of creation, which was formulated during the twentieth century.

Sikh view proclaims that all phenomena pertaining to creation occurs as per Will of God

[11]: *"By His Command, bodies are created; His Command cannot be described"*. In *Japuji*, Guru Nanak sums up his ideas about creation of universe [12]: *"God created the Universe by uttering a word"*. Guru Nanak poses the next question [13]: *"What was the time and the moment, the day and the month, when the Universe was created"*?

Guru Nanak answers the query about time and moment of creation himself as follows [14]:

*Neither the Pandit can predict this date by looking through the Purana texts,  
Nor do the quazi can tell from the Koran,  
Neither the Yogi nor anyone else knows the day, week, season and month of creation,  
The creator who creates the world, He Himself knows the time.*

Guru Nanak versifies his thoughts about the 'epoch' before the creation which is referred to as 'Sūnya', a concept at variance with the 'Sūnyata' philosophy of Buddhism, which means void. The Guru envisages creation out of this 'Sūnya' phase: *"The creator was all alone. He created the air, water, earth and sky; even the sun and the moon from this Sūnya"*. In *Raga Maru Solhe* of SGGS, Guru Nanak elaborates the creation process out of Sūnya [15]:

- *In the Sūnya (Primal void), the infinite Lord assumed his Power.*
- *He Himself is unattached, infinite and incomparable.*
- *From the Sūnya, He created air and water.*
- *He created universe and the man in the fortress of body.*
- *From this Sūnya, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva issued forth.*
- *From this Sūnya, the moon, the sun and the earth were created.*
- *They were created from Sūnya, and they will merge into the Sūnya.*
- *From the Sūnya, the five elements became manifest. ....*
- *In His celestial home, in deepest samaadhi of Sūnya.*
- *O Nanak, the immaculate sound current of the Naad*
- *And the music of the Sabad, resound;*
- *One merges into the True Name of the Lord.*

Guru Arjun, the fifth Nanak, describes the primordial trance of God (*Sünn Samadhi*) before the creation process starts as a manifestation of God [16]:

*For countless days, He remained invisible.  
For countless days, He remained absorbed in Sünn.  
For countless days, there was utter darkness, and  
Then the Creator revealed Himself.*

This wonderful drama of creation is elucidated further by Guru Nanak in his mystic reverie. Surprisingly, there is a perfect correspondence between the epoch of ‘Big-Bang’ and the creation out of *Sünya* phase as enunciated in *Maru Solhe*, the most beautiful hymn on Sikh Cosmology [17]:

*‘For billions of years, there was nothing but utter darkness. There was  
neither day nor night, nor moon, nor sun, but the Lord alone sat in  
profound trance. Neither there was creation, nor air, nor water.  
There were no continents, nor underworlds, nor seven oceans nor  
rivers, or the flowing water. There was neither death, nor time. There  
was no Brahma, nor Vishnu or Shiva....*

*When He so willed, He created the world and supported the firmament  
without support. He created Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva and extended  
the love of mammon. He founded the continents, solar systems and  
underworlds, and from the Absolute self, He became manifest.”*

## References

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9. Guru Nanak. SGGS, M. 1, P. 141.
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11. Guru Nanak. SGGS, M. 1, P. 1.
12. Guru Nanak. SGGS, M. 1, P. 3.
13. Guru Nanak. SGGS, M. 1, P. 4.
14. Guru Nanak. SGGS, M. 1, P. 4.
15. Guru Nanak. SGGS, M. 1, P. 1037-38.
16. Guru Arjun. SGGS, M. 5, P. 1081.
17. Guru Nanak. SGGS, M. 1, P. 1035.