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ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

Nirmal Updesh*Shriman IO8**Mahant Buddha Singh Ji Maharaj***Nirmal Ashram**
Rishikesh

IK ONKAR SATGUR PRASAD II

PREFACE

Ever since the universe was created, God has taken every care to look after it. From time to time He Himself descended or sent those who had completely identified themselves with Him to rid this world of the impurities that had crept into the system. Change is the law of Nature and there is nothing permanent in the world. It was only in keeping with the system that many a weakness and deformity appeared with the passage of time.

In order to remove the shortcomings it became necessary to cleanse the system. After they have been worn for some time, clothes become soiled and have to be washed. A ruler lays out gardens and parks for his and his people's entertainment and benefit, if there is no one to look after the garden it loses its fruit bearing trees as well as its charm. A good gardener has to be there to maintain the place and not allow degeneration to set in. Similarly to ensure that the world remains a beautiful place, God – the supreme gardener – formulated certain rules and evolved a well regulated system to be followed by man so that he continues to be on the path of righteousness, which alone brings to him peace of mind. Man becomes unhappy only when he deviates from the right path. Lord Krishna clearly states this in the *Gita* when he tells

Arjun that God has to intervene, favouring the good and holymen when people forget what is Right, go astray and thus unknowingly embrace misery and unhappiness. Guru Gobind Singh Ji clearly stated in his '*Bachitra Natak*' that he came to this world to protect and promote Good and to perpetuate what is right and in accordance with *Dharma*, and also to put to an end to what is contrary to Righteousness. He wanted holymen to know that this was his life's mission.

So God, in order to save this world, Himself appeared in the form of

Bavan in Satyuga

Ram in Treta

Krishna in Dwapar.

And in *Kaliyuga*, He took the form of **Guru Nanak** and the *Gurus*. This was done with the sole purpose of saving man's soul and to keep him on the right side of *Dharma*. This was to enable mankind to lead a good and meaningful life.

The process continued and there came a great man, a great scholar – one who perceived all knowledge – a perfect believer, who, in order to salvage man's soul, made his appearance on the scene: Baba Buddha Singh Ji Maharaj.

Baba Buddha Singh Ji Maharaj was born in 1861 in village Halowal in District Gurdaspur, Panjab. His father was Sardar Pratap Singh.

It is believed that Sardar Pratap Singh and his wife went to Sant Thakur Dayal Singh asking for his blessings as they had no child even 18 years after their marriage. Sant Thakur Dayal Singh a dedicated and elevated soul, was known to be in unison with his Creator. He was, it is said, often been visited by Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his queen Rani Jindan. The rulers of Patiala too went to pay their obeisance to the great saint. He blessed the couple and asked them to go and pray at the place of Baba Buddha Ji and seek his favours.

After the birth of the child, they reverted to the Dera of Sant Thakur Dayal Singh Ji to pay their respects and to express their gratitude. They requested the saint to name the child and the saint urged them to name the child after Baba Buddha Ji. The parents again brought their child to Sant Thakur Dayal Singh when it was about 10 years old. The great saint entrusted the child to the care of Sant Baba Dharam Singh Ji 'Samadhi Wale' who accepted him as a disciple. After extensive education in theology, Sant Dharam Singh invited him and initiated him into the Nirmal Sect and made him his disciple.

This is how this great disciple of Sant Dharam Singh became famous as Mahant Buddha Singh who after imbibing the teachings of Guru Nanak travelled to Kashi to acquire proficiency in Sanskrit and to acquaint himself with the ancient religious literature. Baba Buddha Singh Ji, besides being an erudite scholar, was a great orator, with

complete understanding of human psychology. He was soft-spoken and an efficient administrator. Because of these attributes, he was appointed Secretary of *Panchayati Nirmal Akhara*. He carried out his duties so well that he was made the President of *Ramah*, the wing of Nirmal Sect comprising holymen who were on the move all the time, expounding to the lay people the teachings of the *Gurus*. During this period, he undertook extensive tours of Panjab, U.P. and Sindh (then part of undivided India), to spread the message of Guru Nanak. The people of Sindh province (called Sindhis) who had great faith in Guru Nanak, responded to him in large numbers and took to the *Sikh* way of life. They learnt *Gurbani* and *Kirtan*. True to the maxim "*Har Ji Vase Sadh Ki Rasna*", where ever and when ever he blessed some one, his blessings bore fruit and the individuals achieved and attained all that they asked for. Many a patient, declared hopeless by doctors, got rid of their ailments.

Many who had lost all hope were blessed with children and are till this day attached to Nirmal Ashram. Going round the country, he preached in the Name of the Lord and the people enjoyed the bliss of the "*Naam*". Through him the miseries of many were put to an end and innumerable persons enjoyed worldly and heavenly bounty.

As time went on, a thought occurred to the holy man that in Rishikesh there was no place of worship to spread the

message of Guru Nanak. He decided to have a place where, besides spreading His message, sadhus and holymen will be looked after, their comfort ensured and their needs well fulfilled. There would be shelter, residential accommodation, to accommodate pilgrims. Soon people started coming and staying here. Most among them were the followers of Guru Nanak from Sindh who started visiting the Ashram regularly and in large numbers.

Mahant Baba Buddha Singh Ji, the great visionary that he was, foresaw the dissemination of His Name and decided to spread the message of Guru Nanak to far off places. For this purpose, he bought a plot of land in Kankhal near *Nirmal Virakt Kutia* and had a garden laid there, now known as Nirmal Bagh. He also had some rooms ready there for stay of pilgrims. Thereafter, he bought land and built an Ashram at Kashi (Varanasi) where students who go there to learn Sanskrit can stay and pursue their studies in a tradition introduced by the Tenth Master. He named it Sangat Gyan Gufa. Sant Bharat Singh Ji, after completing his studies, looked after the *Gufa* before he came to Kankhal. The *prakash* of *Guru Granth Sahib* takes place there every day. There is, in addition, an Ashram at Mussoorie which, too, was established by Mahant Baba Buddha Singh Ji.

Mahant Buddha Singh Ji blessed those who came to him and they became prosperous in life. Many who came in his contact acquired knowledge of the eternal *Brahm Gyan*. They

attained spiritual fulfilment after having overcome the cycle of birth and death, attained salvation and imparted the Knowledge Eternal to those who chose to follow the Path.

The foremost amongst his many disciples was the most revered *Virakt Shiromani* Sant Baba Nikka Singh Ji Maharaj who had attained 'knowledge perfect', had renounced all the wordly comforts and enjoyed the life of perfect bliss. Most prominent among others were Sant Atma Singh Ji who succeeded Mahant Baba Buddha Singh Ji as Mahant, great Saint Jaimal Singh Ji *Avdhoot*, Sant Maan Singh Ji, Sant Giani Balwant Singh Ji and Sant Arjun Singh Ji *Bhikshu Khat Shastri*. Such was the fame that spread all around and great luminaries like Bhai Kahan Singh of Nabha, Bhai Veer Singh, the great mystic poet, and Bhai Sahib Bhai Arjan Singh of Bagarian would often come to meet him, putting across their views. Mahant Buddha Singh Ji was a gifted speaker. His way of putting across his views was so effective that even men of average understanding or intelligence thoroughly understood what he preached and enjoyed a state of ecstasy while listening to his discourses.

Once in 1923, he visited Hyderabad (Sindh – now in Pakistan) on the request of the Sindhi Sangat. People felt blessed by his presence. Elaborate arrangements were made for his stay and discourses at Kalyan Mandir.

At the congregation, he started explaining the ‘*Ashtapadi*’ in Raag Maajh and continued doing so for 24 days . This *Ashtapadi* composed by Sri Guru Arjun Dev Ji Maharaj appears on Page 131 of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. It points out the characteristics of ‘*gurmukh*’ and ‘*manmukh*’. The elaboration by Mahant Buddha Singh Ji makes clear that in order to live a successful life at the spiritual plane it is essential to become a *Gurmukh* and equally important to come out of the orbit that a ‘*manmukh*’ weaves around himself. The state of renunciation of the meaningless egoistic state by a *gurmukh* is very important. This can be achieved only with the grace of the *Guru*. All other processes of self-redemption or elevation come after this state. The perfect *Guru* puts it beautifully why it is essential for a ‘*gurmukh*’ to do so.

The *manmukh* has to pass through so many hellish curves, whereas a *gurmukh* sails smoothly through his life.

While the lectures were delivered for twenty-four days and Baba Buddha Singh Ji was explaining in a lucid manner, the blessed Sindhi devotees made exhaustive notes which were later published in the form of a book that became so popular among the Sindhis that it was re-printed five times.

This great compilation helped the Sindhi Sikhs find the true path of life. It enabled them to lead a life that was perfected and blessed by our *Gurus*.

Time went on and with it Baba Buddha Singh Ji felt the strain of old age. So on an appointed day he installed Sant Atma Singh Ji as the Mahant and gave him all the responsibility to continue the great task he had initiated. Thus this great and exalted soul, after having shown the path of religion and righteousness to many and having divened many of chronic ailments and after having blessed many with gifts most valuable, departed from this world on September 30, 1937. In his sacred memory ever since, the day is commemorated at Kankhal every year and attended by thousands of devotees. After the conclusion of thirty-one Akhand paths of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, there are religious discourses by the learned.

Mahant Atma Singh Ji discharged all responsibilities of the ashram very successfully. He always took all his colleagues into confidence. During his time, great progress was made by the Ashram. The Sindhi Sangat saw in him the image of Mahant Baba Buddha Singh Ji . After the partition of the country, he would visit the Sindhi Sangat every year, where ever they were and whensoever he was requested to come. Many rooms were added to the Ashram. But a great precedent that he set in the year 1970 was Free Community Kitchen (morning meal) for those *Sadhus* and *Sanyasis* and others who were not so fortunate to afford it. Many poor people not so well off besides *Sadhu* and *Sanyasis* have been looked after regularly. He served the great cause for almost thirtyseven years and then with the concurrence of

Sant Baba Nikka Singh Ji Maharaj, he appointed his close disciple Sant Narain Singh Ji as his successor. He exhorted the new Mahant to run the affairs of the Ashram with the advice and under the guidance of *Virakt Maharaj*. He breathed his last on August 9, 1973.

Mahant Narain Singh Ji very efficiently managed the affairs of the Ashram under the guidance of *Virakt Maharaj* who was considered his mentor. He not only continued the free morning meal but got the foundation stone of a three-storey building laid which was completed within a short time. For the stay of devotees, especially from Sindh, there were now enough rooms. Mahant Narain Singh Ji was bestowed with a sweet temperament, kind heart and winsome speech. As he felt that his health was failing him, he requested *Virakt Maharaj* to find some one to look after the Ashram. *Virakt Maharaj*, acceding to his request, chose his chief disciple Ram Singh Ji, who had most selflessly served the cause dear to his preceptor, as successor to Mahant Narain Singh Ji. Baba Ram Singh Ji, a kind hearted soul, while serving Punjab & Sind Bank, had set himself free of all worldly ties. He was appointed as the new Mahant of the Ashram. Mahant Narain Singh Ji, after serving the Lord for nine years as Mahant, passed away in 1982.

Sant Baba Nikka Singh Ji Maharaj was so pleased with the self-effacing services of Mahant Ram Singh Ji that he blessed him immensely and asked Sant Jodh Singh Ji and

Chhotu Baba Ji to assist him in running the affairs of the Ashram smoothly and efficiently.

So far, the devotees from Sindh had formed the main constituent of the *sangat*, but from now onwards with the grace of Sant Baba Nikka Singh Ji Maharaj, thousands of devotees from Panjab, Haryana and Delhi started enjoying the blessings of the great souls at Nirmal Ashram. Plans and preparations, therefore, started to accommodate the ever increasing number of devotees.

After the demise of Pujya Sant Baba Nikka Singh Ji Maharaj on July 22, 1983, all the places in Panjab & Haryana which had the honour of offering services and accomodation to the pious soul on his spiritual tours have been turned into full fledged branches of Nirmal Ashram. In Karnal the *Kutia* has assumed the proportions of a full-fledged Ashram.

When Mahant Baba Ram Singh Ji Maharaj became head of the Nirmal Ashram, his associates Sant Baba Jodh Singh Ji and Chhotu Maharaj ji got completely involved in the service of the great cause. The development work progressed at great pace. At Nirmal Ashram, Kankhal the *Gaoshala* (dairy farm) was completely modernized. Many more cows of superior breed were added. Presently milk is served at Kankhal and Rishikesh Ashrams to thousands of devotees. *Chhetar* is offered to the saints and poor people in the morning. *Guru ka langar* goes on round the clock for the devotees.

The Ashram at Kankhal, since the times of *Virakt Maharaj ji* is being looked after by Pandit Mahesh Chand Ji who had asked for the boon of service from *Virakt Maharaj Ji*. After the demise of Sant Chaman Lal ji, Pandit ji has been managing the Ashram with the assistance of Sant Bharat Singh.

‘Service’ to mankind is going on in a big way. About 40 masons and labourers have been working for the last so many years for the development works at Kankhal and at Nirmal Ashram Hospital. On the one hand, the construction work goes apace, and on the other hand the *Langar* (community kitchen) is served. This reminds us of what Faqir Bulleh Shah had said :

“Along with construction activities goes on ceaselessly the preparation of food,

“Seeing this, God is pleased, and so is Bullha.”

All this possible only with the blessings of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji Maharaj and the cooperation of the *sangat*. No one is asked to donate, for it is believed that Guru Nanak, in whose Name every thing is done, will himself see every thing through. We will, under all circumstances, bow before the will of our Master.

The great elevated soul Mahant Baba Ram Singh ji Maharaj, wished that Nirmal Updesh be brought out in the form of a book so that Hindi and Panjabi knowing people may benefit.

The book has been completed in Hindi and Panjabi with active help of Bhai Mool Chand Ji Sindhi who has proficiency in these languages, besides Sindhi.

It is hoped all those who believe in God and the *Guru* will find it spiritually uplifting.

Nirmal Ashram
Rishikesh
10 January, 1994

In the Service of the *Sangat*
Nirbhinder Singh
(*Sarpanch*)

ABOUT THE ENGLISH EDITION

Great deeds are performed by great souls !

If you wish to remain in service of God, serve mankind.

With the blessings of His Holiness Mahant Baba Ram Singh Ji Maharaj, the Nirmal Ashram Hospital was established in the year 1990. It proved to be a big boon for the people of this area, especially for those coming from the upper regions of Uttaranchal state. Then came the Mobile Hospital, taking medical help to the door of the sick and the poor, to treat and to administer medicine.

Another big need of the people of Rishikesh and surrounding areas was fulfilled when the Nirmal Ashram Deepmala Pagarani Public School was founded in 1997. This English medium, day-cum-residential senior secondary school for boys and girls, has an excellent campus where more than a thousand children are receiving quality education.

The centenary celebrations of the Nirmal Ashram on September 21, 22 and 23, 2003 was a historic event for devotees drawn from all over the country. The *nagar kirtan* taken out to mark the occasion was something memorable.

People in large numbers turned up to show their reverence for Mahant Baba Ram Singh Ji Maharaj. How people revere the Baba was amply evident from the turn out.

Then came the finest moment.

Accompanied by saints and the *sangat*, His Holiness Baba Ram Singh Ji Maharaj – an embodiment of love and compassion for humanity – laid the foundation stone of Nirmal Ashram Gyan Daan Academy at Khairi Kalan on Sep 21, 2003.

This may perhaps be the only school of its kind where children coming from economically weaker sections of society will receive not only free education – imparted on public school lines – but they will also get books and stationery, uniforms, midday meals, medical help and transport facility without any charges whatsoever.

The inauguration of the Academy will be on April 2, 2004.

Initially there will be classes LKG, UKG, I and II (more than 250 students have already been registered).

It is said that God through His grace gets the work, of those dear to Him, accomplished without any hassles. God has chosen Mahant Baba Ram Singh Ji Maharaj to serve His children. The Baba through his message has brought peace & tranquility in the lives of many who needed it most.

In this great and noble task, he has the inflexible support and to operation of Sant Baba Jodh Singh Ji Maharaj who, with his outstanding organizing capability and enlightened approach, has been successfully getting various projects, undertaken by the Ashram, completed.

The writer of these lines felt blessed when asked to translate the *Nirmal Updesh* into English. It is because of His grace and tremendous kindness of His Holiness that the job has been completed.

But for the benign guidance of Sant Baba Jodh Singh Ji Maharaj this task could not have been accomplished.

Conveying faithfully the thoughts and expressions of Mahant Buddha Singh Ji Maharaj – an exalted soul – in another language is a formidable task. The readers' indulgence is sought if certain expressions in translation are not upto their expectations.

