

# **THE SIKH WAY OF LIFE**

*By*  
**RANBIR SINGH**

*Author of*  
**The Glimpses of the Divine Masters  
&  
Guru Tegh Bahadur  
Divine Poet, Saviour & Martyr**

*Foreword by*  
**Dr. Edward A. de Bittencourt Ph.D., Litt. D. (Michigan)**

*Introduction by*  
**SARDAR HARBANS SINGH**

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## *ACKNOWLEDGMENT*

I owe a deep debt of gratitude to the various authors I have consulted and upon some of whom I have drawn freely for exposition of the various aspects of the Sikh Way of Life.

I am also indebted to Dr. Edward A. de Bittencourt, Ph.D. (Santiago) Litt. D., (Michigan) an eminent Scholar, Philosopher and Linguist ; who out of the abundance of his knowledge, has produced a comprehensive Foreword which will be of great interest to the students of the comparative study of religion.

I must thank Sardar Harbans Singh ji, Secretary Bhai Vir Singh Sahit Sadan and of the Literary Sub-Committee Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Delhi State, who made me the proposal to write this book on the Sikh Way of Life and who has now also furnished an appropriate and lucid introduction to it.

New Delhi ;

Dated 22nd May, 1968

RANBIR SINGH



## *FOREWORD*

By

Dr. Edward A. de Bittencourt Ph. D., (Santiago)  
Litt D. (Michigan)

**S**ARDAR RANBIR SINGH, the author of the standard work on the Ten Sikh Gurus entitled *Glimpses Of The Divine Masters*, has written a new masterpiece : *The Sikh Way Of Life*.

In his first great work Sardar Ranbir Singh already has said a few pointed words about *The Sikh Way Of Life*, from pages 398 to 408 inclusive, he devotes a short chapter to the subject to which he now dedicates a whole volume. Before beginning the analysis of the latest work of S. Ranbir Singh, we will quote a few words from his first and major work :

### **Page 399-Caption First Thing First :**

“NANAK placed first thing first. He exhorted the people to forget all supposed agencies of creation, sustenance and death. And he restored their faith and undivided loyalty to One God (Ek-Onkar) as source of all creation. The Religion, that Guru Nanak preached was strictly, monotheistic, requiring belief in none other than the one Supreme Being only. Guru Nanak described God as Absolute yet Personal, the Eternal, All-Pervading Divine Spirit, the Creator, the Cause of Causes, without fear, without enmity and without hate.....”

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This is a great progress over the God of the Old Testament Who is an enemy of all peoples, except the chosen people, id est : the Jews or Israeli, that is why this attribute of God "*without enmity and without hate*" was introduced by Guru Nanak in the Mula Mantra and very first Shloka of Shri Guru Granth Sahib. This is another unique feature of The Sikh Religion that the Sikh concept of God is so pure that as far as I know it is the only Monotheistic Religion which conceives God as without enmity and hate, this contrasts with the Semitic concept of Religion where God is full of enmity, full of wrath, wreaking vengeance on all; but the chosen people and occasionally even on the chosen people, unto the millionth generation A. D. (AE Ternitatem). "*Without hate*" compare this epithet without hate and revise your "Old Testament" and see how much hate is attributed to God by the Semitic writers of the Bible.

*To Continue the above quotation of Ranbir Singh regarding concept of God :—*

‘.....both immanent in His creation and transcendent. He is not jealous or merely a just God, but God of Love and Grace. That being so, He creates man not to punish him for his sins or reward him for his good actions but for the realization of his true purpose in the cosmos and to merge-in from where he issued forth”.

### **Ek - Onkar — One God**

The ancient Hindus worshipped gods and goddesses. Their worship consisted in reciting hymns and offering oblations in sacred fire. This kind of worship is called ‘Yag’ or Yajna’ (Sacrifice). The Vedas, the oldest Scriptures of the world, deal mostly with details relating Yagas.—The

ancient mode of worship of gods and goddesses. Hence the vedas concern mainly with rites, rituals and ceremonials known as '*Karam-Kand*'. But however, the upanishadas dwell primarily on the knowledge of God. This idea of one-ness of God was present in the upanishadas, but though later on it became obscured, and almost completely lost from view.

In the Brihadarnyaka Upanishad which forms the final portion of the Shatapatha-Brahmana, Yajnavalkya Rishi shows himself a true SIKH and a strict monotheist. He also shows himself against the performance of sacrifices and penances and he adds that he who left this world without knowing God was pitiable.

When questioned by the lovely Hindu girl philosopher Gargi : he says textually "Under the rule of God (the Absolute) the sun and moon are held in their orbits, heaven and earth hold their positions, all periods of time are maintained in their places, and rivers keep to their respective courses".

So the Hebrews were not the first monotheists, the Hindu Rishis of upnishadas were the first monotheists, but by a process akin to that which we can observe in the Roman Catholicism of South America, they, I mean the masses, lost view of **First Thing First** and the same as the so-called Christians of South America worship saints, virgins, patron, divinities, ghosts of their

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departed ancestors and so forth, mediaeval Hindus came to worship their Ishta Devatas and many other gods and goddesses and forgot Ek-Onkar (One God). It was reserved for the religious genius of a great Master like Guru Nanak to re-estate in a clearer, precise, definite and accurate way and at the very opening of Gurbani the Oneness of God.

The Bible, really does not begin like Gurbani with One-God. It begins with many gods, the Hebrew Word *Allahum* or *Elohim* is the plural of the Semitic Allah or God.

It is only in the King James version of the Bible that appeared in 1611 A.D. that is to say a hundred years after Guru Nanak (1469-1539) verse (genesis 1-1) runs thus : "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

The jews became monotheist only after Akhnaton the fourth monotheistic religion had permeated through the Exoteric Sects of Kabbalists. The exoteric religion of the Jews became truly monotheistic about the time of the Solomon.

