

POWER OF PRAYER



Raghbir Singh Bir

Books authored

by

Bhai Sahib Bhai Raghbir Singh Ji Bir

have enlightened

&

uplifted

many souls.

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Foreward

No doubt, *Waheguru* is the creator as well as the preserver of the whole universe. His divine laws are just and fair as well as inexorable. It is also an acknowledged fact that man reaps what he sows. Our deeds determine our achievements. As we sow so shall we reap. We have to bear the consequences of some of the deeds of our earlier lives along with the consequences of our deeds done in this life. Some residual effect of our present day deeds also gets carried away to our next birth and next life. In this way, this cycle of cause and effect continues to operate. There are several illustrations in the *Gurbani* which substantiate this cause-effect thesis. The *Gurbani* states that a human soul wastes several lives engrossed in the vices of nursing feelings of enmity, and hostility towards others; and in lust, anger, malice attachment, falsehood, greed, fraud and several other deadly sins and vices. Now,

when our soul has taken a human birth, it is our prayer to Waheguru to show His grace, mercy and benevolence to rid us of all these vices. Gurbani states :

ਇਆਹੁ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਬਿਹਾਨੇ ਕਈ ਜਨਮ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਖਿ ਲੇਹੁ ਆਪਨ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਮ॥

In their ways man has passed away many lives.

O Lord, redeem Nanak, by showing Thine mercy.

We pray because we believe, and it is an accepted fact as well that Divine grace and benevolence are also integral parts of the eternal Divine laws and the Divine Will. Man makes a complete surrender before the Divine and prays only after exhausting all his human egocentric efforts to solve a problem. A prayer made with complete devotion and sincerity gets certainly answered because it is the nature of the Divine Waheguru to protect those who seek His grace :

ਜੋ ਸਰਣਿ ਆਵੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਕੰਠਿ ਲਾਵੈ ਇਹੁ ਬਿਰਦੁ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਸੰਦਾ॥

ਅੰਗ - 544

Who-so-ever seeks the Lord's protection, him He hugs to His bosom. This is the quality of the Lord.

S. Raghbir Singh Bir has laid stress on this aspect of prayer in this book. He believes that

Waheguru is our real parent and He is thoroughly aware of all our needs and problems. He is Omnipotent and Almighty. He has been eternally our preserver and provider, and protector as well. His bounty and benevolence have always been with us. But we, human beings, ignoring such a benevolent and loving Waheguru, stray away and get estranged from Him and get entangled in the meshes of sinful deeds. Raghbir Singh Bir explains this phenomenon of human estrangement from Waheguru and God's benevolence through an illustration. He says : Waheguru is eternally compassionate and benevolent. He does not discriminate between human beings, be they good or evil. As the sun rises it spreads its sunshine over every earthly object. But those who shut themselves inside their houses and shut their doors and windows, remain deprived of the sunshine. Similarly, those who erect a wall of ignorance between Waheguru and themselves, get deprived of Waheguru's bountiful benevolence and grace.

S. Raghbir Singh Bir has laid out a roadmap for all of us to lead a life of faith and bliss by clearing most of our doubts and disbelief about

God through the narration of his heartfelt experiences and illustrations from Gurbani. To confirm our faith in God's benevolence, he tells us that Waheguru is as trustworthy and benevolent to us as a trustworthy and generous mother for her innocent child. Waheguru is as instant and spontaneous in his generous response as a mother is to a small infant's needs.

Shri Bir was an honest human being, a devout believer in Gurbani, a determined spiritual seeker and practitioner of *Nam Simran*. He has tried to bring home the Gurbani's edict that an earnest human prayer never goes unanswered “ਬਿਰਥੀ ਕਦੇ ਨ ਹੋਵਈ ਜਨ ਕੀ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ॥” through the innumerable relevant quotations from the Gurbani. He has also mentioned the four conditionalities for the successful fulfillment of a human prayer. These are : a complete faith in Waheguru; genuineness of human prayer; complete trust in the omnipotence of Waheguru, and a total faith and hope in the fulfillment of one's prayer.

The present book “*Ardas Shakti*” like the two other books “*Bandginama*” and “*Simran Mahima*”

written by the same author has also found a whole-hearted favour and approval of the readers. Its eighth edition, after the necessary corrections and a thorough revision, has already reached the readers. An earnest effort has been made to translate this book into English in order to make it reach a wider spectrum of readers across the world. Prof. Kulwant Singh has accomplished this strenuous and challenging task of translating this book into English. Every effort has been made to capture the subtle spiritual nuances of this Gurbani based text in a matching appropriate linguistic English idiom and diction with minimum deviations from the original text. The primary aim during this translation has been to convey the essence of the spiritual experience described in the book to the English readers. The task of translation is even more difficult than creative writing. It requires to preserve the fundamental thesis of a creative work while expressing it in a different medium without tampering with the originality and spontaneity of the author's approach. Prof. Kulwant has tried to accomplish this task with an appropriate linguistic skill and insight. He has recently retired from the

Post Graduate Department of English from Government College Chandigarh after teaching English language and literature for thirty years. Myself and Atam Science Trust are sincerely indebted to him for his services as a translator. I hope the readers will benefit from this translated version of the already popular version in Punjabi. Atam Science Trust richly deserves appreciation for this noble deed.

(Dr. Jagjit Singh)

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Felicitation

Although it is not very sensible to comment upon the writing of a spiritually enlightened person, but it is customary to felicitate an enlightened person for his great creative work. Enlightened persons not only enlighten and instruct the devout congregations but also leave behind them footprints for the guidance of spiritual seekers for their benefit. The revered late Shri Bir not only guided and enlightened many spiritual seekers during his lifetime, but also showed the spiritual path to many others through his writings.

Late Shri "Bir" was an institution in himself from whom everybody sought spiritual enlightenment. Whosoever came into contact with him, got enriched with spirituality and felt blessed. Such blessed persons are really fortunate. These blessed ones get deliverance from the vicious cycle of birth and death and become seekers of truth. Thousands of such persons have inherited the spiritual legacy of Shri 'Bir'.

Shri Bir is well-known to the followers of

spiritual Therapy. Perusal of his books leads to the understanding and knowledge of Divine attributes. The human soul enters the Divine threshold and arrives at its real Home after crossing the material hurdles. This Divine Home is the ultimate reality which is everlasting and which controls and governs the whole universe. A firm belief in the identity of this Ultimate Reality and its complete understanding are the initial landmarks of this powerful path of prayer.

This book is the creative essence of Shri Bir's spiritual experience and insights. Its repeated study removes all misconceptions about the power of human prayer and leads to the understanding of the process of prayer and its underlying philosophy.

ਬਿਰਥੀ ਕਦੇ ਨਾ ਹੋਵਈ ਜਨ ਕੀ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ॥

ਅੰਗ - 819

The prayer of God's slave goes not vain ever.

The moment a devotee understands the real import of this divine statement, all his wishes and desires find their fulfilment instantly. Really blessed are those supplicants which attain this state of praying to the Divine. Like a lighthouse in the ocean, Bhai Bir, through his writings, guides and leads the spiritual seekers/pilgrims to

reach their destination of Divine realization. Alas! How many educated persons, after reading a large number of diverse books, are led astray into non-belief and skepticism and lose their balance of mind and mental health. This book will surely prove very beneficial to such a misguided category of young readers.

This author wishes the readers of this book to supplicate and pray with complete humility and devotion to the Almighty, Omnipotent God to grant them the spiritual strength and stamina to read and understand this book. He advises us to read this book repeatedly and understand its deeper nuances.

When they understand its underlying philosophy, they must apply its postulates during their prayer. They must also wait eagerly for its beneficial results. These will definitely materialize.

This book has been printed for the fifth time for the propagation of its message by the "Atam Science Trust" It is believed that it will enlighten the path of many skeptics and the estranged. Many *gursikhs* will stand rewarded through the study of this book.

- *Muhinder Singh*

Preface

There is an elaborate description of the Divine attributes. The description includes not only the unlimited vastness of the Divine but also the fact that a human being can tap this Divine source through faith, devotion deep meditation and detachment for the fulfilment of all his desires and aspirations :

ਇਛਾ ਪੂਰਕੁ ਸਰਬ ਸੁਖਦਾਤਾ ਹਰਿ
ਜਾ ਕੈ ਵਸਿ ਹੈ ਕਾਮਧੇਨਾ॥
ਸੋ ਐਸਾ ਹਰਿ ਧਿਆਈਐ ਮੇਰੇ ਜੀਅੜੇ
ਤਾ ਸਰਬ ਸੁਖ ਪਾਵਹਿ ਮੇਰੇ ਮਨਾ॥

ਅੰਗ - 669

The Lord is the fulfiller of aspirations and the Giver of all the comforts. In His power is the elysian cow.

So, O my soul, meditate, on such Lord, then alone, shalt thou obtain all the comforts, O my Soul.

The Gurbani of Guru Granth Sahib gives the message that through prayer based on faith and devotion *Waheguru*, the Divine God, human beings can seek fulfilment of their desires. Why does God behave in this manner? Why does He

pander to the prayers of His devotees? Why does He discriminate between His devotees and the non-believers? Does it mean that God loves flattery and sycophancy because He discriminates between the two categories of human beings? How can a deity having proclivity to sycophancy and flattery be just and impartial?

There is a scientific explanation of this query in Guru Granth Sahib. It explains that Waheguru is always just and fair. His laws are inexorable. Neither His laws nor His own identity undergoes any change. His laws are uniformly applicable to one and all. As the sun spreads its sunshine for everyone, so Waheguru dispenses his justice uniformly for everyone. He is kind and compassionate. He neither discriminates nor favours anyone, whether he is good or bad. But as Sun's rays fall over everyone, only those receive their warmth and light who keep their doors and windows open and who venture outside to bask in the sunlight. Those who remain confined inside their homes and keep their doors and windows shut remain deprived of the Sun's light and warmth. Similarly, Waheguru is kind and compassionate to everyone, but those who create

barriers of ignorance against His grace, remain deprived of the Divine benediction. This denial of Divine grace to such individuals is due to their lack of faith in prayer. It is these barriers of lack of faith, devotion, belief and traces of various kinds of doubts about Divine grace which create a wedge between the Divine and the human. A small pond of water, connected to a vast ocean through a small rivulet, remains filled with water so long as the connecting rivulet remains clean and its channel free from weeds. The moment this linking channel is choked with rubble and weeds, the pond of water will also dry up. There is a similar kind of communicational channel of prayer between the human and the Divine. The moment this communicational channel gets choked with doubt, skepticism and lack of faith and disbelief, the link between the human and the Divine is snapped. It is human ignorance and lack of faith which are responsible for this failure of communication rather than the Divine grace and benediction.

Effort has been made in this book to list those doubts and roadblocks of disbelief which render human prayer ineffective and inhibit its

communication with the Divine. It also lays down a road map for the conditions to prevail which restore this snapped communication between the human and the Divine. The moment we learn the true art of praying, we can immediately tap the Omnipotent Divine Force to solve all our problems.

Raghubir Singh 'Bir'

The Philosophy of Prayer

ਬਿਰਥੀ ਕਦੇ ਨਾ ਹੋਵਈ ਜਨ ਕੀ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ॥

ਅੰਗ - 819

The prayer of God's slave goes not vain ever.

ਜੋ ਜੋ ਕਹੈ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਪਹਿ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਤਤਕਾਲ ਹੋਇ ਆਵੈ॥

ਅੰਗ - 403

Whatever the servant ask his Master, forthwith comes to pass.

“For verily I say unto you, that whosoever, shall say unto this mountain, be thou cast into sea; and shall not doubt in his heart but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore, I say unto you, what things howsoever ye desire when ye pray believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them”. - Lord Jesus Christ

A vendor crossed a street selling sugar candies. A child happened to look at this vendor and felt an urge to consume a sugar candy. But he had no money. Asking the vendor to wait for a minute, the child went inside and begged his

mother for money. The mother gave a coin to the child; and the child had a sugar candy. The child kept the vendor waiting in the street on the basis of his confidence that his mother would never refuse him the money. The mother, on the other hand, could not refuse money to her son on the same basis that her son would lose faith in her if she refused her request.

It is with this child like faith that we should pray to God and He will grant all our wishes with the same parental affection. The only condition is that we must have the childlike faith and confidence in the Divine for the fulfilment of our wishes.



Prayer/Supplication

Human prayer is a dialogue between man and God. The first and foremost condition for prayers is that a devotee must have faith in the existence and identity of the Divine. He must feel assured that God exists and prevails everywhere and at all times.

How can one hope to have one's prayer accepted who prays with a wavering faith, having doubts about God's existence all the time? Ninety five percent of our prayers go unanswered because we pray with a wavering faith and doubt in our mind. In other words, we do not know the way to pray. Why should God, who is Omniscient having the knowledge of our innermost secrets, answer our prayers which are merely customary and ritualistic rather than genuine and sincere? Does it not amount to a mockery both of our prayer as well God when we pray to Him with an insincere heart and doubtful mind.

Our prayers remain unanswered because we have neither been instructed how to pray nor do we know ourselves the way to prayer. Since our daily prayers remain unanswered, our faith in prayer goes on dwindling every day. Among the whole congregation of people standing in prayer with folded hands, only a rare individual has a firm faith in God's Omnipotence, which is a precondition for every prayer. Very often, we pray with a divided heart and a dwindling faith. A skeptical mind, unsure of God's existence and Omnipotence, prays to God in desperation after he has exhausted all avenues to solve his problem. A typical prayer of such a fractured mind runs somewhat like this : "Oh God, I have never seen you; but I have heard from my elders and through the reading of our scriptures that God exists. But since I have failed in all my human efforts and mental intelligence to sort out my problem, I wish and pray that some kind of God should exist and address my grievance. Oh God, if You exist and respond, please listen to my prayer and answer my prayer. I still have my doubts about Your existence and Omnipotence to solve human problems. But having failed in all

my endeavours to sort out my problem, I am taking a recourse to prayer as a last resort to seek a solution." A prayer made with such a split state of mind can never materialize since it is based on a wrong premise of having doubts about the very identity of God. It is illogical to pray to an entity in whose very existence one does not completely believe. Such a prayer with a fractured faith can never be answered as a boat with holes in its floor can never reach a shore. As it is necessary to plug all the holes of a boat before launching it on a sea or river, similarly it is necessary to remove all kinds of doubts, and traces of disbelief from one's mind about God's identity before making a prayer to Him for any boon. A devotee in prayer must have the same level of faith in God as a child has in his mother's capacity to feed him.

ਤੀਨੇ ਤਾਪ ਨਿਵਾਰਣਹਾਰਾ ਦੁਖ ਹੰਤਾ ਸੁਖ ਰਾਸਿ॥

ਤਾ ਕਉ ਬਿਘਨੁ ਨ ਕੋਊ ਲਾਗੈ ਜਾ ਕੀ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਆਗੈ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ॥

ਅੰਗ - 71

The Lord is the Remover of the three fevers. He is the Destroyer of distress and the stock of peace. No obstacle befalls him, who prayeth before his Lord.

2

For a prayer to be successful, a devotee must repose his total faith in the Omniscience and Omnipotence of God. But faith alone will not suffice, it must be combined with some other coditionalities for the success of a prayer.

Along with faith, a devotee must ensure the genuineness of his prayer. If a supplicant is not convinced of the genuineness of his prayer, it will remain unanswered. For example, such absurd demands from God as fulfillment of one's desire of acquiring a neighbour's wealth, or making the whole world subservient to one's own dictates, can never be fulfilled since the supplicant himself is not convinced of their genuineness or reasonableness. Most of our prayers remain unanswered because we ourselves are not convinced of their genuineness. The golden rule of prayer is : First deserve then desire.

As in a shooting competition, for hitting a target, possession of a gun alone is not sufficient. One must have a good aiming capability as well. Even after being in possession of a gun and a good aiming quality, one cannot hit a target in the absence of a fixed target. Even with the

possession all the three ingredients of a gun, a target and a right aim, one fails to hit the target if somebody disturbs a shooter at the time of pressing the trigger. In the same way, for a prayer to be answered, all the required ingredients of a prayer must be utilized in perfect combination. Those who fail to get their prayers answered should learn how to pray rather than abandon the path of prayer. As two plus two always make four, a proper prayer made in a proper way always gets realized. Before one prays, one must know how to pray.

Prayer acquires the most valuable place in the life of a *Gursikh* devotee if he succeeds in mastering the technique of proper prayer after meeting all the requirements of a prayer. Such a devotee will realize that there is neither any dearth of anything in the kingdom of God nor does He (God) disappoint anyone. A supplicant can get his every wish fulfilled provided he knows the true art of supplication. As Sun's light grants warmth and light to every object which exposes itself to it, so God grants every wish of a supplicant who surrenders his self before Him (God). But if a person sitting under shade accuses sunshine of discrimination, he is ignorant of the

temperament of sunshine. It is necessary to give up the comfort of shady coolness to receive warmth and light of the sunlight. The Sun light grants warmth and light voluntarily to a person who has renounced the shade. Similarly, it is necessary to meet all the requirements of prayer and make a proper supplication. Once these requirements of a prayer are fulfilled, God Himself grants the prayer of a supplicant through one of His myriad ways of fulfilment.

So we must understand the technique and power of prayer. We should pray only for those things which our own conscience regards to be genuine. A child asking his mother's permission for eating rubbish will only get a rebuff, but his demand for a feed for nourishment will get an instant nod. So God refuses to grant our prayers when we pray for things which are either harmful for us or are at the cost of other similar creatures of God.

ਜੀਅ ਕੀ ਬਿਰਥਾ ਹੋਇ ਸੁ ਗੁਰ ਪਹਿ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ਕਰਿ॥

ਛੋਡਿ ਸਿਆਣਪ ਸਗਲ ਮਨੁ ਤਨੁ ਅਰਪਿ ਧਰਿ॥

ਅੰਗ - 519

*Regarding thy minds' woe, make supplication
before thy Guru.*

*Forsake thou all thy cleverness and dedicate unto
Him thy mind and body.*

3

As man could not utilize the benefits of electricity till he became fully conversant with the basic laws of electricity, similarly man can not derive full benefits from human prayer till he understands the basic principles of prayer. Basic laws, whether these are of electricity or prayer, operate uniformly without any favour or prejudice towards anyone.

Even when man was ignorant of the laws of electricity, it used to illuminate the skies occasionally through lightening from the clouds. Similarly, even when man was unaware of the principles of prayer, it used to provide an occasional relief to the bereaving persons. As lightening, even now, illuminates the sky not at man's bidding but when laws of electricity or lightening come into operation, similarly, human prayer is answered when its basic principles find their application. But as occurrence of lightening is not subject to human bidding, similarly fulfilment of human prayer sometime is also beyond the realm of human wish.

As electrical gadgets do not function when there is a slight disruption in the electric current

due to certain technical fault, similarly human prayer remains unanswered due to some kind of violation of the laws of prayer. As a leaking electric current gives a shock to human touch, similarly non-fulfilment of prayer shakes the faith of a supplicant. For a prayer to be successful requires complete understanding and proper application of the spiritual laws governing an act of prayer. Beneficial comforts derived from electricity pale into insignificance as compared to the benedictions of human prayer performed according to the prescribed laws of prayer.

As has been repeatedly mentioned in the earlier pages, a supplicant must have a firm faith both in the existence of God and genuineness of human prayer. We shall now explain the third principle of prayer without which a prayer based on two earlier principles would remain unfulfilled. A prayer will remain unfulfilled even if performed with a faith in God's existence and genuineness of one's prayer if a supplicant has doubts about the Omnipotence of God. For example, a person suffering from an incurable affliction as per the declared expert medical opinion, prays to God with a complete faith in His existence as well as the genuineness of his

own prayer cannot be relieved of his affliction so long as he doubts the healing powers of God because his affliction has been declared as incurable by the doctors. With his doubt in the Omnipotence of God, his prayer will remain unanswered.

There should be such a steely firmness in the faith of a supplicant in the Omnipotence of God that his own doubts and opinions should be of no consequence in the face of his faith. His faith in God's almightiness and healing powers should have the strength and firmness of a granite rock in the midst of an ocean whom the mighty waves of the ocean cannot dismantle from its position. He should realize that the end of his human efforts, the intelligence and shrewdness to deal with his own afflictions is not the end of God's spiritual and healing powers as well. What is the distinction between the human and the Divine if the power of the Divine also ends with the end of human power? When we declare our belief and faith in the Omnipotence of God, it clearly means that Divine power is myriad times more powerful than human powers. It means that the power of the Divine is capable of accomplishing even those tasks which human intelligence regards

impossible to be accomplished. Guru Arjan Dev Ji refers to such a Divine attribute of Omnipotence to deal with boundary situations. Guru Ji states that God can not only bring about a deliverance from pain, poverty, affliction and tension but create a counter condition of perfect comfort and happiness in the life of a supplicant caught in a boundary situation if he declares his complete faith in the existence and omnipresence of God.

ਜਾ ਕਉ ਮੁਸਕਲੁ ਅਤਿ ਬਣੈ ਢੋਈ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਦੇਇ॥

ਲਾਗੂ ਹੋਏ ਦੁਸਮਨਾ ਸਾਕ ਭਿ ਭਜਿ ਖਲੇ॥

ਸਭੋ ਭਜੈ ਆਸਰਾ ਚੁਕੈ ਸਭੁ ਅਸਰਾਉ॥

ਚਿਤਿ ਆਵੈ ਓਸੁ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਲਗੈ ਨਾ ਤਤੀ ਵਾਉ॥

ਅੰਗ - 70

*He who is confronted with dire difficulty and
whom none offers any asylum,*

*When friends turn into enemies and even the
relations flee away, and when all the support gives
way and all the succours is at an end,*

*If he then remembers the Supreme Lord, even the
hot wind shall not touch him.*

ਜੇ ਕੋ ਹੋਵੈ ਦੁਬਲਾ ਨੰਗ ਭੁਖ ਕੀ ਪੀਰ॥

ਦਮੜਾ ਪਲੈ ਨਾ ਪਵੈ ਨਾ ਕੋ ਦੇਵੈ ਧੀਰ॥

ਸੁਆਰਥੁ ਸੁਆਉ ਨਾ ਕੋ ਕਰੇ ਨਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਕਾਜੁ॥

ਚਿਤਿ ਆਵੈ ਓਸੁ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਤਾ ਨਿਹਚਲੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਰਾਜੁ॥

ਅੰਗ - 70

*If someone be weak from the pangs of poverty and
hunger, and if he has got no money in his pocket,*

and there be none to give him consolation, and if no one were to gratify his aim and desire, and no work of his be accomplished;

And if he in his heart, remembers the Supreme Lord, he shall have a permanent kingdom.