Rishikesh
March, 2004

Waryam Singh
(*Chairman NDS*)

IK ONKAR SATGUR PRASAD II

Majh Mahalla 5

Kaun su mukta kaun su jugta II
 Kaun su Giani kaun su bakta II
 Kaun su girhi kaun udasi kaun su keemat paye jeeo II1II
 Kin bidh badha kin bidh chhoota II
 Kin bidh aawan jawan toota II
 Kaun karam kaun nehkarama kaun su kahe kahae jeeo II2II
 Kaun su sukhiya kaun su dukhiya II
 Kaun su sanmukh kaun venukhiya
 Kin bidh miliye kin bidh bichhure
 Eh bidh kaun pargataye jeeo II3II
 Kaun su akhar jit dhavat rehta II
 Kaun updes jit dukh sukh sam sehta II
 Kaun su kaal jit parbraham dhiaye
 Kin bidh kirtan gaye jeeo II4II
 Gurmukh mukta Gurmukh jugta II
 Gurmukh giani Gurmukh bakta II
 Dhan girhi udasi Gurmukh
 Gurmukh keemat paye jeeo II5II
 Haume baadha Gurmukh chhoota II
 Gurmukh aawan jawan toota II
 Gurmukh karam Gurmukh nehkarma

Gurmukh kare su subhaye jeeo II6II
 Gurmukh sukhiya Manmukh dukhiya II
 Gurmukh sanmukh Manmukh vemukhiya II
 Gurmukh miliye Manmukh vichhure
 Gurmukh bidh pargataye jeeo II7II
 Gurmukh akhar jit dhavat rehta II
 Gurmukh updes dukh sukh sam sehta II
 Gurmukh chaal jit paarbraham dhiyae
 Gurmukh kirtan gaye jeeo II8II
 Sagli bant banayi aape II
 Aape kare karaye thape II
 Iks te hoyo ananta Nanak ekas mahen samaye jeeo II9II2II36II

In the first four couplets of this *Ashtpadi*, *Guru Arjan Dev Ji Maharaj* has listed 24 questions for a *Sikh* and the last five couplets contain the solutions (answers).

Q 1. *Kaun su mukta*. Who has attained salvation (who is free) ?

Answer : *Gurmukh Mukta* - *Gurmukh* stands liberated i.e. he is free from all pain and has attained bliss It has often been observed that all people belonging to different religions like Hindus, Muslims, Jews, Parsis and all others Europeans professing different religions crave for this bliss. But they find themselves deflected from the path that leads to the attainment of bliss.

Now the question arises as to what is the true path by following which one is assured of freedom from pain. The answer is : This freedom from pain can be attained only by becoming a *Gurmukh*. i.e. by surrendering *Self* before the will of the Master.

Guru Arjan Dev Ji makes it clear as it has been said in the Ramayana that the impossible may be made possible like the Sun may rise in the West instead of East but the only way to attain salvation (freedom from pain) is by remembering Him and by reciting His Name (*Naam*). One may be blessed with the freedom from pain by becoming a *Gurmukh* and by reciting His Name. Only by becoming a *Gurmukh* one can hope to enjoy His blessings and recite His Name. Have there been such persons whose example can be cited ?

Vedas, Shastras and *Puranas* are full of examples of *Gurmukhs* who attained such freedom. Only three examples out of many are given here:

Illustration : Guru Angad Dev Ji set the example of a perfect *Gurmukh*.

Baba Buddha Ji has enjoyed the position of a true *Gurmukh* — the perfect disciple of the *Guru*. He, at one stage, felt that *Guru* Angad was receiving more attention of the *Guru* than him. Guru Nanak, who knew and understood all, put the two to a test.

Guru Nanak asked Baba Buddha to step out of the room one night and report how much night was left. He came out and told the *Guru* very respectfully that 1½ parts of the night were left. The *Guru* said, “No, one half of night is still to pass. Go out and observe carefully.” Baba Buddha Ji did the same and repeated the statement he had made earlier.

Then the *Guru* asked Bhai Lehna Ji to observe the same. He came out and after observing what His Master had told him to do said with folded hands in all humility and with tears in his eyes, “Master, Thou knowest all. It is only that part of night thou wished and willed has passed. How much is left no one knows better than thee, my Master.”

Guru Nanak by this example cleared the doubt that had arisen in Baba Buddha Ji’s mind. Guru Angad proved that he was a true *Gurmukh* as he had completely surrendered himself to the will of his Master as it is by surrendering yourself that you attain what otherwise is not possible to do. Only with the grace of true *Guru* one imbibes in life *Guru*’s teachings so as to enjoy freedom from pain which is caused by ego

And the *Guru*, so graciously, lets his disciple become a part of His (*Guru*’s) being and shows him the path to salvation or true freedom.

Illustration : Sri Guru Ram Das Ji Maharaj and Bhai Ramu were sons-in-law of the third *Guru*, Sri Guru Amar

Das Ji Maharaj. Who, out of the two, will be chosen as the next *Guru* by the third Master, many amongst the followers wondered. The *Guru* set a test and Guru Ram Das Ji, who was a perfect disciple and *Gurmukh*, proved, beyond any doubt, that it was he who alone deserved the honour.

Once Guru Amar Das Ji Maharaj took both his sons-in-law to a particular spot and desired each of them to make a platform. He drew the outlines for both of them. Next day he came to inspect the platform built by Bhai Ramu and remarked that he did not like the way it had been built and that it be demolished. Bhai Ramu was very unhappy as he tried to assert that the platform was fine. After examining the platform built by Baba Jetha Ji (Guru Ram Das Ji) the *Guru* made the same remark. Baba Jetha Ji, in all humility submitted that he had not done the job as his *Guru* had desired and would be too happy to do it again.

Guru Amar Das Ji got the platforms demolished three times. This left Bhai Ramu very unhappy and thought that as in old age one becomes senile the *Guru* could not make a correct judgment. Where as Guru Ram Das Ji, who had completely surrendered himself to the will of *the Guru*, in total obedience and with all devotion listened to and did what his *Guru* wanted him to do. Thus it was proved that Guru Ram Das Ji Maharaj was a *Gurmukh* who had completely identified himself with his *Guru* whereas Bhai Ramu remained what he was.

Illustration : During the time of Guru Arjan Dev Ji Maharaj, a man would daily have his meals in *Langar*, the community kitchen, but would not perform any *seva*. When the devotees pointed this out to him he would tell them that he would do only what the *Guru* told him and was not bothered about what the *Sikhs* said. When it went on for a long time, the devotees reported the matter to the *Guru*.

One day *Guru Arjan Dev Ji* called the man and asked him if he was prepared to do what the *Guru* told him. The man readily replied in the affirmative and asserted that he would not listen to others (*sangat*). Then the *Guru* told him to go to the nearby forest, collect firewood, raise a funeral pyre and after lighting it jump into it. The so called *Sikh*, after listening respectfully to the *Guru*, left the scene but again and again looked back and wished that some how there would be a change in what the *Guru* had ordained and was quite disappointed when it did not happen.

He, accordingly, did raise a pyre, went round it reluctantly, and was not at all mentally prepared to submit to the will of his *Guru*.

At that very moment there appeared a man, who having committed a theft at the king's palace, had reached the forest with the loot to evade arrest. After the two spoke about their

ordeals the so called thief who had full faith in the *Guru* offered to exchange the booty with what the other had got from the *Guru* and jumped into fire putting an end to his life.

The so called *Sikh* was too happy to enter into the deal and came in possession of all the expensive goods in exchange for death which the so called ‘thief’ readily embraced. Meanwhile, the king’s men who had reached the scene looking for the thief arrested the ‘*Sikh*’ who was found in possession of the goods. When produced before the king, he confessed the wrong he had done to his *Guru*. The king, furious to learn of the ‘crime’ he had committed, condemned him to death. Thus the so called *Sikh* who could not submit to the will of his *Guru* died an ignoble death whereas the man who was branded a thief but had faith in his *Guru* ended his life in grace and bliss that his *Guru* bestowed on him.

Q 2 *Kaun su jugta* – Who is the one in unison with God (Pragmatic) ?

Answer : *Gurmukh jugta* – It is the *Gurmukh* – one who learns to obey his *Guru*, one who has surrendered to the will of his *Guru*. There has to be a perfection of the system that ensures harmony – both within and without. In our dealings with others and in all matters spiritual and otherwise, there has to be a governing force which is as pragmatic and effective as Lord Krishna has said in the seventeenth *Shloka* of the first chapter of *Srimad Bhagwad Gita*.

Pragmatic application of the system in our behaviour as well as in our eating habits brings us happiness, solace and peace. Movement, sleep and remaining awake in accordance with a system, that is tried and faultless, brings us happiness and put to an end man’s miseries. Thus a man, who, while leading a worldly life, keeps himself free of impurities, like a lotus (flowering in mud), is a *Gurmukh*. He is always aware of what his *Guru* wants him to do.

Both Janak and Vasishtha, while performing the duties of a king and a priest respectively, never lost sight of objectivity and detachment. Without being a *Gurmukh* one can not aspire to attain such a state. This is illustrated by the following examples :

Illustration : A king who ruled over his kingdom, near Prayagraj, had mastered the art of governance and was a learned man. He was married to Madalsa who was a highly accomplished lady and equally proficient. She excelled her husband in matters spiritual. One day she requested her husband in all humility that she could mother his children on one condition i.e. if he would allow her to bring up every child the way she liked. The king, a wise man, thought that the queen’s request could be accepted as he thought it to be just and proper.

She made sure that the worldly matters did not affect the mental make-up of her son . She composed a lullaby that she would always repeat to her son :

“Your form is pure and without any fault. You are free of world’s illusion (*Maya*). One dreams of this world and the slumber of lust causes you pain. There you give it up – this illusion.” Queen Madalsa observed : “Ye, my son, remember always what I tell you is nothing but the truth.”

She would regularly repeat these words to her son. When he was five she gave him a begging bowl and left him with a holy man in the forest. There the child meditated on the *Name* of the Lord and acquired the knowledge of *Vedas* and attained the wisdom that is complete and perfect.

Seven sons were born to her and she did the same in each case, repeating the same words to every child and leaving each of them with the holy man in the forest and the boys acquired the true wisdom and meditated on God’s Name. The king let her do that. As the time went on the king, who grew old, one day told Madalsa that it was important, and time for him, to appoint his successor. So their next son shall have to be trained to be a king . The queen agreed and asked the king to devise a way which may solve their problem without infringing upon the pledge.

She initiated their eighth son in to the realm of politics but wrote a *mantra* on a piece of paper, put it in a small golden amulet and tied it around her son’s arm and said, “My son, open and read it when you are confronted with a difficult situation. And your troubles will be over.”

When this boy, whose name was Alerk, grew old enough to succeed his father the old couple retired to the forest. The queen met her sons there and reminded them of the promise and the instructions she had given them. She asked them to look after their youngest brother, the new king, and to see that spiritually in no way he lagged behind them.

One day, after the old king and Madalsa had passed away, the brothers decided to go to their youngest brother, in deference to their mother’s wishes, to see if all was well with him.

They said to him, “ No doubt you have learnt the art to rule and are capable of doing a good job as a ruler, but as your older brothers we feel that the eldest brother should be the king . In case you do not agree then the kingdom be divided in to eight equal parts and one part each should be controlled by each one of us.”

The young king was not happy to hear this but did not immediately say ‘no’ to the proposal. He told them that he would consider the matter and apprise them of his decision the next morning. He thought he had been, so far, working hard to rule over the kingdom without anyone’s help and came to the conclusion that his brothers were not being just in asking for a share.

Next morning, he told his brothers that they had no right to ask for a share and that they should leave his kingdom. In case they did not do so they would be forcibly pushed out.

The brothers were all wise men and understood that they had to help the youngest one out of the unfortunate situation in which he had landed himself. True to the value of the education their mother had given them (and especially their youngest brother) they formulated a plan. They contacted the king of the neighbouring kingdom, took him into confidence and asked him to attack their brother's kingdom, which he accordingly did. In the fierce battle that ensued there were heavy losses on both the sides. The youngest brother realized that he was fighting a losing battle and that he could lose his kingdom as well as his life if the battle continued. He thought of the paper his mother had given him and had asked him to read the contents for guidance. He was faced with a real crisis so he opened the amulet and took out the paper.

It read : “The company of good and holy men is the greatest remedy for ending your miseries whereas the company of evil beings, lured by worldly goods, is like being stung by a poisonous snake. So in order to put an end to all your troubles free yourself of the allurements and think positively, and of the good of all.”

Thus he realized his mistake and repented over the kind of treatment he had meted out to his brothers .

It became clear to him that his brothers who wished him well had been insulted and ill-treated by him. In order to undo the wrong he had done he decided to go to them before the day dawned and apologize to them for the disrespect he

had shown them. He expressed sincere regrets and asked his brothers to forgive him and save him from the miseries of the world and put him on the right path that promises men a good and happy life based on goodness and justice. The brothers, in order to bring him to the right path, impressed upon him the value and importance of goodness and righteous conduct, took him along to the forest after making his trusted minister responsible for the day-to-day administration of his kingdom. There he was made to learn the value of the knowledge eternal. The brothers enlightened him regarding right conduct.

Man acquires absolute good and righteous conduct only after he has gained true knowledge and wisdom which help man in life.

After he learnt to divest himself of the false sense of attachment he was asked to return to his kingdom and rule as a just ruler — which he did .

With the passage of time he grew so objective, just and detached that he became known as *Nirmohi*— one without any lust for power and is completely detached. He renounced all lust, got completely detached of worldly goods and affairs and felt so completely and perfectly attached to the Truth and Justice that he became known as king *Nirmohi* - with no lust and attachment.

King *Nirmohi* had only one son, who had been brought up with other members of the family and his subjects as one

who was absolutely free of attachment. The king had taught him to seek and be in the company of holy men and to listen to their discourses. The prince one day went out in to the forest and reached the hut of a *Rishi* whose name was Harisat. He sought the *Rishi*'s blessings and on being asked told him that he was son of King Nirmohi. On hearing this the *Rishi* remarked that a king could never be detached and free of lust, and hence the name Nirmohi had no significance.

The prince, in all humility, told the *Rishi* that his father was truly *Nirmohi* and if the holy man thought proper he could put his father to test.

The *Rishi* left his place to verify for himself if what the prince said was true. Reaching the palace the *Rishi* was ushered in by the guards as the king's standing orders were not to stop a holy man from entering the palace. The *Rishi* met the maid servant and told her that he had very bad news for her. The prince had been killed by a tiger and his dead body lay in the forest. He had expected the maid to raise a hue and cry on this but she very calmly said that if it had been thus fated nobody could do anything about it. The *Rishi* was surprised to see her so calm and quiet. Thinking that she was after all a servant who had little love for her master he reached the Queen's (prince's mother's) chamber and found the mother perfectly composed on hearing that her son was dead. The *Rishi* also found the prince's wife unruffled and not at all perturbed. The king betrayed no grief or emotion when told

about his son's death. He remarked that, like any other traveller, he had, after a night's rest (living his life), also left for his destination. He felt sorry for the *Rishi* that he had to interrupt his prayers to come to him. Thus the *Rishi* became convinced that true to his name, the king was *Nirmohi* and so were the members of his family and even the people of his kingdom.

Thus blessing the king, his family, country and his subjects, *Rishi* Harisat returned to his hut where the prince waited for him. The *Rishi* thought that it was time he could give the prince a test too. He announced to the prince that while he was in the kingdom he learnt that his country had been attacked by the enemy. His father the king, was taken prisoner and then murdered. His mother had put an end to her life by jumping into the burning pyre of his father, and other members of his family had lost their lives. The whole country stood plundered. The prince showed absolutely no sign of emotion or grief. He said, "In accordance with the will of God all have to depart from the scene. It is like walking with fellow travellers, whether you walk together for one mile or fifty miles. It is meaningless to hope for perpetual happiness, for there is nothing permanent in the system that prevails and operates with His will."

The prince said that this brief life was like a dream and one wasted his life in the hope of a brief moment of enjoyment that is not real. "What for should I mourn when I know that

everyone leaves his body, home, wealth, family and kingdom? This will be like a woman mourning for a child that she cannot bear. In this transient world, which is like hell, man alternates between life and death,” the prince added.

Hearing this, the *Rishi* went in to a state of ecstasy, embraced the prince and said that he and his family were blessed to be so detached and free of false ties existing in this world. He prayed to God and hoped that the prince and his family would always enjoy this eternal bliss and that God will always be with them.

Gurmukhs are those who always obey Him and surrender themselves completely to their *Guru*'s will, always keep themselves detached, are free from worldly bonds. They free themselves of worldly miseries and spend their time in bliss. They make their lives a success and attain salvation.

This is '*Gurmukh Jugta*' i.e. a person who is in unison with God.

Q 3 Kaun su Giani – Who is a Giani ? Who has the knowledge divine ?

Answer *Gurmukh Giani* – It is the *Gurmukh* who is a *Giani*.

One who has full faith in his *Guru* and is prepared to surrender himself to the will and wisdom of the *Guru* is a *Giani*.

Only *Gurmukh* is *Giani*. In Sanskrit the word '*Gian*' ('*Jñan*') means 'to know'. One who has come to know and to realize as to what is true and what is not true has acquired the knowledge supreme and this may also be termed as wisdom eternal.

Here it may be made clear that our *Gurus* used this term for *Brahm Giani*. Here Guru Arjan Dev Ji Maharaj makes it clear that only a *Gurmukh* can be a *Brahm Giani*- one who has the knowledge supreme and wisdom eternal.

No one can become a *Brahm Giani* without being a *Gurmukh*. Here *Guru Ji* defines a *Brahm Giani*. The characteristics of a *Brahm Giani* are clearly spelt by the Fifth Master in the eighth Ashtapadi of Sukhmani Sahib. It is made clear that one who has truth at heart and utters only what is true and sees not (recognizes not) anyone except the one Supreme Being is *Brahm Giani*. Guru Teg Bahadur Ji Maharaj also defines *Brahm Giani* as one who never wavers whether he is in distress or otherwise and makes no distinction between pain and pleasure or between friend and foe. He fears none, neither does he cause fear to anyone. Guru Teg Bahadur Ji says only such a person can be called a *Giani*.