So we can truly say that only two world religions have been completely and strictly monotheistic from the very start, first Islam and second Sikhism, all the other religions have at least flirted with polytheism.

It is evident from the close reading of the pages of the Old Testament that the Jews had several gods beside the Jealous Jehovah, Mammon was god of wealth equivalent to Hindu Kubera or Lakshmi. Astoreth, the Jewish Venus or Aphrodité was

goddess of Beauty and Love and she was worshipped with rites which were ultraist of Hindu Vama-Marga. The goddess was served by virgins who served at the temples. Jehovah ascended to chief god after he had been god of war.

The Hindu masses, even to-day, are worshippers of images and idols of various gods and goddesses. They worship even the cow. They believe that bathing at the Ganges on certain occasions would absolve them of their sins. They are mostly steeped in meaningless rites, rituals and debasing superstitions.

The Muslim worship the tombs of their saints. The masses say their Nimaz only mechanically without any understanding. The Shiah Muslims bemoan the death of Imam Hassan and Hussain and do not resign themselves to the Will of God. Roman Catholic Christians worship the dead Christ and not the living Christ, their priests dressed in black, the absence of colour indicates the negation of light and life. They have all become more or less necrophilic religions.

But Sikhism forbids the worship of any thing of the creation. Only God, the Creator of the world, is to be glorified. All gods and goddesses have been dispensed with in Sikhism. The Vedas dealing with *Karamkand*, rites, rituals and ceremonies have absolutely no significance for the Sikhs. Thus Sikhism

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is the only living faith that gives you the healthy outlook on life. It is a wholly new, original and genuinely monotheistic religion. It is an independent religion which naturally may be said to have a background of Hinduism and Islam much as Christianity has a background of Judaism, and Judaism has a background of Akhnatonism and Zeroastrianism and previous semitic Paganism.

Now after this brief exordium, back to our pleasant task, Ranbir Singh's *The Sikh Way of Life*.

Sardar Ranbir Singh's style in English is luminous, clear cut, a direct style which places in evidence a depth of feeling and synthesis or economy of statement which is the chief characteristic of the prose of Ranbir Singh. Both of his books shine with a chaste English, lucidity of concepts and they are easy to read, and well-constructed books. One can feel that Sardar Ranbir Singh is not only a good writer, but that he loves his subject and is enthusiastically and genuinely devoted to the study and meditation of the Guru Granth Sahib and to the life and works or Lila of the Ten Gurus. At the very genesis of his most recent work we already find evidence of the qualities annotated :

"Sikhism is a way of life shown to mankind by the Ten Divine Masters—Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, who were in direct and constant touch with the Eternal Reality. Sikhism is a practical way leading man straight

to his goal and does not involve itself in verbose theorising. It is a religion concerned with *Now* and *Here*".

Here comes a second uniqueness of the Sikh religion ; "Concerned with *Now* and *Here*" The Sikh way of life leads us straight to our goal—the realization of God within us. We can find God and be united to him, not after death in some unknown region but *Now* and *Here* in this very life. There will be no more delusion, no more sin. We get celestial peace, bliss and joy ever-lasting *now* and *here* in this very life.

Sikhism does not condone asceticism. Although the Gita 5000 years ago has spoken against self-torture and asceticism in its sixih Adhyaya 46th shloka and also at another place it says : "He who sitteth outwardly controlling organs of action but dwelling in his mind on objects of senses that bewildered man is a hypocrite". It is only the Sikhs who have well understood this dictum of Lord Krishna. The self-styled followers of Gita have not understood the Bhagwan as is evident by the austerties and self-denial still practised in Hindu India.

Now refer to the Sikh Way of Life—Chapter headed The Spiritual Clean-Up page 27, second paragraph :

"It is true that one has to release himself from the bondages of Maya ; but it does not come through self-torture or mere escape from the battle of life. Renunciation is unhealthy out-look on life. , Maya overtakes man every-

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where whether one lives in a jungle or in a hut or in a palace. Abandoning home, one may go to the forest, he may live on roots and wild fruits, but so vicious is the mind that it forsakes not evil still”.

(Kabir Ji : Bilawal)

“The mind carries with itself its thoughts, feelings and its desires, its likings and dislikings, wherever it goes and these have to be conquered and mind subdued. Austerities practised on the physical body can never change the inner ‘Rasas’ or the instincts and impulses of the mind which is above the physical plane”.

*On the other hand The Guru Says :*

“Take care of the body that you may meditate upon the Lord and apply it to His Service”.

Sikhism is thus a very, not to say a totally, different philosophy to, at least popular Hinduism. It is a world affirming not a world denying philosophy and Religion. Besides it is Philosophical Intuitionism using Gurbani as the springing board unto the realms of the Absolute.

To find books which point the way to Gurbani and the Ten Gurus such as Ranbir Singh’s book is what is termed in India to possess good Karma and Samskaras.

In Sri Guru Granth Sahib the Holiest Sikh Scripture we find a confirmation of the value of being shown the way to the true Guru. Now the one who shows the way performs the most meritorious work of all.



“I serve my own True Guru with one mind, with one thought and love. The True Guru is the heart’s desire and Tirtha of him, whom he instructs. He obtains the boon, for which his heart has been anxious : the fruit he wishes he gets”.

This quotation from Sri Guru Granth Sahib synthesises and incorporates what Sardar Ranbir Singh tells us in his *The Sikh Way Of Life* under the chapter heading ‘The Way To God’

“In the Sikh Scriptures God is described both as Nirgun or Absolute and Sargun or Personal. Before there was any creation, God lived absolutely in Himself unmanifested. He first formed Himself into *Nam* or Divine Name, and beside Himself, He made nature which He sustains with His own presence in it. The universe and the object in it are real, not simply true as opposed to false but REAL as opposed to imaginary and delusive as conceived in Vedantism”.