ਜਾ ਕਉ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਦੇਹੀ ਵਿਆਪੈ ਰੋਗੁ॥

ਗ੍ਰਿਸਤਿ ਕੁਟੰਬਿ ਪਲੇਟਿਆ ਕਦੇ ਹਰਖੁ ਕਦੇ ਸੋਗੁ॥

ਤਉਣੁ ਕਰੈ ਚਹੁਕੁੰਟ ਕਾ ਘੜੀ ਨ ਬੈਸਣੁ ਸੋਇ॥

ਚਿਤਿ ਆਵੈ ਓਸੁ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਤਨੁ ਮਨੁ ਸੀਤਲੁ ਹੋਇ॥

ਅੰਗ - 70

He who is plagued by very excessive anxiety and bodily ailment,

He who is wrapped up in household and family and sometimes feels joy and sometimes sorrow; and wanders in four directions and cannot sit or sleep even for a moment;

Were he to reflect over the Supreme Lord, his body and soul shall be cooled (rest at peace).

A boon is sought from one who is capable of granting it. One can't ask for millions from a person possessing thousands only. When we pray to God for a boon, we must have faith that He is capable of granting that boon. Lack of faith in God's Omnipotence has rendered millions of human prayers to go unanswered. Human prayer can never be realized till man reposes complete faith in God's Omnipotence.

4

The fourth condition which is indispensable for a prayer to be answered is the supplicant's own firm faith and hope in the fulfillment of prayer. The following anecdote will illustrate this thesis.

Once a severe drought struck a country. The danger of crop failure and famine was looming large over the whole countryside. The village elders opined that there was no other alternative but to pray to God for rain, since God alone can cause rains. So the entire village populace should congregate to pray for rain. This is the only option for bringing rain. With this resolution, a public announcement was made for the residents to assemble for prayer in an open ground on the village outskirts on a certain fixed day. This assembled gathering would pray to God for rain to save their crops and to save them from the impending famine. The entire village populace assembled on the appointed day and time in the open ground. The head of the village society stood up to lead this prayer for rain. A wandering mendicant appeared on the scene just before the start of this community prayer and enquired about

the purpose of their prayer. The villagers replied that they had congregated there to pray to God to send rain to save their crops from the impending drought and famine. The mendicant appreciated their noble gesture of praying to God for rain which showed they had reposed their faith in God. Since their prayer was well-intentioned, it must get providential response and cause rain. But he questioned the congregation as to how would they protect themselves from rain if rain comes immediately following their prayer since they did not have umbrellas or raincoats with them. On hearing this, the villagers mocked at the mendicant for his funny remarks. How could rains come so suddenly on such a sunny bright day, they questioned the mendicant. Why should they carry umbrellas on a such a bright sunny day? The mendicant retorted why should they not have faith in the immediate fulfilment of their prayer if they believed that God was capable of bringing rain at any moment of time. If they had believed in the fulfilment of their prayer and had brought their umbrellas, they would have compelled God to accept their prayer and cause rain. He asked them to disperse after prayer and predicted that their prayer will now be answered

in due course of time rather than immediately.

This anecdote provides a valuable advice to a spiritual pilgrim. Our prayers remain unanswered because of our own lack of faith in our prayer rather than any lack of response to our prayer from God. The prayers of Bhai Bidhi Chand trapped inside a burning furnace and Draupadi's prayer in a public assembly were immediately answered because both of them had a firm belief in the power of their own prayer.

A child buys a sweet candy from a street vendor. After taking a delivery of the candy from the vendor, the child asks him to wait till the child brings the money from his mother. Neither the child nor the vendor has any doubt about the mother's generosity. The child approaches the mother and asks for the money to pay to the vendor. The mother, realizing the child's faith and dependence on her, can never turn down the child's demand. Human prayer, made with such a firm faith and confidence, can never go unanswered. God, like a mother, is duty bound to accept such a prayer. The proverbial butcher Sadhna had extended such a prayer which was positively answered.

ਜਿਸ ਕਾ ਪਿਤਾ ਤੂ ਹੈ ਮੇਰੇ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਤਿਸੁ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਭੂਖ ਕੈਸੀ॥

ਨਵਨਿਧਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਨਿਧਾਨੁ ਗ੍ਰਿਹਿ ਤੇਰੇ ਮਨਿ ਬਾਂਛੈ ਸੋ ਲੈਸੀ॥ ਅੰਗ - 1266

He, whose father Thou art, O my Lord; what sort of hunger can that child have?

In Thy Home are the nine treasures of the Name's wealth. What his heart desires, that he receives.

ਪਿਤਾ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਲਿ ਆਗਿਆ ਇਹ ਦੀਨੀ

ਬਾਰਿਕੁ ਮੁਖਿ ਮਾਂਗੈ ਸੋ ਦੇਨਾ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਬਾਰਿਕੁ ਦਰਸੁ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਚਾਹੈ

ਮੋਹਿ ਹ੍ਰਿਦੈ ਬਸਹਿ ਨਿਤ ਚਰਨਾ॥

ਅੰਗ - 1266

The kind father has given this order that whatever the child asks for with his mouth, he be provided with that.

Child Nanak longs for the Lord's vision. May the Lord's feet ever abide within my mind.



Sher-e-Punjab & the Attock River

It is well known that even the very deep and turbulent river Attock had given the right of passage to the forces of Maharaja Ranjit Sing. It is very difficult to convince those people who have no faith in *Waheguru* and the power of His human instruments through whom His Will operates. But there is no need to convince those people who repose their faith in *Waheguru*; His Omnipotence; the genuineness of their own prayer and its definite fulfilment. This article is addressed to those who are neither completely theists nor totally atheists. These are those persons who believe in the existence of *Waheguru*, or some kind of Divine, Superhuman force but have doubts about His Omnipotence and benevolence. His Highness, Maharaja Ranjit Singh was a very devout Sikh and a man of firm faith. He considered himself a loyal soldier of *Waheguru* and attributed all his military victories to the

grace of God. The various incidents related to his life confirm his firm faith in *Waheguru*. His various acts and deeds such as – his willingness to accept the total annihilation of his family consequent upon his construction of Sikh shrine *Gurudwara* at Nander, Hazoor Sahib, his offering of two precious items, a diamond studded crown and a very expensive covering garment prepared for his son to the Golden Temple at Amritsar as being worthy of a Guru's throne only, and his minting of his royal currency in the name of the Guru instead of his own name – are symptomatic of his utmost devotion and faith. There is a well known incident about the legendary devout Sikh Maharaja. Once he and his army had to cross the river Attock which at that moment, was in a torrent (flood). The military exigency demanded that his army must cross the river. But there was no bridge over it. The devout Sikh Maharaja, Maharaja Ranjit Singh was not of the conventional sort of follower of Guru Granth Sahib whose faith was limited to the performance of certain rituals alone. He was a devout Sikh of faith who truly believed in the teachings of Guru Granth Sahib. So at this juncture, Maharaja Ranjit Singh was confronted with a turbulent river on the

one hand and his equally strong faith in God's Omnipotence on the other. There was an echo of Guru Nanak's following words from the *Japuji* in his mind :

ਸੁਣਿਐ ਹਾਥ ਹੋਵੈ ਅਸਗਾਹੁ॥

ਅੰਗ - 3

By hearkening to (God's Name) the unfathomable becomes fathomable.

So, the visibly turbulent and formidable Attock overflowing and cutting its bank posed no daunting threat to the spiritually enriched and faith-laden Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He had learnt and realized from the teachings of *Guru Granth Sahib* that no material or physical object, howsoever formidable, posed any threat to a devout Sikh who believed in the Omnipotence and fearlessness of the Divine. For a spiritually enlightened person suffused with the Divine attributes, external threats were of no consequence. So, addressing his generals and army commanders, the Maharaja declared that this turbulent river posed no threat to the Sikh forces and they must cross this river. But looking at the menacing river in flood, his generals and officers opined that they would not be able to cross such a formidable river without a makeshift bridge. At this moment, the devout Maharaja quoted and

recited the following hymn from Guru Granth Sahib :

ਸੀਹਾ ਬਾਜਾ ਚਰਗਾ ਕੁਹੀਆ ਏਨਾ ਖਵਾਲੇ ਘਾਹ॥

ਘਾਹੁ ਖਾਨਿ ਤਿਨਾ ਮਾਸੁ ਖਵਾਲੇ ਏਹਿ ਚਲਾਏ ਰਾਹ॥

ਨਦੀਆ ਵਿਚਿ ਟਿਥੇ ਦੇਖਾਲੇ ਥਲੀ ਕਰੇ ਅਸਗਾਹ॥

ਕੀੜਾ ਥਾਪਿ ਦੇਇ ਪਾਤਸਾਹੀ ਲਸਕਰ ਕੰ ਸੁਆਹ॥

ਅੰਗ - 144

The tigers, hawks, kites and falcons, them the Lord causes to eat grass.

Who eat grass, them He causes to eat meat. This way of life He can set agoing.

He exhibits mounds in rivers, and the deserts He makes into unfathomable oceans.

A worm, He appoints to kingship, and He reduces an army to ashes.

He declared that the *Khalsa* forces would cross this river on the strength of their faith in God Almighty. His generals, who were already terrified by the turbulent river, felt more threatened by these foolhardy remarks of their Maharaja. In their opinion, Guru Granth Sahib was a scriptural text at the most worthy of certain ritualistic supplications. Since they had lived their lives on the basis of such superficial religious rituals, they felt extremely scared at the thought of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's determination to cross the river without any bridge or any kind of human assistance. On the other hand, the Maharaja had

not only paid his ritualistic obeisance to *Guru Granth Sahib*, but had also understood its philosophy in his own life. He regarded *Guru Granth Sahib* not only the living embodiment of the Sikh Gurus as ordained by Guru Gobind Singh but believed in the underlying philosophy of this sacred text and regarded its teachings as the eternal truth and a divine manifestation. He firmly believed in the real identity and Omnipotence of God as described in the text of the holy *Guru Granth Sahib*. The Divine power of *Waheguru* is as intact, eternal and permanently prevalent as it had been during the time of Sikh Gurus – Guru Nanak Dev , Guru Arjan Dev and Guru Gobind Singh. *Waheguru* has always the power and pleasure of creating mountains out of the deep gorges of rivers and deserts in vast oceans as He possessed these powers during Guru Nanak's times. What is required is the true faith and devotion to make this divine power operational and participative. The moment a human being expresses this level of faith and devotion, the protective and benevolent power of God manifests itself instantly.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh ordered for his horse to be presented. When his steed was brought, the

river Attock was still in a state of terrible flood. The Maharaja mounted his horse, but the river's flow remained steady. Maharaja shouted the Sikh war cry "*Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa*", (victory to the Lord) even as the river roared in its full fury. Maharaja spurred his horse and the horse jumped in the air on the bank of the overflowing river. Maharaja's generals and their subordinates feared for the life of their royal King. But Maharaja, astride his horse, had a firm faith in the protective power of God as enshrined in the following hymn :

ਜੋ ਮਾਗਉ ਸੋਈ ਸੋਈ ਪਾਵਉ ਅਪਨੇ ਖਸਮ ਭਰੋਸਾ॥

ਅੰਗ - 619

What-so-ever I ask, that, yea all that I receive, for I have faith in my Master.

As the horse along with his master jumped into the waters of the river Attock, Maharaja Ranjit Singh shouted the Sikh war cry once more "*Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh*" (Victory be to the Lord). It was a testing moment for the devout *Sikh*, since God Himself was amusingly testing the extent of His devotee's faith. Will the devout *Sikh* waver in his faith at the moment of truth or remain steadfast? But the moment the horse and his rider jumped into the river, all doubts and fears vanished in thin air and the protective powers of

the Divine came into full operation. Since Maharaja Ranjit Singh had fulfilled all the conditions for the fulfilment of his prayer and fully qualified himself for the Divine grace and protection, the Divine power came into operation to protect. It was the same Divine power which had proved to be the saviour of the saintly Prehlad during his forced embrace of a pillar of red-hot iron, the protector of Draupdi during her impending stripping in the evil assembly of *Kaurvas*; the soothing power to Guru Gobind Singh's court poet Nand Lal during the torturous pricking of his eyes; the restraining hand on the devout Sikh Joga Singh's shoulder on the threshold of a prostitute; the commanding voice which addressed Moses on the mountain top and the Divine power which resurrected Jesus Christ after his crucifixion and burial. The same Divine force appeared before Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the midst of a river in turbulent flood. The horse, with Maharaja on his back went down, rose again twice in the river to the consternation of gaping generals and officers standing on the bank. While the Maharaja was still shouting the Sikh war cry "*Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh*" (victory be to the Lord), the horse rose above the water and river seemed to

be flowing below the stirrups supporting Maharaja's feet. Maharaja, still shouting the Sikh war cry "*Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh*", addressed his generals to demonstrate his faith in the Divine Omnipotence and His protective power to protect His devotees. With such a daring and devout commander leading the charge, the whole army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh crossed the flooded Attock, which looked so formidable and indomitable a few minutes earlier.



Draupdi and Sri Krishna

Draupdi : "My Lord! You protected my honour in the assembly of *Kaurvas* but after a lot of suspense and harassment."

Krishna : "Draupdi, I do not harass anyone or did I harass you either."

Draupdi : "Sir, what can be greater harassment than this. Dushashan dragged me to the court, yet you did not protect me. You did not appear even when he threatened to strip me in the crowded court. Then catching me by the wrist and preparing to strip me, he challenged the five Pandavas including yourself (Krishna) to dare to stop him from his act. I cried and called you in my prayers, but still you did not appear. You arrived at the scene only when the wicked Dushashan started stripping me actually. Thereafter, you saved my honour by keeping my body covered through yards of cloth. I am extremely grateful to you for saving my honour

and chastity, but I fail to understand why you intervened so late. How did you accept so much dishonour of your devotee?"

Sri Krishna : "Draupdi, I always protect my devotees. No force on earth can stop me to reach my devotees when they call me in prayer. I take pleasure in protecting the faithful. I, immediately, reach to defend him whosoever remembers and calls me earnestly while in distress."

Draupdi : "Do you think Dushashan's acts of dragging me from my chambers to the open court, slandering me there and the Kaurva's insulting and biting remarks were not acts of dishonour?"

Sri Krishna : "Draupdi, these were indeed acts of dishonouring you, I admit."

Draupdi : "Then, why did you allow these acts of dishonour. Why did you allow Dushashan to touch me and drag me out of my chambers."

Sri Krishna : "Draupdi, I intervene and protect the faithful only when they call me earnestly and allow me to protect them."

Darupdi : "It means, I did not pray to you earnestly and nor did I provide you an opportunity to help me."

Sri Krishna : "Yes, this is a fact."

Draupdi : "Then you are not omniscient. You do not know my predicament."

Sri Krishna (Amusingly) : "Draupdi, this is your misconception. I know each and every trace of your thought."

Darupdi : "How can I accept your words? I had started crying and calling you in prayer from the moment Dushashan appeared in my chamber and started dragging me."

Sri Krishna : "I agree you were calling me in prayer, but in your heart of hearts, you were thinking that the five Pandvas and their elders including Bhisham Pitama, Dronacharya, Vidur and others would not allow Dushashan to disgrace you and they will punish him. You were confident of getting Dushashan punished for his vile acts."

Draupdi : "My Lord! Even if I accept your observation, why did not you intervene when all the five Pandavas and the elders expressed their helplessness to protect my hour? Why did you allow Dushashan to manhandle and disgrace me even when I was all the time, calling you in

prayer?"

Sri Krishna : "Even at that moment, your prayer was not earnest. You had tucked your saree in your teeth, thinking that you could save your honour through your own efforts. You called me in all earnest only when all your hopes and efforts failed to protect you. The moment you called me earnestly, abandoning every other source, I reached instantly and saved you from disgrace. I am protector and saviour of the helpless rather than a protector of those who depend on worldly sources."



A Gurmukh's Prayer

Whenever our prayer remains unanswered, we should not conclude that either there is no Divine power or He does not listen to our prayer. There can be several reasons for the non-fulfilment of our prayer. A prayer succeeds when all the requirements for prayer are met. At such moments, when one's own prayer remains unanswered, intercession by a more spiritually realized person in the form of a prayer produces startling results. I take this opportunity to relate an incident from my own life which would be a matter of interest for those who wish to embark on a spiritual pilgrimage.

I was blessed with a son in 1918. This being the first male issue who had raised the status of my father to that of a paternal grandfather and that of my wife's father to a maternal grandfather. This male child became a centre of attraction for both the families. Being the eldest and the most beautiful, he became an object of love for all the

relatives. But this child expired after two years despite all the medical aid and human efforts. His death shocked everyone in the family. But whatever is ordained is inevitable.

Soon after the death of this child, I was blessed with a daughter. Although myself and my wife got involved in the health care of the new born, but members of our family regarded it as an instance of Divine injustice. God had snatched a male child and substituted a female child in his place.

Two years after the birth of this girl child, we were blessed with another male child. Both the families celebrated the birth of a male child and regarded it as an act of Divine justice and compensation to make up for an earlier loss. But soon this joy turned into grief and consternation when this male child also expired after two years and another female child took birth in our family. The elderly ladies in our family were often heard making comments against God's ways. They used to question God's Will for taking away two male children and replacing them with two female children.

Since I never discriminated between male and

female issues, I accepted God's Will gracefully and busied myself with the bringing up of my two daughters. My wife, though feeling the pangs of the death of her two sons, also loved and liked her two daughters. But other female members of our family could not reconcile with the death of our two sons and often made verbal protests against God's Will. But the following lines from Sukhmani provided me great solace :

ਜਿਸ ਕੀ ਬਸਤੁ ਤਿਸੁ ਆਗੈ ਰਾਖੈ॥

ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਮਾਨੈ ਮਾਖੈ॥

ਉਸ ਤੇ ਚਉਗੁਨ ਕਰੈ ਨਿਹਾਲੁ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸਦਾ ਦਇਆਲੁ॥

ਅੰਗ - 268

He should place the thing before Him, to whom it belongs, and should most willingly obey his Lord's order.

*There-at, the Lord will make him four-fold happy.
Nanak, the Lord is ever Merciful.*

With the passage of time, three more female children were born in our family. Members of our family felt quite offended with the birth of five daughters and the loss of two sons. Female visitors to our household openly declared it as our misfortune. They were also peeved that we, as parents, loved our five daughters to the extent of indulgence and pampering them beyond a

limit. In their opinion they considered it as our perversion to pamper our daughters. But both of us, as parents, loved our daughters as we would have loved our sons and never displayed any sense of hurt at the loss of our two sons. Since I regarded daughters better than sons in certain respects, I, often, dressed my two eldest daughters as male children and took them out for a drive. On certain occasions, dressing them as males, I used to take them out on hunting sprees. I always expressed my willing acceptance of God's Will in blessing me with daughters during my daily prayers. I always prayed for the good health and well-being of my daughters.

Despite this complete acceptance of God's Will, I and my wife could not wipe out the memory of our two sons. Their memory still rankled in our minds. This remembrance of our deceased sons was alive not because we considered sons to be superior to daughters but because this craving for a male issue is inbuilt in human psyche. In the event of our having five sons, we would have craved for two daughters. Man delights in having both sons and daughters. We have come across people who having been blessed with sons expressed a craving for a

daughter as well. When a Sikh Saint Baba Vasakha Singh, President of a welfare committee for the families of imprisoned Indian freedom fighters visited Calcutta in 1930-31 for collecting donations, I invited him to a dinner, considering that he was a spiritually realized soul. He acceded to my request graciously and came over for a dinner at our place. Post dinner, a conversation about *Nam Simran* and meditation ensued. My interest in meditation and its practice in my daily life pleased him. I also felt blessed to be in the company of a meditational soul. Admiring my wife for her hospitality for having served the dinner with devotion, he asked my wife about our progeny. My wife replied humbly that we had been blessed with five daughters. Baba Ji asked us if we had no male issue. My wife replied that we were initially blessed with two sons, but both expired. Now our household has five daughters.

Just before departure after listening to my wife's reply, Baba Ji uttered that a *Gursikh* family like ours should have both sons and daughters. After this, he asked my wife if we had ever prayed to God for the restoration of our two lost sons. My wife replied that we had never

particularly prayed for such a blessing because God Himself is omniscient. Then he asked me if we had the installation of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* in our home. I replied that we had such an arrangement at our place. Baba Ji then declared that let us go inside and pray together before *Guru Granth Sahib*.

So we went inside the room where *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* was installed. Baba Ji, prayed with folded hands bowing his spiritually hallowed face in the words : "True Almighty Lord of lords, You are Omnipotent and bountiful. It is our humble prayer that let this Gursikh's household be blessed with sons."

Baba Ji departed after the prayer. We just forgot about Baba Ji's visit to our place and a big prayer on behalf of us in due course of time. But when we were blessed with a son after a year, we recalled Baba Ji's prayer. We were blessed with another son after two years. We received congratulatory messages from all the relatives and family friends. My father came down to Calcutta to have a glimpse of the two male kids. There were recitations of *Guru Granth Sahib's* text and donations were given to charities. Everyone

thanked God for such a boon. But myself and my wife realized that it was on the intercession and prayer of a spiritual soul which brought about this miracle; Hence Guru's words :

ਬਿਰਥੀ ਕਦੇ ਨਾ ਹੋਵਈ ਜਨ ਕੀ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਜੋਰੁ ਗੋਵਿੰਦ ਕਾ ਪੂਰਨ ਗੁਣ ਤਾਸਿ॥

ਅੰਗ - 819

The prayer of God's slave goes not vain ever.

Nanak has the strength of the Perfect Lord who is the Treasure of excellences.

ਭਗਤ ਮੁਖੈ ਤੇ ਬੋਲਦੇ ਸੇ ਵਚਨ ਹੋਵੰਦੇ॥

ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਪਹਾਰਾ ਜਾਪਦਾ ਸਭਿ ਲੋਕ ਸੁਣੰਦੇ॥

ਅੰਗ - 306

The words which the saints utter with their mouth come to pass.

In His workshop, He appears manifest. All people hear of it.



Power of Prayer

Sri Guru Gobind Singh had a great liking for weapons. He felt extremely delighted whenever a Sikh presented him with a weapon. All the Sikhs in the surrounding areas knew about Guru Ji's liking for weapons and offered weapons as presents to seek his blessings.

A blacksmith by the name Gujar also knew about Guru Ji's liking. He cast such a formidable iron shield which he considered was impregnable by any kind of bullet, spear or sword. He departed for Anandpur Sahib with the present of such a shield. Guru Ji was preparing to confront the might of the several-hundred years old tyrannical Moghul dynasty at Anandpur Sahib.