An example is given below.

There lived a holy man in an orchard. One day some urchins conspired to worry him. They threw pebbles at him. He only ignored them and was as calm and tranquil as one

can ever be. Then a small rock that a boy threw at him caused grievous injury. A good man passing by, found the holy man bleeding profusely. He got him treated by a physician and served him a cup of milk. Meanwhile, the ruler of that state, on learning about the incident, reached the scene and after paying obeisance, asked the holy man about the person who had inflicted the injury. The holy man said nothing and remained calm and unperturbed. The ruler very respectfully submitted that it was his duty to bring the culprit to book and sought the holy man's help in running the administration smoothly and efficiently by letting him punish the offender and by rewarding the one who had looked after the holy man. This would help him as well as his people.

The holy man said that the one who had offered him milk to drink had also thrown stone at him. Then the king asked about the one who had brought him milk. The holy man replied : the one who hit me.

Thus making it clear that he made no distinction between his friend and foe.

The king got the message, requested the holy man to bless him and his subjects so that they might live in peace and harmony. The holy man advised the king to fix a day every year when they got together, congregate and sing praise of Lord Almighty. Thus they would be free from rancour and would live in peace. People thereafter led good and pious lives.

This is the outlook of an enlightened man, one who has acquired knowledge supreme and wisdom eternal. Only such a person can treat all alike – those who cause injury and those who nurse and serve the people

Q 4 *Kaun su bakta* –Who is the teacher / preacher?

Answer : *Gurmukh bakta* – Only *Gurmukh* can instruct.

At what time and which kind of speech is most effective one comes to know only by being a *Gurmukh* .

Speech is of four kinds.

1. ***Para - ajapa Jaap*** : Where there is subtle perception. No one should know that the person is mediating
2. ***Pashyanti*** : Where one can come to know that the person is reciting a prayer/reading.
3. ***Madhyama*** : Your recitations come up to your lips, not out of them.
4. ***Baikhri*** : Where definite sound is pronounced. *Baikhri* is explained in the following manner.

This category of speech has the same effect as the warning to the blind by one who can see: Beware ! there is a ditch. Don't go further. A blind person will be saved by this kind of speech. In the forest a man loses his way. By calling him loudly, he reaches the spot from where he was called. This is called *Baikhri* speech .In *Jap Ji Sahib*, Guru Nanak says –

Karam khand ki baani jor ॥

Tithai hor na koi hor ॥

This means : Those saints and holy men who enjoy His grace have a forceful and effective speech. No one can stop this kind of speech. The following example is given in the *Suraj Prakash*.

Illustration : During the time of the Fifth Master, Guru Arjan Dev Ji Maharaj, there lived a man in Lahore whose name was Buddha Shah. He decided to go into the business of baking bricks. Before setting up a kiln he went to Amritsar to seek the *Guru's* blessings.

The *Guru* blessed him and said : Bhai Buddha you will have your kilns working as you desire but after they are ready you shall organize a feast where the *Sikhs* of the *Guru* shall be entertained. After the work was completed he did what he had been told by the *Guru* .

Buddha Shah fed all those who came to his place. After every one had left there came a *Sikh* whose name was Lakhu. Bhai Lakhu wished to have a meal. Buddha Shah very curtly told him that he could not be served as the feast was over and nothing was there to be served. Bhai Lakhu pleaded that he was really very hungry and needed to be served. Buddha got worked up, ignored him completely and turned the other way. Bhai Lakhu then remarked, “ If my hunger is not satisfied your kilns will not bake proper bricks.” Buddha Shah did not

pay much attention to this as he knew that he had been blessed by the *Guru* himself. So, he thought, what Lakhu said would not make any difference, for *the Guru's* word was the last word and could not be contradicted by a *Sikh*.

When the bricks were taken out of the kilns, Buddha Shah was shocked and surprised to see that the bricks were unbaked. He was very distressed to see it and went to Guru Arjan Dev Ji Maharaj. The *Guru* told him that he had sent away a disappointed *Gurmukh* from his house. It was beyond him, the *Guru* exclaimed, to undo what Bhai Lakhu had said. The *Guru* recited a couplet which said : “The devotee can free some one I have bound, but I can not pardon a man who has been punished by a true devotee. If my devotee binds me by his love and devotion then even I become helpless.”

On hearing this Buddha Shah repented and prayed to the *Guru* - who is always kind - to forgive him, for he would be ruined if he were not forgiven. The *Guru* then ordained that the product of his kilns would stay unbaked as Bhai Lakhu had said but they would be sold at the same rates as the bricks which are properly baked.

And so did it transpire.

That year, because of heavy rains, the fort of the ruler of Lahore collapsed and the demand for bricks went up and Buddha Shah got the same price for his bricks as the baked

ones. Thus what the *Gurmukh* uttered could not be altered. Buddha Shah was also pulled out of distress without changing the devotee's statement.

Such is the effect of what *Gurmukh* utters !

Illustration : A king, while he went out hunting, was chasing a deer. When he passed the hut of a blind man in the forest, the king stopped and asked the blind man very respectfully and politely: "Ye, Goodman, have you heard the sound of a running deer?" The old man said, "Yes an old deer has gone into the forest."

After some time the king's minister reached the spot and said, "Hey, respected blind man ! Did a horse rider pass this way?"

Hearing this, the blind man said, "Yes the king has gone this way only a little time ago."

After some time, a junior official of the king stopped there and asked the man quite impolitely if there had passed some horse riders.

The blind man said, "Yes, ye *kotwal*, the king and the minister have both gone in this direction." After sometime when the three met in the forest, the king said that he was really surprised as to how the man who was blind could say that I was a king and that he knew the deer being chased was an old one and had gone in the particular direction. After

hearing the king, the minister and *kotwal* also narrated what they had experienced.

The three decided to return to the spot together and asked the hermit, "Sir, how could you tell about the position of each one of us?" The old man said he could make from the manner in which each one of them spoke and addressed him as to who he was. "Everyone speaks according to his background. A well-groomed person brought up like a prince talks with humility. The king's speech was pleasing. So I knew that it was only a prince who would speak so well." When the king asked him as to how he could say that that was an old deer, the man said, "A young deer goes jumping, whereas in this case I could make out from the sound of the deer's bones that it was an old deer."

The minister was not as polite as the king was, so the blind man came to the conclusion that this could be a minister. And often it is the minister who follows the king. The way the *kotwal* spoke indicated that it would be only a servant of the king who is used to this kind of speech.

There is a *Shloka* which says : "No one in the world is unworthy or useless. It is only when he meets the right man that the course of a man's life is changed. Similarly most of the herbs that grow in the forest are not useless but it is only the right man who can identify a herb and tell others what it's worth.

Similarly, every 'word' has a meaning. The order in which the letters of a word are arranged is of the greatest significance. Letters, rightly and properly arranged, lend most powerful, meaningful and forceful import to a word. Thus is the effect of speech. Just as Lord Krishna in the seventeenth chapter of *Srimad Bhagwat Gita* says, "O Arjun, never utter the word that makes the listener unhappy. Always speak the truth and utter the words which have a soothing effect on the listeners. Recite and meditate while you are reading a book." A saint has said: "Always speak what is like music soothing to the ear and harms no one. Your beloved (i.e. God) and foe are within you. The delivering of a harsh, unkind and rude speech can set afire a man's being and reduce him to ashes. And the word of a holy man is like the pouring of water, which may bring peace, solace and feelings of bliss to the listener."

According to the Fifth Master such is the speech of a *Gurmukh*.

Q 5 Kaun so girhi - How can a man engaged in worldly pursuits be worthy of our gratitude (Householder) ?

Answer : *Dhann girhi udasi gurmukh* - The man who brings up the family the way it should be brought up, is worthy of earning our thanks. According to ancient Hindu belief there are four stages or *ashrams* in a man's life :

- (i) Celibacy (*Brahmcharya*)
- (ii) Active family life (*Grhasth*)
- (iii) Withdrawal from worldly affairs (*Vaan Prasth*)
- (iv) Renunciation of worldly attachments (*Sanyas*)

The stage when a man is required to bring up his family is known as *Grhasth Ashram*. This stage has been termed as superior to all stages because this stage is the basis of all the other three stages. But this stage is superior to others only if a man leads life as a *Gurmukh*. Only that man of the world is blessed and worthy of gratitude of society if he is a *Gurmukh*.

At every man's house everyday five offences or sins are committed. They are at the time of :

1. grinding of grains,
2. sweeping of floor,
3. drinking water,
4. lighting fire, and
5. thrashing the grains in a pounder.

To atone for these five sins, the *Gurmukh* performs five *Yajnas* :

1. Feeding the monks - holy men - who have renounced the world in search of the Truth.
2. Giving the cow its due share.
3. Putting food in the Fire.

4. Taking out (of your food) the river’s share.
5. Feeding crows and dogs.

Illustration : *Shastras* are full of instances of good and great men of the world. Only three such examples are cited here.

There lived in a forest a great *Rishi* (holy man) by the name of Zajleek. He underwent penance and meditated for such a long time that birds built nests in his hair. He became very vain of himself as he thought that he had done something unique beyond the reach of a man. As he kept magnifying his achievement he had no peace of mind. One day he heard a heavenly voice that there lived in a certain city a businessman by the name of Tuladhar, and if the *Rishi* went to him and sought his help then only he would get peace of mind. Accordingly, he left for the city where Tuladhar lived and reached, in due course, the businessman’s shop where he found Tuladhar, like any ordinary shopkeeper, attending to his work. There arose a doubt in his mind as to how, while he himself was in *Nivritti*, could possibly benefit from the teachings of Tuladhar who lived in *Pravritti*? As the thought crossed his mind, Tuladhar beckoned him, spoke to him very respectfully and after feeding him, squatted at the feet of the *Rishi*. The merchant told him about the turmoil that was there in his mind . The *Rishi* was very impressed by the merchant and asked him how he could know what went through his mind.

Tuladhar said to him, “O ye saint, I have performed no great *Yajna* or religious ceremonies or ritual. I have always followed Truth. I have treated alike all my customers whether it were a child or an old man and I have made no distinction between the rich and the poor. I discharge all my duties faithfully as a man of the world. From my income I take out for charity a certain part as ordained by *Shastras* and spend it on good and religious causes. Despite being busy I pray and meditate as I am supposed to do. If some one ill-treats me, I do not get angry and forgive him. I always try to put an end to others’ miseries and sympathize with them . I worship gods with all devotion and try to serve the poor and guests. I try to imbibe all the qualities that holy men in *Shastras* have spelt out for a householder – ‘*Grhasthi*’. By doing all this and with the grace of God I have got all that I need.”

The *Rishi* attained peace of mind and all his doubts disappeared on hearing this and realizing the fact that Tuladhar was a true *Gurmukh*; he paid obeisance to him.

This is an apt example of a *Gurmukh Grhasthi* who earned *Guru*’s praise and admiration.

Illustration : Sukhdev Swami was a great ‘*Tyagi*’, even then he felt the necessity of being a *Gurmukh*. His father, Ved Vyas, in order to relieve him of egoistic vanity sent him to Raja Janak who was a true *Gurmukh*.

Once when Raja Janak was attending a congregation of holy men the news reached that a terrible fire had broken in the city. All those present there lost no time in deserting the place to help and rescue their dear ones. But Raja Janak kept sitting there, unmindful of what was said because he had understood that all worldly things were a myth and were bound to perish. He had faith only in the immanence of the soul. He believed that his being and all the worldly goods, animate and inanimate (*Chetan and Jarh*) are the same, even his form or part of his being. That is why there was no confusion in his mind about what was true and real and what only appears to exist.

Thus Sukhdev Swami placed all confidence and faith in Raja Janak and accepted him as his *Guru*.

Illustration : A *Santoshi Brahmin* (contented learned man) and his family comprising his wife, son and his son's wife followed the practice of feeding a holy man, before they sat for their own meal. Once while they were on a pilgrimage they got some dry ration. After preparing the meal they divided it into five parts – four for themselves and one for *sadhu or saint* (holy man). While they waited God Himself, as the myth goes, taking the form of an old *Brahmin* appeared there and asked for food. They gave him the fifth part which the old *Brahmin* consumed and asked for more. The Santoshi Brahmin placed his share before him. On seeing this, the

Santoshi Brahmin's wife quietly pushed her plate in front of her husband. Seeing this, their son placed his plate before his mother. When the son's wife observed this, she placed hers in front of her husband.

Mean while, the old *Brahmin* after consuming the second helping, asked for more. He ate up everyone's share leaving nothing for the family.

The Santoshi Brahmin and his family were not at all affected on thus being deprived of food and felt quite happy on having fed an old hungry *Brahmin*.

It is said that God was very pleased with the family as none of them betrayed any annoyance. They were happy even after having gone hungry. Thus they enjoyed God's grace and blessings.

Guru Arjan Dev Ji described such householders, men of the world, worthy of honour and praise.

Q 6 *Kaun udasi* - Who is an Udasi possessing the qualities of a Gurmukh (Renunciation) ?

Answer : *Dhann girhi udasi gurmukh - Gurmukh udasi*, one who denies to himself the comforts that life may offer, is worthy of praise and admiration.

One who is *Gurmukh* and is in control of all his senses and feels completely detached from the world, is considered superior to all others.

The traits of an *Udasi* according to Guru Arjan Dev Ji Maharaj (Ratan Mala) are :

The true *Udasi* – Renouncer – is the one who remains indifferent to all senses.

How does the food taste ? This has no relevance for him. Whether the food is good or bad is immaterial for him. But he must always use the language of truth and love. He should speak in such a manner that he identifies himself with God as His part. Such a great soul only can be described as one indifferent to what he says or tastes .

The person who never uses his limbs to do anything wrong, should have an inward view. He should never lend his ear to anything that speaks ill of others .

Thus a man who acts in such a way in the world is worthy of our thanks and gratitude .

The following narrative about a true saint, who renounced all, appears in the '*Paras Bhag*' .

Illustration : A saint, while travelling, passed by an orchard of pomegranates and felt like eating the fruit. He soon realized that it was not proper for him to pluck the fruit so he picked up one that had fallen on the ground. Before he could taste it, it occurred to him that he had fallen prey to desire. Regretting that, he admonished himself for still being a slave to desire. He threw the fruit without tasting it and set on his path.

He then saw a recluse who was sleeping at the foot of a mountain and whose body was covered with flies. The holy man went near the recluse, paid his respects to him and was very surprised when the recluse addressed him by his name. He said to the recluse, “How could you recognize me or know me when I never had a chance to see you earlier ?”

To this the recluse replied, “Nothing remains hidden from the one who recognizes God.” The holy man, on hearing this, said, “If you have spiritually elevated yourself to such a height why cannot you ask God to save you from the noise of the flies ?”

The recluse, on hearing this, replied that he would not like to ask his Master for a favour for this body that has very limited value.

The recluse then admonished the man for not being able to curb the desire for eating a fruit, “The best thing for you to do is to control your desires. Don’t let them arise because it is the desires that put men in the cycle of ‘Birth and Death’ .” This is the example of a *Gurmukh* who is completely detached.

Illustration : Once the gods including *Indra* were defeated in battle by the demon *Vritasur*. They asked God for a way out of such a disgrace. God told them they could defeat the demon only with a weapon made of the bones of *Rishi Dadheech* and advised them to go to the *Rishi* and ask for

his bones. The *Rishi* readily agreed and felt good that he was donating his bones for this noble purpose. He soon merged his being with his master and his great soul left his body.

The gods took his bones, moulded them into the weapon *Vajra*, and with it they succeeded in annihilating the ‘*Asur*’ i.e. the demon *Vrtasur*.

A great soul like *Dadheech* alone can be described as a perfect example of an *Udasi*, one who renounces everything for a good cause. Such a person is a perfect *Gurmukh* who has been acclaimed by *Guru Arjan Dev Ji* as a truly blessed person.

Q 7. Kaun su keemat paye jeeo - Who can really appreciate God’s worth ?

Answer : *Gurmukh keemt paye jeeo* - Only a *Gurmukh* can comprehend His true worth.

No one can evaluate God. His worth is beyond all comprehension. It is only a *Gurmukh* who is possessed with the power to buy the Beloved by paying the price of love, unlimited devotion and complete faith in Him. *Kabir* has rightly said that He can not be bought against gold, the only way to possess or belong to Him is by surrendering ourselves to His Name (‘*Naam*’).

Illustration : Once a thought occurred to *Raja Janak* that he should find a perfect teacher who imparts complete

knowledge to him while he climbs up the back of his horse. He got this announced to his people and promised the person any reward that he (the teacher) might ask for.

Hearing this, *Rishi Ashtawakra* came to *Janak*’s court and proclaimed that he could fulfil *Janak*’s desire but before that he would ask for a ‘*Guru dakshina*’ – according to ancient tradition, a teacher, after having taught his students, asked for something in cash or kind in return for his services.

When *Raja Janak* agreed to this demand, *Rishi Ashtawakra* asked for his body, mind and wealth. *Raja Janak* accordingly submitted everything that was required. After this the *Rishi* ascended the king’s throne and kept sitting there for quite sometime, ignoring every body, including the king, present there. As the time passed the king thought that the *Rishi* would be ready to grant him the boon. He sent for his horse and as he was about to mount the horse the *Rishi* warned him that he could not do so for he had already given away his body, mind and wealth to the *Rishi* and had no claim or right on any of them and he had been left with no authority to mount the horse. All that was his, was no more belonged to him.