“The world and all things in it are not creation of a dream, but veritable existences set in their places with a real purpose and governed by His Real Laws”.

Here we notice a profound difference between Sikhism on the one hand and Vedantism and Buddhism on the other; for Sikhism the world and its objects are real as coming from God, which is the Reality, they could not be otherwise.

For Vedantist the world and its objects are false, non-existent in the three periods of time...for Buddhism not only the world and its objects are false, but also the individual soul and personality of man and all living beings are transient, changing

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and delusive in 'The Jewel of Transcendental Wisdom' (Chin Kang Ching) a Chinese translation of a Sanskrit Original, translated from the Chinese by A. F. Price. Buddha is saying :

"Yet when vast, uncountable, immeasurable number of beings have thus been liberated, verily no being has been liberated. Why is this Su-Bhuti ? It is because no Bodhi Sattva who is a real Bodhi Sattva cherishes the idea of an ego-entity, a personality, a being, or a separated individuality" (Page 26 of book referred to) Section XXXII of the same book under caption. 'The Delusion of Appearances' Buddha says : "So I tell you" :—

"Thus shall ye think of all this feeling world. A star at dawn, a bubble in a stream ; a flash of lightning in a summer cloud, A flickering lamp, a phantom, and a dream."

"When Buddha finished this Discourse the venerable Su-Bhuti together with the Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, lay brothers and sisters, and the whole realms of gods, men and Titans were filled with joy by his teaching and taking it sincerely to heart they went their ways."

I respect all ideas sincerely held; but I, for one, prefer the Sikh teaching of the reality of the universe and of the objects in it and wholly subscribe to S. Ranbir Singh's words :

"The world and all thing in it are not creation of a dream but veritable existences set in their places with a real purpose and governed by His Real laws"

*Or as the American Poet puts it: :—*

"Life is real, life is earnest and the grave is not its goal."

If the world is un-real *mithya* false as in Vedantism and Buddhism, what does it matter who rules in it, who owns it, or who enjoys what has no real existence ?

The virile affirmation of the world only, would make Sikhism superior in doctrine both to Hinduism and Buddhism.

Now let us say something about the means or the Way to God, the Way is clearly traced by S. Ranbir Singh.

“A body is dead without life and life itself is dead without *Nam*. *Nam* is the Elixir of life without which life would be a blunder and purposeless waste. There is no spiritual awakening, no peace, no joy without *Nam*. Realization of *Nam* is the essential condition for a true and fruitful life. To practise *Nam*, means to practise the presence of the All Pervading Divine Spirit by keeping Him ever in mind with love and devotion and by singing His praises (Kirtan) or dwelling on His excellences. Simran literally means loving remembrance. ‘Without Him my soul takes fire and is reduced to ashes.’ Says Guru Nanak, “The tongue that is not lyrical in repetition of His Name, better it be cut out in ribbons, bit by bit.”

*Nam* Simran is, of course, not the mechanical, automatic way that is generally now practised under the name of ‘*Japa Yoga*’ which is as mechanical as the Rosary or muttering of prayers of some of the Christians in the West.

*Ranbir Singhs writes further :—*

“*Nam* endows the mind with Light and power to turn from unreality to Reality. It enables man to surrender himself to the Divine Will. And by complete and unconditional surrender, the aspirant attains to the highest pinnacle of spiritual advancement”.

I will not go on quoting from the *Sikh Way Of Life* by S. Ranbir Singh, I will begin practising it, living it ; because due to my enthusiasm for the Sardarji's work I might be carried away to write too long a Foreword which might delay readers impatient not only to read *The Sikh Way Of Life*; but to embody the Sikh principles contained therein in their own beings and in their daily lives.

As finishing words, I insist on careful reading ; with concentrated mind, of *The Sikh Way Of Life* and of *The Glimpses Of The Divine Masters* by Ranbir Singh. On living the teachings contained therein, and having this book alway as a Vademecum for all young Sikhs, if they read Gurbani and Ranbir Singh's books there will be no apostasies, no not even among those young Sikhs who live in America and who fall sometimes, rarely though, under the glamour of Western bad habits, such as shorn hair and shaven faces, smoking, and other bad habits that Churchianity, or Christianity, in its zeal for members, quantity and not quality, tolerated; while Sikhism which is truly God-loving will not attempt to correct or improve on God's work by suppressing an essential organ to bodily economy, such as Kesha (Hair) is :—

Only effeminate men will shave their beards and moustaches and become emasculated. "The personality of the Sikh with his long tresses into a knot at the top of his head, covered by a turban and his beard reflect his outlook of life, just as a clean shaven head and ochre robe of a monk reflect his outlook of life.", writes Sardar Ranbir Singh.

In fact, the Keshas is a symbol of saintliness. The holy Rishis of ancient India, Sri Rama, Lord Krishna, Jesus Christ and Hazrat Mohammed, all of them had long tresses (unshorn hair). And Ofcourse, ail the Ten Gurus wore keshas. For the Keshas preserve the spiritual energy generated at Meditation. Hair is indeed associated with holiness.

May God bless Ranbir Singh with health, long life and prosperity for having had the good will to publish his luminous books.

Santiago

Dr. Edward A. de Bittencourt.

3rd April, 1968.