Guru Ji was holding his court when Bhai Gujar reached Anandpur Sahib. Guru Ji was flanked by great warriors on one side, and scholars, poets and learned persons on the other side. *Gurbani kirtan* was being recited. Bhai Gujar

listened to Gurbani recitation while sitting in the congregation. At the end of the congregation, he presented his shield to Guru Ji.

Guru Ji looked at the shield and appreciated its texture. Guru Ji drew the attention of his warriors to the shield who also admired the weapon. The shield was really excellent. It was cast out of the alloys of several metals, light in weight but quite hard in texture. Everyone appreciated the weapon and craftsmanship of Bhai Gujar as it was circulated among the gathering of assembled warriors. But Bhai Gujar, instead of being thankful to the Guru for making it the object such a wide admiration, felt proud of his craftsmanship. He declared proudly addressing Guru Ji and the court audience : None in the whole congregation could dare pierce through his shield. He challenged even Guru Ji to have a tryst with his shield.

Although Guru Ji regarded his shield as a good work of craftsmanship but Guru Ji did not approve of the boastful words of Bhai Gujar. These were the words of a proud individual expressing his false pride. House of God does not approve of such a bravado. Therefore, Guru Ji

once again admired his creation but asserted that he (Guru Ji) himself would try to pierce this shield the next day to test his claim. Even these words failed to remind Bhai Gujar of his false pride and he accepted Guru Ji's challenge. He once again reiterated his claim that a weapon crafted by his hands was impregnable. He challenged Guru Ji to make even hundreds of attempts to pierce his shield with a bullet.

Congregation then dispersed. An elderly Gursikh told Bhai Gujar that the latter had committed a grave error and that he should not have made such a boastful claim about his shield in the Guru's presence. He explained that Bhai Gujar's shield might have been too formidable to be pierced by ordinary warriors, but for Guru Ji, with his spiritual powers and martial expertise, his shield would not be impregnable.

Bhai Gujar argued that it was impossible even for Guru Ji to beat his claim. If his shield was really formidable as he claimed, then it was equally impregnable for Guru Ji as well as other warriors' bullets. Guru Ji would be using the same stock of bullets. The elderly Gursikh tried to prevail upon Bhai Gujar to realize his folly and

learn to differentiate between Guru Ji's skill and that of his other warriors. He warned Bhai Gujar that his boastful claim would get exposed the next day and he would have to face a lot of ridicule. He had come to the Guru's court for his blessings but after making such a proud and boasting assertion he would have to return empty handed.

Bhai Gujar again questioned the elderly Sikh's advice and asserted Guru Ji's gun would not be any better than those of his warriors. The Sikh elder impressed upon Bhai Gujar that it was not the gun which made the difference but the person who would aim at his shield. There was a world of difference between the workmanship of the Guru and that of his Sikhs. While the ordinary warriors would aim at his shield only, Guru Ji would aim at Bhai Gujar's pride and ignorance. Guru Ji knew the complete texture of the molecules which comprised his shield. Guru Ji knew the reality behind the physical existence of material things. When there is nothing permanently formidable and integrated in this material world, how can his shield be impregnable and unbreakable. Guru Ji knows this secret of the material universe. The molecules which formed his shield with his great skill and

craftsmanship had already started disintegrating since the moment of its present existence. This process of disintegration would continue till the total dismantling of the shield with the passage of time. This time span could be ten years to ten thousand years. These molecules would ultimately get disintegrated. As he had joined these molecules into a formidable shield with great craftsmanship, a greater craftsman could disintegrate and dismantle these molecules with a bullet shot much in advance of their natural tenure of expiry. As he was a highly skilled craftsman, similarly Guru Ji was a far more superior artist to look through the motives of men and the manufactured fabric of things. Possessed with such a deep insight, Guru Ji's bullet would definitely pierce through his shield. Bhai Gujar should not equate Guru Ji with other able-bodied Sikhs, otherwise why should these warriors feel blessed when they bow before Guru Ji everyday. Why do they always remain ready to make any sacrifice for their Guru? Knowledge is power, but spiritual knowledge is the greatest power. Since Guru Ji possesses this spiritual knowledge, he is the centre of veneration for all his warrior Sikhs. In fact Guru's followers are the devotees of the

supreme, eternal, omnipresent, omniscient divine power of which Guru Ji is a living embodiment. So the divinely blessed Guru Ji would surely impregnate his formidable shield the next day.

Hearing these facts about Guru Ji's spiritual power, Bhai Gujar felt convinced that Guru Ji's bullet would certainly pierce through his shield. He confessed his blunder of challenging Guru Ji's powers and entreated the elderly Sikh to suggest a way how to make amends for his act of disobedience and defiance. He had realized that he would surely lose the bet next day and become a butt of ridicule among the whole congregation next day. He had come to seek Guru Ji's blessings by presenting his shield made with great skill and craftsmanship, but had instead invited Guru Ji's displeasure and humiliation of the Sikh congregation. With this realization, he begged the Sikh elder to suggest a way out of the impending insult and humiliation at the next day's congregation. He expressed his sincere apologies for his act of defiance and discourtesy which emerged out of his ignorance of Guru Ji's divine powers. He entreated the Sikh elder to save him out of this self-created ordeal.

The Sikh elder suggested to him to pray with humility and faith to the great Guru's spiritual source *Waheguru* to protect his honour. Prayer made in all humility and earnest faith alone could protect his honour. There was no other way out. He should go home, invite five Gursikhs to a dinner, serve them food with devotion and beg them to intercede on his behalf.

Accepting the same advice, Bhai Gujar served food to the five Gursikhs with devotion, and begged them to save him from dishonour by praying to God on his behalf. He appealed to them that their prayers alone could save him from dishonour. They should pray to God to make his shield impregnable. Acceding to Bhai Gujar's appeal, the five Gursikh's prayed to God to protect this errant Sikh's honour since he had confessed his sin. They ended their prayer with a Sikh prayer's epilogue :

ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ

ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਫਤਹ॥

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa,

Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh.

All the Sikh warriors assembled at the next day's congregation. Guru Ji called for Bhai Gujar.

Bhai Gujar was a figure of humility and devotion. He made a humble presentation of his shield to Guru Ji.

The shield was fixed as a target. Guru Ji aimed at the shield amidst great suspense. The audience was eagerly awaiting for the moment when Bhai Gujar's shield would be pierced and he would become a butt of ridicule among the whole congregation.

Guru Ji took the aim twice at the shield, but twice the bullet could not be fired. The Sikh warriors entreated Guru Ji to change the gun, but Guru Ji declined their suggestion. Instead he called for Bhai Gujar. Bhai Gujar appeared before Guru Ji with great humility. Guru Ji asked Bhai Gujar's last night's activities. Bhai Gujar replied that he had been praying throughout to make amends for his last day's act of disobedience and defiance. He had appealed to the five Gursikhs to intercede on his behalf and protect him from dishonour. He begged Guru Ji to forgive him for his misdemeanor since he was an errant human being and Guru Ji was an epitome of the Divine.

Upon this entreaty, Guru Ji addressed the congregation and declared that he could not

impregnate Bhai Gujar's shield since God Himself and his predecessors the nine Sikh Guru's were on the side of Bhai Gujar.

Such is the power of prayer made with humility and faith.



Things Never Get Lost, These Get Out Of Sight

Once I had to travel from Lahore to Karnal on a missionary trip to preach Sikh philosophy. Departing at night from Lahore, the train's arrival at Karnal was early in the morning. I reached the railway station with my bedding and a leather suit case. The compartment which I had to board was extremely crowded. The Muslim porter asked me to get into the compartment and he would hand over my luggage through the side window.

After entering the compartment, I put my bedding on an empty seat. But soon the porter reported that someone had picked up my suitcase while he was handing over my bedding to me. So I got down the train. The porter and myself searched the whole train, but we did not find my suitcase. I told the porter to bring down my bedding from the train since I could not travel without my suitcase. The porter brought down

my bedding and the train departed after a few minutes.

It occurred to me that the suitcase contained three copies of my most valuable notes on Guru Granth Sahib which I had been preparing for so many years. I felt shocked over the loss of my notes. I was going on a missionary trip and a few friends would be waiting for my arrival at Karnal. Why had such an incident occurred? Was it a punishment for my egoistic pride, my duplicity and dichotomy between what I preached and what I practiced? Was my trip jinxed? Not only this ill omen, three big exercise books of notes on Guru Granth Sahib were lost forever. Why did it happen? How did it happen? What did I do to deserve such a punishment?

Sardar Sadhu Singh, a companion and a fellow seeker of spiritual science had come to the station to see me off. He suggested that we should lodge a report about the loss of a baggage with the railway police. So we lodged a report with the police. An easy-going sort of Pathan happened to be the sub-inspector at the railway police post. He sympathized with us and remarked that the hired porter was the real

culprit. He further remarked that those railways porters were a gang of cheats who robbed the passengers every day. The inspector remarked that he was sick of these porters' petty criminal activities. He asked the constable to put the porter behind the bars and he would deal with him after his dinner. I insisted that the porter was innocent, but the inspector refused to accept my plea. The inspector told me that these porters used such tricks everyday. They asked the passenger to get into the train and they would handover his luggage. They picked one odd item of luggage during this handling over process and pleaded innocence. In this case also, the inspector suspected the porter of stealing my suitcase. He asked me to lodge the report and go home. If it was the handiwork of an outsider, then my suitcase might not be traced. But in case it was the mischief of that porter, the inspector would make him vomit out the theft. The inspector promised to inform me at my home address in case the lost luggage was traced.

I returned home with my friend. He also lived in our vicinity. My father enquired about my return at the dead of night. I related the whole incident and expressed shock and regret at

the loss of my notes on Gurbani, the creation of my life-long hard work. Why did such an incident marred by missionary effort?

Putting his hand on my shoulder, my father asked me if I really thought that my suitcase had been lost. I replied that it was a fact and it was also a fact that I had returned from the railway station. My father remarked that it was an illusion and said that nothing in the world ever got lost, at the most it could get out of sight. Nothing could get lost and disappear from this earth. I agreed with him, but since my suitcase had disappeared and I could not trace it, so I would take it as lost. My father remarked that it was a thought of loss which made objects as lost articles. But things do not get lost in reality. He further asked me to think hypothetically that an object lying at a distance of few miles would be declared as lost since human eye could not spot things beyond a certain short distance. But a person with long distance eyesight and capable of spotting objects could not consider it as lost. But I insisted that I would consider my suitcase as lost since it was out of my sight. My father then suggested me to pray to God to seek His assistance for whom nothing was invisible. I

should pray to Him who is Omnipresent, Omnipotent, who could bring my suitcase within my sight and reach. He reprimanded me for being a man of faith and yet feeling frustrated at the loss of an insignificant suitcase. It revealed my fractured faith and a dichotomy between my precept and practice. He directed me to go to bed with a prayer on my lips and go to Karnal by the first train available next morning on a missionary assignment.

I passed through a strange sensation on hearing these words from my father. I could not give a verbal expression to this feeling. I packed another suitcase and went to bed. My father woke me up early in the morning and asked me to proceed on my journey to Karnal.

I was to proceed to Delhi after a stay for two days at Karnal. As soon as I reached Delhi at the residence of my friend Sardar Gurdit Singh Malhan, I got a postcard by post. My father had written this letter to me. He informed that a constable had come to inform him about my lost suitcase just ten minutes after my departure for Karnal. The suitcase had been found and I could make its delivery.

I had already been influenced by my father's logical argument. This postcard information further strengthened my faith. It was revelation for me. I felt nearest to God at this moment.

But my skeptical mind did not stop wavering even at this auspicious moment. I kept on arguing that it was an ordinary incident. The police inspector must have recovered my suitcase with a little dose of torture to the porter. How could God contribute to this recovery of the lost suitcase. Rather the whole credit went to the inspector. But even then I persuaded myself to express my gratitude to God who had enabled the inspector to act intelligently to recover the lost article. Although I compelled myself to express my gratitude to God, but my initial faith, at the moment of receiving my father's letter, was somewhat diluted. It was once again a fractured kind of faith.

I spent four days attending congregations in Delhi. On my return, I went to the office of the railway police. The sub-inspector greeted me by shaking hands and related me the whole story about my lost suitcase. I had thought that the inspector must have recovered the suitcase from

the railway porter. The inspector told that he had been in railway police service for the last fifteen years, including three years at Lahore. It had been his experience during his service that some stray Hindu gentlemen had been occasionally returning lost articles, but Muslims seldom returned any article. I retorted that there were good and bad people in every community. Neither all the Hindus were spotlessly honest nor the Muslims. The inspector remarked that I was talking hypothetically, but he was talking on the basis of his felt experience. The inspector told that he was astonished to find an ordinary Muslim returning my suitcase early in the morning. The Muslim gentleman expressed his regrets for taking away my suit case inadvertently as the railway porter had placed that suitcase among the items of his luggage. He located its presence after travelling for a distance of six miles from Lahore. He expressed his regrets that its owner must have been put to great inconvenience. He had spent the whole night in great discomfort over this inadvertent mistake. He revealed that the suitcase contained two, three woolen suits, a few books, a rosary and some cash. He expressed his sorrow over the loss of these valuable things belonging

to an unknown person because a loss of even a small article disturbed human beings. It must have been his life time's earning. He might have abandoned his journey on account of the loss of that suitcase. He expressed sincere apologies for this mishap. He could not return the suitcase immediately as it was too late in the night with no transport available for Lahore. He caught hold of the first available transport, a horse driven coach (tonga) and came to return the suitcase. He could not sleep the whole night for this sad episode. He entreated the inspector to return the suitcase to its rightful owner. He must have lodged a report about its theft or loss.

The inspector informed that gentleman that the suitcase belonged to a Sikh gentleman who had lodged a report with the police. He asked the inspector to offer sincere apologies to the owner on his behalf and return the suitcase to him.



Various Stages Of Prayer

The First Stage

Ordinary people pray for sound health and worldly comforts. Majority of people belong to this category. It is not a sin to pray for bodily and material comforts. Gurbani states :

ਵਿਣ ਤੁਧੁ ਹੋਰੁ ਜਿ ਮੰਗਣਾ ਸਿਰਿ ਦੁਖਾ ਕੈ ਦੁਖ॥

ਦੇਹਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਸੰਤੋਖੀਆ ਉਤਰੈ ਮਨ ਕੀ ਭੁਖ॥

ਅੰਗ - 958

To ask for aught but Thee, O Lord, is the arch affliction of all the afflictions.

Bless Thou me with Thy Name that I may feel contented and my mind's hunger be satisfied.

But they are ignorant that a prayer for God's *Nam* is far more superior to a prayer for worldly comforts. A select few realize this secret. Man always prays for those things which he considers indispensable for himself. We do not pray for Divine Grace and *Nam* till we experience the value of *Nam Simran* and its efficacious results. Our divided psyche during prayer, praying for the

boon of *Nam Simran* while actually craving for worldly comforts simultaneously, keeps us divided between two ends. It rather betrays our duplicity and fraudulence. It is not forbidden to pray for good health, dignified livelihood, deliverance from disease and tension and welfare of one's family. Gurus, prophets, saints, have been praying for worldly needs and spiritual enrichment unhesitatingly as follows :

ਹਮਰੀ ਕਰੋ ਹਾਥ ਦੇ ਰੱਛਾ॥ ਪੂਰਨ ਹੋਇ ਚਿਤ ਕੀ ਇੱਛਾ॥
ਤਵ ਚਰਨਨ ਮਨ ਰਹੈ ਹਮਾਰਾ॥ ਅਪਨਾ ਜਾਨ ਕਰੋ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਾਰਾ॥
ਹਮਰੇ ਦੁਸ਼ਟ ਸਭੈ ਤੁਮ ਘਾਵਹੁ॥ ਆਪੁ ਹਾਥੁ ਦੇ ਮੋਹਿ ਬਚਾਵਹੁ॥
ਸੁਖੀ ਬਸੈ ਮੋਰੋ ਪਰਿਵਾਰਾ॥ ਸੇਵਕ ਸਿਖ ਸਭੈ ਕਰਤਾਰਾ॥

*Protect me O Lord with Your own hands,
May my cherished desire be fulfilled.
May my mind remain focused on Your lotus feet,
May You sustain me as Your own dear devotee.
May You vanquish all my adversaries,
May Your protective hands shield me as Your own.
May my family prosper under Your Divine Grace,
Which includes all my followers and other
creatures.*

ਸੇਵਕ ਸਿੱਖ ਹਮਾਰੇ ਤਾਰੀਅਹਿ॥
ਚੁਨਿ ਚੁਨਿ ਸਤ੍ਰੁ ਹਮਾਰੇ ਮਾਰੀਅਹਿ॥

I beseech You to redeem all my followers,

*And vanquish all my adversaries one by one,
Raise me, O Lord, with Your own hands,
And eliminate the fear of death from my heart.*

Saint Dhanna :

ਗੋਪਾਲ ਤੇਰਾ ਆਰਤਾ॥
ਜੋ ਜਨ ਤੁਮਰੀ ਭਗਤਿ ਕਰੰਤੇ
ਤਨਿ ਕੇ ਕਾਜ ਸਵਾਰਤਾ॥
ਦਾਲਿ ਸੀਧਾ ਮਾਗਉ ਘੀਉ॥
ਹਮਰਾ ਖੁਸੀ ਕਰੈ ਨਿਤ ਜੀਉ॥
ਪਾਨੀਆ ਛਾਦਨੁ ਨੀਕਾ॥
ਅਨਾਜੁ ਮਗਉ ਸਤ ਸੀ ਕਾ॥
ਗਉ ਭੇਸ ਮਗਉ ਲਾਵੇਰੀ॥
ਇਕ ਤਾਜਨਿ ਤੁਰੀ ਚੰਗੇਰੀ॥
ਘਰ ਕੀ ਗੀਹਨ ਚੰਗੀ॥
ਜਨੁ ਧੰਨਾ ਲੇਵੈ ਮੰਗੀ॥

ਅੰਗ - 695

*O Lord, I perform Thine devotional worship. Thou
arrangest the affairs of those persons who perform
Thine devotional service.*

*Pulse, flour and ghee, I beg of Thee. So shall my
mind be ever pleased.*

*The foot-wear, good clothes, and corn of seven
sorts. I beg of Thee.*

*The milch cow and buffalo I ask for, and also a
good Turkistani mare.*

I ask for a good wife to look after my home.

*Thy slave Dhanna, O Lord, begs Thee to procure
them.*

The Second Stage

As one progresses in one's spiritual journey, the content of one's prayer also goes on changing. He begins to prefer spiritual bliss to material comforts. All the material comforts start appearing superfluous, temporary and transient, his inner voice telling him that nothing material is permanent.

ਮੈ ਕਿਆ ਮਾਗਉ ਕਿਛੁ ਥਿਰੁ ਨ ਰਹਾਈ ਹਰਿ ਦੀਜੈ ਨਾਮੁ ਪਿਆਰੀ ਜੀਉ॥

ਅੰਗ - 597

What should I ask for ? Nothing remains permanent. O Lord, bless me with Thy Beloved Name.

As an adult rejects childhood pleasures and craves for more sensible things, similarly a spiritually enlightened person gets dissatisfied with the fleeting material comforts. He starts feeling as if he had enough of these pleasures. His inclinations turn towards a permanent state of happiness. His prayers adopt a different track :

ਖਾਤ ਪੀਤ ਖੇਲਤ ਹਸਤ ਭਰਮੇ ਜਨਮ ਅਨੇਕ॥

ਭਵਜਲ ਤੇ ਕਾਢਹੁ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਤੇਰੀ ਟੇਕ॥

ਅੰਗ - 261

In eating, drinking, playing and laughing have I wandered in many births.

Take me out of the terrible world-ocean, my

Master. Nanak has Thy support alone.

At this stage, one craves for lofty ideas, spiritual quest and guidance. His soul cries :

ਮੈ ਅਜਾਨੁ ਜਨੁ ਤਰਿਬੇ ਨ ਜਾਨਉ ਬਾਪ ਬੀਠੁਲਾ ਬਾਹ ਦੇ॥ ਅੰਗ - 873

I am an unskilful man and know not how to swim.

O God, my dear Father, give Thou me Thine arm.

His thought craves for a flight to a higher spiritual state. Nature starts providing guidance to a person who has reached this stage.

The next leg of this spiritual state or journey is extremely arduous and involves a formidable psychic struggle. It involves shedding earlier habits, thoughts and views, and acquiring a new code of conduct and thought process. It looks a bit odd and difficult to adopt this new mindset and new outlook. One is sandwiched between the contrary pulls and pressures of worldly desires and sensual pleasures on one side; and the newly experienced spiritual delights on the other side. It appears to be a terrible struggle between bodily urges and spiritual aspirations. At times, one fears one can never achieve deliverance from the 'urges of the human flesh. Once, I came across a saintly hermit and enquired about his state of spiritual growth. He replied that he was passing

through a worst phase of his life. He was in a dilemma because he could not meditate although he remained detached from the world and its comforts. He kept tossing and tumbling between bodily desires and an urge to do selfless service in a sacred place. He was flip flopping between renunciation and involvement in the pulls of the flesh. Quoting a line from Baba Farid, he remarked that 'he was in a terrible dilemma :

ਗੁਨਹੀ ਭਰਿਆ ਮੈ ਫਿਰਾ ਲੋਕੁ ਕਹੈ ਦਰਵੇਸ਼॥ ਅੰਗ - 1381

I wander about soiled by and people call me a saint.

God's grace alone could take him out of this torturous state of duality. During a brief stay with this saintly hermit, I came to know that he had castrated himself to get rid of his lust ad sensual desires. But still he was not at peace with himself.

Several seekers of spiritual bliss abandon their spiritual quest when they fail to overcome this state of duality. I myself have felt disappointed many times and felt that it was not my good fortune to attain a state of spiritual bliss. I would remain a degenerate forever. But a seeker should never lose heart and abandon his quest. All obstacles get cleared in the face of

strong faith and determination. Nature provides a marvellous guidance to the faithful and devout seeker who prays with detachment and humility. One may ebb and flow with the frequent and alternative bouts of disbelief and faith. One who perseveres with his spiritual quest and keeps on fighting against human weaknesses succeeds in his endeavour. He finds his efforts rewarded when he observes a friendly powerful force solving all his problems.