Hearing this the king got the message and he went in to a trance, became one with his Creator. It was a state of complete realization.

When the king opened his eyes the *Rishi* told him to mount the horse and he was ready to impart the knowledge. The king, most respectfully, said to the *Rishi*, “O thou Most Gracious One, you have already gifted me the true wisdom and knowledge. I know that nothing in the world can be mine. I have realized and felt the bliss after having renounced everything.”

Here Guru Nanak Dev Ji says in a *Shloka* that we should give away all that we have to one who unites us to the Supreme Lord. This is how we overcome all our doubts and fears and we save ourselves from all miseries and discomforts. Guru Nanak Dev Ji has said about such a person that he alone realizes the worth of finding Him.

*Tann mann dhan arpo tisai parabhu milave more ||
Nanak bharam bhao katiye chooke jam ki joh ||*

Illustration : Once Uddalik Rishi thought of giving away everything in charity. Barring a few cows – the best ones for his son Nachiketa – the rest of his belongings he gave away. When Nachiketa came to know about it, he asked his father why he had kept the cows and wanted to know as to whom was he going to be handed over. When he asked his father the same question again and again Uddalik got angry and said that he was going to give away his son to *Yamaraj* – the god of Death (which of course he did not mean). Nachiketa felt happy and started preparing himself to go to Yamaraj

with his body – it is believed the body is discarded by the soul after it reaches the god of Death. With the help of yoga and with a firm determination he succeeded in reaching the city of Yamaraj and waited for three days and nights outside the abode of the god of Death.

Yamaraj, pleased with his devotion, gave him audience and told the boy that he would be happy to grant him three boons. Nachiketa asked:

- (i) After having come to you when I return to the world of mortals my father would treat me as a ghost. Pray arrange so that I continue to enjoy his filial love as before. Please allow this to happen.
- (ii) I know not all the rituals to perform *Yajna* – religious ceremony. Please teach me.
- (iii) Please enlighten me with the true knowledge of the eternal and supreme wisdom.

The Yamaraj granted the first two boons and advised Nachiketa not to press for the third one, instead he could ask for worldly comforts and joys – including living for as long as he desired.

When Nachiketa insisted on the spiritual knowledge, Yamaraj granted his wish, for it became clear that he had no desire or temptation for any worldly or heavenly comfort. Yamaraj agreed that he would be blessed with the *light eternal* which brings supreme knowledge. Persons who attain

such a state are known as the ones (*Gurmukh*) who have understood and realized the worth of devotion to God.

Illustration : Bhai Manjh – a true devoted *Sikh* was a rich man. He believed in Pir Sarwar. Once he heard someone, who was going to pay his obeisance to Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji at Amritsar, reciting a hymn.

He was touched and felt a strong urge to go to Amritsar to see the *Guru*. On reaching Amritsar he bowed his head before the *Guru* and requested him to accept him as his disciple. The *Guru* said that it was not easy to practise the *Sikh* way of life especially when he worshipped Pir Sarwar. Bhai Manjh once again bowed before the *Guru* and immediately came back home and demolished the structure where he worshipped Pir Sarwar. This became quite a topic for people to talk about.

Drawn towards his *Guru*, he reached Amritsar and once again requested the *Guru* to accept him as his *Sikh*. Guru Arjan Dev Ji reminded him that it was really very hard to be a *Sikh*. Bhai Manjh said that with *Guru's* grace he would be able to do what was expected of him. The *Guru* smiled and taking him under his wings told him to serve the believers. Thus Bhai Manjh got himself engaged in the service of his *Guru*. One day the *Guru* told him to return home to confront a very unpleasant situation. His domesticated animals were all dead due to disease. He had no money to pay the debt so he was forced to sell his house.

To make both ends meet, he would everyday go to the forest to cut grass which he sold for a paltry sum. And even out of this meagre amount he would save what he thought he owed to his *Guru*.

One day Guru Arjan Dev Ji sent a *Sikh* to him with the instruction that the edict - '*hukumnama*', the *Sikh* was carrying, be handed over to Bhai Manjh after accepting an offering of twenty one rupees. The *Guru's* representative was received by Bhai Manjh with all respect. Bhai Manjh did not know how to arrange for twenty one rupees. After he discussed the matter with his wife it was decided that his wife would go to a rich merchant of the village who had asked for the hand of their daughter and borrow the amount. This was accordingly done. Money was handed over and the *hukumnama* (religious edict) was given to Bhai Manjh which said : One who calls himself a *Sikh* of the *Guru* gets up early in the morning to say his prayers and to meditate on His Name. He may have a dip in the holy tank or may think of the holy place where ever he may be and may get rid of impure thoughts. By meditating on Hari's Name his sins will be washed out and his miseries shall end.

As the day breaks he should listen to *Hari kirtan*, the hymns sung in the praise of the Lord immortal. One who recites His Name, while he is engaged in his usual work all the time is dear to his *Guru* and the *Guru* blesses him with his message. In the end Guru Ram Das Ji Maharaj (who

composed this *shabad*) says in all humility that he would take the dust that is beneath the feet of such a *Gurmukh* and shall rub it on his forehead.

The *Sikh* returned to Amritsar and narrated all that had happened. The *Guru* was happy to learn all that. After a few days *Guru Arjan Dev Ji* once again sent a *Sikh* with similar instructions.

This time it was more difficult to arrange for the money, twenty one rupees, as the daughter of *Bhai Manjh* had died. The husband and wife could think of only one possibility. *Bhai Manjh's* wife agreed to work as a slave for a rich man who advanced the money that they, with all devotion, offered to their *Guru*.

The *hukumnama* said that *Bhai Manjh* should immediately come to Amritsar. The *Sikh*, bowing before the *Guru's* will, reached Amritsar. When he arrived at *Darbar Sahib* and saw the *Guru* from a distance; the *Guru* turned his face the other way. On going to the other side, the *Guru* turned his back towards *Bhai Manjh*. The *Guru* in his grace wanted to make sure that his *Sikh*, who had all love and devotion for his *Guru* and had done all that the *Guru* wanted him to do, did not suffer from a sense of vanity. This was to help the *Sikh* besides giving him another test.

Bhai Manjh did not waver in the least and got himself fully engaged in the service of his *Guru*, with greater vigour. One

day while *Bhai Manjh* was busy working in the kitchen, where food was prepared for all those who came to see the *Guru*, a *Sikh* came with the message that the *Guru* wanted to see *Bhai Manjh*.

On being ushered into the *Guru's* presence, he was asked where he had his meals from. *Bhai Manjh* most respectfully replied that he had his meals in the '*langar*', the community kitchen. The *Guru* said, "This is no service. This is labour for which you are compensated in the form of food."

From that day onwards, *Bhai Manjh*, after finishing his *seva* in the kitchen, would go and beg for food. It might seem incredible but it is true that this indifference and then a harsh order in no way affected *Bhai Manjh's* devotion and love for his *Guru*. He had truly surrendered himself before the will of his *Guru* and took *Guru's* word without any 'if' or 'but'..

One day while he was returning from the forest after collecting the firewood for the *Guru's* kitchen the weather turned bad. There was a storm and *Bhai Manjh* lost his way and as it had got dark fell into a well. He soon collected his wits and stood in the water with the load of fire wood resting on his head lest the wood get damp and rendered unfit for the fire. It was cold. *Bhai Manjh* started feeling sick and very uncomfortable.

That was the MOMENT.

Guru Arjan Dev Ji Maharaj Ji had given a very difficult test to his *Sikh*. And even now when he was in great physical distress almost unconscious, he was in service of his Lord. The *Guru* who knew everything, saw his *Sikh* pass even this test – the most difficult one – and realized that the *Sikh* was in distress. He was moved to tears, got up hurriedly from his seat and without wearing his shoes started walking briskly towards the well and ordered the *Sikhs* present there to follow him with a rope. The *Guru*, feeling intensely for his *Sikh*, was in tears and after reaching the well said, “Who is in the well ?” Bhai Manjh who was not at all fully conscious, recognizing the *Guru*’s voice, could manage to utter these words, “It is me My master, your slave. The servant of your servants.”

The *Guru* was in a state of ecstasy and said : “Great ! You are blessed, a hundred times blessed. And I am proud of you my son.”

The rope was lowered on *Guru*’s command. There came a request - a unique one — from Bhai Manjh, “My Lord, permit me to send up first the firewood that was collected in the name of the *Guru*.”

Guru Arjan Dev Ji smiled benignly and let the wood be brought out before Bhai Manjh could come out.

The *Guru* embraced him, forgetting that Bhai Manjh was all covered with mud, saying : You are blessed. You are

blessed, my child,”. and uttered these lines : “Manjh is dear to *Guru*, *Guru* is dear to Manjh. Manjh is the ship that shall help men cross the ocean.”

Manjh piara guru ka guru manjh piara ||
Manjh guru ka bohitha jag langanhara ||

Bhai Manjh had truly surrendered his all – body, wealth, mind and soul to his *Guru*. And that is how he attained the high exalted position.

This is a *Gurmukh* realizing, imbibing and appreciating the worth of devotion.

Illustration : There was a man whose love and devotion for his *Guru* were only superficial. He would request the *Guru* to accept him as a disciple. The *Guru* would tell him first to be worthy of what he was asking for. Once the man, through carelessness, dropped a one rupee coin in a drain that was dirty. He immediately put his hand in the filth and fished out the coin. The *Guru* had observed him do that. After a few days the man made the same request. This time the *Guru* asked him to walk with him while he considered his plea. After walking a little distance, the *Guru* let his water container fall in to the dirty water. When the man was asked to pull it out, he started offering excuses and finally told the Master that he would have it taken out by his sweeper when he came that way. The *Guru* then remarked that if the man cared for the *Guru* as much as he did for his one-rupee coin he could

have perhaps been accepted as a disciple. The man felt ashamed of himself and realized what he was.

Without obedience to the *Guru* and without surrendering yourself to the *Guru*, it is not possible to realize God's grace. It proves that such people can have no place amongst the blessed ones.

Q 8. *Kin bidh baadha* - How is man bound ?

Answer : *Haume baadha* - The man who is not able to repose complete faith in his *Guru*, who over-estimates himself because of an inflated ego can not free himself from the cycle of birth and death (84 lakh species).

The man who can not rise above personal considerations, thinks too much of himself and his family and his belongings, remains chained by men and matters which are of little help to him. The *Guru* has said this clearly in the seventh *Pauni* of *Asa di Var*. The meaning is clear and the following example is relevant.

Illustration : There lived a rich merchant in a certain country. He left for a neighbouring kingdom to promote his business which flourished there and the man did not return home despite many requests of his wife .

Finally the man decided to return home with a retinue of servants and a large number of goods and gifts. Meanwhile, his young son, in the company of his friends, left home to

meet his father. On their journeys, coincidentally, both father and son stopped at the same inn without being aware of each other's presence. At midnight the boy (merchant's son) fell sick and cried in agony. This disturbed the rich merchant who thought of nothing but of sound sleep. With the help of the manager of the inn (who was overawed by his wealth) the man first threatened and then got the boy out of the inn. The boy who was very ill succumbed to the cold and died .

Next morning, many people gathered around the dead body of the boy. The merchant, after he came out of his room, saw the people and stopped there to enquire as to who the boy was. One of the friends of the boy pulled out a letter that the boy carried for his father. On reading the letter and realizing that the boy, who had been thrown out of the inn in the cold night was his own son, the merchant collapsed and died of shock.

The merchant who had no feeling for the sick boy died when he came to know that he was his own son.

Thus thinking, in terms of my, mine and attachments, keeps a man in bondage.

Q 9. *Kin bidh chhoota* - How does man attain freedom?

Answer : *Gurmukh chhoota* - Only by being a *Gurmukh*. This has always been the practice that two lions can not live in one forest. Where the ego rules, man will remain devoid of

His Name; conversely, when a man recites His Name, he shall be free of ego.

It has been clearly stated in the *Guru Granth Sahib* that ego and God's name remain opposed to each other and both can not have the same abode. The opposite of egoistic conduct is humility. When a man seeks shelter at the *Guru's* feet, he divests himself of his ego. The example of *Maskinia*, the wrestler, proves this :

Illustration : Once a *Sikh* came to Guru Arjan Dev Ji Maharaj and humbly asked: "What are the qualities which a true *GurSikh* should have ?" The *Guru* said that he (the *Sikh*) should go to a *GurSikh* so that he may have a vivid picture of a true *GurSikh*. The *Guru* gave him a letter and told him to deliver it to the *Sikh* who lived in Lahore. The *Sikh*, on locating the person for whom the letter was meant, handed over the *Guru's* letter to him. The *GurSikh* showed all consideration to him for he had come from his *Guru*. After reading the contents he showed reverence for his *Guru* by pressing the letter against his forehead. Through the letter he was instructed by his *Guru* to send a sum of five hundred rupees through the person who had brought the letter. He was a poor man who could hardly afford two square meals.

The *Guru* who knows all did this to test his devotion to the *Guru*.

While he was discussing with his wife as to how that could be done, they heard a public announcement. The famous

wrestler *Maskinia* had thrown an open challenge to the effect that whosoever won in a wrestling bout against him would get a reward of one thousand rupees. Even the loser would be paid five hundred rupees.

This clearly indicated that *Maskinia* was a very great wrestler who could not be challenged. He was a very strong and adroit wrestler. Anyone who was not all that strong and skilled could even get killed or nearly so.

The *Sikh*, on hearing this, was very happy . He decided to challenge *Maskinia* and was not at all bothered about any eventuality. Even a defeat would fetch him five hundred rupees which he needed to make an offering to his Master.

At the appointed time when *Maskinia* threw the challenge, the *Sikh* – a lean middle-aged man entered the arena to accept it. Many among the spectators wondered as to what could have happened to the man to challenge *Maskinia* who was considered invincible.

When the two met, *Maskinia* wanted to know the reason why the man was there. The *Sikh* quietly told him everything. *Maskinia* was moved by the *Sikh's* devotion to his *Guru* and suddenly realized the greatness of the *Guru* whose disciple was prepared to go to such an extent where he could even lose his life. *Maskinia* told the *Sikh* that he would feign to lose this bout on the condition that he would take him to his *Guru* and help him become the *Guru's* disciple.

Accordingly Maskinia lost the bout. The *Sikh* was awarded one thousand rupees as the prize.

After that, the two took the other *Sikh*, who had come with the *Guru's* message, and the three of them left for Amritsar.

It is believed that when they reached the *Guru's* place Guru Arjan Dev Ji Maharaj was composing Sukhmani Sahib. Eleven *ashtapadis* had been composed.

When the three men bowed their heads before the *Guru* and every thing became known to the Master the *Shloka* was composed in which Maskinia was referred by name. It says:

*Sukh vasai Maskinia aap niwar tale ॥
Bade bade ahankariya nanak garab gale ॥*

“Those who live with humility always enjoy His grace and live happily and those who suffer from ego get eaten up by their misplaced sense of pride.”

(In vernacular Maskinia literally means humble). Thus the *Guru* made him immortal because of his humility, love and devotion that he felt welling up within him on hearing about the *Guru*.

Maskinia, thus attained eternal bliss and happiness for having embraced humility and true devotion for his *Guru* who accepted him as his *Sikh*.

Guru Arjan Dev Ji says that *the Gurmukh* stands liberated.

Q 10. Kin bidh awan jawan toota - How can one escape from the bane of the cycle of birth and death?

Answer : *Gurmukh awan jawan toota* - By becoming a *Gurmukh* one is set free from the bondage (cycle of birth and death).

There are four kinds of people in the world :

1. *Paamar* : Men who live in a manner contrary to the one given in the *Shastras*.
2. *Vishai* : Those who, as per *Shastras*, indulge in all the acts which turn them into beings who succumb to vices.
3. *Jigiasu* : The one who, because of his noble deeds, has understood the philosophy of the six *Shastras*. One who firmly believes that the worldly comforts are temporary and get him only misery. As long as the physical being does not overcome desire and the man does not attain salvation he shall not be free from miseries and shall not attain eternal bliss.

The man who develops the will to know and find his God is called *Jigiasu*. When he attains complete wisdom and eternal knowledge, he finds teachers who are intellectually and spiritually perfect. He develops firm faith in his teachers and serves them with full devotion. Then only he becomes *Gurmukh* and becomes free from the cycle of birth and death.

4. *Gianvan* : Only those, who become free of the wheel of coming and going (cycle of births and deaths) because of their perfect knowledge and true wisdom attain salvation.

Illustration : Narad Muni, inspite of having studied all branches of knowledge, had not acquired true knowledge. This was the reason that he could not get peace and contentment. Therefore he went to the four sons of Brahma namely Sanak, Sanandan, Sanatan and Sanat Kumar who had attained all knowledge and perfect wisdom and were completely indifferent to the state of mind, misery or bliss. Narad, after paying his respects, requested them to bless him with true knowledge. He said that he had studied thoroughly but he could not attain peace and contentment. They asked him about all that he had studied and what made him say that he had not attained true knowledge. Narad told them that he had studied the four *Vedas*, six *Shastras* and the science of spirits. But his mind was never free from cobwebs whereas one who possesses complete knowledge never has doubts or sense of grief. That is why he felt that he had not attained true knowledge and wisdom that is eternal. They suggested that Narad meditate on His Name in order to be free of doubt and self-deception. When his heart would become pure and pious and His Name would reside within him then all doubts and sense of pain will disappear and he would attain true knowledge and wisdom that is perfect. After this, Narad did all that he was told to do and he attained peace and contentment.

