
EDITORIAL

SEMINAR 2008

SABD GURU & 300TH GURGADHI DIVAS

The year 2008 was very auspicious for the Institute for Understanding Sikhism (IUS) since it completed its ten years of study of Gurbani and Sikhism. Therefore, to celebrate the Tenth Anniversary of the IUS two Seminars on “SABD GURU” were held during September 2008. ‘Sabd’ and ‘Guru’ are two words, which have been used extensively in the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS). Although these words have been discussed in the ancient philosophy from time immemorial, they have special meanings and applications in the AGGS. In this connection the IUS had already held a Seminar on this topic, *Sabd Guru: Conscience and Consciousness*, in 2002. Moreover a book entitled, *Sabd Guru to Granth: An In Depth Study*, was also published in 2004. The topic, SABD GURU, is such a vast subject that more we study more we learn about it. Therefore, to understand the intrinsic values of ‘Sabd’ and ‘Guru’ and their implications, the IUS held two seminars on SABD GURU on this occasion of Tenth Anniversary of the IUS. Since the Tercentennial Gurgadi Divas was also being celebrated during this year throughout the world, some scholars presented papers about bestowing Gurgadi onto the Granth (Holy Scripture of the Sikhs) during these two Seminars.

The first Seminar on September 13, 2008 was held at Kitchener in collaboration with Mr Kuldip Singh Bachher, President of Golden Triangle Sikh Association and Dr Gurdev Singh Sangha, President of Sikh Social and Educational Society of Ontario at the Gurdwara Sahib of Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario.

The second Seminar was held at the Civic Center, Dollards des Ormeaux, Quebec, on September 20, 2008. All speakers, who participated at the Kitchener Seminar, also presented their papers at Dollards des Ormeaux, Quebec. Besides, a few more speakers joined at this Seminar. Prof Dharam Singh, Editor, Encyclopaedia of Sikhism, Punjabi University, Patiala was the Chief Guest and Dr Kulbir Singh Thind, the pioneer of developing Gurbani CD was Special Guest of Honor. Hon. Baljit Singh, Privy Council, Government of Canada was a Chairperson for one session. Mr Abnash Singh, McGill University was Chairperson of another Session. However, the first Session was chaired by Dr Harjeet Singh Bhabra, Concordia University, Montreal. This Seminar was attended by most of the Sikh scholars of Montreal. Prof Dr Devinder Singh Chahal, President of the Institute for Understanding Sikhism (IUS) was invited to present a

paper, SABD GURU, at *The International Interfaith Conference*, held by the Takht Sach-Khand Sri Hazur Abchalnagar Sahib at Nander, Maharashtra, on September 25-28, 2008. At this conference Prof Chahal presented his recent book, *NANAKIAN PHILOSOPHY: Basics for Humanity*, to Bhai Sahib Mohinder Singh Ji, Chairman of the Conference and President of Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha (GNNSJ), Birmingham, UK; and to Rev. Dr William Leshner, Chairperson, Board of Trustees, Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions, Chicago, USA. Besides, copies of the book were also presented to Bhai Sahib Sukhbir Singh (GNNSJ), the Convener of the Conference; to Amam Ulmair Ahmed Ilyasi, Secretary General, All India Organization of Imams of Mosques, New Delhi; to Dr Mimpal Singh, Doctor of Medicine, Lahore, Pakistan and to many other academicians. This book is becoming popular among the young Sikhs and the researchers in philosophy of Guru Nanak.

The events at the Seminar held at *Dollards des Ormeaux, Quebec* were divided into separate sections. Following the welcome remarks by Prof Harjeet Singh Bhabra of Concordia University, Montreal in English Dr Jit Singh Arora, Professor, Université Du Quebec welcomed the participants in French. Thereafter, Dr Parminder Singh Chahal, Scientist, Biotechnology Research Institute, Montreal provided a brief overview of the Institute’s activities and achievements since its inception. This was followed by the inaugural address by Prof Dr Devinder Singh Chahal, President of the Institute for Understanding Sikhism.

Presentation of papers commenced immediately thereafter, 3 papers were presented dealing with the *Tercentennial* Gurgadi Diwas, Guru Maneo Granth, Guru Granth Sahib and the role of Guru in Sikhism by Dr H S Bhabara, Mr. Gurdev Singh Sangha and Dr Dharam Singh. The luncheon session included a presentation on the “Mystery of Naam Simran” by Dr Kulbir Singh Thind from California. Four speakers presented their papers in the afternoon. **Sabd Guru** was discussed by Dr Gurnam Singh Sanghera, Dr Balbir Singh, Dr Avtar Singh Dhaliwal and Prof DS Chahal. The seminar ended with dinner and demonstration of the uses of CD on Gurbani by Dr Kulbir Singh Thind, the pioneer in developing this unique CD.