Physical and Psychic Ailments

Psychic disorders are far more serious than bodily ailments. Man is keen to keep good health, but acquiesces in the psychic pulls and pressures of his physique. He is unable to detach himself even after getting saturated and sick of these. A man would make desperate efforts to get rid of a fever, but an alcoholic and a man of lust would not easily withdraw from their indulgence in these vices, even when aware of their damaging results. Continuous prayers with deep faith are needed to pull one out of these vices. A spiritual seeker prays with humility and self-surrender :

ਕੁਚਿਲ ਕਠੌਰ ਕਪਟ ਕਾਮੀ॥

ਜਿਉ ਜਾਨਹਿ ਤਿਉ ਤਾਰਿ ਸੁਆਮੀ॥

ਤੂ ਸਮਰਥੁ ਸਰਨਿ ਜੋਗੁ

ਤੂ ਰਾਖਹਿ ਅਪਨੀ ਕਲ ਧਾਰਿ॥

ਜਾਪ ਤਾਪ ਨੇਮ ਸੁਚਿ ਸੰਜਮ

ਨਾਹੀ ਇਨ ਬਿਧੇ ਛੁਟਕਾਰ॥

ਗਰਤ ਘੋਰ ਅੰਧ ਤੇ ਕਾਢਹੁ

ਪ੍ਰਭ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਦਰਿ ਨਿਹਾਰਿ॥

ਅੰਗ - 1301

I am filthy, stone-hearted, deceitful and lustful.

As Thou deemest fit, so save Thou, me, O my Lord.

Thou art All-powerful, worthy of giving refuge and exercising Thy might, Thou savest the mortals.

Worship, penance, religious vowes physical purity and self-mortification, by these means, emancipation is attained not.

Casting Thy eye of grace, O Lord, pull Thou out, Nanak, from the awfully dark ditch.

ਮਾਟੀ ਕਾ ਕਿਆ ਧੋਧੈ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਮਾਣਸ ਕੀ ਗਤਿ ਏਹੀ॥

ਅੰਗ - 882

How can the dust be washed? Such is the state of the man, O my Lord.

ਹਾਹਾ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਰਾਖਿ ਲੇਹੁ॥

ਹਮ ਤੇ ਕਿਛੁ ਨ ਹੋਇ ਮੇਰੇ ਸੁਆਮੀ

ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਅਪੁਨਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਦੇਹੁ॥

ਅੰਗ - 675

O, O my Lord, do Thou save me. By myself I can do nothing, O my Lord. Mercifully, bless me, Thou, with Thy Name.

ਪੰਚ ਬਿਖਾਦੀ ਏਕੁ ਗਰੀਬਾ ਰਾਖਹੁ ਰਾਖਨਹਾਰੇ॥

ਖੇਦੁ ਕਰਹਿ ਅਰੁ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਸੰਤਾਵਹਿ ਆਇਓ ਸਰਨਿ ਤੁਹਾਰੇ॥

ਅੰਗ - 205

O Saviour, the five quarrelsome vices are the enemies of the sole poor soul Save me from them. They cause me suffering, and immensely annoy me. So I have sought Thine shelter.

After crossing over the second stage of duality, one finds the long-indulgent but now helpless mind being dragged by the assertive spiritualised self. One feels a wonderful sense of bliss and the world starts appearing to be a place worth living. A spiritual seeker at this stage feels cleansed after a life-long fight with the sensual desires like a washed crystal blue sky after a heavy downpour. One feels lightened after shedding the worldly baggage of lustful desires and a bit purified. His mind starts taking delight in meditation and *Nam Simran*. His power of concentration increases and becomes immune to all diversions and distractions.

Furtive onslaughts of the carnal desires : The Third Stage

Although the carnal desires get weakened in the third stage of spiritual quest, but these desires keep on interfering and gripping the seeker's

conscious, unconsciously. These sensual and worldly pulls keep on intruding into his consciousness. Sometimes, the seeker may even get trapped into their snare and relapse from his enlightened state. But since these desires have lost their earlier sting, an enlightened consciousness immediately overpowers their onslaught. *Nam Simran* and humble prayer restore the lost balance. The awakened consciousness grips these weaknesses like a cat's paw. The seeker launches once again on his spiritual quest with an added vigour. Saint Kabir has described this vulnerable stage as follows :

ਗਿਰੂ ਤਜਿ ਬਨਖੰਡ ਜਾਈਐ ਚੁਨਿ ਖਾਈਐ ਕੰਦਾ॥

ਅਜਹੁ ਬਿਕਾਰ ਨ ਛੋਡਈ ਪਾਪੀ ਮਨੁ ਮੰਦਾ॥

ਕਿਉ ਛੂਟਉ ਕੈਸੇ ਤਰਉ ਭਵਜਲ ਨਿਧਿ ਭਾਰੀ॥

ਰਾਖੁ ਰਾਖੁ ਮੇਰੇ ਬੀਠੁਲਾ ਜਨੁ ਸਰਨਿ ਤੁਮਾਰੀ॥

ਅੰਗ - 855

Abandoning my home, though I may repair to the forest region and pick up tubers to live on;

Even then, my sinful and evil mind forsakes not misdeeds.

How can I be saved? How can I cross the great and terrible world-ocean, the treasure of water?

Preserve me, preserve me, O my Lord. I, Thine slave, have sought Thy refuge.

ਮਨ ਮੂਰਖ ਅਜਹੁ ਨਹ ਸਮਝਤ ਸਿਖ ਦੈ ਹਰਿਓ ਨੀਤ॥

ਅੰਗ - 536

*The stupid mind, as yet, reforms himself not,
though I have grown weary of ever instructing him.*

The Fourth Stage

The state beyond the third stage is a spiritual paradise. Although human psyche does not shed its human vulnerability completely till the last stage of spirituality, but human consciousness at this higher level gets so much cleansed and sacred that all the divine attributes start manifesting in its personality. The whole environment gets suffused with the fragrance of divine bliss. All kinds of wavering, tumbling and tossing between divergent desires gives place to detachment and poise. An ecstatic sensation, born out of this detachment and poise, overtakes the consciousness. Gurbani states this ecstasy as follows :

ਮਾਈ ਮੈ ਧਨੁ ਪਾਇਓ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮ॥

ਮਨੁ ਮੇਰੋ ਧਾਵਨ ਤੇ ਛੂਟਿਓ ਕਰਿ ਬੈਠੋ ਬਿਸਰਾਮ॥ ਅੰਗ - 1186

O mother, I have attained the wealth of God's Name.

My mind has ceased to wander, and has laid down to rest.

As the consciousness learns to reside in this

ecstatic states it feels as if it is in the company of a far greater consciousness – the Divine itself. At moments of rare poise and peace during this blissful state, one's consciousness feels spells of ecstasy and bliss. The prayer of such a realized soul adopts an altogether new terminology. It no longer prays for bodily and worldly comforts because one feels fulfilled in all respects. The prayer employs the vocabulary of thanksgiving and gratitude :

ਐਸੀ ਲਾਲ ਤੁਝ ਬਿਨੁ ਕਉਨੁ ਕਰੈ॥

ਗਰੀਬ ਨਿਵਾਜੁ ਗੁਸਈਆ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਾਥੈ ਛੜ੍ਹ ਧਰੈ॥

ਅੰਗ - 1106

O my Love (God), who but Thee can do such a thing?

O my Lord, the Patroniser of the poor and the Lord of he world, Thou hast put over my head the umbrella of Thine grace.

One prefers to spend maximum time in this state of spiritual bliss. The consciousness now feels itself poised in a state of ever rising morale a higher state of evolution and fearlessness. An overwhelming consciousness seems to be beckoning the human consciousness all the time. A person, in possession of this fortunate state of spiritual bliss, surrenders all his problems, fears, and worries to the Divine consciousness, and

himself becomes detached. He experiences an implicit assurance that he will get all his worries and problems of this newly acquired Divine bliss. His daily prayer at this stage acquires a tone of assurance and guaranteed assistance :

ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਪਿਤਾ ਤੂੰਹੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਾਤਾ॥

ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਬੰਧੁ ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਭਾਤਾ॥

ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਰਾਖਾ ਸਭਨੀ ਥਾਈ

ਤਾ ਭਉ ਕੇਹਾ ਕਾੜਾ ਜੀਉ॥

ਤੁਮਰੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਤੇ ਤੁਧੁ ਪਛਾਣਾ॥

ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰੀ ਓਟ ਤੂੰਹੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਾਣਾ॥

ਤੁਝ ਬਿਨੁ ਦੂਜਾ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ

ਸਭੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਖਲੁ ਅਖਾੜਾ ਜੀਉ॥

ਅੰਗ - 103

Thou art my father, Thou art my mother, Thou art my kinsman and Thou art my brother.

In all the places Thou art my protector. Then why should I feel fear and anxiety?

By Thy grace do I understand Thee.

Thou art my covert and Thou art my honour.

Beside Thee there in no other second. The entire universe is the arena of Thy play.

The Fifth Stage

The fifth stage is a stage of further consolidation in the sense that a seeker feels assured that the Divine presence which he feels residing in his consciousness is far more powerful

and well-meaning than his own consciousness. This Divine entity is his eternal protector and concerned about his prosperity. He also realizes that his human thoughts, plans and schemes create hurdles in the Divine scheme laid out for him. Once assured of such a protective presence, a spiritual pilgrim gets rid of all his tensions and worries :

ਜੀਅ ਜੰਤ ਸਭਿ ਸਰਣਿ ਤੁਮਾਰੀ ਸਰਬ ਚਿੰਤ ਤੁਧੁ ਪਾਸੇ॥

ਜੋ ਤੁਧੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਸੋਈ ਚੰਗਾ ਇਕ ਨਾਨਕ ਕੀ ਅਰਦਾਸੇ॥

ਅੰਗ - 79

Men and other beings all seek Thy protection. All anxiety for them rests with Thee.

Whatever pleases Thee, O Lord that is good. This alone is Nanak's supplication.

God forbid, even if he is to face crucifixion for any reason, he finds the Divine presence standing by his side and willingly surrender himself to his cause:

ਜੋ ਤੁਧੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਸਾਈ ਭਲੀ ਕਾਰ॥

ਤੂੰ ਸਦਾ ਸਲਾਮਤਿ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ॥

ਅੰਗ -

Whatever pleases Thee, that is a good pursuit.

Thou art ever safe and sound, O Formless One!

At the highest ladder of this stage, he abandons his prayer also as he feels the Divine presence an active partner in his ordeal :

ਜਤ ਕਤ ਦੇਖਉ ਤਤ ਤਤ ਤੁਮ ਹੀ ਮੋਹਿ ਇਹੁ ਬਿਸੁਆਸੁ ਹੋਇ ਆਇਉ॥

ਕੈ ਪਹਿ ਕਰਉ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਜਉ ਸੁਨਤੋ ਹੈ ਰਘੁਰਾਇਓ॥

ਅੰਗ - 205

Wherever I behold I find Thee there. I am now, firmly convinced of it.

Before whom should I make a supplication, and entreaty, when the Lord Himself is hearing all.

ਹਰਿ ਅੰਤਰਜਾਮੀ ਸਭ ਬਿਧਿ ਜਾਣੈ

ਤਾ ਕਿਸੁ ਪਹਿ ਆਖ ਸੁਣਾਈਐ॥

ਅੰਗ.- 624

God, the Reader of hearts, fully knows all the state of my mind, then, whom else am I to go to tell?

ਕਿਆ ਦੀਨੁ ਕਰੇ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ॥

ਜਉ ਸਭ ਘਟਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਨਿਵਾਸ॥

ਅੰਗ - 1304

What supplication I, the poor one, can make, when the Lord abides in all the hearts?

My mind thirsts for the touch of the Lord's feet.

The Sixth Stage :

At the last stage of *Nam Simran* and meditation, the roles are reversed. The seeker or the devotee becomes the deity, and deity becomes the devotee's attendant. At this stage, the Divine is always impatient to carry out the will of the devotee. Every wish gets fulfilled at the slightest licker of a wish :

ਜਹ ਜਹ ਕਾਜ ਕਿਰਤਿ ਸੇਵਕ ਕੀ ਤਹਾ ਤਹਾ ਉਠਿ ਧਾਵੈ॥

ਸੇਵਕ ਕਉ ਨਿਕਟੀ ਹੋਇ ਦਿਖਾਵੈ॥

ਜੋ ਜੋ ਕਹੈ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਪਹਿ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਤਤਕਾਲ ਹੋਇ ਆਵੈ॥

ਅੰਗ - 40

Whithersoever the business and affair of His slave is, thither the Lord runs.

To His servant, the Lord shows Himself to be near. Whatever the servant asks his Master, forthwith comes to pass.

ਕਬੀਰ ਮਨੁ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਭਇਆ ਜੈਸਾ ਗੰਗਾ ਨੀਰੁ॥

ਪਾਛੈ ਲਾਗੋ ਹਰਿ ਫਿਰੈ ਕਹਤ ਕਬੀਰ ਕਬੀਰ॥

ਅੰਗ - 136

Kabir, my mind has become immaculate like the Gange's water.

The Lord follows me, saying "Kabir, O my Kabir"

ਜਿਸ ਕਾ ਪਿਤਾ ਤੂ ਹੈ ਮੇਰੇ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਤਿਸੁ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਭੂਖ ਕੈਸੀ॥

ਨਵਨਿਧਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਨਿਧਾਨੁ ਗ੍ਰਿਹਿ ਤੇਰੈ ਮਨਿ ਬਾਛੈ ਸੋ ਲੈਸੀ॥

ਪਿਤਾ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਲਿ ਆਗਿਆ ਇਹ ਦੀਨੀ ਬਾਰਿਕੁ ਮੁਖ ਮਾਂਗੈ ਸੋ ਦੇਨਾ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਬਾਰਿਕੁ ਦਰਸੁ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਚਾਹੈ ਮੋਹਿ ਹ੍ਰਿਦੈ ਬਸਹਿ ਨਿਤ ਚਰਨਾ॥

ਅੰਗ - 126

He, whose father Thou art, O my Lord; what sort of hunger can that child have?

In Thy Home are the nine treasures of the Name's wealth. What his heart desires, that he receives.

The kind father has given this order that whatever the child asks for with his mouth, he be provided with that.

Child Nanak longs for the Lord's vision. May the Lord's feet ever abide within my mind.

Prayer gets its highest degree of fulfilment at this spiritual stage. The Divine fulfils every desire

even before its articulation.

ਬਿਰਥੀ ਕਦੇ ਨਾ ਹੋਵਈ ਜਨ ਕੀ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ॥

ਅੰਗ - 819

The prayer of God's slave goes not vain ever.

A spiritual devotee who has achieved this stage stops praying since he has realized the underlying philosophy of prayer. He realizes that one needs to pray till one is in need of anything

When the human merges with the Divine and becomes Divine then what else is left to pray for? All cravings and desires cease to appear, as the benefactor and the supplicant merge into one :

ਹਮ ਕਿਛੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਏਕੈ ਓਹੀ॥ ਆਗੈ ਪਾਛੈ ਏਕੋ ਸੋਈ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਿ ਖੋਏ ਭ੍ਰਮ ਭੰਗਾ॥ ਹਮ ਓਇ ਮਿਲਿ ਹੋਏ ਇਕ ਰੰਗਾ॥

ਅੰਗ - 391

I am nothing, He alone is all-in-all.

In the past and the future He alone is.

Nanak, the Guru has dispelled my doubts and demerits.

He and I, uniting together, have assumed identical colour.

Need for Prayer :

Prayer is essential for everyone, irrespective of his mental state. Prayer helps at every stage of life from the mundane to the spiritual level. Prayer makes us humble and cleansed. Prayer is

as indispensable for life's voyage as a supporting stick (staff) for a blind person.

ਕਿਆ ਹੰਸੁ ਕਿਆ ਬਗੁਲਾ ਜਾ ਕਉ ਨਦਰਿ ਕਰੇਇ॥

ਜੋ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਕਾਗਹੁ ਹੰਸੁ ਕਰੇ॥

ਅੰਗ - 91

What is a swan and what a crane? The Lord may show mercy o any He likes.

He, who is pleasing o Him, O' Nanak! him He makes a swan from a crow.

ਕੀਤਾ ਲੋੜੀਐ ਕੰਮੁ ਸੁ ਹਰਿ ਪਹਿ ਆਖੀਐ॥

ਕਾਰਜੁ ਦੇਇ ਸਵਾਰਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸਚੁ ਸਾਖੀਐ॥

ਅੰਗ - 91

Whatever work, thou desirest to do, tell that to the Lord.

He shall accomplish thy affair. The True Guru bears true testimony to it.



Bhai Kamaliya's Prayer

A small hillock, at a distance of a few miles from Lahore, is popularly known as Bhai Buddha's Brick Kiln. It is believed that Bhai Buddha earned so much money which could last for whole of his life by selling bricks extracted from just one corner of his kiln. That he did not extract bricks from the other sectors of the kiln. The unextracted bricks still lie there as a historical monument. There is an interesting tale in the Sikh history about this brick kiln.

Bhai Buddha was a devout follower of Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji. During the Guru's visit to Lahore, Bhai Buddha invited Guru Ji and his Sikh followers to his house, organized a congregation and served food to the whole congregation with great devotion. It was customary to pray for the welfare of the host after partaking of the meals. Bhai Buddha begged Guru Ji and the congregation to pray for the successful baking of his bricks in his huge brick

kiln. Acceding to Bhai Buddha's appeal, Guru Ji and the whole congregation prayed to God for the successful baking of his bricks. Sikh followers of those times had a firm belief in the efficacy of an earnest prayer. The congregation was extremely sure that their prayer would surely be answered. So they cried in excitement : Bhai Buddha's bricks will be fully baked.

But at the same moment, a lunatic dressed in rags started shouting : Buddha's bricks would remain unbaked. The people caught hold of the lunatic and presented him before Guru Ji with a complaint that he was shouting against the prayer and wishes of the whole congregation. He was declaring that Bhai Buddha's bricks would remain unbaked. The congregation pleaded for a suitable punishment to the wayward lunatic.

Guru Ji called him in and asked him to explain the reason for his curses. Guru Ji further enquired him how Bhai Buddha had offended him. The man complained that Bhai Buddha's minions did not allow him to enter the congregation. He had pleaded with them that he, too, was a Guru Ji's devotee. But these people did not pay any heed to his request and turned him

out. How could he pray and wish for the successful baking of Bhai Buddha's bricks after such a discrimination and humiliation. Bhai Buddha's attendants were hauled up and they confirmed that they had really prevented the man from entrance. Guru Ji directed Bhai Buddha and his attendants to tender an apology to the aggrieved person and they begged pardon for their wrongful act.

However this incident created a very piquant situation. How could the two prayers, one by the whole congregation in favour of Bhai Buddha and the other by an equally devout Sikh against Bhai Buddha's interest, be answered at the same time? Guru Arjan Dev gave his verdict in favour of the aggrieved Sikh and declared that Bhai Buddha's bricks would remain unbaked. Guru Ji wanted to teach him the lesson that the humiliation even of a single Sikh was tantamount to the disrespect shown to the whole congregation. A Sikh's earnest prayer never goes unanswered. However, since Bhai Buddha's and his men had tendered an apology and the whole congregation had also prayed for the success of Bhai Buddha's operation, he would also be rewarded. Even his unbaked bricks would sell at the rate of baked

bricks and Bhai Buddhu would not suffer any financial losses.

It is recorded in history that the bricks of all the brick kilns remained unbaked due to heavy rains that season and even unbaked bricks were sold at a premium. This historical episode reveals how much faith the Sikhs of those times reposed in prayer and its success.



A Waheguru – Sikh Bond

Once a Sikh scholar visited me at Calcutta. He disclosed that he had been highly impressed by my written article : Bandginama (A Manual for Prayer). Since then, he had been very keen to see me. Asked about his Calcutta visit, he disclosed that he had been directed by the Government to meet a Railway Engineer at Calcutta in connection with a job. Earlier, he had been serving as a Government servant on India's border during the second world war. He further disclosed that the railway engineer had conducted the interview one day ahead of the fixed schedule. The engineer told that since the Sikh scholar did not possess any work experience of railway machines, so he had not been selected for that job. But the concerned engineer had not filed a written report about his selection to the higher authorities so far.

Noticing the crestfallen face of the Sikh scholar I asked him if he really wished to get a

job at Calcutta. The gentleman replied that although he was reconciled to God's Will, but still he felt depressed at the loss of an opportunity. He would be returning to his home the same evening. I suggested that since the concerned officer had not sent his written report, he should stay at Calcutta for a couple of days. He remarked that it was futile to wait for the written report after the officer had conveyed his decision to him verbally. While taking leave from me, he expressed happiness over our meeting, the disappointment over the loss of a job notwithstanding. This moment reminded me of one of the Guru Arjan's hymns and seeking inspiration from this hymn I addressed the departing guest in this way : "Sir, Have you provided an opportunity to Waheguru (God) for assistance in this matter." He replied that he had prayed just once for assistance on the eve of his departure from home. He asked me what did I mean by providing an opportunity to God. Did God look out for an opportunity and provided assistance when such an opportunity was available. He believed that all things moved according to God's Will. The engineer's consent or refusal also depended on God's Will. I remarked

if he was really reconciled to God's Will then he should not have felt so much depressed at the engineer's refusal of a job. Why should a man with an abiding faith in God's Will feel so frustrated at the loss of an opportunity. In my opinion, he would have felt delighted on getting that job, but having missed the opportunity, he was trying to dilute his frustration by attributing this loss to God's Will.

These remarks disturbed him and set him thinking. He agreed with my analysis and admitted that he really wanted a job at Calcutta and would have been really delighted had he been selected, but having lost the opportunity, he was returning home disappointed. I retorted that he should have given Waheguru an opportunity to help him, if he had really prayed for a job at Calcutta. I further assured him that Waheguru never disappoints a person who prays and surrenders to His Will as per the teachings of Guru Granth Sahib :

ਜੋ ਸਰਣਿ ਆਵੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਕੰਠਿ ਲਾਵੈ

ਇਹੁ ਬਿਰਦੁ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਸੰਦਾ ॥

ਅੰਗ - 544

Who-so-ever seeks the Lord's protection, him He hugs to His bosom. This is the quality of the Lord. Prays Nanak, I have found God, my Spouse, who ever indulges in dalliance with me.

ਕਉੜਾ ਬੋਲਿ ਨ ਜਾਨੈ ਪੂਰਨ ਭਗਵਾਨੈ
ਅਉਗਣੁ ਕੋ ਨ ਚਿਤਾਰੇ ॥

ਅੰਗ - 784

*The Perfect Lord, who thinks not of my demerits,
knows not the bitter word.*

He asked me to explain my repeated assertion on praying, surrendering and providing an opportunity to Waheguru to assist a devotee. I explained that according to Guru Granth Sahib's teachings "surrender to God" means to pray with a complete sense of humility and abandonment of all other options. Gurbani states this mental state as follows :

ਸਗਲ ਦੁਆਰ ਛਾਡਿ ਕੈ ਗਹਿਓ ਤੁਹਾਰੇ ਦੁਆਰ ॥
ਬਾਂਹਿ ਗਹੇ ਕੀ ਲਾਜ ਅਸ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਦਾਸ ਤੁਹਾਰ ॥

*Abandoning all other sources, I have come to seek
Your protection
I beseech You to kindly protect my honour,
Since I am Your humble devotee.*

When a devotee prays with this kind of attitude, then he achieves a state of total surrender. This total surrender of human will to God's Will amounts to giving Waheguru an opportunity to assist a devotee. After listening to this explanation, he admitted that he had never experienced this state of mind during his prayer and had never prayed in a state of total surrender.