Thus it is established that Narad gathered all knowledge only after he became a true believer and surrendered himself to his teachers. That is why the *Guru* says that only after imbibing the qualities of a *Gurmukh* one gets out of the cycle of birth and death.

Q 11. *Kaun karam* - Who performs good and praiseworthy acts (Actions) ?

Answer : *Gurmukh Karam* - Only a *Gurmukh* can distinguish himself by his superior acts.

It is very difficult to comprehend the philosophy of *Karma*. Even great scholars and wisemen find it hard to perceive as to what act be performed (or what action should be taken) at a particular time. Therefore, our *Gurus* have made it clear that a *Gurmukh* alone has the capacity and wisdom to decide as to what action be taken at a particular time. Some acts appear to be good, but only after their performance it becomes clear that they only appeared to be good whereas they were not really so. At times it appears that performance of a certain act will result into something good or is in accordance with the spirit of *Dharma* but after it has been committed it turns out to be the other way round and one realizes that the performance of the act has amounted to a sin. Certain acts appear to be bad but after their execution it becomes obvious that they result in something good and positive. One's thinking must always be regulated by good and nobility. This is

possible only when man acquires the qualities of a *Gurmukh*.

Illustration : Arjun had taken a vow that anyone who spoke ill of the Gandiv bow that he had been given by Lord Indra, shall be put to death by him.

The four Pandav brothers had also taken a pledge that they would not spare that man's life who did any physical harm to their elder brother, Yudhishtira.

While the battle of Mahabharata was on, Karan – son of Kunti – inflicted a severe blow to Yudhishtira so that he became unconscious and Karan brought him to the place where he dwelt. By the time he regained consciousness Arjun had also reached there. As he looked around Yudhishtira asked Arjun if he had beheaded the enemy who was responsible for making him unconscious. When Arjun replied in the negative, Yudhishtira referred to his Gandiv bow in derogatory terms.

Arjun, then took out his sword and in order to keep his promise regarding the Gandiv bow and was about to attack his brother Yudhishtira. Lord Krishna intervened at that moment warning Arjun that if he insulted or tried to kill his revered elder brother in order to fulfil his promise its consequences would be very bad for him. He told him to weigh the matter very carefully and then act and gave the following example:

Illustration : A man learnt that by speaking the truth one attains salvation. He renounced the world, went to the

jungle and started meditating. That very day he took a vow to speak nothing but the truth.

Once some men, women and children, while on pilgrimage, passed through the jungle. Some highwaymen were after them. The pilgrims, who had become aware of the presence of robbers, were trying to hide themselves in the forest. The robbers reached the spot where this man sat meditating. They asked him if he had seen some people and which way they had gone. The man who had resolved to speak only the truth gave them the information the robbers needed. As a result, the pilgrims after being looted, were all killed. There was *akashvani* that he had committed a great sin and that he would be sent to hell. The man was flabbergasted and said, "I have only spoken the truth. How could this be a sin?" Again there was *akashvani*, "You are responsible for the death of so many innocent people. If you had not given the correct information regarding pilgrims' whereabouts the robbers would not have been able to kill them. You are devoid of the sense that enables a man to evaluate truth." The man, on seeing the gruesome scene, gravely repented over the sinful act that he had committed, that had led to the killing of innocent people.

Lord Krishna thus impressed upon Arjun that he too was going to commit a great sin by trying to fulfil his vow. So he should consider the matter very carefully and then only decide what is right for him to do.

Illustration : While a man was catching fish on the bank of Ganga a holy man reminded him that good people fed these fish with gram whereas he was doing something wrong by killing them. The man said that this was how he earned his living and if the holy man suggested an alternative he would give up his trade. The *Mahatma* brought him to his ashram where the man would be fed and looked after. He was thankful to the *Mahatma* and willingly participated in the service at the Ashram. One day he expressed a wish to be accepted as a disciple. The *Mahatma* told him to first go on pilgrimage, purify himself and then only he could be taken as a disciple. The man said, “How will I come to know that my sins have been washed off and I may return to the Ashram?” The *Mahatma* gave him a dry stick and said, “You may come back when this turns green.”

The man set on his journey. He stopped in a forest near a village. There were two other men at the same place who were seemingly not aware of his presence there.

After it was dark he could hear the two talking to each other about setting the village afire and destroying it. The man thought that these two should not be allowed to cause a big threat to the inhabitants as well as to other living beings of the village. So with the stick, he had been given by the holy man, he succeeded in killing the two conspirators. After that when he saw the stick turn green he was very happy and returned

to the holy man, who was pleased to hear the account and accepted the man as his disciple. The *Mahatma* said, “No doubt your act of killing the two does not appear to be good but by resorting to it you saved the lives of so many men and animals. So your killing the two to save many lives is not a sinful act. On the contrary it is something good that brings you credit.” Lord Krishna told Arjun that it was not easy to evaluate the acts one commits. This man killed two men but did not earn any discredit for his action resulted in good. So Arjun was advised to see what action was right and proper. This is how it became clear to him that his way of thinking was not correct. He apologized to his brother. This proves that by thinking in a noble manner, as a *Gurmukh* does, Arjun acted upon the correct advice of Lord Krishna and was saved of the sin of killing his brother.

This is called right and proper action.

Q 12. *Kaun nehkarma* - Who is beyond / above action?

Answer : *Gurmukh nehkarma* - A *Gurmukh* takes the right and proper course without a desire for any reward .

In *Sukhmani Sahib* Guru Arjan Dev Ji makes it absolutely clear that the ‘*Dharma*’ of a man is superior to that of others if acts in a selfless manner.

As long as a man is alive he has to act. But the man who acts only for himself cannot come out of the cycle of birth

and death whereas a man who acts in a selfless manner gets out of this orbit.

In practical life also we see that if a servant/employee serves selflessly, this certainly has a salutary effect on the employer who compensates him irrespective of the salary.

At the same time, a man can spoil the entire relationship by resorting to selfish acts just as a sweet dish can completely go waste if it gets sour by adding a very small quantity of foreign matter to it. An act devoid of selflessness can minimize the good effect that otherwise could have been achieved, whereas an act performed without an ulterior motive brings credit and grace to the doer as illustrated by the following example :

Illustration : Once two princes visited Amritsar to pay obeisance at Darbar Sahib.

Two gardener-women brought two beautiful garlands to them which they offered at the Darbar Sahib. One of the princes wanted to know the price he was expected to pay. He was asked to pay five rupees, which he readily paid to the woman. The other gardener-woman most respectfully told the prince that she would be very happy if the prince liked the garland and continued to patronize her . The prince was so happy that he gave her a fiefdom. So we see that even in real life selfless service pays.

Illustration : A poor woodcutter was very disappointed

when his wife gave birth to a son whose legs and arms did not function. At a difficult time in the family the woodcutter took this child to the forest and left him with a group of holymen who took pity on him and let him stay in their hermitage. Such was the wonderful impact of the company of holymen that this child had no desire and he grew to be self-effacing. When asked if he needed anything this child always said that he needed nothing. He meditated and kept himself above worldly pulls. The holymen liked him immensely and brought all kinds of gifts but he never showed any special interest in any thing. His fame spread and people came from far off places to see him.

Once, when Narad visited the holymen residing there, he decided to see the boy.

The young lad received him with all respect and deference. Narad was very pleased with him and told him to ask for anything to which the boy, as ever, said ‘no.’

After Narad’s return to the realm of gods, he mentioned this to Brahma who decided to visit this boy accompanied by his consort , Saraswati, god Vishnu , his wife Lakshmi and Shiv and Parvati and Narad . The gods reached the jungle where the boy lived. They were received by the boy with utmost reverence. Vishnu spoke to the boy and said that the gods were very happy with him and would like to grant him any boon. The boy thanked the god and reiterated that he

required nothing. When Vishnu insisted, the boy said most respectfully, “Sire, I had heard that saints and holymen preached to others not to have any desire. In my case you are goading me and encouraging me to desire. Please have pity on me and leave me alone.”

The gods were so impressed by his selflessness that they granted him the power to use his limbs. He became a healthy and handsome young man within no time. This boy became a great intellectual and many benefited by remaining in his company. Guru Sahib has said in *Sukhmani Sahib* : Blessed is he by whose company people benefit.

In *Jap Ji Sahib*, Guru Nanak spoke : Blessed are the ones by whose company people attain salvation. They earn our gratitude for they set others who come unto them free, besides attaining for themselves the freedom from the cycle of birth and death. It is because of the hallowed company of holymen that a man can become selfless and earn His blessings and favours, like this boy . This is the state that a *Gurmukh* attains.

Q 13. *Kaun su kahe kahaye jeeo - Who sings and makes others sing, God’s praise?*

Answer : *Gurmukh kare su subhaye jeeo* - Whatever a *Gurmukh* says or does and whatever he makes others say and do is praiseworthy. There is grace and dignity in whatever

a *Gurmukh* does . Most of us fail to comprehend, even observe, the heights that the holymen gain.

Illustration : Guru Nanak Dev Ji accompanied by Bhai Bala and Bhai Mardana arrived at a place where the people, who were ignorant, instead of welcoming them were rude and disrespectful to the *Guru*. While leaving that place the *Guru* observed, “May you always remain settled here!”

At another town the *Guru* was very respectfully received and he along with Bhai Bala and Bhai Mardana was very well looked after. While leaving the place he observed, “May you scatter and settle elsewhere!”

When asked for this strange blessing, the *Guru* explained that those with offensive behaviour and conduct should continue staying at the same place for their bad behaviour may affect other people otherwise. And good people by their example would turn others also into good persons where ever they go.

So whatever those dedicated to their *Guru* do, brings a good name.

Q 14 and 15. *Kaun so sukhiya kaun so dukhiya - Who is happy and who feels miserable ?*

Answer : *Gurmukh sukhiya manmukh dukhiya* - A *Gurmukh* stays happy while the person who has not surrendered to the *Guru’s* will feels miserable. Everybody in

the world feels that this world is a place full of miseries. There would hardly be a man or woman who has not suffered at one time or the other, as stated in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* in *Raag Ramkali, Var 1, Pauri 14* and *Shloka 1* :

Raja Indra cried in agony many a time for having violated the modesty of Ahalya, spouse of Gautam Rishi. For this reason, Gautam Rishi had cursed Indra that his body may be divided into a thousand pieces. Raja Indra felt miserable because of this. Similarly Parshu Ram, the *Brahmin*, on retrospection cried many times for having axed so many *kshatriyas* to death . He had to suffer because of this. So did Raja Ajj cry after having satiated his hunger by begging alms : Raja Ajj who was grandfather of Sri Ram Chandra, once went to jungle and killed a deer. He dipped a piece of his cloth in the deer's blood and sent it to the palace with the message that the king had got killed while hunting. He did this to test his queen's fidelity and love for him. The queen burnt herself alive with that piece of cloth. The king felt so pained on hearing this that he renounced the kingship and went begging for a meal and cried bitterly every time he received alms.

Evil deeds beget us the punishment we deserve and result in pain and agony.

Sri Ram Chandra, while in exile, wept many a time when he was separated from his wife, Sita , and brother Lakshman.

Ravana, who was a great scholar and had acquired as much knowledge as ten scholars, cried bitterly and repeatedly after he lost Lanka and all his clan. He had to pay for the wrong he had done by abducting Sita.

Pandavas, despite all the help they got from Lord Krishna, cried while they were given refuge by king Virat whose wife's brother Keechak cast an evil eye on Draupadi and they felt helpless. Pandavas had to suffer because instead of heeding their *Guru Ved Vyas*, they listened to their wife who urged them to kill Brahmins.

All those men who sing His praises cry, for they do not want to experience pain towards the close of their lives .

Raja Bhartari and Raja Gopi Chand wept even after quitting their kingdoms and entering the order of *yogis* when they had to go from door to door to beg.

A miser who gathers wealth for personal comfort cries when he loses wealth.

Similarly Ajamal, the *Brahmin*, cried for having squandered all the knowledge he had gathered as he indulged in evil deeds. Bali, a woman who had contracted several matrimonial alliances, cried over separation. Thus spoke Guru Nanak : there is only pain and misery in this world . Only those who meditate His Name with love and devotion, can conquer pain and comforts. It is only meditation that helps a man. *Naam* is superior to every thing else.

So it can be said that only by becoming a *Gurmukh* can a man overcome his pain and misery. This is the apogee of his *Karma*.

People know it but it is the *Gurmukh* who enjoys peace and harmony in life by living above the rut of this world, i.e. like the lotus flower. Those who have not realized the true message of the *Guru* and have not brought faith in their *Guru* live in agony whereas a *Gurmukh* enjoys His bliss.

Illustration : Hardas, a *Gurmukh*, decided to go on pilgrimage. On his way, he met a man who was, *Manmukh*, a self-centred individual, who too was on a similar mission. After he came to know that Hardas had money and valuables with him, the *Manmukh* decided to rob him of his belongings whereas Hardas who meditated on His Name never imagined that the other could have evil designs. They walked in each other's company and the *Manmukh* looking for an opportunity to deprive Hardas of his wealth and, if need be, even to kill him.

One day they came across a well. The two decided to rest for a while, have their breakfast and bathe there. The *Manmukh* soon finished the chores, put on his clothes and came to Hardas – who never suspected his motive – and asked Hardas to pull out of well a bucket full of water as he said he was thirsty and wanted to quench his thirst. Hardas did that and while his back was towards the *Manmukh*, the

latter pushed him into the well and walked away with all his belongings. Hardas, with the support of a big bush, kept sitting there. As it grew dark, he heard a snake and an apparition talking to each other. The snake said to the apparition, "My friend, we have lived here for long but I see you today after many days. Where have you been living these days?" The ghost replied that he possessed the body of the daughter of king Dev Dutt. The snake was curious to know as to how he could reside there because the king and his folks always remain surrounded by important persons. The ghost said that no one could dispossess him of the princess' body. When asked what was the device that enabled him to do so, the ghost replied that 'it' could be evicted out of the body of the princess by the incense of a particular herb that grew only on a particular mountain. And no one had a notion about it, it said. Then the spirit asked the snake about its whereabouts as many a time when the spirit haunted the place the snake was never found there. The spirit wondered if the snake had found as nice a dwelling place as he had done. The snake spoke about a spot where there lay buried the wealth left by seven kings. He enjoyed his stay there and like his friend he could be driven out of the place only when some one burnt the refuse of the bird Garud.

The two left the spot soon; the *Gurmukh* who had carefully listened to the conversation between the two, memorized everything.

Next morning, when a man, passing that way, put the rope with the bucket tied to its end into the well in order to draw some water to drink, the *Gurmukh* held the container firmly enough and requested the man to help him come out of the well. The man did accordingly, was thanked by the *Gurmukh* who left the spot and went straight to the mountain and after plucking the plant headed towards the city of King Dev Dutt. He let people call him a physician and then made it known to all through a public announcement that he could drive the spirits out of human bodies which were possessed. Soon the news reached the king who immediately called him over. The King had taken a resolve that whoever cured his daughter would be given her hand in marriage. The *Gurmukh* agreed to it. As soon as the plant was burnt and its incense was inhaled by the princess, the ghost left the princess and came out shrieking and moaning. The princess was completely cured. The king was very happy and got his daughter married off to this handsome man – the *Gurmukh* – and urged him and made him share the responsibility of running the affairs of the state.

The *Gurmukh* then enlightened the king about meditation and asked him to respect and look after the holymen. Thus many saints visited his city and got what they needed.

The *Manmukh*, who also came to know about this, reached the city disguised as a saint. The *Gurmukh*

immediately recognized him as the man who had pushed him into well. So did the *Manmukh* who felt scared and uneasy. But the *Gurmukh*, on the other hand, treated him with respect. The *Manmukh* wanted to know how the *Gurmukh* had attained this position and beseeched the *Gurmukh* to forgive him. The *Gurmukh* assured him to be at ease and enjoy himself as his friend. Then the *Manmukh* asked him to narrate what had happened to him after he fell into the well and how he managed to come out. The *Gurmukh* told him all that he had experienced, what happened after he fell into the well, and clearly stated that he had secured this position only because of what he heard about driving spirits away. The *Manmukh* enjoyed the hospitality of the *Gurmukh* for many days. One day he decided to leave the place fearing that some harm might come to him. The *Gurmukh* bestowed on him numerous gifts and sent some ministers and other officials with him to give him a proper send off. When they were with him they asked the *Manmukh* about his relationship with the *Gurmukh*. The man, evil as he was, spoke against the *Gurmukh* and said that the *Gurmukh* was a sweeper from his village and had treated him well lest I disclose his identity. “I am only confiding in you. Please advise the king to arrange to give him a dip in the holy Ganga to make him repent over what he has done,” the *Manmukh* told his escort.

The ministers, on their return, informed the king of what they had learnt. The king got very angry on hearing this and

planned to kill the *Gurmukh*. The *Gurmukh* was wont to have his meals with the king. The latter posted a man with a sword in the hallway with the order that his son-in-law be produced before him as soon as he arrived. When the *Gurmukh* appeared before the king he accused him of defiling his religion and bringing him in to disgrace. On being asked about the source of information the king told him all that the ministers had said. The *Gurmukh* denied this allegation and narrated the whole story to him. He said, "I did not tell you about him only because I did not think it right to speak ill of the man."

