

Silver Jubilee of this Journal A Special Issue

PREAMBLE

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The publication of *Understanding Sikhism: The Research Journal* was started in 1999, the year of 300th Anniversary of initiation of Khalsa. We have been publishing logical and scientific articles on different topics of Sikhi, founded by Guru Nanak, and Sikhism, developed later by the Sikh Guru, the followers of Guru Nanak. Any Sikh or non-Sikh can submit articles well-researched with authentic documentation. Their article will be published free of any charge. One must follow the Instructions for the Authors. The journal is also online with free access to everybody. All the issues for the last 25 years are available on *Understanding Sikhism: The Research Journal* www.iuscanada.com

The year 2023 is the Silver Jubilee of the Institute for Understanding Sikhism and *Understanding Sikhism: the Research Journal*.

The Silver Jubilee issue contains three sections:

SECTION I contains 13 articles on GOD by expert scientists and theologians from Sikhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Islam:

Dr. Eleanor Nesbitt: *IK OANKAR: some reflections*. She says, "What is clear is that *ik oankar*, both visually as a symbol and logo and orally as a reverberating statement and invocation, not only unites today's Sikhs but also connects Sikhs across the generations from the days of Guru Nanak and that it will continue to do so on into the future."

Prof. Devinder Singh Chahal: *CONCEPT OF GOD BY*

NANAK. He says Guru Nanak conceptualized God in a logo, ੴ, by taking ੴ (one) from numerals, open ੴ (oora) from Gurmukhi script, and its extended end (ੴ) from Geometry. The components ੴ + ੴ + ੴ of ੴ do not support under any circumstances to be pronounced as *Ek Oankar* or *Ek Omkar*. The God of Nanak, ੴ, became Nature/ Universe as explained by Nanak in *Kita Pasao Eko Kawao...* Therefore, Nanak's God, ੴ, is Pantheistic and impersonal and does not interfere in the working of Nature/Universe and human affairs.

Dr Avtar Singh Dhaliwal: *THE CONCEPT OF ETERNAL ENTITY IN THE GURBANI*. The Supreme reality (Eternal Entity), being invisible, infinite, unfathomable, without any form or figure, unborn but mysteriously omnipresent and omniscient, is realized as a concept through nature and natural phenomena. In Nanakian philosophy, there is no specific name, but the term 'NAAM' has been applied to the virtuous attributes of the Eternal Entity. The Sikhs believe in the Concept of the Eternal Entity, not any anthropomorphic form.

Dr. Karminder Singh Dhillon: *THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN SIKHI*. Within the AGGS, God is depicted through a symbol that Guru Nanak created - ੴ. It is a God that is in one-ness with, an extension of and resides within His creation, including humans. While the God of Sikhism, by virtue of it being no different from the God of virtually all other pre-1468 religions, has nothing

new to offer to both the world of religions and humanity, the God of Sikhi in being a novel, unique, and distinctive notion of Guru Nanak offered the human being an opportunity towards making the world a better place, instilling humanity, and bettering humanity.

Dr. Sukhraj Singh Dhillon: *CONCEPT OF GOD IN THE AAD GURU GRANTH SAHIB (AAGS)*. The central theme of Gurbani is that there is only one God (*Ek 'O'*ੴ) manifested in all creations, Who is not outside the world. It pervades everywhere in all forms and formlessness (*sargun* and *nirgun*, which are matter and energy in science). He (As Energy of the Universe) is everywhere in all forms and formlessness (*sargun* and *nirgun*). All matter and all space is Him (energy). He has been and will be there forever (*akal moorat*). He creates, maintains, and destroys everything. That is, all living things take birth, grow, and die. He is Life. He is Self-Creating (*saebhang*). Besides, Dr Dhillon says, "God is not a theoretical concept in Sikhism. We should be able to experience God within us. All humans, irrespective of their faith, can achieve union with God while still alive by realizing the Divine within."