I assured him that Waheguru never feels offended over our half-hearted prayers as he is eternally loving and generous. I advised him to pray to Waheguru once again in the true state of surrender and provide a fresh opportunity to Waheguru to assist him.

He asked me how should he make a fresh start in this direction. I explained that he should enter into a bond with Waheguru which Guru Arjan wished every one of his Sikh followers to sign with Waheguru, but which very few Sikhs signed and that too very rarely. He asked me to further explain the conditions or clauses of such a bond. I explained that Guru Arjan had laid down the conditions of this bond in a hymn in Raga Gaudi. The first and foremost condition of this bond is that a devotee must approach Waheguru and pray with a sense of total surrender and humility. The bond further stipulates that after an earnest prayer, a devotee must repose a complete faith in Waheguru's omnipotence to solve all human problems. He must feel assured that Waheguru would surely resolve his tensions, worries and all other troubles and tribulations. He must remain convinced that Waheguru would do everything to ensure a

devotee's victory even if the mightiest of mighty in the world had to bend before His devotee. The third stipulation of this Guru-Sikh bond is that following the resolution of all his problems, a devotee would do *Nam Simran* or meditation in a pose of fearlessness. Practice of *Nam Simran* would shower a state of perfect bliss on the devotee. The fourth stipulation requires that a devotee who attains a state of spiritual bliss through *Nam Simran* and *Waheguru's* grace must share with and impart this experience to others without any discrimination. Upon this explanation of the Guru - Sikh bond, he argued why did all these divine boons and blessings resulted just from surrendering the human will to the divine Will? I gave a further explanation of the underlying philosophy of this Guru-Sikh bond as stated in *Guru Arjan Dev's* hymn in the *Raga Gaudi*. *Guru Arjan Dev* states in the concluding lines of this hymn that *Waheguru*, is a Lord of all lords, who expects nothing in return from a devotee, who knows every secret of human mind who never assists a devotee till he makes a total surrender of his will and prays with complete humility. But the moment a devotee sheds every other hope and surrenders his will to God's Will

his sense of surrender and humility evokes God's grace and the Divine Will comes into operation to resolve all human problems. Guru Arjan Dev categorically states in the concluding verses that he himself has entered into such a bond with the Divine and on the basis of his own experience recommends the same pathway to his faithful devotees for the resolution of their worldly problems. The Sikh scholar asked me to point out this powerful hymn which stipulated such a bond between Waheguru and a devotee. When I recited this hymn, he was astonished to see that he himself recited this hymn daily but never realized its potent content :

ਬਿਰੁ ਘਰਿ ਬੈਸਹੁ ਹਰਿ ਜਨ ਪਿਆਰੇ ॥
ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਤੁਮਰੇ ਕਾਜ ਸਵਾਰੇ ॥
ਦੁਸਟ ਦੂਤ ਪਰਮੇਸਰਿ ਮਾਰੇ ॥
ਜਨ ਕੀ ਪੈਜ ਰਖੀ ਕਰਤਾਰੇ ॥
ਬਾਦਿਸਾਹ ਸਾਹ ਸਭ ਵਸਿ ਕਰਿ ਦੀਨੇ ॥
ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਨਾਮ ਮਹਾ ਰਸ ਪੀਨੇ ॥
ਨਿਰਭਉ ਹੋਇ ਭਜਹੁ ਭਗਵਾਨ ॥
ਸਾਧਸੰਗਤਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਕੀਨੋ ਦਾਨੁ ॥
ਸਰਣਿ ਪਰੇ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਅੰਤਰਜਾਮੀ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਓਟ ਪਕਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਸੁਆਮੀ ॥

ਅੰਗ - 201

*Sit steadily at home, O dear slaves of God.
The True Guru has arranged your affairs.
The Lord has smitten the wicked and the evil.*

*His slave's honour, the Creator has preserved.
The Kings and Emperors the Lord has all subjected
to His slave.*

*He has quaffed the great essence of the ambrosia
Name.*

Fearlessly meditate on the Fortunate Lord.

*Meet the society of saints and give this gift of
Lord's meditation to others.*

Next day the Sikh scholar informed me telephonically that being overwhelmed with diverse sentiments, he could not face me. He further informed that he had been selected for the same job and by the same engineer who had categorically refused him the same job a day earlier. He had no explanation for this sudden turn of events except that he had become worthy of God's grace. He thanked me for explaining the implications of the Guru-Sikh bond signified through prayer and sought my blessings for remaining steadfast in the execution of the bond that he had voluntarily signed with Waheguru through prayer.



All-Pervasive-Waheguru

Fortunate are those who seek *Waheguru's* protection during adversity. A verbal prayer alone is not sufficient to evoke God's grace. An earnest prayer made with complete faith and devotion brings about divine benediction. We become worthy of divine grace only when we abandon all human hopes and other means of protection. The divine power as a saviour comes into operation when a devotee seeks divine protection abandoning all other efforts and props. The *Gurbani* of *Guru Granth Sahib* has laid down the procedure for seeking divine help at so many places in the text :

ਅਵਰਿ ਉਪਾਵ ਸਭਿ ਤਿਆਗਿਆ ਦਾਰੂ ਨਾਮੁ ਲਇਆ ॥

ਅੰਗ - 817

I have abandoned all other efforts and have taken the medicine of the Name alone.

ਤਿਆਗਿ ਸਗਲ ਸਿਆਨਪਾ ਭਜੁ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ॥

ਅੰਗ - 405

Lay aside all thine cleverness and remember the

Formless Supreme Lord.

ਪ੍ਰਥਮੇ ਮਤਾ ਜਿ ਪਤ੍ਰੀ ਚਲਾਵਉ ॥

ਦੁਤੀਏ ਮਤਾ ਦੁਇ ਮਾਨੁਖ ਪਹੁਚਾਵਉ ॥

ਤ੍ਰਿਤੀਏ ਮਤਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਕਰਉ ਉਪਾਇਆ ॥

ਮੈ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਛੋਡਿ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਤੁਹੀ ਧਿਆਇਆ ॥

ਅੰਗ - 37

*At first I was counselled to send a letter. Secondly
I was advised to send two men to mediate.
The third suggestion was that some effort should be
made.*

*Forsaking one and all, I have meditated on Thee
alone, O Lord.*

Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji has also stated the
process of evoking divine grace :

ਸਗਲ ਦੁਆਰ ਛਾਡਿ ਕੈ ਗਹਿਓ ਤੁਹਾਰੋ ਦੁਆਰ ॥

ਬਾਹਿ ਗਹੇ ਕੀ ਲਾਜ ਅਸ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਦਾਸ ਤੁਹਾਰ ॥

*Abandoning all other sources, I have come to seek
Your protection*

*I beseech You to kindly protect my honour,
Since I am Your humble devotee.*

Waheguru, being Omniscient, knows whether
a devotee is just paying a lip service to seek His
grace or is earnest in his prayer. *Waheguru* sees
through the motives of a devotee who keeps on
depending simultaneously on his own intelligence
and efforts while making a pretence of praying a

well.

Human mind's rational faculty always keeps on diverting and distracting us away from God. Even during human prayer for divine protection, human intelligence keeps on distracting our attention through various kinds of rational and logical arguments. But those who have faith in God's Omnipotence do not fall into the snares of human intelligence. Such persons reject the clever mental arguments firmly :

ਰੇ ਜੀਅ ਨਿਲਜ ਲਾਜ ਤੁਹਿ ਨਾਹੀ ॥

ਹਰਿ ਤਜਿ ਕਤ ਕਾਹੂ ਕੇ ਜਾਂਹੀ ॥

ਜਾ ਕੋ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਊਚਾ ਹੋਈ ॥

ਸੋ ਜਨੁ ਪਰ ਘਰ ਜਾਤ ਨ ਸੋਹੀ ॥

ਸੋ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਰਹਿਆ ਭਰਪੂਰਿ ॥

ਸਦਾ ਸੰਗਿ ਨਾਹੀ ਹਰਿ ਦੂਰਿ ॥

ਅੰਗ - 330

O shameless fellow, dost thou feel not shame?

Forsaking God, whither and to whom goest thou?

Whose Master is the most high, for that man, it seems not graceful to go to another's house.

That Lord is fully pervading everywhere.

God is ever with us, and is never distant.

When we earnestly seek Divine assistance and pray with faith and devotion during our hour of adversity, *Waheguru* does not weigh our merits and demerits, but extends His grace according to

his fundamental attributes of being compassionate and kind. A prayer performed with complete humility and sense of desperation brings out marvellous results.

There was a *Gursikh* scholar among the members of our spiritual science organization at Calcutta. I always sought his scholarly assistance whenever I needed an interpretation of the intricate sankritised hymns in the text of Guru Granth Sahib.

This Sikh scholar's eldest son was in employment at Amritsar. Being a devout Sikh, he was associated with various Sikh organizations and commanded their respect. One day, during the communal riots of 1947, Giani Ji approached me. He was under great stress and tension. He informed me that his son has been arrested by the police in connection with the communal riots. Giani Ji had learnt that those detained for their alleged involvement in communal riots were severely tortured by the police. Majority of the police force, comprising Muslims, maltreated the Hindu and Sikh detainees. Giani Ji further informed that due to his own absence at Amritsar and the detention of his son, there was nobody

else in the family to defend his son in the police case and look after the family affairs. In his own absence, his eldest son, now under police detention, used to look after the entire family. We had a detailed discussion on this topic which went on as follows :

Giani Ji reiterated his fears that Muslims constituted the majority in the Punjab Police. This Muslim force was inimical towards the Sikhs and the Hindus. These detainees were detained as under trials for a long spell before presenting them before the courts. They were humiliated and tortured during their detention. False witnesses were produced as evidence to prove the cooked up charges and many innocent detainees were convicted with very harsh sentences.

I advised Giani Ji to follow the golden rule of seeking Divine protection and grace in the time of adversity through the medicine of a prayer performed with complete earnestness and humility. He should abandon all human efforts and rational efforts and seek divine protection. He argued that he knew the complete philosophy of Guru Granth Sahib as he had a thorough knowledge of its text and had undertaken many

non-stop readings of the text. He had also preached this philosophy many a time to the Sikh congregations. But, inspite of his complete knowledge of Guru Granth's philosophy and his scholarship, he doubted its efficaciousness. He expressed his apprehensions that God, no longer, listened to prayers of the people living in *Kaliyuga* (the Dark Age).

I tried to impress upon him that *Waheguru* and His divine attributes were irreversible irrespective of changes in time and age. I further reiterated that *Waheguru's* divine identity and divine attributes were not subject to change under any dispensation. *Waheguru*, in His true identity, always saved those who seek his shelter and grace in right earnestness. Somewhat impressed by my confident assertions, Giani Ji pleaded with me to pray for the safety of his son.

I, once again, asserted that *Waheguru's* grace and protection extended to all the creatures of the world alike. Whosoever sought His protection in right earnestness, received his grace and benediction. At this, Giani Ji promised to pray himself, but still insisted on my praying for him.

Throughout this discussion, I felt that Giani

Ji himself lacked conviction because he asked me repeatedly to pray for him. But knowing the basic principles of prayer I wished to drive home this lesson to Giani Ji and insisted that he himself should pray with faith and humility.

Finally, we agreed that both of us should pray to God independently. I had started the recitation of *Guru Granth Sahib* at my residence for the peace of the departed souls of those innocent Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims who were killed during the communal riots. Giani Ji preferred to stay at my residence that night. He recited the holy text during that night with complete devotion and faith. I felt that his impressive recitation had fulfilled all the conditions of a prayer. I was sure of its being answered and fulfilled.

Giani Ji again insisted on my praying for him, while departing from my residence in the morning. I, once again, reminded him that a single prayer made with faith and devotion could bring about the Divine power to operate and intercede and that repeated prayers exposed one's own lack of faith.

After about a week, my wife informed me

that Giani Ji had visited our residence. He was in good humour and brought a token gift of fruit. He had informed her that his son had been acquitted of all charged and released from jail.



Dignity Of A Faithful And Humble Prayer

As Waheguru is eternally pervasive and eternally compassionate and responsive to the prayers of the devout, similarly, the devout and men of faith always keep on resolving their problems through their earnest and humble prayers. The devout and men of faith are those persons who repose a permanent faith in the eternal omnipotence and omnipresence of God. Such persons make earnest human efforts to solve their problems; but admitting the inadequacy of human efforts, keep on praying in all humility for the success of their mission. Every community, every society and every nation has a fair share of such devout people at all times. I wish to introduce one such person of faith, a truly Christian Lieutenant General Sir William Dobi to members of the Spiritual Science Association. Born at Madras in 1879, commissioned in the

British Army, he took an active part in the Boer war and remained a Governor of Malta from 1940 to 1942. He has described his faith and belief in God in the following words.

“The chief and the most far-reaching lesson I have drawn from my experience of life is undoubtedly the reality of God. When I speak of the reality of God I don’t mean some abstract idea which some people may call God, nor a vague conception such as the prime cause, nor fate, nor any of the other indefinite and impersonal experiences by which men sometimes seek to describe Him. But I mean that I have learned that He is intensely a personal Being, with whom one may become acquainted and get in close relationship and who is interested in me and my affairs, who desires my well-being and plans to use me to fulfil His purposes. This Being has been intensely real to me. His reality has been so truly part and parcel of my life that it has exerted a controlling influence on me.

An illustration of the way to which I have seen His guiding hand may be helpful. For instance, my entrance into the Army may be quoted as a case in point. As most of my relatives

and forebears had been in the Army, I naturally desired to follow their steps. But when I was a boy, it was discovered that my eyesight was not too good, and it was considered very unlikely that I would pass the medical examination for the Army. Consequently, my studies were planned to enable me to enter the Indian Civil Service, but it was considered that the experience of a public examination would be beneficial to me and in consequence I sat for the entrance examination to the Royal Military Academy with that object in view than any other. To my surprise and to that of my parents I passed the Medical test, but I had not passed with high marks enough to qualify for a place. But to my further surprise, a number of candidates above me were rejected on medical grounds and in due course I was admitted to the Royal Military Academy. Since my parents and I had made the choice of my career a definite matter of earnest prayer, we had no doubt that God answered these prayers in this quite unexpected way and that it was His purpose for me that I should follow a military career and my subsequent consideration of the matter in the light of this experience has, so far as I am concerned, fully confirmed that original opinion."

Sir Dobbi states his faith in prayer in the following words : "In 1929, I was commanding the Cairo Brigade. Serious disturbances broke out in Palestine where the situation threatened to get completely out of hand. Troops and naval detachments were rushed to Palestine from Egypt and elsewhere and I was sent up to take command of the forces of the three fighting services of the country. Before the full reinforcements had arrived and when the troops in Palestine were fully extended, I received a report in my headquarters at Jerusalem that a large force (said to be 5000) of armed Bedouin was moving on towards Gaza from the South East. In Gaza, there were many defenceless people including a British mission hospital with nurses and families. I knew that if the Bedouin force, enflamed as it was with false propaganda, got into Gaza, the place might become a shambles. But I had no available force to send there, all at my disposal being already fully employed. I sent an engine with two trucks in which a couple of lewis guns were mounted to patrol the railway line to the east of the city, though I realized that the effect they could have would be microscopic. I also ordered some aircrafts to go out, locate the

Bedouin and drop bombs in front of them, in the hope of diverting them off. They, however, returned at dusk, having been unable to locate the Bedouin, who presumably took over in the *Wadis* with which the country was intersected. But I continued after that to get information from other resources that the Bedouin continued to move towards Gaza until they were extremely close. The situation to me seemed pretty desperate, so I did what I had frequently done before in difficult circumstances and sought God's help. I remember kneeling down in my office in Jerusalem and using some such words as these : "Oh God! I have come to that end of my resources. If the Bedouin get into Gaza it seems that there will be a massacre. I cannot stop them. Please intervene." I continued to get information for a short time that the Bedouin were continuing to approach Gaza i.e. in a South Western direction, then suddenly I heard that they had changed direction by a right angle and were moving North East i.e. in a direction where there was nothing to matter. They actually spent the night in the open country and did no harm to anyone. Early next morning H.M.S. courageous arrived at Jafa with a battalion from Mala; part of a battalion was immediately

sent to Gaza and the situation was saved. A British Govt. official also succeeded in getting in touch with the Bedouin and after some difficulty managed to convince them that they had been misled and persuaded them to return to their homes. I tried to find out afterwards what had caused the sudden change of direction but no satisfactory explanation was found. I have never doubted that it was a case where God intervened in answer to a humble prayer."

Sir William Dobbi has related several other incidents when God listened to his humble prayer and became his saviour. In the end, Sir William Dobbi states that those who repose their complete faith in the eternal omnipotence of God and experience His omnipresence, they can face the most dangerous ordeals in life on the basis of their faith.



One Must Remain Expectant

One of the major postulates of spiritual science is to remain expectant after prayer. One must remain expectant of a boon for which one has prayed to God. A *Gursikh* who prays with faith and devotion must expect his prayer to be answered. Most of our prayers remain unanswered because we abandon hope about their fulfillment.

Waheguru fulfils human desires manifestly. He demonstrates His divine power by fulfilling every human prayer performed with determination. As a cinematographic film, passing in front the light falling from the film projector, gets reflected on the screen, similarly a human wish expressed through prayer acquires its transparent manifestation in the world through a back up from the Divine Force. A firm belief is one about which one is sure to be materialized. A wish, which lacks conviction and expectation, fails to

attract sufficient Divine energy for its realization and manifestation.

An episode from the life of a Kashmiri old woman illustrates the veracity of this spiritual postulate about expectation after prayer. This old lady from Kashmir started making preparations for Guru Hargobind's visit to her humble cottage immediately after making a prayer that the Guru must pay a visit to her cottage. She was determined to present to the Guru a woollen robe spun and knitted by her own hands. With such a firm belief and determination, she started spinning and knitting the woollen robe and became a butt of ridicule among her community. She prepared the desired robe ignoring public ridicule. People made fun of her for her ridiculous fancy that Guru Hargobind would travel from Punjab to accept a hand-spun robe from an old hag. The Guru had no dearth of devotees in Punjab who could present him with silken and quality woollen robes. But these ignorant people hardly realized that the firm belief and prayer of an old female devotee would induce the Divine power to compel Guru Hargobind from distant Punjab to visit this

supplicant's cottage in Kashmir. They were dumb-founded when Guru Hargobind presented himself in the devotee's cottage to receive her gift. It was a miracle for them. But the old female devotee was congratulating herself for her firm faith and conviction which had materialized her prayer.

This kind of fulfillment or materialization of a well-intended prayer made with faith and determination should not be mistaken for a false pride or vanity. Pride and vanity are not based on divine sustenance. These are creatures of human ego. Human self gets sustenance from the Divine only when it reposes its complete faith in Him and remains attached to Him. This attachment should not have a trace of ego. One must detach or disentangle from ego in order to get attached to the Divine. We must shed our egotism and pride for seeking entry into the Divine much like we remove the dust laden shoe before entering a place of worship.

Based on a similar faith and determination a poor, ignorant adolescent rustic boy started shouting for Guru Hargobind's visit to his

meadows. He had learnt from her mother that Guru Hargobind visits those who call from the depth of their hearts with faith and determination. Upon this he had also asked her mother about the kind of offering to be made to the Guru in case his prayer was answered. The mother advised him that he must make a offering of one rupee and a dollop of jaggery. This faithful and devout child took these two articles from her mother and tied these in a knot of his headgear before inviting the Guru through his loud shouts. He would not be able to collect these offerings if the Guru visited him in response to his shouts and calls. The mother, in order to keep the innocent boy's faith intact, tied these articles in a knot of his headgear. He carried these offerings in a knot for months together. To his mates several enquiries he would firmly answer that he would present these offerings to Guru Hargobind when he visited his fields.

The village urchins and folks nicknamed him "A boy with a knot of rupee and jaggery" and often called him by this nickname "Palla". History bears a witness to this fact that one day Guru Hargobind paid a visit to this boy's fields. The

boy opened the months long knot and presented his offering of a rupee and a dollop of jaggery.

In the opinion of general public, Guru Hargobind must have taken pity on this boy and responded to his shouts. This seems to be an obvious explanation of this incident. But the deeper significant aspect of this recorded historical episode is its spiritual content which can be understood properly by spiritually enlightened persons alone.

Guru Hargobind loved and respected everyone without discrimination or favour. He was above prejudice and favour. He loved his devotees alike. He was always keen to present himself to his devotees, but those who prayed with faith and confidence could receive his blessings. So this rustic boy Bhai Pallo had no doubts about the fulfilment of his wish expressed through faith. He was completely sure that Guru Ji would definitely respond to his shouts and calls coming from the depths of his heart. That is why he had tied his meager offering of a rupee and lump of jaggery in a knot in anticipation of Guru Ji's visit.

Even today, any devout Sikh can call for his Guru through a message of love and faith. The only condition is to have faith, and pray with faith and hope and to keep always ready with one's offering in anticipation of His visit after a call for such a visit



Waheguru Protects The Honour Of His Devotees In Moments Of Adversity

My daughter was in a state of advance pregnancy. This being her first delivery, we were apprehensive. She maintained good health for nine months, but there was a swelling all over her body at the end of the ninth month. For some other medical reasons as well, doctors felt it would not be a normal delivery. A surgery would have to be performed for a safe delivery.

When I told the senior most surgeon that God had never disappointed me and every thing happened at my household in a normal way, he gave me a wry smile. He called his juniors and told them that Mr. Singh (the author) had a firm belief that it would be a normal delivery. The other doctors remarked that they also wished it would be a normal delivery but since the patients medical condition was not normal, they would

have to make arrangements for a surgical operation.

We admitted our daughter in a nursing home on the expected date. She spent the whole day in great discomfort. The doctors told us at around 11. P.M. that the delivery was expected at around 4 A.M. in the early morning and advised us to go home. They promised to inform us telephonically at home.