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over time. A drop in following will reduce the incentive for such unscrupulous individuals to pursue their selfish objectives. Gurdwaras can also play a significant role in this regard by doing their due diligence and ensuring that they do not become inadvertent accomplices by opening up their facilities to them. On a proactive approach, Gurdwaras should educate the *sangat* on a regular basis about how toeing the line of such individuals is inconsistent with our philosophy.

As we celebrate the 300th anniversary of the Gurgaddi Diwas, let us rededicate our efforts to get back on track and live by the edict “*Guru Maneo Granth.*”

REFERENCES

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

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Dinner time was started with a beat of *Dhol* (drum) played by Master Vicky Kaura. During Dinner a Poetic Seminar was arranged by Mr Surjit Singh Pahwa on SABD GURU.

The readers will find a lot of diverse opinion on various topics in the papers presented by various authors. The editors are of the opinion that each author has the right to express his/her views but they must follow the format of the IUS Journal. The IUS is following a scientific research format of International Journals on Biology and other Life Sciences and strictly maintains this system. Mr. Gurdev Singh Sangha was unable to submit his paper in English since he was too busy in writing his PhD Thesis. However, the Abstract of his paper is appearing in the Journal.

The readers must note that it is not necessary that the views expressed by the authors are endorsed by the IUS. For example, different views about ‘*Dhur ki Bani*’, ‘*bestowing of Guruship onto the Granth*’ and meanings of ‘*Sabd Guru*’ have been expressed by some authors. Moreover, the same Bani has been interpreted differently by various authors. We feel that the study on Gurbani and Sikhism is passing through a critical stage where every individual author is trying to force his/her views on others. That is not the way to study Sikhi. The IUS has adopted a very novel method where the Editor works with each author to help him/her to modify the paper according to the format of the Journal. To maintain consistency and

continuity of the theme, cross references are checked and duplication or author’s own contradictory statements are removed. It must be noted that the IUS hold no authority to declare any statement of any author as wrong or right and it is true with any other individual scholar and Sikh Organizations. However, if there is any statement which is considered contrary to the basic principles of Nanakian Philosophy a note by the Editor-in-Chief is added at the end of the paper but the statement of the author is not changed.

It is true that no body has authority to decide what is right and what is wrong. This problem has not been resolved during the last 404 years since the time of compilation of the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) that who is the final authority to declare any interpretation right or wrong. And it is difficult to say how long it will take to decide whose interpretation is right. The editors of the IUS Research Journal believe that only the collective effort of at least five scholars expert in each of the following fields: Physical and Natural Sciences, Philosophy, Psychology, Neuroscience, Sikh History, Languages, especially the Archaic Punjabi, etc. may be able to interpret Gurbani that may be very close to the real theme/philosophy of Guru Nanak.

Devinder Singh Chahal
Editor-in-Chief

Avtar Singh Dhaliwal
Associate Editor

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9. Ganda Singh, ed., *Bhai Nand Lal Granthavali* (Malacca, Malaysia, 1968), p. 192 [*jo sikh guru darsan ki chahi/ darsan kare granth ji ahi/...jo mam sath chahe kar bat/ granth ji parhe sune bichar sath/jo mujh bachan sunan ki chai/granth ji parhe sune chit lai/mera rup granth ji jan/ is me bhed nahi kujh man*]
10. 10. The *Rahitnama* by Prahlaad Singh says: *akalpurakh ke bachan siun pragat chalayo panth/sabh sikhian ko bachan hai guru maniahu granth.* See Piara Singh Padam, *Rahitname* (Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 1974 [rpt. 1995]), p. 67
11. AGGS, M 1, p 660: [*nanaku sairu ev kahatu hai sache paravadgara*]
12. AGGS, M 1, p 722: [*jaisi mai avai khasam ki bani taisara kari gianu ve lalo*]
13. AGGS, M 5, p 628: [*dhur ki bani ai/jin sagali chint mitai*]
14. AGGS, M 4, p 982: [*bani guru guru bai bani vichi bani amaratu sare*]
15. Kesar Singh Chhibbar, *Bansavalinama Dasan Patshahian Ka* [Ed. Piara Singh Padam] (Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 1997). p. 161 [*adi guru hai granth/ih asadi hai khed juda rahe man manth*]
16. AGGS, Satta and Balvand, p 966: [*joti oha jugati sai sahi kaia pheri palatai*]
17. AGGS, M 5, p 1156: [*koti bisan kine avtar/koti brahmand ja ke dharamsal/koti mahes upai samae/ koti brahme jagu sajan lae/aiso dhani guvindu hamara/barani na sakau gun bishthara*]
18. 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, but M is replaced with the name of Sufi or Bhagat, p = Page of the AGGS).