## INTRODUCTION

BY

SARDAR HARBANS SINGH

GURU NANAK appeared on this earth at a time when the sublime spirit of true religion was largely obscured by elaborate ceremonialism and meaningless formalities. Religion had been reduced to just a code of certain dogmas and observance of mechanical rituals. Man worshipped the creation rather than the Creator. The noblest ideals and truths had dropped from consciousness and sight into the mire of debasing idolatry. The *symbol* had superseded the *spirit*. The *image* was taken for the *real*. The aim was forgotten and the means were taken to be the end. The people associated religion only with the life hereafter. It had no practical impact on their conduct in the present life. The soul had left. The body was dead. Yet the people blindly clung to it thinking it all in all. When the body is deprived of its *soul force*, putrefaction sets in. Thus with the ignorance of the essential spirit of religion, the society began deteriorating. The more it deteriorated, the more susceptible it rendered itself to the debasing attacks and each successive attack left it more debilitated than before. In one word man had caught hold of the *outward* symbol and had ignored the *inward* spirit.

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One great good that the divine advent of Guru Nanak did to the Indian society was the set-back it gave to anything which could be called religious hypocrisy (*Bhekh*) that had taken hold of men at the time and was rampant at all levels :

“Those who make a show of *Nimaz*,  
Do not hesitate to devour men—  
Those who are wearing sacred thread,  
Do not hesitate to strike the dagger.”

(Guru Nanak, *Slokas*) translated

Guru Nanak emphasised the importance of essential inwardness of true religion without which there was an imminent danger of the whole system being swallowed by the ghost of superstitions and insincerity.

The Guru declared his fundamental approach in unequivocal words :

“I know not any superstition,  
My mind is illumined by His Light.”

(Guru Nanak *Suhi Rag*) translated

And :—

“Burnt be those rituals and formalities,  
Where I forget my Beloved.”

(Guru Amardas, *Wadhana Rag*) translated

According to him the mere act of pilgrimage to holy places, bathing in sacred waters on certain occasions and observance of many other such austerities would not absolve man of his sins :



“Man may go about bathing at holy places,  
And wander about on earth as a mendicant,  
He gets no solace in the life hereafter.”

(Guru Arjan, *Gauri Rag*) translated

With him it was the sincerity of heart that  
mattered :

“Of what use is the bathing in sacred waters,  
If the mind is defiled by sin.”

(Guru Nanak, *Sri Rag*) translated

And again :

What all these rituals are worth,  
If the heart is not sincere ?

(Namdevji, *Asa Rag*) translated

A review of the pages here presented will readily reveal to the reader the practical and wholesome aspects of the religion as taught by the Sikh Gurus and the place it admits for religious sincerity and its practice in a man's day to day life. It is, however, a matter of great regret that their noble message has not had a greater diffusion in India, where sublime truths are largely mixed up with debasing mythological legends and superstitions.

The writer of these pages, Sardar Ranbir Singh, needs no introduction to the readers. He is known for his beautiful and thought provoking book : *Glimpses of the Divine Masters* published a couple of years back. His writings bear his sincerity and the depth of his faith in the word of the Gurus. His works display rare strength of conviction and

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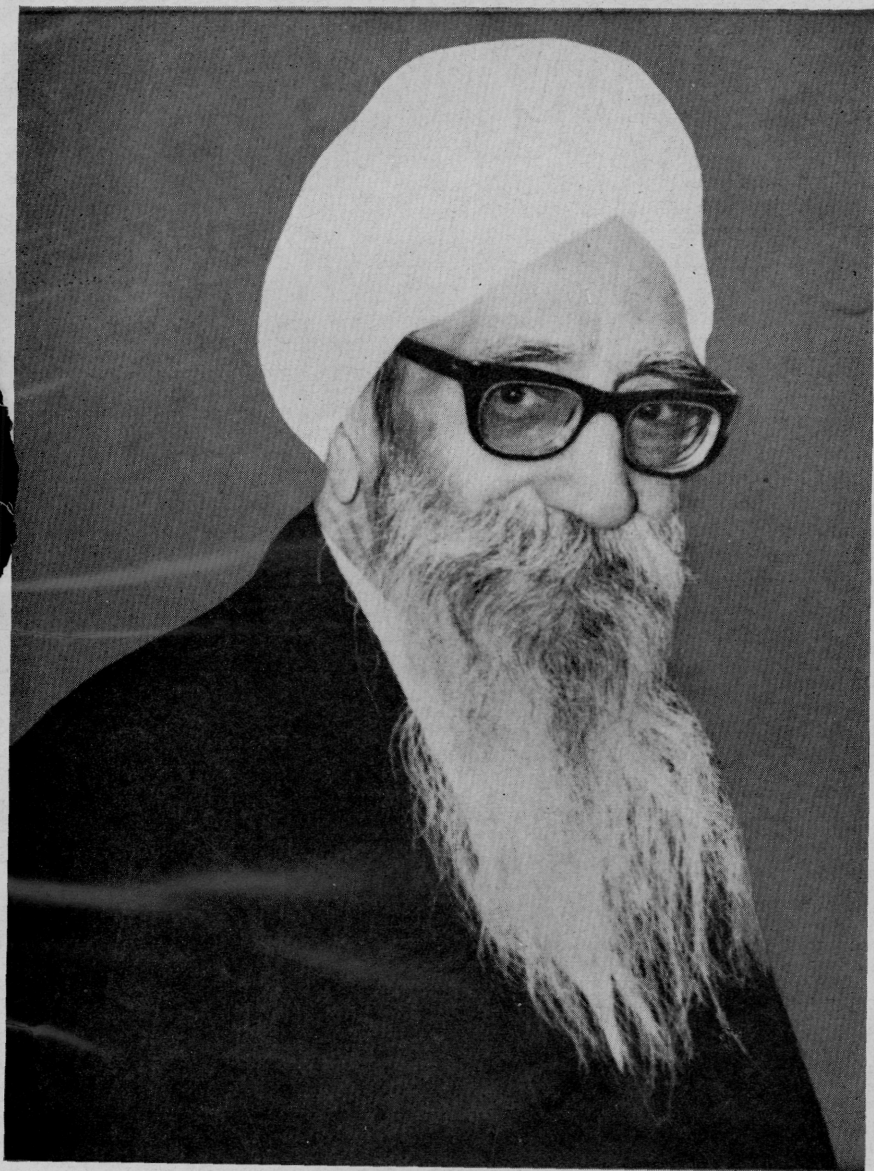
clarity of thought which is evident from his fearless and frank exposition of the teachings of the Gurus.