My daughter looked terribly exhausted and weak due to the unrest during the day. She called me and asked me to pray for her, since she was so much exhausted that she could not even pray. She was too scared to bear the labour pains. I myself was dumbfounded. She had passed the whole day in severe pain and still the delivery was expected next day in the morning. Her health was continuously deteriorating. On the repeated insistence of the doctors, I went home with a mind that I must pray to God for the well-being of my daughter. Before my departure for home, I entered the Labor Room and recited the full text of the following *Gurbani* hymn with complete faith and devotion :

ਤਾਤੀ ਵਾਉ ਨ ਲਗਈ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਸਰਣਾਈ ॥

ਚਉਗਿਰਦ ਹਮਾਰੈ ਰਾਮ ਕਾਰ ਦੁਖ ਲਗੈ ਨ ਭਾਈ ॥ ਅੰਗ - 819

Not even the hot wind touches him, who is under the protection of the Supreme Lord.

On my four sides is the Lord's circle, so pain afflicts me not, O brother.

My wife and my elder daughter stayed back in the nursing home. It took me ten minutes to reach home by car. I started praying again at ten minutes past eleven at night. I feared I would not be able to sleep at night, so I preferred to spend the whole night in prayers.

I would like to share with the readers the spectacle which I saw and the spiritual experience which I underwent during my prayer. As I began to pray, I saw a terrible spectacle. I could not explain whether this spectacle was the creation of my lack of faith or it was created by the Divine power to test my faith. But now I feel that *Maya* (the illusory world) creates such a scenario whenever a devotee has to pass through a test of faith. This negative force tries its utmost that its prey, the man with a wavering faith, should not escape its grip of disbelief and mistrust. But if a devotee remains steadfast and asserts his faith with a determined confidence and humble devotion, then this negative force withdraws and

disappears. The Divine Will prevails and casts a protective shield over the devotee. During the course of my prayer, I had a dialogue with the force of negativity and illusion. It questioned me that the Divine power whose protection I was seeking in my prayer either did not exist, or even if it existed, it did not interfere in the cause-effect cycle of human deeds. It argued that my daughter must have committed some sinful acts in her previous birth for which she was being punished in this life. It tried to frighten me by stating that my daughter was really in a terrible state. The doctors had made a correct diagnosis of her affliction. It further tried to dishearten me by saying that prayer at such a stage would result in disappointment only. Instead of escaping from the scene, I should have stood by her in the hospital till she breathed her last, the voice seemed to rebuke me for my act of omission and cowardice on the pretext of making a prayer and accused me of running away from the scene on the false pretence of praying for my daughter's well-being. It built up a night-marish environment around me in which I visualised my daughter as already dead and I praying in vain for the survival of a dead body. I became extremely

nervous as I passed through this scene. But after a moment, I asserted my faith and declared that such a thing could never happen. Waheguru is omnipotent and Almighty. His grace can wipe out all the sins of the past. When His grace manifests, the effect of previous deeds gets obliterated. He always protects those who seek His grace. The spectacle which I had been witnessing was false, it was an illusion. Waheguru is million times more powerful and mightier than the power of illusion Maya. While others, including doctors and my daughter, could be discouraged and deceived by the force of negativity, I, being a devotee of Guru Gobind Singh, could never be misled. I knew certainly that Waheguru's grace could snatch a devotee from the jaws of death. My daughter would certainly recover and survive this ordeal. She would suffer pain no more. With this assertion of faith and confidence I prayed to God to ignore our misdeeds and acts of omission and commission and save our daughter. I further prayed to God to manifest His Divine grace and demolish this illusory force of negativity.

When I asserted my faith, the horrible nightmarish spectacle started disappearing gradually into thin air. My frayed nerves acquired

their poise and a wave of fearlessness passed through my whole being. I started feeling myself in the protective custody of the fearless, eternally gracious Waheguru and the Sikh war-cry of victory escaped my lips.

Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa,

Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh.

I was shaken out of this dream-like state by a telephonic ring. My elder daughter informed me that my younger daughter had given birth to a baby girl at 11.43 P.M. It was a completely normal delivery. The doctors were also surprised. Both the mother and the baby were safe and sleeping peacefully. I went to sleep reciting hymn from *Japuji* :

ਵਾਰਿਆ ਨ ਜਾਵਾ ਏਕ ਵਾਰ ॥

ਜੋ ਤੁਧੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਸਾਈ ਭਲੀ ਕਾਰ ॥

ਤੂੰ ਸਦਾ ਸਲਾਮਤਿ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ॥

ਅੰਗ - 3

(I) cannot even once be a sacrifice unto Thee.

Whatever pleases Thee, that is a good pursuit.

Thou art ever Existent and Eternal, O Formless One!



The Best Prayer

The best prayer is one which comprises a determined supplication before Waheguru for bringing about one's spiritual evolution. The higher a *Gursikh* climbs the spiritual ladder, the more contended and the more calm he becomes.

What is a spiritual growth? It is not merely an effort to acquire a God-like identity or God like persona, but to succeed in one's efforts to acquire divine attributes. We can evaluate our spiritual evolution by the reflection of divine attributes in our day to day thoughts and deeds. Spiritual growth is directly proportional to the adoption of divine attributes and their practice in our everyday life :

ਸੰਤ ਰਾਮ ਕੈ ਏਕੈ ਕਾਮ॥

Saints and God function for the same objective.

One has to keep the divine attributes in one's consciousness every moment of one's existence in order to attain a God-like persona. One attains

this Divine persona by continuously keeping the divine attributes embedded in one's consciousness and reflecting these in one's daily conduct. One becomes endowed with divine attributes by the conscious exercise of these attributes. How can one embed these divine attributes in one's consciousness? This can be done through the conscious recitation of certain hymns from the scriptures particularly the hymns which resonate with the varied Divine attributes. This kind of repeated recitation of these sacred hymns acclimatizes the human consciousness with the Divine spirit and leads to spiritual enrichment of the human spirit.

One must develop a selfless and sacred bond with the Divine spirit for a complete union with the Divine.

This state of spiritual union materialises and starts manifesting itself when all other material considerations and human relationship starts appearing fragile and inferior to the spiritual relationship with Waheguru. This, then, is the state of spiritual enlightenment and kinship with the Divine :

ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਪਿਤਾ ਤੂੰ ਹੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਾਤਾ ॥

ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਬੰਧੁ ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਭ੍ਰਾਤਾ ॥
ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਰਾਖਾ ਸਭਨੀ ਥਾਈ
ਤਾ ਭਉ ਕੇਹਾ ਕਾੜਾ ਜੀਉ ॥

ਅੰਗ - 103

Thou art my father, Thou art my mother, Thou art my kinsman and Thou art my brother.

In all the places Thou art my protector. Then why should I feel fear and anxiety.

We become an embodiment of the Divine when we are purged of all kinds of evil and sins. Evil is an alternative force which, beginning with sin, ends in tension, suffering, disease and death. There is not a trace of evil in the Divine (Waheguru). We acquire as much divinity as we shed evil and sinful thoughts. Evil has no existence, but it appears to be very formidable to the ignorant mind. Lack of consciousness of the Divine, infact, creates the illusion of evil. There is no room for evil in a consciousness which becomes an abode of the Divine and His attributes. Evil resides in a consciousness devoid of the Divine or opposed to the Divine.

However, it is a Herculean task to cleanse one's consciousness of evil and in its stead saturate it with the Divine attributes. It needs a lot of effort and sacrifice to bring about such a transformation.

It involves synchronising one's precepts and deeds with the Gurbani's teachings; meditating continuously on the name of God or non-stop-practising of *Nam Simran* and willingly accepting the subsequent changes in one's thoughts and deeds as an aftermath of *Nam Simran*. In other words, this is the sacrifice, the hard labour and the spiritual preparation that one has to put in to achieve the status of a realised soul :

ਜੋ ਸਾਸਿ ਗਿਰਾਸਿ ਧਿਆਏ ਮੇਰਾ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ

ਸੋ ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਨਿ ਭਾਵੈ ॥

ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਦਇਆਲੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਸੁਆਮੀ

ਤਿਸੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ਸੁਣਾਵੈ ॥

ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਧੂੜਿ ਮੰਗੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਕੀ

ਜੋ ਆਪਿ ਜਪੈ ਅਵਰਹ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਾਵੈ ॥

ਅੰਗ - 305

The Guru's disciple, who with every breath and morsel contemplates over my Lord God, he becomes pleasing to Guru's mind.

He, unto whom my Master becomes merciful, to that disciple of His, the Guru imparts his instruction.

Servant Nanak asks for the dust of the feet of that Sikh of the Guru, who himself contemplates on God's Name and makes other contemplate thereon



Prayer

Every noble or virtuous human desire is a prayer. Prayer does not need any particular place or any particular vocabulary for its expression. Every human desire and aspiration which aims at moral edification is a prayer.

Since Waheguru is omnipresent and omniscient and takes a prior cognizance of our every human desire and aspiration we do not need any particular place or any particular ritualistic methodology to invoke his grace.

ਸਭ ਬਿਧਿ ਤੁਮ ਹੀ ਜਾਨਤੇ ਪਿਆਰੇ
ਕਿਸੁ ਪਹਿ ਕਹਉ ਸੁਨਾਇ ॥

ਅੰਗ - 432

Thou knowest all the condition of mine, O Love. To whom should I tell and narrate it?

ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸਦਾ ਹਦੂਰਿ ਹੈ ਕਿਆ ਉਚੀ ਕਰਹਿ ਪੁਕਾਰ ॥

ਅੰਗ - 1420

The Lord is ever near, why callest thou Him with a loud voice?

ਹਰਿ ਅੰਤਰਜਾਮੀ ਸਭ ਬਿਧਿ ਜਾਣੈ

ਤਾ ਕਿਸੁ ਪਹਿ ਆਖਿ ਸੁਣਾਈਐ ॥

ਅੰਗ - 62

*God, the Reader of hearts, fully knows all the state
of my mind, then, whom else am I to go to tell?*

Every human aspiration which leads to moral upliftment and which is sincere and determined constitutes a prayer.

Although prayers in the congregative manner are also beneficial for the overall societal welfare but every genuine prayer, whether expressed or made in silence, elicits divine response :

ਅਨਬੋਲੇ ਕਉ ਤੁਹੀ ਪਛਾਨਹਿ ਜੋ ਜੀਅਨ ਮਹਿ ਹੋਤਾ ॥ ਅੰਗ - 82

*Thou, O Lord, knowest un-uttered what-so-ever
in the minds.*

Prayer is deeply rooted in our consciousness. There is wide gap between a verbal prayer and a prayer arising out of our deepest consciousness. Majority of our verbal prayers without the involvement of our consciousness are superficial and irrelevant. Sometimes we verbalise our prayers without being involved in them merely for the sake of a ceremonial formality. A prayer is superfluous and artificial unless the deeper core of our consciousness is involved in it. A person addicted to bouts of Alcoholism acts of lechery and avarice, acknowledges the viciousness of his vicious acts and prays for a deliverance.

from these evils; but falls a prey to these vices the moment he gets a chance to indulge in these acts. This is because he does not shun these evils honestly, but makes a pretence of denouncing these desires. That prayer alone is genuine which arises from the deepest core of our consciousness and which stirs our entire consciousness.

When we raise the pitch of our prayer to such a lofty state through continuous supplication, utmost humility and deepest faith that raises the status of our consciousness to the level of the Divine will, our prayer gets an instant divine response, as if in a flash, and materialises into manifest success.

Since every human consciousness breeds desire and aspirations, every human being keeps on making conscious and unconscious prayers. Every human being seeks fulfilment of his hidden desires and aspirations. So he keeps on praying for their fulfilment. Even an atheist who denies the existence of God has desires and aspirations and keeps on praying for their fulfilment. But his desires are fulfilled to the extent of his involvement and desirability of his prayers.

A prayer is the deepest expression of human

consciousness which on the basis of its capacity to invoke Divine grace results in its successful fulfilment. One may acknowledge it or not, every human being prays. Sometime we are not even conscious that we are praying because we do not hear its verbal expression. As we are not conscious that we are breathing, similarly we remain unconscious of our prayer. Who does not wish to improve his environment, his health, his family and his motherland? Is there any human being who does not pray? Most of our secret desires are also prayers. Irrespective of our being theists or atheists, we keep on aspiring and praying according to our needs and awareness. An invisible power keeps on fulfilling our desires as well. It is immaterial whether we call this invisible power Waheguru or give any other nomenclature :

ਜਗਤੁ ਭਿਖਾਰੀ ਫਿਰਤੁ ਹੈ ਸਭ ਕੋ ਦਾਤਾ ਰਾਮੁ ॥ ਅੰਗ - 142

The world wanders about as a beggar and the Lord alone is the Bestower of all.



Prayer

Views of Madam Marry Baker Eddy

The Divine takes cognizance of even our expressionless desires. Infact, human desire or aspiration itself is a prayer. Surrender of human aspirations to the Divine lends them to a spiritual dimension which, in turn, leads to their manifest fulfilment. We cannot bring about a change in the Divine will through our meditative eulogizing of His Divine attributes, but we can certainly activate it.

Since eternal *Waheguru* is eternally benevolent and loving towards His creation, nothing but good and beneficial can come out of His dispensation. Prayer does not alter our constitutional framework, but streamlines our consciousness in accordance with the Divine will. Since *Waheguru*, by His own Being, is benevolent, who are we to make Him more benevolent? Can we add to His existing Omniscience? Can we add

to His perfection? Can we increase the flow of His benevolence Who is already excessively benevolent to us? Each human aspiration, without giving expression to it, brings us nearer to our eternal source of happiness and bliss - Waheguru.

Waheguru, being eternally benevolent, irrespective of the past, present and future dimensions of time is always keen to dispense His Divine grace. Man's knowledge, being inadequate, cannot influence the Divine Will.

It is futile to stand in front of a blackboard and pray to the fundamental rules of Mathematics to solve our mathematical problems. Fundamentals of mathematics have already been fixed forever. We can solve our mathematical problems by applying those fundamentals. Similarly, we can not increase the quantum of Divine beneficence, because Waheguru is already perfect in His benevolence. We should make efforts to solve our problems through the proper utilization of His guaranteed benevolence.

Man has already been cast in the image of Waheguru (God). He has already been endowed

with the Divine attributes. Man needs to cultivate these attributes in his consciousness and reflect these in his thoughts and deeds. More than words, man should express his sense of gratitude to Waheguru through his everyday conduct and deeds. Divine attributes should be reflected in human conduct.

We should always pray to become noble, truthful and contented. We can pay our debt of gratitude to our spiritual Gurus (mentors) by practising their teachings in our conduct. Words without deeds are hollow claims.

Jesus Christ exhorted his followers to express their love for him through their noble deeds. Verbal expression of our faith in God is not adequate. We should always be impatient to cultivate Divine attributes in our life and reflect these in our everyday conduct and deeds. We must cultivate the Divine attributes to seek unity with the Divine. The verbal expression that we love God is not adequate. We must be keen to acquire the divine attributes and reflect these noble qualities in our everyday conduct. We must cultivate the moral values in our life to acquire

image of the Divine Waheguru. Spiritual enlightenment benefits us more than the contemplation of higher goals because it inspire us towards higher quality of life. Silent prayer, conscious cultivation of noble thoughts and practice of Guru's teachings take us closer to the Divine.

Expiation of one's past evil deeds is the first step towards spiritual rejuvenation. Cultivation of morally clean thoughts despite temptations and provocation is the second step towards spiritual reformation. Continuous repeated resistance to evil thoughts and temptations, despite occasional failures and lapses, ultimately leads to complete spiritual cleansing.

It is not desirable and proper to seek forgiveness for one's sins through prayer. Sins are condoned only when human soul starts regarding these as evil and ceases to indulge in further sins. Cessation of indulgence in sins is synonymous with redemption and spiritual reformation. It is the greatest sin to pray for forgiveness of sins if indulgence in sin continues even after prayer. One who keeps on praying for forgiveness of sins

without stopping to indulge in sins, falls deeper into moral and spiritual degeneration. Sins are condoned only when one ceases to indulge in sins any further.

Retribution for sins is meant to stop the sinner from further indulgence in sin. Quantum of divine retribution is always higher and disproportionate to the sins committed by the sinner only to teach him a lesson. But the motive behind this retribution is always reformation rather than vengeance or punishment. This cycle of divine retribution continues till indulgence in sins does not cease.

It is crucial to pass this test of non-indulgence in sins before the successful fulfilment of a prayer made with faith and devotion. This kind of test is meant to assess the moral fibre of a supplicant or devotee and the extent of his faith in the Divine. Clearance in this test (complete non-indulgence in sin in thought and deed) endears us to Waheguru and his Divine grace leads to the success of our prayer.

So, the best human prayer is one which seeks energy and Divine grace for accomplishing noble

deeds. Prayer means a supplication for spiritual enlightenment and cast one's life in that mould even if we have to mortify our sensual pleasures. It is not sufficient to aspire for higher moral and spiritual mode of life. We have to make concerted efforts to attain this mode. The dawn of spiritual enlightenment and spiritual realisation dawns only after one has reached its threshold through conscious and concerted efforts.

Most often our prayers do not materialise because we are skeptic about the essentially beneficent and graceful nature of the Divine. It is mandatory to pray with complete devotion and faith. Jesus Christ says that some human prayers are not answered because the supplicants pray for immoral and undesirable things. We often seek those things from Waheguru which are not beneficial for us. In such cases, the ever beneficent and extremely well-wishing Waheguru does not grant our prayers. Our prayer is not genuine and justified if we pray for the condonation of sins without the proper expiation of sins on our part. Sin without retribution leads to further indulgence in sin. A whore approached Jesus Christ and sought forgiveness for her sins. Jesus Christ

condoned her past sins provided she did not indulge in sin in future. The just and perfect Waheguru not only condones sins but pulls out these sins from their roots.

A follower of spiritual science can seek benefits from the ever loving and beneficent Divine.

If our prayer is genuine, sincere and from the deepest core of our consciousness rather than a superficial verbal expression, then we should make concerted efforts for the materialisation of our prayer through continuous spiritual cleansing. The Omniscient Waheguru will certainly help us in our efforts leading to fulfilment of our prayer.

Jesus Christ says :

“When thou prayest, enter into the innermost compartment of your soul and shut it in from all outside sources. There prayest thou to thy Omniscient father in solitude. The all-knowing father will listen to thine prayer and grant it.”

The innermost compartment of the soul refers to the deepest core of one's consciousness which opens only to virtue and truth but remains shut

towards sins and vices. For the successful fulfilment of our prayer, our consciousness must remain completely evacuated from sins and vices. In such a vacuum, prayer is silent and human soul stands cleansed and naked without any trace of sensuality. It is a moment of complete forgiveness for the soul and its unity with the Divine."



The Risk In A Prayer

Many a time, prayer, instead of being beneficial, causes harm. Waheguru is as much beneficent as just and fair. Waheguru's simultaneous beneficence and sense of justice and fairplay both are required for human spiritual reformation. Had Waheguru been beneficent rather than just and fair or only fair and just without being beneficent, then human soul could never cross over the snares of illusory world and seek unity with God.

A Gursikh (devotee), not conversant with the twin aspects of Waheguru or the Godhead, very often lands himself into trouble through wrong kind of prayers. A Gursikh, who prays for the condonation of his past sins, and having prayed once considers that his sins must have been condoned is, infact, ignorant of the Divine aspect of justice and fairplay. Prayer alone does not result in the condonation of our sins. If it is so, how can, then, Waheguru be just and fair.

It is not adequate to atone for one's sins for their divine condonation. A devotee must demonstrate his sense of atonement through his deeds in future. Abandoning indulgence in sins forever after prayer is the only affidavit of a genuine and heart-felt repentance.

Cleansing of one's thoughts and deeds is a testimony of spiritual reformation. We must make a solemn determination to shun indulgence in those sins or lapses for which we have sought divine forgiveness in our prayer. Permanent abstinence from indulgence in sins or immoral acts is a solid proof of our atonement. A prayer coupled with clean thoughts and acts leads to the dispensation of divine grace because such a genuine and just prayer recommends itself to the sense of Divine justice and fairplay.

It must also be remembered that the Divine sense of justice and fairplay is not aimed at retribution but directed towards the spiritual rejuvenation of the human soul. Law awards sentence for the improvement of the criminal. When a convicted person reforms himself and gives a demonstration of his reformed self through his good conduct, law has a provision for

the condonation of his punishment.

In the law courts also, when a judge is convinced of the reformed status of a criminal through the demonstration of his good conduct, he takes a lenient view of his past crime. A Judge of a law court may commit an error of judgement while taking a lenient view of a criminal's act of culpability; but Waheguru, being omniscient and conversant with the innermost thoughts of sinner's consciousness, condones his sins only when his real conduct satisfies the Divine sense of justice and fairplay. Genuine expiation and good conduct make us eligible for Divine grace.

So self improvement and good conduct are prerequisites of Divine grace. Divine grace is the inevitable consequence of purity of thought and goodness of conduct. Performance of meaningless rituals such as vocal invocations, making offerings of *Karah Parshad*, undertaking pilgrimages to holy places without bringing about an improvement in one's conduct do not qualify a *Gursikh* (devotee) for a Divine forgiveness. These are hollow demonstrations of one's duplicity of behaviour.

Divine grace shuns those nations and religious societies who practise hollow vocal

invocations without bringing about a reformation in the conduct of their citizens. Such nations and religious organisations do not progress upwards on the civilizational ladder. On the contrary, these hollow rituals breed hypocrisy and duplicity. These meaningless ritualistic practises encourage their practitioners to indulge in further sins. These practices provide a handle for these practitioners to indulge in flagrant indulgence in crime and sin. Such prayers are really prejudicial and harmful for human welfare and human improvement.

When one seeks to get one's sinful acts condoned through the performance of an easy and effortless rituals conducted by a temple priest without improving his own conduct, one gets an encouragement to further indulge in more sinful acts since he gets an assurance that sins can be easily condoned through such vocal invocations and rituals. *Gurmat* sanctions the endowment of Divine grace based on good conduct and self-reformation alone. It does not recommend forgiveness without atonement and self-purification. It is because of this reason that a Sikh prayer follows a simultaneous path of self-improvement and Divine grace :

ਪਿਛਲੇ ਅਉਗੁਣ ਬਖਸਿ ਲਏ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਆਗੈ ਮਾਰਗਿ ਪਾਵੈ ॥

ਅੰਗ - 624

So pardon Thou my past misdeeds, O Lord, and put me unto Thy way for the future.

ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਸਿਖ ਕੇ ਬੰਧਨ ਕਾਟੈ ॥

ਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਸਿਖੁ ਬਿਕਾਰ ਤੇ ਹਾਟੈ ॥

ਅੰਗ - 287

*The True Guru cuts off the fetters of his disciple.
The Guru's disciple recoils from evil deeds.*

Some *Gursikhs* (Sikh devotees) are often heard that they are incapable of curbing their habit of indulging in sins by their own human efforts and that Divine power or Divine grace alone can relieve them from their indulgence. Such hypocritical persons keep on indulging in sins as well as praying at religious shrines for the remission of their sins. This habitual indulgence in sin and meaningless prayer becomes chronic. Such individuals cease to be deterred by sinful acts and lose the nerve to curb their indulgence.

