

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Many thanks for your Inaugural Issue of UNDERSTANDING SIKHISM - The Research Journal. You couldn't have thought of a better way of ushering in the year of destiny 1999! It is stunningly beautiful in production values. Your choice of articles is interesting, though matters of marginal and peripheral importance like *Halal* need not have been juxtaposed with, for example, "Pathway to Spirituality." As desired, we shall be delighted to reprint your article: SYSTEM OF REFERENCING BANİ, (minus reviewers' comments) in the forthcoming issue of the Sikh Review.

Saran Singh, Editor, The Sikh Review, Calcutta.

I am very happy to receive the Inaugural Issue of "Understanding Sikhism: The Research Journal". The first work I did was to go through the whole issue. It is rightly remarked that there are some misconceptions about Sikhism in the classical writings by the scholars about Sikhism and the criteria to evaluate their authenticity should be the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS). But we cannot brush aside them by saying that they provide false information, because there is some valuable information also in these writings. So they should be evaluated one by one in the light of the AGGS. I mean to say there is a need to do critical study of these secondary sources. It will be better if there is one or two articles on such writings in every issue so that the readers can know the truth in the Western world. Why it is needed because all the studies done in the West by McLeod and others are based on these writings. I shall be happy to do if I can be of any assistance to you in running this journal. Congratulations for the first issue and best wishes for the coming ones.

Gurnam Kaur, Reader, Punjabi University, Patiala.

Please accept my best wishes on your venture, Understanding Sikhism - The Research Journal. This is the need of the Sikh community. Positively, it will inculcate scientific temper regarding interpretation of Gurbani. Fortunately you have talented Editorial Board and Trustees to work with you. Team efforts will bring fruitful results. Your leading article, *False is Taken to be True*, is very scholarly and thought provoking. Young people, particularly, in western world can be reached and we can touch their lives through your journal. I did not know that astrologers are minting money in Vancouver and Toronto. Let us work as astrologers together to mint some money for your journal. Just kidding.

Dr Harbans Singh, Ex Principal, Amritsar.

First, let me begin by congratulating you on the launch of the Journal. It is far and away the most concentrated single source of reflective thought, which I have yet encountered within the contemporary writings of the Sikh Panth. Let us hope that it is but the beginning of a long and healthy process of inquiry within the Panth based upon an earnest search for truth.

Dr Bikram Singh Dhillon, Schaumburg, Illinois

Although I will read it tonight and this weekend, it looks good. My immediate comment is that it looks really good and it can be a new milestone. Congratulation on your success and thanks for a ton of hard work you had to put in. May

Guru bless you with energy and zeal to continue this seva.

Dr Harbans Lal, Fort Worth, Texas

A brief email to thank you for the first number of your journal. I want to write more but this is the exam period and I have much marking to do. My apologies but also thanks and congratulations. I hope your journal will be very successful. Such academic journals are much needed.

Owen Cole, UK

Thank you very much for sending me the opening issue of "Understanding Sikhism." Knowing how much time and energy go into creating this type of enterprise, I admire you for taking up this challenge. I found this issue excellent, the problems discussed are very significant, and the spirit of open discussion admirable.

Dr Gurinder Singh Mann, California

Congratulations on winning the Academic Excellence Award from StudyWeb for your Web site: Understanding Sikhism: <http://www.dsUPER.net/~dchahal>. Also, I would like to congratulate you for bringing out the inaugural issue of your journal "Understanding Sikhism". This is the kind of journal we need if we want to maintain Sikhism as a modern and dynamic religion not steeped in rituals, and out of date traditions and customs. Your hard work and dedication to Sikhism and for the welfare of humanity in general, and especially for the Sikh community, is very much appreciated. Without open discussion and academic discourse we run the risk of our religion becoming intolerant, inward looking and eventually ridden with corrupt practices. Thank you for starting such a refreshing and scientific discussion on our religion in the forthcoming issues of the journal. We wish you and your journal much success for the sake of Sikhism and of good religious practices.

Dr Sardar S. Sohi, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.

