

EDITORIAL

INAUGURAL ISSUE

Before I write about the Inaugural Issue of the Journal, it is important to define **religion** according to the Nanakian School as compared to that of the others because this New Research Journal will be dealing with *Gurbani* and the Sikh religion (Sikhism). The comprehensive conception of a religion has been summarized by Paden [4] as follows:

"The word **religion** denotes both earnest observance of ritual obligations and an inward spirit of reverence. In modern usage, *religion* covers a wide spectrum of meanings that reflect the enormous variety of ways the term can be interpreted. At one extreme, many committed believers recognize only their own tradition as a religion, understanding expressions such as *worship* and *prayer* to refer exclusively to the practices of their tradition. Although many believers stop short of claiming an exclusive status for their tradition, they may nevertheless use vague or idealizing terms in defining religion—for example, "true love of God," or "the path of enlightenment." At the other extreme, religion may be equated with ignorance, fanaticism, or wishful thinking.

Modernity has posed acute challenges to traditional religions. For a large number of people in modern societies, religion is neither good nor bad but simply irrelevant, given the many alternative ways to find meaning in various forms of cultural pursuits, ethical ideals, and lifestyles. These challenges to religion are partly a result of the prestige of science. The sciences describe a universe without reference to deities, the soul, or spiritual meaning. Other factors that have contributed to a decline in religious participation in the modern world include the presentation of religion as a prescientific form of superstitious thinking, as a source of political control and divisiveness, as a confirmation of established patriarchal values, or as an emotional crutch."

SIKHI (Sikhism) is a different religion than that described by Paden. Guru Arjan describes a religion in a very simple term [2]: "*The highest religion among all the religions is to realize the Almighty and to do good*

deeds."

This definition of religion has a universal acceptability. Nevertheless, this definition leads to three questions: i) How can one realize the Almighty? ii) What are the good deeds? iii) How can one do that? Guru Nanak's response to all the three questions lies in the *Sikhi* (Sikhism) explained in the following stanza [3]: "*Sikhi (Sikhism) is the advice given in the philosophy of the Guru.*"

What is the philosophy of the Guru? It is the philosophy of the Nanakian School that is incorporated in the *Aad Guru Granth Sahib* (AGGS) [1]. Some scholars accept that most of the information given in the ancient writings is contrary to the philosophy of Nanakian School. They still prefer to use misinformation given in such writings without verifying their authenticity and validity for construction of Sikhism for the modern Sikhs. Until and unless Sikhism is represented on the philosophy of the Nanakian School incorporated in the AGGS, the younger generations of the third millennium will not be interested in Sikhism. Consequently, it is this Journal's ambition to represent *Gurbani* and

Sikhism in their real perspective.

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In most of the journals, magazines, newspapers and proceedings of conferences the papers are reproduced as received from the authors without being reviewed by other scholars before their publication.

However, it is the policy of this Research Journal that every paper will be reviewed at least by two or three editors on the Editorial Board and the authors will be requested to revise their papers accordingly. In case there are some contrary views then these views are reproduced as such at the end of the paper so that the readers of the Journal know every side of the topic to draw his/her own conclusions. Besides reviewing of papers by the Editorial Board, all the papers are further open for discussion after publication by the readers of this Journal. The comments and suggestions of the readers will be published in the following issue of the Journal. It is suggested to send the comments to this journal rather than posting on any Internet.

The first section of the **Inaugural Issue** of the Journal includes **Feature Articles**. These are well researched and documented with pertinent references. The first paper deal with the need of the new research journal and the second one discusses that it is an inherent weakness of the humanity that false is usually taken as true. Since there was no standardized system of referencing *Bani* from the most authenticated source of information, i.e. Sikh Scriptures, *Aad Guru Granth Sahib*

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[1], therefore, a standardized system of referencing of *Bani* has been given in the next paper. The responsibility of the first three papers fell on the Editor-in-Chief. S. Pal Singh Purewal has prepared a new Nanakshahi Calendar that will be introduced in 1999. It gives the dates of various *Gurpurbs* and other important events in Sikh history that will fall on the same dates every year. Prof. Hardev Singh described Sikhism as the scientific religion for the mankind with the hope that the tercentenary of Khalsa will imbibe the true scientific concept of Sikh religion and Khalsa culture. Prof. Devinder Singh Chahal presented Nanakian philosophy for world peace. Dr Jasjit Singh Walia took the readers to Guru Nanak's pathway to spirituality. He explains why are we here and what is the purpose of life? Dr Bikram Singh Dhillon tried to define a Sikh. He says there is not now, nor has there ever been any single definition of a Sikh, if such definition is bound within any particulars of time or place..... So tell me, how do you define Sikhism? Dr (Bhai) Harbans Lal tried to prove that *Sehjdhari* Sikhs were and are the part of the Khalsa of Guru Gobind Singh. Guru Gobind Singh and his associates, Guru Panth, continued to love them as their own.

The second section, **News & Views**, contains the critical analysis of the news and the papers presented elsewhere. S. Baldev Singh criticized the misinterpretation of *Halal* meat in the Sikh literature, Prof. Chahal

commented on the Astrology and *Gurbani* and S. Nirmal Singh Kalsi discusses the procedure of *Vaak Laina* (Taking of Word). The other sections to be included in the forthcoming issues are **Discussion** arising from the previous papers, **Letters to the Editor**, **Book Reviews**, and **Question and Answers**. According to *Gurbani* every Sikh has the right to do research; and has freedom of expression and discussion/deliberation on any subject to clarify doubts by using discriminating intellect while sitting together in the *sangat*. Please see "*Why This Research Journal?*" on page 5. Therefore, I, being the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal, invite the Sikhs for presenting their well researched and documented papers through this Journal for the Sikhs and Non-Sikhs, especially, the young Sikhs of the next millennium. (See page 6 for 'Call for Papers'.)

Finally, I am grateful to the Editorial Board for their critical examination of all the papers and for their comments and suggestions to make the papers in presentable forms for the Journal. I am also very thankful to the patrons, institutes, Gurdwaras and the individuals for financing the publication of the Journal.

REFERENCES

1. AGGS = Aad Guru Granth Sahib. 1983 (reprint). Publishers: Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar. (M = Mahla, i.e., succession number of the Sikh Gurus to the House of Guru Nanak, P = Page of the AGGS).
2. AGGS. M 5, P 266: ਸਰਬ ਧਰਮ ਮਹਿ ਸ਼੍ਰੇਸਟ ਧਰਮੁ॥ ਹਰਿ ਕੋ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਿ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਕਰਮੁ॥
3. AGGS, M 1, P 465: ਸਿਖੀ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਗੁਰ ਵੀਚਾਰਿ ॥
4. Paden, William E. 1998. Religion. Microsoft® Encarta® 98 Encyclopedia. Microsoft Corporation.

Devinder Singh Chahal
Editor-in-Chief

ਪੋਥੀ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਕਾ ਥਾਨੁ ॥

AGGS, M 5, P 1226

The Granth (AGGS) is the Enlightener.