These clever people assert that since man is fallible and liable to err because of his constitutional framework of being made of flesh and blood, he is incapable of reforming himself through his own efforts. Such people even quote scriptures

in support of their devilish misconduct :

ਹਾ ਹਾ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਰਾਖਿ ਲੇਹੁ ॥

ਹਮ ਤੇ ਕਿਛੁ ਨ ਹੋਇ ਮੇਰੇ ਸੁਆਮੀ

ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਅਪੁਨਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਦੋਹੁ ॥

ਅੰਗ - 67.

O, O my Lord, do Thou save me. By myself I can do nothing, O my Lord. Mercifully, bless me, Thou with Thy Name.

ਮਾਟੀ ਕਾ ਕਿਆ ਧੋਧੈ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਮਾਣਸ ਕੀ ਗਤਿ ਏਹੀ ॥

ਅੰਗ - 82.

How can the dust be washed? Such is the state of the man, O my Lord.

These people do not know that the Guru and saints who have uttered these pious words had led a life of hard regimen of immaculate conduct and unblemished integrity. They have been leading a life of contentment and procurement of their livelihood through just and rigorous hardwork.

These Gurbani hymns have not been uttered for the defence of evildoers and sinners but for the inspiration and encouragement of dynamic, industrious and progressive, self-reforming Gursikhs. These hymns are meant to impart a lesson in humility to the struggling self-reformers rather than in defence for the willing offenders.

Gursikh struggles to purify his thoughts and conduct under the directions of Guru's teachings and tries to exercise self-control over vices and sinful thoughts and achieves his goal of self-reformation through the grace of God. For all his stamina and struggle to improve himself morally and spiritually, he gives all the credit to Divine grace rather than to his own will power in the true spirit of a devout, humble Gursikh. Gurbani teaches us to overcome human weaknesses with faith confidence and determination under its guidance :

ਉਦਮੁ ਕਰੇਦਿਆ ਜੀਉ ਤੂੰ ਕਮਾਵਦਿਆ ਸੁਖ ਭੁੰਚੁ ॥ ਧਿਆਇਦਿਆ ਤੂੰ
ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਮਿਲੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਉਤਰੀ ਚਿੰਤ ॥ ਅੰਗ - 522

Making an effort for the Name, thou shalt live and practising it, thou shalt enjoy peace.

By meditating on the Name, O Nanak, thou shalt meet the Lord and thy anxiety shall vanish.

Gurbani also exposes those who keep on indulging in sins and vices and also keep a pretence of getting their sins condoned through meaningless rituals and invocations at places of worship. Addressing such people, Gurbani states:

ਪਾਪ ਕਰਹਿ ਪੰਚਾਂ ਕੇ ਬਸਿ ਰੇ ॥
ਤੀਰਥਿ ਨਾਇ ਕਹਹਿ ਸਭਿ ਉਤਰੇ ॥
ਬਹੁਰਿ ਕਮਾਵਹਿ ਹੋਇ ਨਿਸੰਕ ॥

ਜਮ ਪੁਰਿ ਬਾਧਿ ਖਰੇ ਕਾਲੰਕ ॥

ਅੰਗ - 13

*He commits sins under the influence of fi
demons.*

*Bathing at the holies, he says that all his sins ha
been washed off.*

He commits them again without any fear.

*The death's courier binds the sinner and takes h
to his city.*

Translated simply, it means those caught the vicious, cycle of indulgence in anger, lust, greed, attachment and pride and subsequent prayer for the condonation of their sinful act followed by yet an other recourse to indulgence will get damned forever.

Sometimes, a *Gursikh* commits an occasional inadvertent moral lapse while genuinely striving to rid himself of sins and vices. In such a case the benevolent Waheguru tries to condone his lapse by making him genuinely repentant over his lapse. Divine justice is meted out according to the intention and determination of a devotee to fight with the vices and sins in his life. Waheguru provides a protective shield to a devotee even in the case of an inadvertent moral lapse during his struggle for moral, spiritual reformation. At the most, the Divine Will admonishes a devotee

repent over his lapse. But if a devotee keeps on ignoring this Divine admonition and keeps indulging in sin and vices, then the Divine will expose such an indulgent sinner to public ridicule so that he may feel ashamed of his sinful acts and makes a renewed effort to reform himself :

ਖਾਲਸਾ ਮੈ ਜੋ ਨਿਤ ਕਰੇ ਜੰਗ।

He alone is a true Sikh who wages a war against indulgence in vice and sin everyday.

ਧੰਨ ਜੀਓ ਤਿਹ ਕੋ ਜਗ ਮੈਂ

ਮੁਖ ਤੇ ਹਰਿ ਚਿਤ ਮੈਂ ਜੁਧ ਬਿਚਾਰੈ॥

Blessed are those in this world,

Who have God's Name on their lips,

And wage an internal war against vices.

This hymn means that a Gursikh keeps on waging a war against his indulgence in vices and considers it his birth right to wage such a war. Victory over human weaknesses makes us worthy of Divine grace. The Divine grace manifests itself at the victorious end of this psychic war against vices and sins.



Tales Of Our Times : 1945

He was a clerk employed in a Government office in Shimla. He lived in a house just below the Nabha Estate. He was the only bread-earner of the family.

The eye-specialist had given his verdict that his eye could not be cured. The vision would be lost.

The wife heard it and cried. No human could bear her sorrow.

Then came a Saint XYZ Singh. He asked the couple to pray for recovery. Non-stop recitation of Guru Granth Ji was immediately started. The couple prayed, particularly the wife. I have seldom heard prayer more sincerely offered. It was the outpouring of a true and loving heart.

At the end of the Bhog the bandage was taken off and a miracle happened; the man could actually see.

Readers! have faith, such things are still possible.

(2)

His arm was affected by gangrene. The doctor said an amputation would be necessary. The patient must be rushed to the hospital the same evening or it would be too late. The poison was spreading upwards.

The doctors were asked to wait for a night. The ambulance car would come next morning to take the patient to the hospital.

The patient spent that night meditating sincerely. God must save his arm for he must play the harmonium and sing songs of His devotion.

Next morning came. The eruption was receding. The operation did not take place. The doctor, an experienced Muslim Surgeon of Amritsar, felt astonished.

And the patient continued playing the harmonium and singing the praises of the Lord thereafter.

- Gurdit Singh Malhan

Power of Prayer

The girls in our family longed to be tall. My younger sister was only four feet and ten inches while both of my uncle's daughters were also short-statured. My elder uncle's daughter was also short-statured. My own daughter was not taller than her aunt. My sister was so much obsessed with a tall frame of body that she stood on two bricks in the back row during a photo session in a family.

Girls shorter than five feet in height are considered short-statured in Punjab and Delhi. Girls taller than five feet are considered considerably tall. My second daughter attained a height of four feet and nine inches at the end of her thirteenth year and thereafter her growth stopped. My cousin once remarked that my daughter was getting obese for her height. I thought that she would also be not taller than her elder sister. After a few days, my daughter came to me with sadness written large on her face.

enquired about her gloomy looks. She said that one of her friends had remarked that she and all her other sisters would remain short-statured. None of us could grow as tall as she was. She asked me with a sigh if she would really not grow tall. I preferred to keep silent at her enquiry.

After a visit to the Gurudwara in the evening, I really got worried about my daughter's concern for her growth. I consulted my wife. She informed me that since our daughter had reached the stage of puberty, there was less likelihood of her gaining any more height. She was not likely to gain more height than her elder sister. I kept thinking about it the whole night. Could there be any medical treatment for this problem? Then, I intuitively felt that no medical option was relevant in this case. In the early hours of the morning, It occurred to me to take a recourse to prayer. I had read a lot about the power of prayer in the books on spiritual science written by S. Raghbir Singh Bir. I decided to adopt the path of prayer and test the veracity of the statements about the power of prayer. So I took a firm decision to adopt the way of prayer.

I called my daughter and advised her to

follow my advice if she really wished to grow tall. She readily agreed to follow my advice. I advised her to pray to God daily for a growth in her height and take a nutritious diet of dairy products. These dairy products contain a lot of calcium which helps in the growth of bones. My daughter promised to pray everyday for this purpose. I also made it my daily routine to pray for my daughter's goal. I kept on praying for my daughter's growth in height at every moment of my spare time. Simultaneously, I kept on reminding my daughter about her promise to pray and take a proper diet. Even when I went away from home, I used to remind her about prayer through letters. Finally, with God's grace, she started growing taller and taller till the age of sixteen years. She grew four inches taller than her elder sister. She was now very happy about her growth.

My third daughter and younger to the first two, also adopted the path of prayer and attained a height of five feet and one inch.

My fourth daughter and the youngest adopted the prayer path and dairy product's diet at the age of twelve. Now at the age of fourteen

years, she is as tall as her elder sisters and is still growing. She is the tallest girl in her class and feels a little bit complacent about her height at this age. I tell her that she would feel proud of her height at an adult age.

I have prayed infinite number of times for the height of my three daughters during the last seven eight years. I pray daily whenever I am at peace with myself. I have been making offerings of *Karah Parshad* for their proper growth.

I have noticed that girls grow in height from March to September and their growth remains static during rest of the five months in a year. They keep on gaining height till the age of puberty, but the onset of menstrual cycle does not stop their growth. The growth continues till the age of eighteen.

In the end, I am extremely grateful to Waheguru who answered my prayers and made me worthy of His Divine grace. His grace fulfilled my daughter's wishes and blessed me as well with happiness.

- Sajjan Singh Sambholi

Power of Prayer

A devotee's prayer never goes unanswered

There is no doubt that prayer has a great power but one must adopt a proper procedure to make a prayer. The supplicant must have complete faith in God and His Omnipotence. The motive behind the prayer must also be noble and one must make earnest efforts for the fulfillment of prayer. I relate below two real incidents from my life which prove the power of prayer.

1. I was an officiating Deputy Superintendent of Police at Moga in the year 1939. There was hardly any possibility of myself getting confirmed in this rank. My wife meditated and recited the hymn : ਬਿਰੁ ਘਰੁ ਬੈਸਹੁ ਹਰਿਜਨ ਪਿਆਰੇ, ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਤੁਮਰੇ ਕਾਜੁ ਸਵਾਰੇ' 1,25,000 times within a span of forty days with an aim that her husband may get confirmed in the rank of a D.S.P. At the end of these recitations, I myself prayed for my confirmation. As soon as I reached my office at 10 A.M., I received a telegram of congratulations

om a friend regarding my confirmation in this
nk. I was really astonished to see the power of
ayer.

2. During the year 1953-54, I used to meditate
ily at 4 A.M. in a room of my residence where
uru Granth Sahib was installed. A subordinate
d kept a poultry in one of the out houses. A
ck used to crow every morning and disturb my
ncentration during prayers. It just crossed my
nd that such a cock should die for disturbing
r prayers. The cock fell sick next day and died.
egged forgiveness from Waheguru for the
ilicious intent of my prayer. But the prayer had
en answered. My subordinate brought an other
ck and it also started crowing. In this way,
ven cocks died one after the other. After I
nnunicated my inadvertent wish during my
ayer for the cock's death to my wife, she asked
r subordinate not to bring any more fowls as
y will not survive. He accepted her advice and
pped breeding cocks. Through this incident, I
vise the meditating devotees to guard
mselves against any such wishful expression
ich may prove detrimental to anybody.

- Bishan Singh Palta

Power of Prayer

The incident happened six, seven years ago, when I had not taken a membership of the Atam (spiritual) Science Organization. There was a division among the workers of an organization, where my husband worked. As a result, there were many factions among the workers. Very often, a person whom one considers a gentleman may be a villain in the eyes of many others. Once my husband also got involved in such a situation. He was so much fascinated by one particular factional leader that he kept discussing things with him for hours at a stretch in front of the entrance to our residence. There was a shady tree at the entrance. My husband and this leader used to stand under this tree and discussed organizational matters under the full gaze of the public on this thoroughfare. Their daily gate meetings came to the notice of the workers belonging to various other factions. My husband was holding a high position in the company. I

insisted upon my husband to desist from hobnobbing with a factional leader of the workers on a public road. Being highly placed executive, he should discuss company affairs in the privacy of the house rather than on a public road. But my husband did not pay any heed to my advice. He would rather admonish me for disturbing them. I felt extremely perturbed that resulted sometime in a tiff between the two of us. This everyday discussion gave me a lot of tension. It occurred to me one day that since all of my efforts had failed to relieve that tension, I should seek the divine help from the Omniscient Waheguru to end this unpleasantness. Since then, I started praying for divine assistance. My prayer being genuine and noble, it elicited an instant divine response. One day, my husband remarked that since that tree at the entrance was an obstacle on the drive way, we should chop it off. I was elated at the proposal. I sent a silent prayer. Within a month, the tree was removed and their daily public discussions also ended with the fall of this tree. I still kept on praying to God to get rid of this undesirable person. Soon, another miracle happened. This person got a better employment in an other company through the influence of my

husband. The change of job reduced his interference in my husband's company. Now he came occasionally and left after a few minutes chat with my husband in his office.

I remain extremely grateful to Waheguru for having responded to my prayers and fulfilling my wish and protecting my husband from an undesirable influence.

- G. Kaur



A devotee's Prayer Never Goes Unanswered

Dear friends, I am not a gifted writer who would present his experience in an impressive expression. I am an ordinary reader of *Atam Science* journal like many others. From the teachings of saints and my own experience, I believe in the veracity of the proverb : "Rice grains get cleaned by getting rubbed against each other." The two incidents which I experienced confirm this statement of Sardar Bahadur Onkar Singh of Jabbalpur in an article which was published in November 1952. I am definitely sure that these two incidents would help in the concentration of those devotees who believe in the power of prayer. The reading of these two incidents would benefit the readers as well as me, and both of us would get more purified like the cleaning of mutual rubbing of rice grains.

The first incident (1936-37)

I was serving as a fireman in the Assam railways in East Bengal during 1936-37. I used to move between the stations of Badarpur and Chandpur. In between, there is a station named Shaha Ji. People of that area must have seen this station. Now this area forms a part of East Pakistan, Bangla Desh. This place was named after the name of a Muslim saint. The train used to pass by the Mossoleum of this saint. Passengers, irrespective of their caste and creed, used to make offerings of coins and candles at this memorial. A few European Railway drivers also worked in railways along with me. As the train approached this sacred place, these European drives would switch off the engine steam, stand on their seats and bowed their heads in prayer to this ancient saint. I kept observing their faith and devotion to this sacred Muslim saint for a long time. I, too, felt a surge of faith and devotion, but, being a Gursikh, I restrained myself from bowing my head in prayer before the monument of a Muslim saint. But this devotion and faith expressed by these strangers confirmed my own faith towards Sikh saints and Sikh places of worship. I, too, longed for a Sikh place of

worship near a railway track where I could also bow my head in prayer and devotion. I was certainly wrong in my opinion which discriminated against spiritual saints on the basis of religion. We should not be so narrow-minded and fanatical in spiritual matters. But I always wished that I could be a driver on a railway track to Amritsar in Punjab so that I could perform a similar prayer from a railway bridge near river Tangra and bow my head to a Gurudwara built in the memory of Sant Baba Gurbax Singh near the bridge. I made this motive the main theme of my everyday prayer. I was made to join East provincial railway after the partition of the country.

The readers can well imagine the turn of events, how from the distant Assam Railways in East Bengal, I was moved to East Punjab Railways in Punjab. I attribute this miracle to the power of my prayers and their acceptance by Waheguru the omniscient.

Now when I drive my train to Amritsar, I repeat the ritual of praying and bowing my head to my revered saint much in the fashion of those european drivers. I make it a point to slow down

and pray even when I am running late on an express train.

Dear readers, trust me to affirm the veracity, of this scriptural statement of Gurbani that a devotee's prayer performed with faith and devotion never goes unanswered. But we must fulfil all the conditionalities of a prayer mentioned in S. Raghbir Singh Bir's article on the contractual bond mentioned in the sacred hymn :

ਬਿਰੁ ਘਰਿ ਬੈਸਹੁ ਹਰਿ ਜਨ ਪਿਆਰੇ ॥

ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਤੁਮਰੇ ਕਾਜ ਸਵਾਰੇ ॥

ਅੰਗ - 201

Sit steadily at home within, O dear devotees of God.

The True Guru will surely accomplish your affairs.

Guru Ji has illustrated these conditionalities in great detail in this hymn. This article has been included in this book in chapter 11 with the title." The contractual bond between a devotee and God." Many devotees with a wavering and unstable faith can seek direction from this article provided they understand the full implications of this contractual bond.

The second incident (1954)

My aged mother fell seriously sick and

became bed-ridden at Rawalpindi in 1945. I was at her bedside. She would repeat a few words about her pangs of separation from her older son who had not visited her for the last seventeen years. These words of commiseration uttered on her death bed would melt a stone even. With tearful eyes, she would remember her separated son and pray to God for a reunion during her everyday prayers. She would refer to Rama's long exile and his subsequent return after twelve years. She would pray desperately for a slight glimpse of her son before her end came. She made it an every day practice to pray for a reunion with her son after the recitation of her daily Sikh prayer. I, too, was moved to tears by the heart-rending prayers of my mother. Some of the readers must have undergone such an experience in their own families.

I was desperate to fulfil the last wish of my dying mother. But I was really helpless. Africa, where my brother resided, was at a distance of thousands of miles from Rawalpindi. I was alone with my mother with no other relatives around. It occurred to me that I should seek Divine help to solve this problem with a faith and devotion distilled in me by my mother. Waheguru, with

whom we have a contractual bond of father-son relationship, is more powerful than our biological bonds. So I must seek assistance from Waheguru. I started reciting the following hymn composed by Guru Ram Das in Raga Gond :

ਜੇ ਮਨਿ ਚਿਤਿ ਆਸ ਰਖਹਿ ਹਰਿ ਊਪਰਿ
ਤਾ ਮਨ ਚਿੰਦੇ ਅਨੇਕ ਅਨੇਕ ਫਲ ਪਾਈ ॥
ਹਰਿ ਜਾਣੈ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਜੋ ਜੀਇ ਵਰਤੈ
ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਘਾਲਿਆ ਕਿਸੈ ਕਾ ਇਕੁ ਤਿਲੁ ਨ ਗਵਾਈ ॥
ਹਰਿ ਤਿਸ ਕੀ ਆਸ ਕੀਜੈ ਮਨ ਮੇਰੇ
ਜੋ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਰਹਿਆ ਸਮਾਈ ॥
ਮੇਰੇ ਮਨ ਆਸਾ ਕਰਿ ਜਗਦੀਸ ਗੁਸਾਈ ॥
ਜੋ ਬਿਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਆਸ ਅਵਰ ਕਾਹੁ ਕੀ ਕੀਜੈ
ਸਾ ਨਿਹਫਲ ਆਸ ਸਭ ਬਿਰਥੀ ਜਾਈ ॥
ਜੋ ਦੀਸੈ ਮਾਇਆ ਮੋਹ ਕੁਟੰਬੁ ਸਭੁ
ਮਤ ਤਿਸ ਕੀ ਆਸ ਲਗਿ ਜਨਮੁ ਗਵਾਈ ॥
ਇਨ੍ਹ ਕੈ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਾਥਿ ਨਹੀ ਕਹਾ ਕਰਹਿ ਇਹਿ ਬਖੁੜੇ
ਇਨ੍ਹ ਕਾ ਵਾਹਿਆ ਕਛੁ ਨ ਵਸਾਈ ॥
ਮੇਰੇ ਮਨ ਆਸ ਕਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਅਪੁਨੇ ਕੀ
ਜੋ ਤੁਝੁ ਤਾਰੈ ਤੇਰਾ ਕੁਟੰਬੁ ਸਭੁ ਛਡਾਈ ॥
ਜੋ ਕਿਛੁ ਆਸ ਅਵਰ ਕਰਹਿ ਪਰਮਿਤੀ
ਮਤ ਤੂੰ ਜਾਣਹਿ ਤੇਰੈ ਕਿਤੈ ਕੰਮਿ ਆਈ ॥
ਇਹ ਆਸ ਪਰਮਿਤੀ ਭਾਉ ਦੂਜਾ ਹੈ
ਖਿਨ ਮਹਿ ਝੂਠੁ ਬਿਨਸਿ ਸਭ ਜਾਈ ॥
ਮੇਰੇ ਮਨ ਆਸਾ ਕਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਸਾਚੇ ਕੀ
ਜੋ ਤੇਰਾ ਘਾਲਿਆ ਸਭੁ ਥਾਇ ਪਾਈ ॥
ਆਸਾ ਮਨਸਾ ਸਭ ਤੇਰੀ ਮੇਰੇ ਸੁਆਮੀ
ਜੈਸੀ ਤੂ ਆਸ ਕਰਾਵਹਿ ਤੈਸੀ ਕੋ ਆਸ ਕਰਾਈ ॥

ਕਿਛੁ ਕਿਸੀ ਕੈ ਹਥਿ ਨਾਹੀ ਮੇਰੇ ਸੁਆਮੀ

ਐਸੀ ਮੇਰੈ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਬੂਝ ਬੁਝਾਈ ॥

ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਕੀ ਆਸ ਤੂ ਜਾਣਹਿ

ਹਰਿ ਦਰਸਨੁ ਦੇਖਿ ਹਰਿ ਦਰਸਨਿ ਤ੍ਰਿਪਤਾਈ ॥ ਅੰਗ - 859

O man, if, in thy mind, thou rest thy hope on God, then shalt thou obtain thy heart-desired many many fruits.

God knows everything that passes in the mind. The Lord overlooks not even a sesame of any one's labour.

O my soul, put thou thy hope in that God Lord, who is contained in everything.

O my soul, rest thou thy hope on the Lord of the World and the Master of Universe.

The hope, which is reposed in any other than God, that hope is fruitless and goes all in vain.

The wealth, worldly love and the entire family, that thou seest, pin not thou thy hope on them. Like-wise thou shalt lose the merit of thy life.

Nothing lies in their hands. What can these poor fellows do? By their doing nothing can be set aright.

My soul, place thou reliance on God, thy Friend, who shall save thee and also emancipate all thy family.

If thou reposest any hope in another, or in a friend, other than the Lord, know that it shall not avail thee anywhere.