The king, after hearing the story of the snake and the spirit, said if it were true he may be taken to the spot where the treasure was buried. The *Gurmukh*, after reaching the spot, burnt the refuse of the bird 'Garud' and sure enough the snake went away and the king was very happy to find many precious stones and the treasure.

The king, in all humility, asked for the *Gurmukh*'s forgiveness and acclaimed him as one who possessed greater wealth than he did. But the doubt about his low birth persisted in the king's mind. So he sent his men to the village to which the *Gurmukh* belonged to verify the fact. When they found that the *Gurmukh* belonged to a high caste his relatives were brought to the palace with all honour and the king received them with great respect.

On the other hand, soon after the return of the ministers, the *Manmukh* decided to go to the same spot, hid himself amidst the wild growth of the bush and waited for the snake and the spirit. The two spoke of their misfortune in losing the places that brought them comfort and good feelings and said to each other that some one must have heard their conversation and so succeeded in driving them away from there. They should, before talking about the other spots, search the place and find out if any one was hiding there to spy on them. The ghost accordingly came down and very soon found the *Manmukh* and gave the fellow a thorough beating while keeping him pressed under his foot, the snake stung him, and he died.

That is the reason that Guru Sahib has clearly said :

A *Gurmukh* is blissfully happy whereas a *Manmukh* is eternally miserable.

Q 16 and 17. *Kaun su sanmukh kaun vemukhiya - Who listens to the Guru and who is turned away from the Guru ?*

Answer : *Gurmukh sanmukh Manmukh vemukhiya -* Meaning clearly : A *Gurmukh* always listens to his *Guru* and does only that which his *Guru* tells him, whereas a *Manmukh* is turned away from his *Guru* and does not have faith in the *Guru*'s word.

Only those attain the state of salvation before God who

look to God and never turn away from Him; that is, they always do what God wants them to do.

Such is a *Gurmukh*.

When we are facing the Sun our shadows follow us whereas if we turn our backs to the Sun our shadows remain in front and always beyond our reach. Similarly, a *Gurmukh* has his face always towards the *Guru* and wealth follows him like a shadow whereas a *Manmukh* who is not facing his *Guru* (who has not surrendered himself to the *Guru*) will miss all wealth like his shadow eluding him, beyond his reach.

So a *Gurmukh* finds both God and wealth whereas a *Manmukh* gets neither.

To kill *Prahlad* Bhakt, his father, who was a very powerful king, did every thing but could not harm *Prahlad* for he was a true *Gurmukh*, whereas *Harnaksh* despite the fact that he enjoyed all kinds of boons was done to death for he was a *Manmukh* .

It has been clearly so stated in the *Guru Granth Saheb*.

Illustration : In the story of Bhakt Chandrahaas, Dhrishtbuddhi, in order to make Chandrahaas miserable, set his own house afire.

Once upon a time, a good and benevolent king ruled over Mahilpur (South India). His name was Sudharm. His kingdom was attacked by Raja Kant-hool. Sudharm died while

defending his country leaving behind his queen and three-month old son. The queen, before she committed *sati*, handed over the little prince to a very loyal maid servant who brought him up well. The victorious king returned to his country after handing over the administration to his notorious minister known as Dhrishtbuddhi who had a son called Madan and a daughter Vikhya who had good qualities. His subordinate Kubuddhi (evil-minded) was as bad as Dhrishtbuddhi. They ill-treated their people.

The faithful maid, in whose custody the queen had left the small prince, went out to live in the forest for the safety of the prince. There lived some holymen in that forest. The maid took the child with the saints who agreed to bring up the child. The maid also took refuge there and looked after the prince and the holymen . But as it was destined she passed away when the prince was three years old. The child grew in the company of holymen and imbibed their good deeds and devotion to God.

The holymen left on pilgrimage and the boy accompanied them. After some time they reached the territory which was under Dhrishtbuddhi's control. The people who served the holymen, after paying obeisance, invited them to a meal. The holymen consented. When the ruler learnt about the same he, out of convenience, asked them to have a meal with him. When the holymen and the boy reached his palace the king, while talking to them, questioned the propriety of the child

being kept in the company of the men who had renounced the world. On hearing this remark the saints looked at the child and smiled. When asked for the reason, one of the saints observed, “It is difficult to understand the ways of God. The same child you are talking about will, one day, become your daughter’s husband. Reading his forehead and looking into the future we have come to this conclusion.”

Dhrishtbuddhi, on hearing this, kept quiet but felt annoyed and uncomfortable. After the saints left he conspired with his aide to get the boy murdered. He thought the match, because of the boy’s status, would bring disgrace to Dhrishtbuddhi and give the people an opportunity to mock at the king for having chosen a mendicant as his daughter’s suitor. So he ordered the executors to kill the boy and as proof bring one of the toes of the boy to the king. The killers accordingly took the boy to a secluded place and were about to kill him when the boy requested them to spare his life for four days during which he would meditate on God’s name. As soon as his request was conceded the boy sat in a trance and a glow appeared on his forehead.

When the killers found the boy calm and praying with all devotion, they looked at his innocent face which looked beautiful. Realizing that it was an elevated soul, they asked for his forgiveness and the boy blessed them. In order to save their skin they requested him to allow them to cut one of his toes. The boy readily agreed and put his foot before

them. The ways of God are strange ! The boy had one extra toe in his foot because of which there was an obstacle in his way of becoming a king . They took the extra toe to Dhrishtbuddhi who was happy to presume that the boy was dead and thus a potential foe was out of his way, and that the forecast by the saints had been proved false. The boy found his way out, sat under a tree and started singing the praises of God. His singing attracted birds and beasts who would flock to that place and enjoy his singing.

One day a king, whose name was Kulind, mounted on the back of a horse, passed that way.

When the king witnessed this scene he was very impressed and charmed by the grace and appearance of the child who exercised such a positive pull on the surroundings. He felt the impact of the great soul and asked the boy to accompany him to his palace where he would live as his son – since he had no son of his own – and be the future king. He was grateful to God for being blessed with such a wonderful son.

“There can be nothing better for me !” the self-effacing boy, appreciating the king’s great and genuine love for him, said, and agreed to go with him.

Riding the horse the two reached the palace. The queen’s joy knew no bounds. The event was celebrated by the entire city and there were lighting and fireworks at night amidst joy

every where, the boy was given the name Chandrahaas because his countenances was bright and pleasant like moon.

Raja Kulind had accepted the suzerainty of king Kant-hool and paid him tribute every year. As Chandrahaas grew he earned the reputation of being a very brave, clever and just prince. The princes of neighbouring principalities were happy with him and accepted him as their superior.

The king's representative took some special presents besides the money that Kulind had to pay annually as tribute. When Dhrishtbuddhi heard about Chandrahaas' qualities, he felt convinced that this Chandrahaas was no one else but the boy he had ordered to be killed. Dhrishtbuddhi was consumed with anger and malice but preferred not to say anything. He then set off on the advice of Kubuddhi for the kingdom of Raja Kulind. On meeting Chandrahaas he became convinced that it was the same boy. He was apparently polite to him. After staying there for two-three days he told Kulind that the ruler of the kingdom had always been a vassal of King Kant-hool, he would suggest that Chandrahaas should, accompanied by his son, Madan, meet the sovereign and should personally hand over the money (taxes) to Kant-hool. He would write a letter for his son asking him to accompany Chandrahaas to the king. As Kulind did not doubt Dhrishtbuddhi's intention he readily agreed to send Chandrahaas. He was dispatched with Dhrishtbuddhi's letter to his son Madan, stating that the carrier of the letter,

Chandrahaas, "because of his might, can prove dangerous for us so he should be done away with by giving him *vikh* (poison)." Chandrahaas, on reaching the outskirts of the city, stopped in a garden that belonged to Dhrishtbuddhi. As he was tired he fell asleep. Dhrishtbuddhi's daughter who often went to that garden came there and instantly fell in love with Chandrahaas as she saw him. She decided to marry him, without knowing anything about Chandrahaas. On coming closer, she saw the letter that Chandrahaas was carrying. She could make out that it was a letter from her father. After deliberating over the propriety of reading the contents of a letter not meant for her, she decided to read it, justifying her action by arguing that a wife could always read a letter belonging to her husband and she had firmly resolved to be his wife.

When she read the contents – that Chandrahaas be poisoned to death (*vikh* in vernacular is poison, but it is also short form of *Vikhya* – the name of Dhrishtbuddhi's daughter). The girl decided to add "ya" to "vikh" in order to save Chandrahaas and to marry him. But there was no ink so she picked up a small twig and using *kajal* in her eyes as the ink, she turned the word in to 'Vikhya'. She was very happy to think that this would not only save the life of Chandrahaas but also fulfil her heart's desire to marry him. After altering the purport of the letter, she put the letter back and returned to the palace.

Meanwhile Chandrahaas, after taking a siesta, reached the palace and delivered the letter to Madan who was very happy to know the (altered) contents for he liked Chandrahaas as he was a handsome prince who radiated special charm. Madan's mother too was happy and getting her daughter's consent (which was there in abundance) solemnized the wedding that very day as indicated.

Madan was very happy that he had acted in accordance with his father's desire and direction, given '*Vikhya*' to Chandrahaas. He at once wrote a letter to his father, Dhrishtbuddhi, that he had done what he (Dhrishtbuddhi) wanted him to do. On receiving his son's letter, Dhrishtbuddhi felt very unhappy. He came back to his capital to find to his annoyance and disgust, celebrations going on all around. He instructed his men that the man who came out of Durga temple that night be killed and at the same time dispatched his son to the *swayamver* at Kant-hool's palace. He asked Chandrahaas to go to the temple to perform a ritual. While Chandrahaas was on his way to the temple, he met Madan who asked him to go to the palace of Kant-hool whose daughter Champaka had refused to marry any of the princes who had gone there to win her hand and had declared that she had already decided to accept Chandrahaas as her lord. Even Kant-hool had desired him to send Chandrahaas there.

Chandrahaas told Madan that he could go there only after visiting the temple as desired by his (Madan's) father. On

being assured by Madan that he (Madan) could have the ritual performed, Chandrahaas and Madan, exchanging their carriages, left respectively for Kant-hool's palace and the Durga temple. Dhrishtbuddhi's men killed Madan without knowing who he was as soon as he came out of the temple, whereas Kant-hool and his queen were very happy to receive Chandrahaas at their palace and got the marriage ceremony concluded that very day.

The next day Chandrahaas with his wife Champaka left for the city of Dhrishtbuddhi with promise to return soon.

Dhrishtbuddhi felt utterly frustrated when he saw Chandrahaas alive and with Champaka. Dhrishtbuddhi, when informed about Madan's sojourn to Durga temple, started crying and moaning and fell unconscious. He rushed to the temple followed by his queen and daughter, Chandrahaas and others to see his son's dead body which had been cut into pieces. Dhrishtbuddhi died of shock. People mourned the death of Madan but had no good word for Dhrishtbuddhi.

Dhrishtbuddhi paid for his sins. This all made Chandrahaas very unhappy. He prayed to the goddess, that life be restored to his friend Madan for whom he had developed a genuine liking and his father.

It is said that the goddess appeared and told him that Dhrishtbuddhi was an evil person who had tried to destroy Chandrahaas many times so he should not pray for his life.

Then Chandrahaas, with folded hands prayed, to the goddess, “Mother no one is my enemy. Everybody is guided by his own understanding based on good or evil thinking. Merciful Mother, give them life.”

The goddess, impressed by the goodness of Chandrahaas, put life back into their bodies. The goddess spoke to Dhrishtbuddhi and made it clear that the father and son had got back life only because of this great devotee – Chandrahaas. Dhrishtbuddhi should feel proud of the fact that Chandrahaas was his son-in-law. He was asked to seek his forgiveness and never to resort to evil deeds. Dhrishtbuddhi who was overwhelmed to see Madan, apologized profusely to Chandrahaas and promised never to stoop to mean tactics. Chandrahaas readily forgave him. This brought Chandrahaas great fame. People everywhere showed respect and love for him. Raja Kulind, on hearing about this, came with his queen to meet him. The holymen who had brought up Chandrahaas also happened to reach the palace. The *Rishis* told the rulers who had gathered there that Chandrahaas was son of Sudharm who was looked after for three years by the maid and after that under their tutelage he had learnt to meditate on His Name before Raja Kulind took him as his son.

Chandrahaas paid his obeisance to the *Rishis* and said that he was fortunate to enjoy their blessings and thanked God for every thing.

People felt happy and the holy men were respected and looked after very well by them. They became God-fearing and were guided by the principles of *Dharma*. Thus one *Gurmukh* (in this case Chandrahaas) successfully bore all the difficulties and met with a good end whereas Dhrishtbuddhi, a *Manmukh*, can never be happy in his life.

Illustration : Once a king invited holymen to a feast. After having fed them they were given gifts. Jai Dev, who had also come, was forced to accept gold coins as gifts. He met four thieves while he was passing through a jungle. He could sense that they wanted to rob him so himself offered the coins to the thieves. As they were about to depart they thought he (Jai Dev) could report them to the authorities, so he should be killed. But on second thought they decided to cut his arms and legs and then throw him into a well.

After a few days, a king passing that way heard the Name of the Lord being recited by someone from within the well. When the king saw that the man had no limbs he wanted to know the reason. Jai Dev did not name any one and said that that was his fate. The good king brought him to his palace and asked him to look after the holymen who came there seeking alms.

Jai Dev did his work with all dedication and devotion. One day the four robbers who had cut his limbs came there asking for charity. Jai Dev, on recognizing them,

took them to the king and said that the four were great saints who be treated with due consideration. The king accordingly detailed a servant. It has been said in the Ramayana : “Shiv Ji while addressing his consort Parvati says that true saints are those who treat well even an evil person.”

The four robbers too recognized Jai Dev and feared reprisal and also wondered why they were being treated so well. This thought made them decide to leave the place soon despite persuasion by the king and Jai Dev to stay. Jai Dev got them loaded with gifts and money before they left and sent some guards with them for security. After going some distance and before returning to the palace the guards asked the thieves how they came to know Jai Dev who had looked after them so well.

The thieves told them that Jai Dev at one time had committed a theft and because of that the ruler got his limbs cut and had him thrown into a well. “As we alone knew about the matter Jai Dev was extra good to us so that we may not reveal his secret,” they remarked maliciously, and added that Jai Dev was acting as if he were a great soul.

It is said God could not tolerate their talking about Jai Dev in such a scandalous way so the earth got split and the thieves were swallowed in it.

When the servants narrated the story to the king and Jai Dev on his return, Jai Dev felt bad and felt an urge to rub his

hands in dismay and also tried to stretch his feet and legs and, lo and behold ! there appeared his hands and feet.

When the king witnessed this he asked Jai Dev to tell him the truth. After initial hesitation he told the king the whole truth about the thieves and what they had done to him.

Despite the fact that the thieves had done the worst to him, he was good to them. Thus he as a *Gurmukh* did what was right and God wants everybody to do the same whereas the thieves who were far from God had to meet an ignoble end. This is what is termed as an act of a *Gurmukh* and on the other hand that of a *Vimukh* — one who does not enjoy God’s grace because of his evil deeds.

Q 18 and 19. *Kin bidh miliye kin bidh bichhure* - What is the way to reach God ? What makes one to turn away from Him ?

Answer : *Gurmukh miliye Manmukh vichhure* - A *Gurmukh* becomes part of God. He merges his entity unto God whereas a *Manmukh* turns away from God and can never be a part of God.

A question people invariably ask whenever they find themselves in the company of holymen : How can we reach God ?

The answer our *Gurus* have given is simple : When you overcome sensual temptations you will meet God.

He who can not rise above temptations and cannot exercise control over his senses is a *Manmukh* and can never reach God .

Illustration : A holyman accompanied by his disciple set out on a pilgrimage. A weakling who could not control his senses was very keen to go with him. The saint, knowing him and his shortcomings, tried to avoid him but ultimately gave in, thinking that it might do him good.

That three-some halted at a village for the night and the next morning were again on their way. The good people of the village, when the three were ready to depart, packed for them eight loaves of bread saying that the next day they would be in the jungle and were not likely to be fed by any one.

The next day the saint and his disciple made the third man sit under a tree (leaving the loaves with him) and told him to wait for them. As they were away, the man could not resist the temptation of eating two loaves. While he ate he said to himself that he got very little to eat in the company of the holyman so there was nothing wrong if he later consumed another loave.

After the saint and his disciple returned they sat for the meal and each of them ate two *rotis*. After the meal the saint asked the man as to what had happened to the remaining two *rotis* as the people in the village had packed eight.

The man protested his ignorance. After walking some distance they saw a tiger coming towards them. The man was very frightened. The saint told him to remember God and not to worry . The tiger, showing due deference to the holyman, passed by. Again the saint asked him, “Come on, be honest, tell us what happened to the two *rotis* ?”

The *Manmukh* repeated his statement. The saint kept quiet and they all continued on their journey. Then there was a river to be crossed. The *Manmukh* was worried as to how he would reach the other bank. Again the saint asked him not to worry and the water of the flooded river receded and the man crossed without much difficulty.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji has said in *Jap Ji Sahib* : “*Suniye haath hove asgah*”

This world is like an ocean difficult to cross. But His Name shortens it to the size of a human hand and one can complete the journey of life without any difficulty.