In the present volume, the author has undertaken a searching study of the fundamentals of Sikhism and has presented them in a simple and straightforward style. He has sought to bring forth sublime truths as taught by the Gurus in the hope that the people seeing afresh their beauty and significance might respond to their appeal and strive to live up to them.

And in this venture every lover of the truth and of man must wish him well.

HARBANS SINGH

New Delhi,  
5th May, 1968.



RANBIR SINGH  
14th May 1899—21st April 1980



## **THE SIKH WAY OF LIFE**

### **(A TRIBUTE)**

Dr. Amiya Chakarvarty, the renowned Indian scholar teaching in Boston University, was invited to participate in an international seminar in connection with the 500th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak. I asked him which, in his opinion, was the best written book on Sikh religion in English. "Sardar Ranbir Singh's", said my old teacher unhesitatingly. I was embarrassed since I had not heard this name until then.

Ranbir Singh, the little known author of "The Glimpses of the Divine Masters", "The Sikh Way of Life" and a couple of other works is no more. He died in Delhi on April 21 after a brief illness.

A well-to-do businessman he did not have to write for money. Nor did he write for name; he lived essentially a cloistered life screened from the media glare. He took to writing because of an inner urge. An evolved soul, what he wrote touched the innermost fibres of his readers, sounded most convincing and swept them off their feet. They came to him again and again.

### **Fine Compilation**

It was a small coterie. Though it included such eminent scholars as Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji

who said: "The Glimpses of the Divine Masters" is a remarkable compilation of the most beautiful incidents and deathless episodes in the lives of the Gurus with copious selections from their discourses and teachings" Dr. N.C. Mudaliar remarked "I like to have this book with me always. Every sentence of this book impresses me and provokes my spiritual thoughts."

Dr. K. R. Srinivas Iyengar, Vice-President, Sahitya Akademi observed : "The Glimpses of the Divine Masters" and "The Sikh way of Life" are a series of vivid snaps but cumulatively the effect is panoramic. Great events, great figures, great confrontations pass before the eyes and build up the story of a great movement, a great religion, and a great people. The author has written these books with a mind stored with knowledge and a heart in total allegiance to the Gurus and hence these two books speak with an authority and immediacy that the reader cannot miss."

### **Inspiring Volume**

Dr. Ganda Singh, the noted Sikh historian, wrote: "The Sikh Way of Life" is the result of the author's deep study of the Sikh scriptures and other relevant literature for some 40 years. We are grateful to the author for giving to the spiritual-minded students of religion a thought-provoking and a life-inspiring handy volume."

However, the highest tribute came from Dr. Edward A. de Bittencourt of Santiago who opined: "The book ("Glimpses of the Divine Masters") is not only of the highest devotional value, but it is also a veritable jewel in hagiographical literature ... It is a book to which we will return again and again, compelled by the magnetic style born of sincere devotion."

After my encounter with Dr. Amiya Chakarvarty I had another surprise in store for me. I found that Ranbir Singh, spoken so highly of by Dr Chakarvarty, was no other than our tenant. I had met him just once along with his son when he came to negotiate the lease of the property. I now made it a point to see him at the first opportunity

"You never mentioned about your writings", I complained. "You are too big an author for that", he said in utter humility.

When I told him about Dr Amiya Chakarvarty he turned still more modest. He, then, hastened to inscribe the two books for me graciously.

"Glimpses of the Divine Masters" is designed to talk about the Sikh Gurus. Rather than being the conventional biographical sketches, these are highly subjective accounts projecting the events of their lives that illustrate what the great Gurus stood for. They are indeed stray episodes and yet they make a running narrative. Each sketch is

complete in itself and read together they make a fascinating story of a new movement, a resurgence of saint-soldiers reincarnated at the call of the Divine Masters.

The author has made an admirable attempt in this volume to explain the true meaning of religion and how it is relevant for the proper development of human character. The illumined hearts of the Sikh Gurus, while in constant touch with the Eternal Reality, revealed to the suffering humanity the true meaning of life. In fact, Sikhism is divinity reflected through Nanak in the form of 10 Gurus and then through the Holy Granth, the Living God. It is a way of life, a practical way, leading man to its cherished goal.

### **Aim of Life**

“The Sikh way of Life” is a companion volume. It holds out a magnificent hope that “the life of the spirit-born person blossoms like a flower with joy everlasting and the man remains in a state of eternal bliss, not after death in some unknown region, but even now and here in this very life.” The author believes that religion has suffered most from the clergy. The simple truth of life has been garbled and complicated. Senseless dogmas, rituals and rites have done untold damage to it. Truth is buried deep under the heap of myth and superstitious practices. The new man, the modern mind refuses to accept it. Mr Ranbir Singh removes the



false layer and tells what the true religion is: What is the purpose of life ? What good Sat Sangat, association with the holy, does ? What profit is derived from "seva", unselfish service ?