*This hope of another friend is born of duality.
Being false, it all vanishes in a moment.*

*O my soul, have thou faith in thy True Beloved
Lord, who shall approve all thy service.*

*Hope and desire are all Thine, O my Lord. As Thou
makest man hope, so is the hope he cherishes.*

*Nothing lies in the hands of any man, O my
Master. Such an understanding, my True Guru has
imparted unto me.*

*My Lord Master, Thou knowest the yearning of Thy
slave Nanak. He beholds Thine vision, and with
Thine vision, he remains satiated.*

The recitation of this sacred hymn somewhat lifted the sense of gloom from my mind. I was also reminded of Moghul emperor Babur's supplication to God for the recovery of his son from a fatal illness. I should also pray like him for a Divine relief. So while taking a round of my ailing mother, I prayed to Waheguru for a temporary reprieve for my mother till her last union with her long separated son. I prayed to God like a child to restore her health for a short period till their reunion. Waheguru may terminate her life soon after the fulfilment of her last wish, since a mortal must perish as per the Divine Will. The family would accept her death with gratitude after this wish fulfilment. My mind kept drifting

between fear and hope during these prayers. Sometimes, I felt the inadequacy of my own prayer, but an inner voice would again impel me to pray with more faith and devotion. Once again I resumed my prayer and recited a hymn composed by Saint Sadhna from Guru Granth Sahib :

ਨ੍ਰਿਪ ਕੰਨਿਆ ਕੇ ਕਾਰਨੈ ਇਕੁ ਭਇਆ ਭੇਖਧਾਰੀ ॥

ਕਾਮਾਰਥੀ ਸੁਆਰਥੀ ਵਾ ਕੀ ਪੈਜ ਸਵਾਰੀ ॥

ਤਵ ਗੁਨ ਕਹਾ ਜਗਤ ਗੁਰਾ ਜਉ ਕਰਮੁ ਨ ਨਾਸੈ ॥

ਸਿੰਘ ਸਰਨ ਕਤ ਜਾਈਐ ਜਉ ਜੰਬੁਕੁ ਗੁਸੈ ॥

ਏਕ ਬੁੰਦ ਜਲ ਕਾਰਨੇ ਚਾੜ੍ਹਕੁ ਦੁਖ ਪਾਵੈ ॥

ਪ੍ਰਾਨ ਗਏ ਸਾਗਰੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਫੁਨਿ ਕਾਮਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ॥

ਪ੍ਰਾਨ ਜੁ ਥਾਕੇ ਬਿਰੁ ਨਹੀ ਕੈਸੇ ਬਿਰਮਾਵਉ ॥

ਬੂਡਿ ਮੂਏ ਨਉਕਾ ਮਿਲੈ ਕਹੁ ਕਾਹਿ ਚਵਾਵਉ ॥

ਮੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਕਛੁ ਹਉ ਨਹੀ ਕਿਛੁ ਆਹਿ ਨ ਮੋਰਾ ॥

ਅਉਸਰ ਲਜਾ ਰਾਖਿ ਲੇਹੁ ਸਧਨਾ ਜਨੁ ਤੋਰਾ ॥ ਅੰਗ - 858

For a King's daughter, a man assumed the disguise of Vishnu for the love of lust and his own object, but the Lord protected his honour.

What merit is in Thee, O Guru of the world, if my evil deeds are not to be erased?

What avails it to seek lion's refuge, if he is to be eaten up by a jackal?

For want of a drop of rain, the pied-cuckoo suffers agony.

When its life is gone, then even if an ocean is at hand, it is of no avail.

Now that my life is grown weary, and I am not to last much longer, how can I be patient?

If I am drowned to death and a boat is obtained, say, how shall I embark thereon?

I am nothing, I have nothing and nothing is mine.

At this conjuncture, protect Thou my honour, O Lord, Sadhna is Thy slave.

In this vein, I prayed for Divine grace. I prayed to Waheguru that since His Divine will had saved and graced innumerable devotees and sinners, He should also give a temporary reprieve to my dying mother, so that she may have a last glimpse of her elder son before shedding her mortal frame. I became quiet after this honest prayer and took a glass of water. I also put a few drops of water in my devout mother's mouth. These few drops of water proved to be an elixir of life for my mother for which God made me an instrument to administer this elixir to my mother.

I lack adequate words to share my experience with my readers. Things took a miraculous turn. I kept on administering the prescribed medicine to my mother and she started recovering from her illness. She could sit in the bed in the evening. She started recovering gradually. It was the Divine grace and fulfilment of a wish made in prayer,

since my mother recovered completely.

She fell sick again in the summer of 1947. But before that, my elder brother had arrived. She breathed her last in the lap of her loving son.

Dear readers, we must have faith and pray with faith. Waheguru, Almighty definitely responds to our prayer provided we are sincere and honest in our prayer. The way to prayer is lined with humility and faith. We must say with conviction : The prayer of the devout never goes unanswered.

ਬਿਰਥੀ ਕਦੇ ਨ ਹੋਵਈ ਜਨ ਕੀ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ॥ ਅੰਗ - 819
The prayer of God's slave goes not vain ever.

- Gyani Bachittar Singh



Power of Prayer

This is the story of a world's biggest Radio network devoted to the preaching of Gospel of Jesus Christ and the cause of Christianity. It owes its origin to the power of prayer made with deep faith and devotion by its founder Billy Graham and its almost instant fulfilment by Divine Grace. The article was written in 1949. So, the reader must make out the necessary conversion of the monetary worth of its network assets in today's monetary terms from the figures prevailing in 1949 to realize the enormity of this monumental task. The true incident as related by Mr. Surjit is reproduced in its English version below :

"The largest Radio Programme being broadcast over more than seven hundred Radio Stations and which costs more than sixty thousand rupees for a weekly coverage belongs to Mr. Billy Graham. It is entirely devoted to the Christian missionary programme. This is the most extensive and expensive programme of all other

Governmental and commercial Radio Programmes. The history of the origin of this enormously expensive Radio Programme was published in the "Reader's Digest".

Billy Graham is the youngest and the most popular Christian preacher. He travels all over the world to spread the message of Christ and Christianity. Thousands of people all over the world after listening to his sermons repose their faith in Christ and get attracted to Christianity.

Once a team of his friends suggested to him to start a Radio Programme for spreading the message of Christianity. Billy Graham thought that it was impossible to undertake such an enormous and expensive project. On the persistent demand of his fellow missionaries, he asked about the estimated cost of this venture. They calculated that it would cost twenty five thousand dollars or seventy five thousand rupees for its initial launch and seven thousand dollars or twenty one thousand rupees as its broadcasting expenses per week. Billy Graham commented that his organization had neither the resources nor time to undertake such an enormous task. He would not be able to accomplish this project. This answer

disappointed his colleagues and they departed. However, after their departure, Billy Graham started thinking about the whole thing. Being a man of faith and devotion, he felt as if there was the hand of the Divine behind the concerted insistence of his colleagues and that it might be God's will that wants to make him the instrument for carrying out this task. In the meantime, the same two colleagues, who had insisted on such a venture, returned to his place. Once again, they pleaded with him to review his earlier decision. Billy Graham did not reject their proposal this time but reiterated that the accomplishment of this task depended on the will of God. He asked them to pray together and wait for the unfolding of the Divine Will. Thereafter, all the three went down on their knees and prayed with faith and devotion. One of them revealed later on that he had never made such an earnest prayer earlier. Billy Graham himself felt that he had never made such an sincere prayer earlier nor could he make it in future. This was a prayer of direct dialogue and communication with God. Billy Graham uttered in his prayer to God that God alone knew the source from where the money for such a huge project would come. If God really wanted to make

him his instrument to undertake this task, then God must provide him with the initial seventy five thousand rupees.

Since Billy Graham had never received more than fifteen hundred rupees in donation and charity during his appeals, his two friends also felt that Billy Graham had prayed for the impossible. Feeling that such a prayer could never be granted, they departed for the airport to fly away to their places.

Addressing a huge congregation that night, Billy Graham presented the blue print for this venture through a radio broadcast. He told his listeners that he could not accomplish this task alone and had infact expressed his inability in this respect, but this time he was leaving the project to the Will of God. He did not disclose the amount needed for undertaking this venture, but appealed to the audience to respond to his appeal for such a venture was the Will of God.

As he retired to his room after addressing the congregation, one of the devotees was waiting for him. Behind him, there was a long queue of other devotees. These devotees kept entering his room and, after placing their donations in cash, Bank

cheques and promissory notes on pieces of paper in front of Billy Graham, leaving his room.

A timber merchant left a promissory note for a donation of seven thousand five hundred rupees. A school teacher and his wife donated an entire amount of one thousand rupees in their bank account and wrote that they could donate more for that noble cause if they had more. A school student emptied whole of his pocket money and pleaded for the acceptance of his humble contribution. An amount of rupees seventy thousand five hundred were collected in this single donation. Billy Graham's two colleagues, who had departed for the airport, were also standing at the end of the queue. Before boarding their flight, they felt that they should wait for the result of their prayer and so they had also returned. These two colleagues congratulated Billy Graham for the success of his prayer. Billy Graham remarked that his prayer had not been answered yet and reiterated that he would not accept this collection until it reached the exact figure of seventy five thousand rupees. His colleagues assured him that they would contribute the balance amount. Billy Graham remarked that he had prayed for an exact amount

of seventy five thousand rupees and would not receive a penny less.

When these three friends reached their hotel room a few minutes before midnight, he found three letters addressed to him lying on the table. One letter contained a cheque for three thousand rupees and two others contained cheques for seven and half hundred rupees each.

Billy Graham remarked that God had accepted their prayer. All three went down on their knees once again and made a prayer of thanks and gratitude to God for the fulfilment of their prayer. Billy Graham's radio programme is successfully broadcasting its missionary programme to this day. The devout Christians are continuously making donations to keep this programme running.

So, Waheguru always answers the prayers made with faith and devotion and would keep His promise in future as well.

- Surjit



Prayer

Based on the views of Marry Eddie Baker

Waheguru knows our needs much before we feel the need. He is Omniscient and Omnipotent to fulfill our needs. Waheguru does not meet those of our demands which are detrimental to our interest. All our genuine and legitimate needs get realized through prayer. For a prayer to be answered, we must repose our complete faith in the Omnipotence of Waheguru. Nothing is impossible in Waheguru's realm.

Waheguru is privy to our innermost and most secret desires. Our every secret desire is a prayer, but its fulfillment depends on its legitimacy and its efficacy for us. The Divine Will first grants legitimacy to some of our desires, then makes their articulation possible and finally concedes these desires when they will prove beneficial to us.

Waheguru's Will operates to the extent of His

determined welfare for us, despite our prayers and invocations. Whatever is in our interest is already being done by Him. Whatever He endows us with is endowed keeping our best interest in sight. None else is a greater well wisher of man than God. Prayer cannot change the laws of nature which is synonymous with God's Will. On the contrary, Waheguru uplifts the moral content of our desires to make these compatible with the laws of nature for our own benefit.

Waheguru is love-incarnate and love manifest. We can't add anything to make Him more loving. He is Omniscient and all pervasive. We can't add to his knowledge who is already well-informed. Can we change the dimensions of perfection? Can we ask Him to be more generous who is already providing us more than our expectations.

Each well-meaning prayer takes us nearer to the bountiful Waheguru. Waheguru is eternally steadfast in His beneficence as He has always been. Being Omniscient, He can't be oblivious to our interest. Nor does He require our consultation for our welfare. We are not so farsighted to watch our interest and suggest to Waheguru to do a

favour to us. A student cannot find solutions to a mathematical problem by standing in front of a blackboard and pleading before it to provide a solution. Mathematical solutions are based on certain fundamental formulas. Mathematical problems can only be solved through the application of those formulas. In the same way, we can get our well-meaning desires fulfilled through the application of the inexorable laws of the Divine Will. The most prominent attribute of Waheguru is that He has created man in His own image. The Divine has put the divine spark in the human. Being the best creation of God, man is the son of God with all His attributes.

Realising this intimate relationship with God, man should streamline his own desires and aspirations and invoke divine grace for their fulfillment. Reposing complete faith in the benevolence of God, man can solve all his problems through prayer :

ਮਨ ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰੂਪੁ ਹੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੂਲੁ ਪਛਾਣੁ ॥

ਮਨ ਹਰਿ ਜੀ ਤੈਰੈ ਨਾਲਿ ਹੈ ਗੁਰਮਤੀ ਰੰਗੁ ਮਾਣੁ ॥ ਅੰਗ - 441

*My soul, thou art thee embodiment (image) of
Divine light, so know they source.*



Power of Prayer

I would not have written this article had S. Hira Singh not been my nearest blood relation and had I not observed his life most intimately. Here was a person who had been endowed with the paradoxical instincts of both spiritual enrichment and sensual indulgence. Both of these instincts had been inextricably entrenched in his personality.

He was the sole inheritor of a property worth millions from his paternal and maternal families. Coupled with this affluence, he was endowed with the attributes of liberalism and generosity in equal magnitude. His extremely handsome constitution with fair complexion, wide eyes, impressive handle-bar mustachios and fine beard, six and half feet tall stature, smiling charming disposition together with bright royal turban made him the cynosure of everyone's eye. His liberal, generous disposition and large

heartedness matched his extraordinary stature and royal status.

Despite this apparent personality traits, his close family members and friends had a very low opinion of him because of his excessive indulgence in alcohol, gambling and promiscuity made him a pauper within a span of few years. The wealth earned over generations, he drained out in lechery and alcoholism. He became a pauper in a few years.

But despite this recklessness and self-created deprivation, he remained untouched and in high spirits. During this phase, he happened to visit me at Calcutta. When I returned from my office in the evening, he was busy in talking over the phone to many of his acquaintances. My domestic servant informed me that he had been busy over the telephone for the last few hours. I asked him about his telephonic conversations.

Smilingly, he informed me that he had more than forty acquaintances in Calcutta. Since he could not visit all of them, he thought it better to talk to them over the phone. I asked him further about his friendly connections. Smiling again, he quipped that those who are fortunate converse

only with the fortunate. Most of the dancing bar girls were complaining that a royal personage from Punjab was going back without enjoying their company.

Contrary to this aspect, there was an other aspect of his personality as well. This article has been written to highlight that very aspect. Despite his indulgent ways, he was a man of firm determination, good intentions and a deep abiding faith in God.

Once he accompanied me to Amritsar. Facing Akal Takhat, he stood and prayed to Guru Ramdas in the following vein, "Revered Guru Ramdas Ji, the king of Sodhi Dynasty, I have come to seek two boons from your Divine House. I have never prayed for anything so far in my life. I will return only after receiving these two boons from your Majesty. Though I have already been endowed with millions, but I still need millions more to satisfy and saturate my carnal desires."

I was listening to this prayer dumb founded. He had become oblivious of my presence in his prayer. He was completely absorbed in his prayer. After a brief silence, he resumed his

prayer with deep faith and devotion. "Great God, the second boon that I have come to seek is that no one from my family should indulge in alcoholism, gambling and acts of lechery." He stood silent for a minute. Tears were rolling down his eyes and flowing over his sparkling beard. Wiping his face with a handkerchief, he remarked that he would seek the boon of meditation *Naam Simran* and salvation in next life. He had prayed for those boons only which were required at this stage.

Returning home at Lahore, he informed all the family members and close friends that he had a dream last night. The dream told him that he would take his next birth in a royal House. Preparations for his arrival in that palace had already begun. Arrangements were being made to appoint governesses, buy baby dresses and cradles in that royal house. He further informed that after one month on a given date, he would shed his mortal frame and be reborn in a royal palace. His family members and close friends would make fun of him over his prophecy and remind him that his final day was fast approaching. But he never took all of their teasing remarks. He would rather retort that the

appointed day was fast approaching; they should keep a close watch over time. He stretched his opinion so much through repetition that his friends really started counting days and continuously reminded him about the approaching date. S. Hira Singh would agree with them and take their taunts in his stride.

Exactly three days before this predicted date of his death, he fell sick with a high fever and soon contracted pneumonia. The family members and friends really got worried. Quite a few doctors and Vaidayas were consulted. To the query of a famous Lahore physician Dr. Beli Ram about his health one morning, S. Hira Singh replied very calmly that thanks to the Lord and Dr. Beli Ram, he was gradually moving towards his end. Exactly on the predicted day, S. Hira Singh breathed his last and departed forever.

Now there is none in his entire family who indulges in alcoholism, gambling and any other vice. They are leading a clean moral life. His son is a highly placed Government Officer. Guru Granth Sahib has been installed in his house and all members of the family assemble together in the morning for a prayer in the presence of Guru

Granth Sahib. His wife has been the President of Women's Kirtan Wing and is leading a pious life of meditation and devotion.

- S. Hira Singh



Simran's Prayer

Simran is a name give to a girl. She is now eight and quarter years old. She is the elder daughter of S. Jagjit Singh Advocate and his wife Sardarni Kuljit Kaur B.A., the patrons of Atam Science Movement. Their younger daughter, they have given the name - Sukhmani.

When she was felicitated and congratulated on her success in examination, she humbly attributed her success to Waheguru's grace. She used to pray every morning and evening for God's grace. Closing her eyes, she repeated her following prayer, which she has been making day and night. "Almighty God! I am first your daughter and thereafter a daughter of my biological parents. Grant me the strength to work hard so that I may never fail in my examination. You are our saviour and father, we are your ignorant children. May your grace endow everyone irrespective of their financial and social standing. May we always speak the truth and

never tell lies. May I never steal or take what belongs to others. May I be an obedient child of my parents. Protect me from immoral thoughts and dreams. May I never be weak and frail. You are Almighty, we your children are ignorant and insignificant. May my parents and other relations live long. Pardon my inadvertent sins. Make my life free from sin and vice. We are grateful for your grace and beneficence. May your grace visit those as well who are poor and dispossessed. May our pet dog 'Joe' also be worthy of your grace. May my parents never have a tiff with each other. May your grace bless each and everyone of your creatures. May our domestic servant and maid be also blessed by your grace."

Later on she narrated that during the Goa operation she prayed everyday for the victory of her country over her enemies.

Simran has a rosary of white beads with which she meditates on God's Name twenty eight times every night before going to bed. She keeps this rosary under her pillow at night.



**Let the Enemy fire
a volley of Bullets
Not a bruise comes to those
Whom the Lord protects.**

The hill station Dagshai was exclusively earmarked for British troops. No Indian was either allowed to stay here or construct a house here. After the departure of the British Army in 1947, Dagshai, out of all the Simla hills, is being used for the rest and recreation of Indian troops because of its salubrious climate. During 1966, two battalions, which had fought the war against China in the Ladakah and Nefa sectors were stationed at Dagshai for recouping and recreation. There were quite a few Sikh officers. One of the commanding officers was also a Sikh officer.

Male students of our Sikh convent institution Dagshai Public School were frequently invited by these officers to play hockey matches against the

hockey teams of these units. I also got an opportunity to witness one of these matches. After the match was over, school students were treated to a lavish tea party. During this get-together, I had a friendly talk with the commanding officer and he started talking about the battle scene at Nefa during the Chinese aggression. He narrated that during this battle, Chinese suffered heavy casualties. But for the Chinese leadership, these casualties matter very little and they sent more reinforcements. However, they were ordered to withdraw from their positions after heavy losses. Indian troops also suffered many casualties but Indian loss was comparatively very low as compared to the Chinese loss of lives.

During this conversation, he narrated, that a number of enemy bullets pierced through his turban and one bullet swished past his ear, hut he escaped any serious injury. He told that he believed that a mysterious Divine power had protected him during this war. He further revealed that being bred and educated in the English convent schools, he was not fully conversant with the basic tenets of Sikh religion. But despite his not being devoutly religious, he had been protected by the Divine power. He

narrated that unit's doctor had hidden himself under an Army vehicle instead of attending to the wounded soldiers. Even after a reprimand by the commanding officer, this doctor retorted how could he come out in such a fierce volley of bullets being fired. The commanding officer threatened to shoot the doctor, but a bullet from the Chinese side hit the butt of his revolver and stopped him from shooting the doctor. I told the doctor that he was lucky to escape the bullet since God had saved him, so he should come out. But the doctor still refused to come out.

We were listening to the commending officer's narration of events. Closing his eyes for a second, the officer informed us that suddenly a shower of bullets hit the doctor hidden under the truck and he died instantly.

When an other Sikh officer approached us to serve us tea, the commanding officer pointed towards him and remarked that the brave officer had always been with him during that operation. He had all along been boosting the morale of their fighting troops along with the commanding officer. He too came unharmed out of that operation.

We were listening to his narration spell-bound. He resumed his narration once again. He remarked that he believed that the credit for their safe return from this bloody war went to their wives. They learnt on our return that their wives had been praying and reciting Gurbani for their protection everyday. They had been taking frugal meals and sleeping very little during those days. But they had been continuously reciting Gurbani, meditating and praying for their husbands' safe return.

We became absolutely convinced that it was the faith and devotion of their wives which had protected their husbands during the war.

After this, the commanding officer introduced us to another Hindu officer. He used to play a full-back position in his unit's hockey team. He told that as the war went on becoming hotter and bloodier, the pulse of this officer kept on beating slower and slower. His face would get more calm and peaceful instead of becoming tense and anxious. Once when the enemy troops were advancing fast, this officer did not order his troops to open fire at the advancing enemy troops. He ordered firing only when the enemy

troops came too close and eliminated hundreds of them in a stroke. He was promoted to his present rank after that operation. Before my departure, he declared that he had developed a great faith in God and His protective powers. He asked me to send him a few books on religious and spiritual topics.



Glossary Of Terms Used

Atam Science : Science of spirituality or spiritual experience

Guru Granth Sahib : The Holy Book of the Sikhs

Gurbani : The text of Guru Granth Sahib

Gurbani Kirtan : Choral recitation of Gurbani with music

Gurmukh : Guru-oriented person

Gursikh : A follower of the Sikh Guru's teachings

Gurudwara : A place of Sikh worship

Giani : A learned Sikh scholar

Kaliyuga : The Dark Age (The present era)

Karah Parshad : A pudding offered at Sikh Shrines by the devotees

Naam : The sacred Name of God

Naam Simran : Meditation or concentration on God's Name

Wadis : Valleys

Waheguru : God

Waheguru Ji Ki Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh :
The Sikh slogan of victory (The Khalsa belongs to
God, Victory belongs to God)

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An earnest prayer never goes unanswered.

“ਬਿਰਥੀ ਕਦੇ ਨ ਹੋਵਈ ਜਨ ਕੀ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ॥”

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib Page 819)

Four conditionalities for successful fulfillment of a human prayer are:

- Complete faith in Waheguru (God).
- Genuineness of human prayer.
- Complete trust in the omnipotence of Waheguru.
- Total faith and hope in the fulfillment of one's prayer.

"I say unto you, what things however ye desire
when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and
ye shall have them."

Lord Jesus Christ.

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POWER OF PRAYER

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