Dr. Hardev Singh Virk: Concept of GOD, the Ultimate Reality, in Sikh Religion. Sikhism is a theistic religion. The oneness of God is represented explicitly by the icon ੴ. God is manifested in nature. It is compatible with the monotheism of Islam. Its transcendence and immanence (*nirgun & sargun*) aspects establish its relationship with the Vedantic Hindu concept of God. The God and Man inter-

relationship as Father, Mother, and Bridegroom makes its correspondence with the Christian concept of God a viable option. Consequently, the Sikh Scripture qualifies as a Universal Scripture for all mankind. In the Scientific God journal, he reported the views of 50 Nobel Laureates and 50 other great scientists who believe in God. However, Stephen Hawking is not among them, as he established theoretically that the Universe's creation happened without God's intervention.

Dr. Devinder Pal Singh: *Concept of God in Guru Nanak's Hymns*. Guru Nanak emphasized the idea of an all-loving and compassionate God in his teachings. His concept of God, often called "*Ik Onkar*," tells us that God is merciful and does not seek revenge or punishment. Guru Nanak's teachings focus on a personal and accessible relationship with the divine, where individuals can connect with God through devotion, meditation, and leading a virtuous life. He has discussed many attributes and names of God in Sikhism.

Dr. Dr Devinder Singh Sekhon: ੴ. ੴ is the symbol in Sikhism which is used to represent the single Supreme Being. With the support of sabds from the Aad Guru Granth Sahib, he explains the meaning of "*Ek-Onkar*" and its origin. Even though this holy word, "*Ek-Onkar*," has been derived from the word "Om" used in Hindu Granths, it has a completely different meaning in Sikhism.

Dr. Kulbir S. Thind: *THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN VARIOUS RELIGIONS INCLUDING SIKHISM*. He has discussed God in detail in various

religions, for example, Jainism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism. In Sikhism, God is noted to be that mystical force that has always existed and will always exist, and it is the source of everything and permeates everything and every being. God is invisible, inaccessible, incomprehensible, infinite/limitless, all-powerful, all-knowing, benevolent, and without malice. According to Sikh philosophy, the universe works according to God's command/laws. The aim of human life is to understand all this and to live a truthful life with honest work ethics and practices that include the service of others.

Pastor Greg Armstrong: *GOD IN CHRISTIANITY: The God Revealed in Biblical History and in Jesus Christ*. Christian theology claims that God is known as he has revealed himself both in the created order and more fully in the Biblical Scriptures. The Bible is primarily a historical record of God's activity that fits into and lays out God's plan of salvation for humanity. Our knowledge of God is most fully apprehended in the person of Jesus Christ, whose person embodied the culmination and epitomization of God's redemptive work. Jesus reveals God to be one who loves humanity, even in its sinful corruption, so much that he was willing to humble himself and take upon himself the form of a man, as a servant, and freely giving up his life by bearing the cost of our sin in order to fulfill the righteous requirements of his justice, and with the aim to extend forgiveness and reconciliation to everyone who would believe.

Swami Krishnananda: *THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN HINDUISM*. * He explains

God in different Sacred Granths of Hinduism. For example, the earliest statement of the Nature of Reality occurs in the first book of the Rig-Veda: *Ekam Sat-Viprah Bahudha Vadanti*. "The ONE BEING, the wise diversely speak of." The tenth book of the Rig-Veda regards the highest conception of God both as the Impersonal and the Personal: The *Nasadiya-Sukta* states that the Supreme Being is both the Unmanifest and the Manifest, Existence as well as Non-existence, the Supreme Indeterminable. The *Purusha-Sukta* proclaims that all this Universe is God as the Supreme Person—the Purusha with thousands of heads, thousands of eyes, and thousands of limbs in His Cosmic Body. He envelops the whole cosmos and transcends it to infinity. The *Narayana-Sukta* exclaims that whatever is anywhere, visible or invisible, all this is pervaded by Narayana within and without. And in many other sacred granths.