"Guru Teg Bahadur" was written at the instance of the Chief Khalsa Diwan on the occasion of the tercentenary of the martyrdom of the ninth Sikh Guru. It is a highly readable life-story of the Guru with English rendering of his hymns done by Dr Harbhajan Singh and Prof Parman Singh. It is an amazing story of a martyr and a poet giving his life not for his own but other people's religion.

Ranbir Singh was no author, he never claimed to be one. He was an evolved soul. What he wrote was dictated by deep conviction and a sincere urge to share his experience with others. This made him an artist and a writer of rare talent.

Not long ago he sent me his translation of Guru Nanak's "Japji" in Urdu. I showed the manuscript to Ali Jafri, the noted Urdu poet, who was staying with me. He was amazed to see the lucidity and vividness of the style of writing. He would not believe that it was done by a non-professional. Sardar Jafri made it a point to go over to the author and pay his respects to him.

Born in a village in Jhelum district of West Punjab in 1899, Ranbir Singh was a staunch freedom fighter in his time. He discontinued his formal

studies during the non-cooperation movement and graduated from the National College in due course. A prosperous businessman with branches in New York and other important capitals of the world, he lived an utterly austere life and tried his best to help the deserving causes in his quiet way. He was a member of the governing council of the Khalsa College, Amritsar, the Chief Khalsa Diwan and also of several other institutions. He never sought the limelight or publicity. He had all the luxuries of life but lived above them.



Ranbir Singh

Hearing about his grave illness, it is said, his eldest son came from the U.S.A. and asked him, 'If an angel of mercy came and gave you another 10 years would you care to live?' "No!" was his determined reply. "I am perfectly at peace. I have

had my innings. I must now go." He closed his eyes and breathed his last.

He was an embodiment of the Sikh way of life. He lived the life of a true Sikh. When his time came he departed like a true Sikh, without any regrets.

K.S. DUGGAL

"From my Book Shelf"

The Tribune

10th June 1980

## THE SIKH WAY OF LIFE

**S**IKHISM is a Way of Life shown to mankind by the Ten Divine Masters—Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, who were in direct and constant touch with the Eternal Reality. Sikhism is a practical way, leading man straight to his goal and does not involve itself in verbose theorising. It is a religion concerned with *now* and *here*.

Guru Nanak preached that there is but One God. He described Him as Absolute yet Personal, the Eternal, All-Pervading Divine Spirit, The Creator, the Cause of causes, without enmity, without hate, both immanent in His creation and transcendent, Immortal Reality, Unborn and Self-Existent, and He can be realized through the Grace of the Guru—the Divine Master.

He is not jealous or merely a just God, but God of Love and Grace. That being so, He creates man, not to punish him for his sins or to reward him for his good actions, but for realization of his true purpose in the cosmos, to merge in from where he issued forth.

The object of human life according to the Guru is to seek God and to be re-united with Him. Just as all waters must flow down to sea

whence they came so all life must ultimately go back to God in whom it was.

“Thou hast been given this human body.  
Now this is thy opportunity to meet God, thy Lord,  
Of no avail would be thy other activities.  
Seek the company of the holy,  
Learn to adore God,  
Set thy mind on crossing the sea of life.  
Life is being wasted away  
In pursuits of pleasures of the world.”

(Guru Arjan: Asa)

*Translated*

God, Whom we seek, is not merely a God of mercy or even a distant ruler to be prayed to and supplicated before, but an all too human God, like a bridegroom yearning to receive His youthful bride in His restful Arms. The analogy of the bridegroom and bride employed over and over again in the Holy Granth to explain and express the idea of the individual soul and that of the Supreme Soul is pregnant with a great meaning.

As no sustained and final happiness can be found in perishable things, man reaches his goal only by seeking union with that Eternal Lord from Whom he came. But man is snared in this world of change. It has verily become a prison for him, which should have been his happy play ground. This is because of his own blind acts in identifying the ‘self’ entirely with his physical body and environment in utter forgetfulness of his real ‘self’ and the Supreme Reality behind.

The Guru preached that mere belief in myths and miracles or in some such senseless dogmas and meaningless rites and rituals cannot free the man or save him. The Guru repeatedly pointed out that religion or Path to Reality does not consist in worshipping stocks and stones nor in throwing oneself prostrate on the ground, nor in raising the hands before idols or gods, nor in approaching the **altars** and deluging the temples with the blood of the beasts, nor in taking vows upon vows, but in realizing the Divine Light within one's soul in dedicating oneself to Him.

The Guru declared that salvation cannot be obtained by abandoning home and family or by wandering aimlessly, or by torturing the body, or by frequenting holy places, or by performances of external austerities, or by observing fasts, or performing 'Havan' and pouring oblations into sacrificial fires. But it is only by kindling the Fire of Devotion and Love for God in the self itself, by the Guru given Spark of Life, that sense of egoism (*khudi*) is lost and salvation is obtained.

The Sikh Way of Life, so to say, is the art of living a pure and beautiful life like a flower, by abiding in the True Source of its being and emitting its fragrance and sweetness all around. And this life is to be lived in fulness in all its aspects. It is the Life of Light, Love and Service (Gyan, Prem and Seva) a life filled with the fire and fervour of God, a life of vigour, vitality & valour in the midst of

perils. This **life** of inspiration is the gift of the Guru, the Divine Master. Man achieves this illumination through his Goodwill and Grace.

The Guru is the Light of the world. He shows the Way to Reality. He that follows him shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of Life. But anybody who walks in darkness 'does't know where he is going.

Guru Nanak spoke the words of eternal truth, which were destined to give peace, freedom and salvation to all men and create a noble humanity.

He gave the world a simple doctrine, a pure faith, universal in its application. All those who are weary of the materialism of the modern times will find in the Gospel of Guru Nanak comfort, peace of mind and happiness.