At the outset let me congratulate you for the initiative in giving form and essence for the Research Journal in Understanding Sikhism. The research is much needed to bring unity in the drifting trend that has overtaken the Sikh society. While projecting Guru Nanak/s teachings, which reflects universality of Divine Love based on universal oneness of God for all human beings, we must guard against clannish approach.

Haim Narain Singh, Kamloop, BC, Canada

Congratulations for your hard work and enthusiasm for spreading Guru's teachings prey for your continuous success.

Prem Singh, Tenn. USA

Superb, Bhai Sahib!!! Yeah ! Well done, Felicitation ! You have shown notable perseverance & tenacity in your great achievement, it must give you great satisfaction. Judging from the contents page display that you sent as an attachment, I think that you did a great job and I'm proud of

Continued on page 51

TENSION BETWEEN REASON AND FAITH

Many preachers and scholars put a lot of emphasis to have full faith, without any reasoning, on all the concepts of a religion. They forget the fact that the present generation of humanity is living in the Science Age / Space Age / Communication Age and new scientific information is accumulating at such a high speed that it is even becoming difficult for most of the scientists to keep pace with the progress. If a concept that cannot stand the test of science and logic, is taught in any religion it will not be able to hold its ground when its truth is exposed by science. It first happened in Christianity and now is happening in other religions. The following report is the best example to explain the whole truth that a wrong concept in a faith cannot stand for a long:

Nearly four centuries after the Vatican condemned Nicholas Copernicus's discovery that the earth revolved around the sun, another Pope - Pope John Paul - visited the astronomer's birthplace on June 7, 1999 and praised his scientific achievements. But the Pope noted that science and religion are still grappling to find common ground in the "service of truth." In 1992, the Pope formally proclaimed that the church erred when it condemned Galileo for supporting Copernicus's theory, which had been denounced in 1616 as dangerous for the faith. It remained on the church's index of prohibited books until 1822. "The discovery made by Copernicus, and its importance for the history of science, remind us of the ever-present tension between reason and faith," John Paul told officials of the university in Torun, Poland, named after the astronomer [1].

NOW QUESTION ARISES:

Continued from page 52

you, You didn't make a thundering overture though, just a hush, hush, un-announced inauguration at the Gurdwara. It certainly requires a true champion to do it and you've done it again, my friend. . . You gave Sikhs a beautiful web site and now you've given us another journal with a different dimension and flare.

Good luck for your journal. Congrats.... well earned!!! Way to go.

Hindé Thind. Montreal, Quebec

I am glad you are involved in a very worthy cause. I commend you whole heartedly.

Darshan Padda, USA

First of all let me congratulate you and your team for

If a wrong decision taken by the church or the Pope in 1616 CE can be reversed in 1992 by another Pope, then why cannot the Jathedar of the Akal Takht reverse the wrong decisions taken by his predecessor/s? The irony is that some Sikh politicians and scholars consider the position of the Jathedar of the Akal Takht equivalent to that of the Pope. Even then they are not ready to follow the good gesture of the Pope shown towards Copernicus and Galileo, who challenged the wrong concept of the church - the sun revolves around the earth. Moreover, Nanakian Philosophy, incorporated in the *Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS)*, does not support the position of priesthood of any type in Sikhism (*Sikhi or Gurmat*). Consequently, there is no such position in the Gurdwara Act of 1925 even then some theologians and Sikhs are creating a highest priest class with full political and religious powers in Sikhism. There is another lesson from the above report that the clergy should not formulate any concept or code in the future that cannot stand the test of Gurbani, science and logic - the touchstones of truth.

REFERENCE:

1. The Gazette, Montreal, June 8, 1999, Page B 6. Copernicus praised: Pope visits birthplace of astronomer once condemned by church recall 'tension between reason and faith.'

successfully bringing out the first issue of your journal. The format and the contents make for easy reading and hopefully it will maintain its high standards. There is no reason why it should not become the pre-eminent journal on Sikhism.

Dr. Sarjeet Singh Sidhu, Malaysia