Mr. Muhammad Shoab Sarwar: *CONCEPT OF GOD IN ISLAM*. No philosophy, exploration, in-depth research, or revelation is necessary to understand Allah Almighty (God). Open the Holy Quran and begin reading it using the translation. You will begin to learn about Allah wherever you begin reading the Holy Quran. However, He has quoted several phrases from the Holy Quran to define God. Allah revealed everything from the beginning of the universe to its end in his book. The Almighty Allah claims in His word that He created man. After creation, Allah disclosed to humanity the purpose of his coming into the world. He described the terrible destruction

that the earth and heavens will experience on the Day of Judgment. The Moon and Sun shall unite. Man will be upset about where to flee in this terrible condition. When humanity comes together again, Allah will reward the pious and punish the wicked.

SECTION II contains three articles on Reincarnation.

Dr. Karminder Singh Dhillon. *THE CONCEPT OF REINCARNATION IN SIKHI AND SIKHISM – ADVOCATED OR PRECLUDED?* The plain truth is that reincarnation in the afterlife (together with the entire gamut of related notions) runs the chariot of religion on the wheels of genuine fear and fake promise in the afterlife. It acts as a powerful, effective, and potent tool for the clergy to control the minds of the follower masses. Such fear and promise kept the faithful but unenlightened Sikhs chained to the dictates of the clergy and accountable to the institutions that the clergy dominated. This notion of reincarnation is rejected within the framework of Sikhi, the philosophical foundations that Guru Nanak and Gurbani laid, and the considerations of enlightenment that are termed the spirituality of ੴ.

Sr. Daljit Singh Jawa: *WHAT HAPPENS AFTER DEATH*. Reincarnation constitutes a prominent and deeply rooted belief within several religious systems, notably Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism. Christianity and Islam espouse distinct conceptions of the afterlife, accentuating notions of judgment after death and the potential for eternal salvation or

eternal condemnation. In medical inquiry, numerous near-death experiences have been documented in which individuals recount encounters with an afterlife. While such experiences do not provide conclusive empirical evidence of an afterlife, they do furnish intriguing insights into the conceivable existence of a reality beyond the physical domain.

Dr. Devinder Singh Sekhon: *REINCARNATION: THE SIKH PERSPECTIVE*. It is clear from the sabds from the Aad Guru Granth Sahib used in the article, the logic used in support of reincarnation and the scientific investigations by renowned medical doctors and psychiatrists prove convincingly that reincarnation is real, and the man is reborn with certain innate qualities which he inherits from his previous life. That is why some people are born artists, scientists, great sportsmen, poets, writers, or good administrators.

SECTION III contains three miscellaneous articles:

Bhai Harbans Lal: *GURU NANAK ASSIGNS HIS PHILOSOPHY A UNIVERSAL ROLE*. In short, the followers of Guru Nanak stand at a new juncture, a new crossroads today. They can either realize a form of subjectivity that is genuinely plural. This way, they encounter the coming waves of global uncertainty with confidence and optimism. Or they can retreat into the usual kind of romantic self-emulation.

Dr. Devinder Singh Sekhon: *DO SUPERNATURAL POWERS EXIST: THE SIKH PERSPECTIVE*. Citing many holy sabds from the Aad Guru Granth Sahib about Guru Sahiban and some

Bhagats, and the solid evidence provided by the diary of Sant Syed Pirthi Pal Singh about the Mecca visit of Guru Nanak Sahib, it is proved beyond any doubt that miracles or supernatural powers do exist. However, the holy men do not perform miracles for any personal gain or to boost their ego.

Dr. Devinder Pal Singh: *SIKHISM AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE – THE MUTUAL RELEVANCE*. The advent of AI has the potential to impact Sikhism in various ways, both positively and negatively. Therefore, it is essential for the Sikh community to engage in dialogue and reflection on these issues and to approach these technologies with caution and consideration for their potential impacts on the tradition and its followers.