

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

JAP: The Essence of Nanakian Philosophy

-----Original Message-----

From: norman barrier [mailto:barriern@missouri.edu]

Sent: March 19, 2004 9:11 AM

To: sikhism@chahal.info

Subject: Re: JAP: The Essence of Nanakian Philosophy

Thanks. Got the books. I have been putting into Amazon. You did a very good job, and the production is excellent. I will also send a copy into Choice, the US Library review journal. Will keep you posted on that.

To get into the US Books in Print, I need a short note from you. Email will suffice.

"I authorize NG Barrier, South Asia Books, to register my book Jap: The Essence of Nanakian Philosophy, Institute for Understanding Sikhism, in the US Books in Print."

Then your signature and the address including Institute for Understanding Sikhism. Simple. I will then get it immediately into Books in Print.

Great job.

Want to buy 5 copies immediately. Please mail along with a bill. If you can manage it, would appreciate cost of \$7.50 each. I have to give Amazon and others 50%.

Cordially, Jerry

Dear Prof Chahal,

I have been subscriber of *Understanding Sikhism – The Research Journal* since its inception in 1999. The very first look at the inaugural issue captivated my heart. It's strikingly beautiful covering and soothing to the eyes printing convinced me right away that someone has really worked hard to create something as attractive. Without any doubt the Journal in a span of a few years (5-6 years) has carved for itself a unique position in the dissemination of true spirit of Gurbani.

The articles published in the Journal are well researched and well documented. Presenting Gurbani text along with page references makes it easy for the readers to follow the thought process under discussion. Articles are focused on particular topics. Their discussion is based on Nanakian philosophy as enshrined in the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS). Deliberation follows scientific and logical reasoning. Articles are informative, educative and enlightening to all Sikhs as well as non-Sikhs.

Article such as:

1. Causes of misinterpretations and misrepresentations of Gurbani and the solution. Vol. 3, No. 1.
2. Misinterpretation of Gurbani by WH McLeod. Vol. 4, No. 2.
3. Ritualistic *Akhand Paaths* – A Plea for sanity. Vol. 5, No. 2.

try to clear up the confusion surrounding topics which have been fed upon for so long by our *Granthis*, *Kathakaars*, *Raagis*, and many scholars – Sikhs and non-Sikhs.

Whereas articles such as:

1. The Commencing Verse of the Aad Guru Granth Sahib. Vol. 2, No.1.
2. Language and script of the Aad Guru Granth Sahib. Vol. 5, No.2.
3. Harness the mind to win the world. Vol. 6, No. 1.

are not only stimulating and thought provoking but are ground breaking as well.

For providing a forum for open discussion for discovering Gurbani and Sikhism in their real perspective, one would have hoped that the Journal would easily get the moral and financial support of our religious institutions such as SGPC, Amritsar, and Akal Takht. Not so. They are too busy in issuing *Hukmnamas* (edicts) declaring Sikhs as *tankhaya*, banning books on flimsy grounds, and excommunicating Sikhs from Sikhi. Never mind that such activities cannot be justified and defended on the basis of Gurbani and *Rehit Maryada* issued by the SGPC.

Our Gurdwaras are not doing any better in this regard. They are busy promoting ritualistic *Akhand Paaths* in which there is no benefit whatsoever spiritual or economic. Of course, for Gurdwara Managements it is a money making machine and, therefore, the more the number of *Akhand Paaths* the better it is. Then there is the ritual of spending hard earned donations of *Sangat* on activities like Vaisakhi Day parades and election litigations. The list of such activities goes on.

None of the above-mentioned activities, in which our religious institutions are engaged, address the real problems being faced by our community. Institute for Understanding Sikhism, on the other hand, is not only trying to identify these problems but is striving hard in presenting some solutions to them.

In the end, I thank you, Prof Chahal, the management team and the participating authors for your great service

to our community. May the Almighty reward your labor of love and May this Journal (nay our Journal) continue to enlighten us all about Nanakian philosophy in its true spirit.

Rajinder Singh, Surrey, BC

Dear Professor Chahal, Sat Sri Akal.

There is a poem by Professor, philosopher Mohammed Iqbal in which he says: After the light of Buddha was extinguished in India, the conscience of the Indian people went into deep slumber, until a perfect man from Punjab, Guru Nanak revived it. According to him the effect of Bhagats and Sufis on the Indian society was not noticeable. The name of the poem is 'Nanak'. The inclusion of Bhagat Bani in AGGS is essentially the background material, which is an essential part of modern PhD thesis.

Some time back Gurbakhash Singh Gill wrote me that Kharak Singh does not like the term Nanakian philosophy, but Nanak philosophy is all right. I wrote a scathing letter to him to explain the difference between the two. Moreover, I told him that 'Nankian, mean 'of Nanak' or 'Nanak's'. These people are idiots, you can't argue with them. Shergill asked me how every body else and all the literature say that Indian languages came out of Sanskrit, where as Chahal says that Sanskrit came out of old Punjabi. I said Chahal is right, if Sanskrit were the base of Indian languages then Sanskrit would have been the language of Indian masses not of select few. But these people have very little knowledge. You can't argue with them.

Sometime back a doctor from San Diego called me about your article on Sanskrit. I gave him the same answer I gave to Shergill. He said a professor by the name of Gurmail Singh Sidhu insists that all Northern Indian languages came out of Sanskrit. Well I said, I can't argue with a *Jat*. Show me learned Brahman who agrees with Sidhu. He said, "you are insulting the jats." So what can you do when you are born among barbarians?

Regards.

Baldev Singh

Response from the Editor:

It is very unfortunate that Dr Kahrak Singh is against the use of term 'Nanakian Philosophy' when used by Prof DS Chahal but has no objection when it was used by Dr Kirpal Singh in the Abstracts of Sikh Studies,the published by the Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh for which he has been Editor for many years. (Please see next letter by Mr Noor.)

Dr Baldev Singh Jee! You are absolutely right: "So what

can you do when you are born among barbarians?" If such scholars continued to criticize the scholars having scientific temper to disseminate Gurbani and Sikhism in their real perspective through scientific and logical methods, one can easily realize the future of Sikhism.

RE: Nanakian Philosophy

From: **Harbans Singh Noor**

[mailto:india_link@hotmail.com]

Sent: July 24, 2003 9:01 AM

To: Sikh-Diaspora@yahoogroups.com

Subject: Re: [Sikh-Diaspora] Re: Mundane expression resurfaces

For example in 1977, in a joint review of W. H. McLeod's "The Evolution of the Sikh Community; Joyce Pettigrew's "Robber Noblemen" and Ethne K. Marengo's "The Transformation of Sikh Society", entitled "A Critique of the Attempts at Destroying the Sovereign Self-identity of Sikhism (Conspiracy or Coincidence)" published in "Journal of Sikh Studies" pp. 169-177 he wrote:

"The conceptual fallacy inherent in the high-sounding analyses of W.H. McLeod, Joyce Pettigrew, E.K. Marengo and others, is their failure to distinguish the Nanakian philosophy from the metaphysical bases of Hindu reformative movements of the medieval age, as also from the teachings of the Sufi teachings. A new kind of historical consciousness, corresponding to the simmering anti-feudal revolt and the emerging proto-bourgeois element, got expression in the form of Sikh philosophy that provided an ideational basis to the class character of the Sikh movement.

The Nanakian doctrine itself contains..."

*The Journal of Sikh Studies is published by Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, (Ref from Sikh Review.)

The term "Nanakian Philosophy" was used by Dr Jasbir Singh Ahluwalia long time back.