After crossing the river, the saint asked the man in the name of God Almighty with whose help he had crossed the river to speak the truth about the two missing *rotis*; even this had no effect on him. This convinced the saint that the man was a confirmed *Manmukh*. In order somehow to make him blurt out the truth the saint decided that he would have to be on his own and not in their company as he was interested only in worldly things. He would utter the truth only when tempted with material goods. As they were walking they saw

a big boulder blocking their path. The saint asked the man to look at it. He was overjoyed to see that what appeared to be a boulder was in fact pure and solid gold.

The saint said that it would be divided into four parts to which the man replied, “But we are only three. Why four shares ?” The saint reminded him that there were eight *rotis*, the three of them had two each and one who had the remaining two is the fourth.

The *Manmukh* took no time to own that it was he who had the two extra loaves. The saint regretted that the man had not spoken the truth even in the name of God and told him that he would no more be their companion. He could go his way taking all the gold (all the three shares) with him. The man was very happy and turned towards the mountain to find that a solid rock stood there and no gold.

Thus the *Manmukh* went away and was no more to be in the company of the saint.

The saint and his disciple had to spend the night in the jungle. They decided to rest at a spot. The saint suggested that they should go to sleep by turns. While one slept, the other be on guard. After the saint had rested, the disciple went to sleep while the saint was awake. Soon the saint saw a snake advancing towards his disciple. The saint checked him and asked him the reason why he was creeping towards him. The reptile, after paying its obeisance to the saint, said,

“During the previous manifestation I was a man and this man (disciple) was a snake and he sucked blood from my neck and now I am going to take revenge.”

The saint enquired, “If you are allowed to drink the blood from his neck that should quench your thirst for revenge and the old enmity would also be over. Do you agree ?” The snake agreed. When the saint with knife in his hand put one foot on the disciple’s chest he woke up and saw his *guru* ready to kill him. The disciple thought that the saint was his teacher. If he had decided to take his life it did not matter to him for he had already surrendered himself to his *Guru*. “If *the Guru* decides to take my life it must be for my good,” he reasoned. The saint took some blood from his neck and offered it to the snake who after tasting it went away. Next morning the saint and his disciple set forth on their journey. They decided to have a dip in the river that came next. When the disciple took off his shirt, the saint asked him if he knew how the shirt was stained with blood. The disciple, in all humility, said that he had full faith in his *Guru* and whatever he did was for his good. Then the saint told him all about the snake. The disciple felt blessed and lay prostrate at his *Guru*’s feet and exclaimed : “The *Guru* who knows all comes to the rescue of his disciple.” The saint blessed him with knowledge profound and perfect, freeing him of all bondage united him with his God.

This is known as meeting *the Gurmukh*, for the disciple attained salvation, became one with God after meeting the *Gurmukh*

Q 20. *Eh bidh kaun pargtaya jeeo* - Who shows the path ? Who explains the method to be adopted?

Answer : *Gurmukh bidh paragtaya jeeo* - It is the *Gurmukh* who points out the way.

Men who have acknowledged the superiority of spiritual beings and have themselves inculcated the qualities of great men show the way to deal with the people of the world. It is they who tell us what to do while talking about God and matters spiritual. As man can know only in the exalted company of holymen and imbibing their instruction and example about what the way is, *Gurmukh* men lead such exemplary life that others emulate them and themselves become *Gurmukh*.

Illustration : A boy was in the habit of eating sweets. Because of it he had eruptions on his body. His parents took him to a holyman and requested him to advise the boy to give up over-eating sweets. The *Mahatma* who himself was fond of sweets thought that his advice could be effective only if he himself stopped eating sweets. He asked the parents to come after eight days. He asked friends and followers not to bring any sweets for him. After eight days, the parents brought the boy again to the *Mahatma*. As they were entering the room they were checked by a volunteer who asked them if the

boy was carrying any sweets in his pocket. The boy thus came to know that taking sweets to the room of the holyman was not allowed. After they entered the room, the parents again requested the *Mahatma* to advise the boy against eating sweets. This time the *Mahatma* advised the boy not to eat sweets. This had an immediate and positive effect on the boy. This example makes it amply clear that teachings or preachings of holymen become effective only when they themselves lead a disciplined life. People want to do what they observe holymen doing.

Ordinarily people find it hard to understand spiritualism and fatalism.

A person understands the way only by the grace of holymen and by remaining with them. As holymen have unshakable faith in fate they do not make much effort to look after themselves because they understand that fate or nature which gave us this body is our servant and keeps serving us whereas they always make efforts to be able to meditate on God's Name and to be one with Him and to reach God.

It is well known that Kabir, Namdev, Ravidas and Farid strove only to meditate on God's Name and left every thing to fate as far as physical well being was concerned.

As a result, these great men were a success in spiritual attainment as well as worldly matters. But worldly beings do the opposite. When asked to remember God and to meditate

on His Name, they only say: “If it is thus fated, we shall meditate.” But when it comes to earning money they are prepared to undergo any hardships even in any foreign land. This is how they spend their time and lives in amassing wealth and bringing up their families.

Wealth is like a shadow. If you are facing the Sun your shadow will follow you. In case you turn your back towards the Sun your shadow will be ahead of you. Same is the case with wealth.

The *Gurmukh* who meditates and does everything in accordance with His will enjoys both : His grace as well as wealth — whereas one who does not care to know what God wills and turns his back towards God keeps chasing wealth in vain just as the man with his back towards sun keeps chasing his shadow — and fails to enjoy God’s grace.

Illustration : Two men went to a *vaidya* (a physician) with similar complaints. The two suffered from stomach ache and a kind of eye infection because of which they could not see clearly. The physician gave each of them two different doses of powders clearly stating that one was for stomach ache and was to be swallowed with water whereas the other one was to be dropped in the eyes. One of the two, who was a sensible man, used the two as prescribed and felt completely cured. The other person who could be termed as foolish swallowed the eye drops and the powder meant for stomach-ache he used for the eyes. As a result his condition got worse

and his relatives and friends went to the physician and spoke to him rudely that his medicine had worsened the man’s condition. The physician tried to calm them down and sent for the other patient who thanked the physician for having completely cured him. When the physician checked with the first patient it became clear that he had used the medicine meant for eyes for stomach-ache and the one for stomach ache was used for eye trouble. The physician said that the wrong usage aggravated his ailment for which he could not be held responsible. The man was administered correct medicine with which he got cured.

In this world a true teacher is like a physician. People come to him with their problems. They say that they cannot concentrate on His Name, find no peace of mind and fail to comprehend the ways which help them understand spiritual philosophy. They seek guidance and help from the teacher. Holy men tell them to meditate on His Name and in worldly matters to practise and show patience and let destiny decide the future.

When you are able to do this you will have comfort and peace of mind in this world and nothing but bliss in heaven. But some one attached to the world makes no effort to meditate or to remember God and remains dependent on fate and to succeed in the worldly affairs keeps himself involved in every thing and does not get peace and contentment.

When the two come to the holyman they are asked about their state of mind. Then the enlightened one states everything. He says : “Because of acting upon the saints’ advice he is happy and his doubts are getting cleared.” But the man who is involved in life’s intricacies says that his condition is worse than what it was. The *Mahatma* asks him if he had practised what he was advised to do. The man says, “I make all the efforts to succeed in life.” The holyman reminds him that was not what he had been advised to do. “You are acting in a way contrary to what you were told to do . That is the reason that you are not happy. Now you do what we tell you to do.”

Have faith in God. Surrender yourself before the *Guru* and meditate on His Name and let Destiny determine your course of action in the world. This way you will enrich yourself materially as well as spiritually.

This is how a *Gurmukh* — elevated soul — helps men in freeing themselves of all bondage that causes unhappiness and pain. This is what we call :

“ The *Gurmukh* shows the way to salvation.”

Illustration : A king had two ministers for civil and defence affairs. Both attained proficiency in their respective fields and the affairs of the state were conducted very well.

The king decided to change their portfolios which resulted in confusion. This gave an opportunity to the neighbouring king to attack. The king was defeated and imprisoned.

Similarly man – the king, has two ministers : Ability to work hard, having faith in fate or destiny

A *Gurmukh* applies himself hard in meditation and goes according to His will as He guides him in worldly matters. Thus both the aspects of life are taken care of and a full and meaningful life is ensured. A *Manmukh*, on the other hand, acts in a contrary manner with the result that he suffers pain and unhappiness on both the aspects. A *Manmukh* remains subservient to lust. As a matter of fact, while performing his duties in life a man should be guided only by his Destiny

Guru Sahib has said :

“*O man,*

“*Why should you worry about the means of livelihood. God Himself has taken responsibility for your physical upkeep. He feeds the creature that dwells in the solid rock which is without an opening.*”

And about Fate :

“*This life is like an ocean. Make the effort (meditate on His Name) to cross, otherwise you will waste this life by indulging in matters worldly which are only an illusion and will not be of any help to you. Your life can be a complete success both materially as well as spiritually. But only a true Gurmukh can show you the way and only he can lead you.*”

Illustration : During the times of Shri Guru Arjan Dev Ji Maharaj there was a *Sikh* who supported his family by selling wood. He believed that in order to support his family he had to do physical labour. Once when he came to pay his obeisance to Guru Sahib he was asked to serve for some time at the house of the *Guru*. The *Sikh* said, “ My family is waiting for me. I shall buy and take home some dry ration, then only food will be cooked and the members of my family fed.”

“Take this thought out of your mind that you are feeding them. Have faith in God — the One who has given life to every one,” Guru Sahib said: “God has created the means for every one to live. Why should you worry about feeding your family ?” But the *Sikh* could not bring faith to what he was told. Then Guru Sahib decided that he be helped to have faith in God.

Guru Sahib gave him a letter and told the woodcutter that he could go home after delivering the letter to the person concerned, a follower of the *Guru*. When the *Sikh* (for whom he carried the letter) read the contents he told the carrier that he would have to stay there for two months, this being the order of the *Guru*. The woodcutter felt very uneasy and protested against such an order. He was firmly told by the *Sikh* that if he tried to disobey he would be forcibly kept there. So he had no option but to stay.

After waiting for him in vain the members of his family managed with the left-overs and went to sleep. Next morning the neighbours, who were aware of the family’s pathetic circumstances, sent over food for them. This went on for 3-4 days. After that the neighbours raised funds by contributing money and bought them rations enough to last them during the difficult times. The good and the kindly neighbours arranged for a job for the man’s son and even solemnized the marriages of his son and daughter and built them a pucca house. Now the members of the family found that they were happy (without him). They thought that he was unlucky for the family and believed that his disappearance was a good omen for their prosperous future.

After two months, the *Sikh* rushed towards his house, fearing that his family might have perished during this interval. On reaching home he was shocked to see a house at the spot where his hut had stood. He enquired from his neighbours about the house and its owners. They told him every thing. By this time his family members, on seeing him there, shut the door on him as they thought it was better for them if he stayed away from home. On neighbours’ intervention the door (of his own home) was opened and he was let in. He became very happy to see his people in good shape but soon he realized the truthfulness of what Guru Sahib had said. He decided immediately to go to his *Guru*. He wept lying at his feet and begged the *Guru* that he be allowed to stay there to

serve the house of the Guru. He said he had realized the truth of Guru Sahib's words and he had decided to break the false ties that kept him bound to things that are not real. The Guru in his grace blessed him by accepting him as a follower.

A *Gurmukh* alone shows the true path

Q 21. *Kaun su akhar jit dhawat rehta - Is there a divine word that puts to an end mind's wanderings ?*

Answer : *Gurmukh akhar jit dhawat rehta* - When a man takes refuge with the true teacher, then alone the teacher will take pity on him and tell him the word which will bring him peace and tranquillity.

The story goes that once upon a time gods, demons and men were all surrounded by various evils.

Each of the three groups selected a representative who would go to Brahma to seek his help in finding a solution.

It is said that Brahma suggested to each one of them to concentrate on the letter 'D', meditate on it while sitting all by himself and then report back to Brahma Ji.

The gods said that for them, busy day and night enjoying all comforts, it meant '*Daman*' i.e. to kill the senses or exercise control over them. Indra acquired complete knowledge and, as it is believed, he imparted knowledge to king 'Pitrdan'. Men decided that for them 'D' meant '*Daan*' i.e. giving in charity.

Illustration : A king suffered from leprosy. One day he went to a saint and told him about the ailment. He was advised to practise charity. The king gave a lot in charity but it had no effect. The king came to the saint and said that he had done what he was advised to do but his disease persisted. The saint told him that he should give all in charity i.e. the beneficiary's desire be fulfilled. One day while the king was going around he saw a child crying. The king asked his mother the reason. She said one day the child saw a sweet meat (*ladoo*) and after that he was asking for one. The woman said that where ever she went begging for a *ladoo*, people made fun of her. One day a kindly person gave her a *ladoo* which she brought to the child and gave it in his hand. The child was very happy and started rolling it in his hands.

There appeared a monkey who snatched the *ladoo* from his hand. Since then the child had not stopped crying. The king ordered his servants to get a load of *laddos*. They were given to the child who ate them, held as many in his hands as he could and was very happy. As he had in full what he desired he was very happy and his state of happiness, brought about by the king, was accepted in heaven as *full* charity; the king was cured of the disease.

In the third place, the demons also considered the significance of the letter 'D'. They thought that as they were known as stone-hearted people they should try to be kind and show '*Daya*', that is be kind to others. As Prahlad had

also belonged to the demons but having shown kindness to living beings he had attained a unique position by the grace of God. He brought salvation not only to his family but to many others. Thus the letter ‘D’ suggested by Brahma Ji brought peace and solace to many.

Similarly Raja Bhoj and Manjh also received the message. Bhoj was a small child when his father died. Before he died, the father sent for his brother, Manjh, and asked him to look after Bhoj. “He be brought up in such a way that when it is time for him to be crowned king he should in every way be worthy of the position,” the father instructed. Till such time Manjh was to run the administration.

So Manjh started running the affairs of the state and Bhoj started learning all that he was supposed to know in order to be a good king. They say Bhoj was such a brilliant student that within a short time he learnt all that a good king needs to know. Manjh got worried over the way Bhoj was making progress for he thought Bhoj would soon be the king and Manjh would have to depend on him. The thought of losing control over the kingdom troubled him so much that he decided to get rid of Bhoj. He summoned his minister and told him to take Bhoj to jungle and kill him there. Manjh did not listen to the minister’s pleas and wanted his order to be carried out. The minister, obeying the king, took Bhoj to jungle and there he told him what Manjh’s order was. Bhoj, without

losing his calm, told the minister that he would like him to take a small note he would write for Manjh and thereafter he could feel free to kill him. When the minister pointed out that there was no paper or ink there, Bhoj took a few drops of blood from his thigh and with a reed wrote on a leaf of banyan tree.

It read:

“During *Satyuga* (the era when, according to Hindu mythology, only Truth prevailed) there had been a king by the name of Mandhata who ruled supreme over all the three kingdoms i.e. Earth, Heaven and the Domain that is underneath the earth. Even he could not take the planet earth with him (on his death). In *Treta*, there was the great king Ravana who, according to the myth, was so powerful that the sun and the moon were forced to run his kitchen and the god of wind (Pawan) swept his palace; Fire washed his clothes and the god of death remained chained to his bed. He was killed by Rama who built a bridge over the sea. But both Rama and Ravana at the time of death could carry nothing with them.

“In *Dwapar*, a king like Yudhishtira could not take any thing with him.”

Addressing Manjh it said: “You think after committing such a sin you will be able to take this *Earth* with you.”

On reading the *Shloka* such was its impact on the minister that he told Bhoj that he had not only given up the idea of

killing him but would defend him with all his might. He would never invite gods' wrath by killing the learned child that Bhoj was. He took Bhoj with him to his palace and kept him there in a small room. All arrangements for his stay were made and he was told not to venture out. He then handed over the note, written by Bhoj, to Manjh who was deeply shocked and repented greatly over what he had done. Such was the effect of the note on Manjh that he became unconscious and fell on the ground. When he regained consciousness he sent for the minister and said, "Either bring back Bhoj or prepare a funeral pyre for me so that I may put an end to my life." The minister told the king that Bhoj, after having been ordered to be killed, could not be brought back to life.

Manjh said that he was determined to end his life. He ordered for the necessary material and was prepared to put an end to his life by burning himself. The minister, sensing his determination, asked him not to lose hope as he had heard about a holy man who could bring a dead man back to life. The only way to bring Bhoj back to life was to find the saint.

Manjh directed his ministers to find the holy man and bring him at any cost. The minister had already taken a man into confidence who now appeared on the scene as a sadhu and brought Bhoj with him.

The king was overjoyed to see Bhoj alive, embraced him and shed tears of joy. He thanked God, rewarded the saint,

and the very next day held a special court and Bhoj was crowned as king. After installing him as king Manjh went in to seclusion and immersed himself in prayer to God. Thus he attained salvation in the company of holymen.

Now imagine what magic did this *Shloka* of a *Gurmukh* boy played and saved Manjh from committing a heinous sin.

Q 22. *Kaun updes jit dukh sukh samsehta* - Which teaching enables man to treat pleasure and pain alike?

Answer : *Gurmukh updes dukh sukh sam sehta* - It is only the *Gurmukh* who can maintain an equilibrium during good and bad days.

Illustration : There lived a Brahmin who had no knowledge of *Vedas* and *Shastras*. Financially he was not doing well at all. So he decided to go to the king to ask for charity. He left his house.