Sikhism is a sovereign religion. It is a new, original and direct revelation. It defies all the social laws of Manu and turns its back on the four-fold Hindu Order of Society. Caste system is totally obliterated. All gods and goddesses have been eliminated. We find there is a dynamic transvaluation of values. Old values crumbled and have been remoulded and reshaped into a new form with a new life. Spirituality and religion have been revolutionised and a new ideological coin has been minted and the seal of the New Faith has been set on it. This faith is crystal-clear, as is the water gushing out from the snow-fed fountain. It is like the new dawn

so pure, so fresh and fragrant that it immediately catches our imagination and gives us pleasant feelings.

Sikhism is the most modern religion, not only in age but also in its outlook on life. But in order to understand and fully appreciate the fundamentals of this 'new deal' in the form of Sikhism, it is essential to make a brief survey of the conditions that prevailed in India before the advent of Guru Nanak.



## INDIA BEFORE GURU NANAK

**T**HERE came a time when godliness suffered an eclipse in India and evil prevailed throughout. The moral and spiritual decay weakened and emasculated the soul of the people. Corruption became rampant from top to bottom. The rigid caste distinctions, with superstitions associated with it, divided the Hindu community into innumerable water-tight compartments. A great body of population were treated as untouchables, even their touch polluted the higher castes.

Religion was just a code of taboos and ritualistic show-piece. It consisted of bathing at the pilgrim places, mechanical repetition of unintelligible 'mantras' and worship of idols and stone-images of numerous gods and goddesses.

Further still the petty principalities and several small states, into which India was divided, had entirely broken its integrity. One section of community that came in power, ill-treated the other and tried to liquidate the same; so there were intrigues and secret betrayals.

With such conditions prevailing in India, hordes of Muslims from across the North Western borders

**swept upon this country like locusts carrying slaughter, desecration and desolation with them. In the fifteenth century and the centuries that preceded it, these invading armies came one after the other like waves of the sea. They were ruthless beyond description, massacring men without mercy, plundering hearths and homes and lifting away young girls and demolishing temples and converting the Hindus to Islam at the point of the sword.**

When the world is in trouble and sorely stricken, it then prays and prays sincerely. The **True One** listens with attention and in the kindness of **His** nature grants consolation.

God, the Merciful Lord, heard their bewailings and lamentations and sent Guru Nanak, the Divine Master, the Saviour of humanity. He came to show the Light and the Way. He showed us the Light out of darkness of falsehood that overshadowed the land. He comforted us. He awakened in human mind the consciousness of God, the Creater and brought the erring humanity back to the Lord and cured the sickness of the soul.

He united all sections of the Indian people in unbreakable bonds of love, where the lowest was to be equal with the highest in race, in social, political and religious rights. He laid the foundation of a **brotherhood** of Warrior-Saints who in due course of time, snatched the sword from the tyrants' hands and destroyed the evil doers root and branch.

## THE ADVENT OF GURU NANAK

**S**IKHISM is a religion taught through Guru Nanak in the form of the Ten Gurus:—

( 1469 A.D.— 1708 A.D. )

1. Guru Nanak	:	1469-1539
2. Guru Angad	:	1539-1552
3. Guru Amar Das	:	1552-1574
4. Guru Ram Das	:	1574-1581
5. Guru Arjan	:	1581-1606
6. Guru Har Gobind	:	1606-1644
7. Guru Har Rai	:	1644-1661
8. Guru Har Kishan	:	1661-1664
9. Guru Tegh Bahadur	:	1664-1675
10. Guru Gobind Singh	:	1675-1708

Guru Nanak, upon his advent, found the masses steeped in the darkness of ignorance. The tyranny and oppression of the rulers of the day and domination of the people by the priestly class had led to their demoralisation and degeneration. What passed for religion contained more of husk than the kernel. The spirit of Truth was buried under heaps of senseless dogmas, meaningless rituals and blind superstitions.

“The popular religion about the time of Guru Nanak’s birth was confined to peculiar forms of eating and drinking, peculiar ways of bathing and painting the forehead, and such other mechanical observances.

The worship of idols, pilgrimages to the Ganges .....  
 The springs of true religion had been choked by weeds  
 of unmeaning ceremonials, debasing superstitions,  
 the selfishness of the priests and the indifference of the  
 people.”

(*Sir Dr. Gokal Chand Narang*)

The chaotic conditions prevailing in India at that time have been aptly described by Guru Nanak himself in the following verse :—

“*Kal kati raje kasai*”

“This dark period is like the knife,  
 The kings are the butchers.  
 The Dharma hath taken wings  
 And can be seen nowhere  
 Yea, it is the dark night of falsehood  
 And Truth, O where is the Moon of Truth ?  
 One is bewildered in this vain search,  
 No path is visible in this darkness.  
 The people are in the grip of egoism  
 It causeth them anguish and makes them bewail  
 Say, O Nanak, how can they be saved ”

(*Guru Nanak : Slok Var Majh, Stanza 16 page 145*)

*Translated*

### The First Thing

The need of the hour was to first restore the faith of the people in One God and to extricate all that hindred man's relation with God.

Nanak placed first thing first. He exhorted the people to forget all supposed agencies of creation, sustenance and death. :—

"They suppose that Maya, the mythical goddess,  
 Mysteriously conceived and gave birth to three deities:  
 Brahma, Vishnu and Siva.  
 Brahma, it is said, is the one who creates,  
 Vishnu the other that sustains it  
 And Siva, they say, is the destroyer  
 That controls and sits on judgment.  
 But no, in reality it is God,  
 Who directs the world according to His Will  
 And no other.  
 The thing that astonishes the people most is  
 That while He sees them ever, they see Him not.  
 All hail to Him ! All hail unto Him !  
 Who is the Primal Being, Immaculate,  
 Without beginning and Ever Changeless  
 The same from age to age."