Finding a nice spot, on his way, he decided to take rest for some time. At that very spot there lived a *yogi* who could change his form at will. He appeared in the form of a snake. On being asked by the *yogi* the Brahmin told him that he was going to the king seeking alms. The Brahmin confessed to the snake that he knew nothing about *Vedas* and *Shastras*. The snake advised him to pose as an astrologer before the king and when asked to make a forecast he must tell him that he made only one forecast in a year. That year there would

be fire all around. He should advise the king to make arrangements accordingly to extinguish the fire in the city as well as in the forest. Saying this the snake went into its burrow and the Brahmin headed towards the king's palace. The king received him with due deference and the Brahmin told him all that he had been advised by the snake.

Fire broke out in the city and the forest. As arrangements had been made in advance there was very little damage done. The king was very happy. He liberally loaded the Brahmin with gifts and cash. Before he took leave he asked the king for a favour: one hundred labourers each carrying firewood should accompany him. This was arranged. When they reached near the hole of the snake, the Brahmin ordered the labourers to take off the load and pile up the wood near the hole and then set it on fire. He wanted that the snake be done away with so that it should not be able to share the secret with any one else.

The ungrateful Brahmin got the money exhausted fairly soon. He thought of going to the king again to ask for more money as he had almost started starving. He took the same path and passed near the same place and saw the snake and got frightened, thinking that the snake would take revenge. The snake, who understood his fear, reassured the man that he would not harm him and asked the Brahmin what he would tell the king this time. The Brahmin stated that he would repeat the same story. The snake told him that this time it would be

the excessive rains. The entire palace would be flooded and rains would cause havoc.

On reaching the palace he was received well by the king who asked him the same question and the Brahmin answered as per *yogi's* advice. The king got all arrangements made to control the floods. Sure enough there were heavy rains which brought floods. But all arrangements had been made. People did not have to suffer much. This convinced the king that the Brahmin was a great astrologer. He was greatly honoured and rewarded.

At the time of departure for his home, again the Brahmin asked for a favour. This time he asked for one hundred water containers made of leather and one hundred persons to carry them. In those days it was the usual practice to carry water from rivers in this fashion.

The king obliged him by ordering for the same. When these people (water carriers) reached the spot where the snake was supposed to live, the men were made to empty the containers so as to flood the tunnel where the snake lived. The ungrateful Brahmin reached home almost convinced that the flood had destroyed the snake.

He lived in comfort with the money for quite some time and decided to return to the king after exhausting it. Again he met the snake who could change forms (appearance) at will and got really scared of him but was again reassured by the

snake who wanted to know as to what he would tell the king this time. The Brahmin said he would again talk about fire. The snake advised him against it and urged him to tell the king that there would be peace and prosperity that year and the people would be happy and prosperous. This time the Brahmin was treble welcomed by the king who asked about the future and was told what the snake had instructed the Brahmin. It was exactly the same. This brought bigger rewards and honour for the Brahmin. Again he asked for a favour. This time he asked for milk, sugar, and goods needed for performing religious ceremonies and rituals. As the Brahmin reached the snake's hole he got all the milk sugar etc. thrown into it. After that the snake came out. The Brahmin paid his respectful obeisance and was asked the reason why he brought milk etc. this time. The Brahmin confessed that he was a sinner and despite all he had done to the snake he was helped by it. He asked to be forgiven. At this the snake said, "No one can cause any harm or bring comfort to another person. Man earns pain or pleasure because of his own actions. For the first two years I also underwent the same trouble that others had undergone. This year when it was peace and prosperity I also had my share accordingly. So no man can cause any harm to another living being. It is God who punishes or rewards us for our misdeeds or deeds. We get what we earn because of our actions and God treats us accordingly."

After listening to what he was told, the Brahmin set on his homeward journey.

It was a good lesson for the Brahmin. He understood the reality and accepted pain or misery as it came in accordance with God's will and he learnt to live in peace

He started preaching to the people that they should bow to the will of God whether they lived in comfort or misery.

This is what a *Gurmukh* does. He readily accepts both comfort and pain as Guru Sahib has said :

Q 23. *Kaun so chaal jit paarbrahm dhiyaye - How can man meditate his name ?*

Answer : *Gurmukh chal jit paarbrahm dhiyaye* - When a man, on finding a true teacher, becomes a *Gurmukh* and can successfully meditate on God's Name.

Explanation : It is very difficult to act like a *Gurmukh*. People treat well a man who does good to others and identical treatment is meted out to one who thinks ill of others. But it is only a *Gurmukh* who does good to a man who thinks ill of others. No one except God or His own dear *Gurmukh* can do this.

Illustration : There was a holyman who led a contented life. He would go asking for alms by stopping at the door and said, "Hari Narayan !" If he got enough from one house he would not stop at the next one. As usual he said "Hari

Narayan!” at the door step of a house where lived a woman known for her ill-temper. Instead of giving anything to the mendicant she said something unpleasant.

The saint, who was kind-hearted and never lost his cool, took little notice of what she said and walked away.

Next day when the saint again said “Hari Narayan !” the lady lost her temper and said worse things about the saint who again ignored her. The third day the holyman decided that there was need for him to do something to help the wretched woman. This time the woman was busy plastering the walls of her house with a piece of cloth smeared with mud. As the saint said “Hari Narayan !” the woman threw that very cloth (full of mud) she was holding at the face of the saint. The saint said with a smile, “I thank the Lord for enabling you to give something (as an offering) at least. May God bless you for this charitable act.” The noble-natured saint said this and went towards the river, had a dip and washed the muddy rag clean. After drying the same he used it as holy incense by burning it before the image of the god in the evening. The moment the cloth was lighted the lady, because of the grace and kindness shown by the holy man, felt the sudden presence of a light in the dark corners of her heart and God blessed her with good sense. She shed tears of repentance and made up her mind to go to the holyman the next morning and ask him for his forgiveness. The holyman was there at her door to

bring salvation to the lady. As soon as she saw him she fell at his feet, cried her heart out and begged to be forgiven. The holyman, reading the state of her mind, prayed for her and asked her to meditate on His *Name*. The lady, the above story clearly indicates, treading the path of a *Gurmukh*, attained salvation.

Illustration : The son of a king was born with a hunch and his daughter had three instead of two breasts. And his minister had a son who was blind.

The king and the minister thought that the three children, when they became adults, would not be able to perform their usual duties. So it would be better to send them away to a far off place. The king ordered his servant to make arrangements for their stay out of his kingdom, somewhere in the forest, where they could be brought up quietly. They were sent over to an isolated place. There lived a saint near by, who, taking pity on the three, decided to act as their teacher. Reading their future (as the saint knew the science) the saint could foretell that the three would distinguish themselves in life and he accordingly informed the king about it. But the king could see no future for them and ignored the holyman’s prediction. The three started growing up under the tutelage of the saint. Besides the studies, they would collect wild fruit, ate the same and took some for the saint; and they learnt to pray too and meditate under his guidance.

One day while they were wandering in the forest the two saw a beautiful tree that bore beautiful fruit. They felt tempted to taste the fruit which was beyond their reach. The minister's son being blind could not see the fruit and the king's son being a hunchback could not reach the fruit on the tree.

So it was decided that the prince, while standing on the shoulders of the minister's son, would pluck the fruit and give the same to the other two. The minister's son tasted two pieces which turned out to be sour. He thought the prince was keeping the sweet ones for himself and his sister and passing only the bad ones to him. In a fit of anger he threw the prince off his shoulders, the prince fell with his back hitting a rock.

As his back touched the rock the prince's hunch was gone and he stood straight. When the princess saw her brother being hit she felt bad for her brother and threw a stone at the son of the minister whose head started bleeding. He got hurt and in turn kicked the princess on the chest.

As soon as she was hurt, her third breast disappeared and she became absolutely normal. When the minister's son recovered consciousness he found that he could see. With bleeding the flow of blood to the veins became regulated. The veins started functioning and so did his eyes. Now the three of them were perfectly normal.

They ate the fruit and brought some for the saint who was very happy on seeing them. They narrated the entire incident

to him and the saint said that it was because of their prayers and meditation that they had come out of the turmoil. He informed the king of what had happened and asked him to take the children back home. The king and the minister were overjoyed to know this. They came to the forest and paid their obeisance to the saint and expressed gratitude to him. The saint told the king that this could happen only when one prayed to God as a *Gurmukh*. He asked the king to lead the life of a *Gurmukh*. Thus he would enjoy a perfect life. The king sought the saint's permission to take the children home, which was readily granted. Thus the king returned to the palace with his children where the occasion was celebrated in a big way. Soon after the king got his son crowned and his daughter married to a prince; he chose for himself the path of complete devotion to God. The minister's son, as well, rose to the position and the status due to him.

Q 24. *Kin bidh kirtan gaye jeeo* - How should His praise be sung ?

Answer : *Gurmukh kirtan gaye jeeo* - Only by being a *Gurmukh* one can sing His praise and realize the Truth.

Prahlad Bhakt had taught all his disciples nine ways of worship or devotion

The first is hearing His praise and the second one is singing His praises. There is no equivalent to this devotion. Man has only one tongue whereas *Sheshnag* has a thousand mouths.

Even he can not sing all the praises of God and can not perceive and sing God's greatness. If a pen is made out of all the vegetation of the world and the Earth is treated as a piece of paper and the waters of all the oceans turn into ink and the God of air *Pawan* is to write the praises on such a canvas it shall not be possible to fully sing or pen His praise. The art of singing God's praises (*kirtan*) knows no limit. Only Lord Shiva and Narad Muni can comprehend it. Once when Shiv Ji performed *Kirtan* (sang god's praise) such was the effect that water started oozing out of the Lord's body; it was collected by Brahma in a container he carried. No one should be unduly surprised over it. At times the singing of sacred hymns can melt and affect even a stone-hearted man who is moved to tears.

Illustration : Luv and Kush, the two sons of Sri Ram Chandra, who grew in the forest under the guidance of Rishi Valmiki, sang *kirtan* in God's praise out of love and devotion in such a manner that they went into a trance and those who listened to them including birds and beasts also forgot about themselves and their surroundings.

Once Luv and Kush, holding a copy of Ramayana in their hands, reached Ayodhya and sang so well that the people of Ayodhya felt completely enraptured. People took them to the court of Sri Ram Chandra and the people there, including Lord Rama, came under their spell. Lord Rama was so impressed that he made them sit on his throne. Lord Rama

knew everything about this universe. They told him on being asked all; he still asked them about their parents and they said they had grown and been brought up in the ashram of Rishi Valmiki and did not know more than that. When Valmiki was sent for he told Lord Rama that the two were his own sons; hearing this, Lord Rama called back his wife Sita, gave her the honour that was due to her and made the boys sit on his throne. Valmiki also received the respect and honour that he deserved. This proved that Luv and Kush attained the position of *Gurmukhs* because of Valmiki's training and performed *kirtan* so well that no one remained unaffected, and started meditating.

Illustration : Shri Guru Nanak Dev sang His praise. Such was the influence of singing God's praises that nine-tenths of the land and those living on it, men, women, birds, beasts, and vegetation could not remain unaffected by Guru Nanak's immortal sayings and singing. It is not possible to describe the effect of singing. If some wishes to try this, he should only read from *Shri Guru Granth Sahib* to have joy that is celestial and eternal. All that the *Gurus* spoke can be composed in "Raags". The *Sikhs* have got this heavenly gift from Shri Guru Arjan Dev Ji Maharaj.

In those days, there were Satta and Balwand, two great Raagis or singers who rendered all recitations and compositions in the classical music. The story goes that their inflated ego started playing a negative role in their lives. They

thought people flocked to the Guru's court to listen to their singing. To their bad luck, they even thought (and perhaps said also) that people attended the congregations only to listen to their singing.

They reached the Guru's court early in the morning to sing "*Asa di var*" – hymns that are sung early in the morning in praise of God. They needed money for the marriage of their daughter. They requested Guru Arjan Dev Ji for monetary help. He asked them to have faith in God, they would get all the money which came as offerings the next day. As God willed there was very little money on the following day. They got very angry and did not turn up to perform the next day, thinking that people came to the Guru only because of their Kirtan. Guru Arjan Dev Ji, who loved kirtan, sent for them but they refused to come. They ignored the Guru's word and were disrespectful even to the *Sikh* who went to persuade them to return to the Guru's court to perform *kirtan*.

Guru Arjan Dev Ji Maharaj, for whose glimpse *Rishis* and holymen craved, went himself to their house, stood in the hallway, sent word, then went to the room where Satta and Balwand were sitting on raised platforms. They showed no consideration for Guru Arjan Dev Ji. Despite all this, Guru Ji requested them to start singing again at the congregations, but their response was insulting. Guru Ji, being embodiment of humility, still did not take any notice.

The two crossed all limits and referred to Guru Nanak Dev Ji in derogatory terms which Guru Arjan Dev Ji could not stand and they were cursed: "You will be lepers. No one will care to see you, neither will anyone put a good word for you." Saying this, Guru Arjan Dev Ji returned to the Darbar Sahib and made it known to all that if anyone ever recommended that they be pardoned such a man shall be made to ride on a donkey with his face smeared with black dye. This pronouncement had an immediate impact on the people.

After this Guru Sahib blessed his *Sikhs* that from then onwards, they themselves would perform *kirtan* and sing the praises of Lord Almighty. As the *Sikhs*, obeying the command of the fifth Master, started performing *kirtan* they learnt Raags and became apt in classical music. And the *Sikhs* enjoy this blessing till this day.

The story of the professional singers is long but it needs to be said here that the two brothers contracted leprosy. Nobody ever visited them. Anyone who saw them would turn his face away. When they could not bear it any more, they requested many *Sikhs* to intervene on their behalf but no one ever dared to do so.

After all they approached Bhai Ladha of Lahore. After giving it careful thought he decided to take them to Amritsar. Before entering the city he, in accordance with what Guru

Sahib had said, rode a donkey after smearing his face with black dye and wearing a string of old shoes round his neck and went round the city before coming to the Guru to request him to forgive them. When Guru Arjan Dev Ji observed that Bhai Ladha had literally obeyed the Guru's word, he was happy and said, "Blessed is Bhai Ladha for taking up such a cause. There will hardly be any one like you, prepared to undergo humiliation for some one else." The Guru further said that the two should sing in praise of Guru Nanak to undo what they had done by uttering unbecoming words about the Master. Then only they could be cured of their suffering.

Then the two sang a few couplets praising Guru Nanak from the core of their hearts. These lines find a place in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* and are to be sung in Raag *Ramkali*.

Thus they got cured of their affliction.. Such is the effect of music !

In earlier times, when people could sing in a Raag they could achieve the desired effect. By singing *Deepak Raag* lamps got lit even without lighting them. And to have rain one had to sing *Malhar*. Similarly *Basant Raag*, which for ten months retires to heaven and comes to earth only for two months, rouses new hopes and aspirations even amongst those who are dejected and live in utter despondence. Kabir liked *Raag Gauri* by singing which men went into a trance. Mira Bai also loved to sing in praise of her Beloved and she would

be so engrossed in singing that she completely forgot all about herself and her surroundings. People's emotions got completely swayed (of course in a positive sense).

Bhakt Narsi loved *Raag Kedar* and sang with total dedication. Such was the effect that garlands around the neck of god's image would drop down and rest around the neck of the Bhakt. It is said once when Narsi Bhakt, in order to feed some holyman (who had arrived unexpectedly), went to buy some items on credit; the grocer demanded that he would get the grocery only if he agreed to mortgage *Raag Kedar* so dear to his heart. Narsi did this and never sang the Raag he so loved. As a result the garland of flowers on the god's neck stopped dropping down and coming round his neck.

A small man who was jealous of Narsi and wanted to let him down, went to the king and reported the incident and asked the king to come to Narsi's house to verify the fact, knowing full well that Narsi had stopped singing *Raag Kedar*.

The king, responding to the man's request, came over to the residence of Narsi and asked him to sing *Raag Kedar*. It is said that God can not see his devotees or those who meditate on His Name being let down. In the garb of a servant, God Himself got the matter settled with the grocer and thus Narsi was once again free to sing *Raag Kedar*. As he sang, the garland dropped down from the god's neck and rested around Narsi's neck. The king came down to his knees and

paid obeisance to Narsi and asked to be forgiven. The man who thought and spoke ill of Narsi could not save his face and was duly punished for his malicious report.

Guru Sahib has said that God got the temple turned the other way in order to show his back to those egoistic persons who thought ill of Namdev and turned his face towards Namdev. It is not every one's lot to perform *kirtan* in such a manner. And one who performs *kirtan* as a *Gurmukh* alone gets an exalted position.

God himself designs and executes the way *Gurmukhs* have to live. God brings *Gurmukhs* to this world and He Himself makes them do what is to be done. God makes them appear and do good to the world and He Himself defends them. God, out of His divine love, forms, creates the forms (beings) of many *Gurmukhs*. And after have done good to the world takes them back in His form, i.e. they become one with God. They merge themselves with His sublime form. This is the quality of *Gurmukhs*. This is the grace of God that they enjoy.

All these forms are of one God, just as all ornaments are made of gold. *Gurmukhs*, right from the beginning of time, are His part and remain so till the end. Even in the interregnum they are known as forms of the same God just as it is said: "There was corn in the beginning. There was corn at the end and it (the same corn) was transformed in the form of plants.

So God maintains His being in the beginning, at the end and in the middle also. Only he prevails. This is what is important to consider : *Gurmukhs* are God's own image. But you rarely come across a learned man – the enlightened one who knows (understands) God through the *Gurmukhs*."

Whosoever, with the grace of *Guru*, has understood God is the form of God.

Satnam Sri Waheguru.