(Guru Nanak: Japji)

*Translated*

He thus restored their faith and undivided loyalty  
 to One God, as source of all creation. The religion  
 that Guru Nanak preached was strictly mono-  
 theistic, requiring belief in none other than the One  
 Supreme Being only. Sikh scripture begins with the  
 numeral 1. Words may bear or may be made to  
 yield different interpretation but not numerals.  
 Their meaning is fixed once for all. To denote the  
 Oneness of the Ultimate Reality Guru Nanak  
 used the numeral 1.

#### **Seek The Support & Shelter of One God Alone**

The Guru, in his profound wisdom, has  
 ordained that the true Sikh shall seek the sup-  
 port and shelter of one God alone, Who is the  
 Creator, Sustainer of the entire creation, and Who

is the source of all life, knowledge and wisdom.  
To such benevolent God, one must surrender his  
entire 'self'.

Thus Speaks Guru Nanak :

"If a man sings of God and hears of Him  
And lets love of God sprout within him,  
His all sorrow shall depart,  
And in the soul, God will create abiding peace."

(Guru Nanak : Japji)  
Translated

At another place he says :

"Everyone seems worried and care-ridden;  
He alone gets peace and becomes care free,  
Who cherisheth but One God in his heart."

*"dhar jiare ik tek tu lahe bidani as"*

"Lean only on the support of One God alone,  
Forsaking the hope of help of any other."  
And, dwell thou on *Nam* (Divine Spirit), O Nanak,  
That thy object is achieved."

(Guru Arjan : Gauri Bawan Akhri.)  
Translated

*"tajoh sianap sur-jānoh sinroh har har rae"*

"Give up thy cleverness, O goodman  
And remember and ever remember God, the Lord  
Nanak trust in One God alone  
That thy suffering, fear and doubt may depart."

(Guru Arjan : Gauri Sukhmani)  
Translated

The Guru, thus exhorts us, in clear words, to  
abjure reliance on all other props and to have

## THE ADVENT OF GURU NANAK

unshakable faith in One God, Who alone is infallible. He alone is capable of providing relief against all sufferings.

“Meditate upon One God alone,  
 And the One alone do glorify.  
 Remember, ever remember, O man, the One,  
 And him alone do ever in thy heart enshrine  
 Sing, yea, sing the **excellences** of this One,  
 The **excellences** that have no end.  
 With thy heart and soul contemplate upon the One Lord  
alone  
 This One ! The All-in-all ! Perfect & Supreme One,  
 He pervadeth all, Yea, full & brimming by Himself  
 Many an emanation from this One have overflowed  
 Remember Him, this Holy One, O man, all thy sins  
shall go  
 When imbued with the love of this One, within & without  
 Then by the Grace of the Guru, the Blessed one is found.”

(Guru Arjan : Sukhmani. 19 -8)

*Translated*

Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth Guru Nanak, supports the same idea when he says :

“bin kartar na kirtam mano  
 adi ajoni ajai abinashi tih parmesar jano”

(Shabad Hazare)

That is to say, ‘Do not be misled into recognising any one of His creation as the Creator. The Creator alone was true in the beginning and true in the primal ages. True He is and True He shall ever be. He is not-incarnated. He is Eternal Lord and is the

True Enlightener. To such omnipotent God alone one must supplicate."

And Guru Gobind Singh, in continuation, stoutly enjoins upon his followers to observe strictly the doctrine of 'belief in One God' alone when he declares :—

*"Jagat jot japai nis basar ek bina man naik na anai"*

"He who constantly keeps his mind  
Intent upon Ever Awake Living Light of Consciousness,  
And never swerves from the thought of One God;  
And he who is adorned with full faith in Him  
And is wholly steeped in the Love of the Lord,  
And even by mistake never puts his faith in fasting;  
Or in worship of tombs, sepulchre or crematoriums,  
Caring not for pilgrimages, alms, charities,  
Penances or austerities;  
Or anything else but devotion to One God;  
And in whose heart and soul the Divine Light  
Shines forth as the full moon  
He is known as Khalsa, the purest of the pure."

*(Guru Gobind Singh : Swayas)*

*Translated*

### All Men are the Same

When the Divine call came to Nanak, the words that were first on his lips were : "There is no Hindu, no Musalman" meaning thereby that there is to be no distinction between man and man. Hindus and Muslims are their different faiths. But behind the faith is "Man". Nanak realized the unity of Hindus and Muslims in the Man universal. The emphasis in



his message was not on rituals and rites, ceremonies and dogmas, but on life, on love of God and right actions.

Nanak rose above philosophy and metaphysics, above rites and rituals, above creeds and conventions, above all nation-cults and all race-cult to a vision of the deeds of love.

“God will not ask man”, said Nanak, “Of what race and religion he belongs to”. He will but ask him “What have you done ?” Deeds, not creeds, is what Nanak asked of his disciples. He preached a religion for which men would live, a religion which would illuminate lives, a religion of love, service and sacrifice.

Guru Nanak and the nine Gurus who succeeded him set a wonderful example in the art of living spiritually. In an age when class distinction was very rigid, when the bonds of caste in India had strictly divided the people, Guru Nanak taught equality and brotherhood. In an age when the inferiority of women was taken for granted, the Guru spoke out against the custom of purdah and *Sati* and gave women equal status with men.

According to Sikhism, the whole humanity is one family and every man must be honoured not in terms of his birth or his caste or creed or colour but as a man. Caste, country, creed or colour could have

no place in God's scheme of things. Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth Nanak, says in Akal Ustat :—

*“Mans ki jat sub ek hi pahchanbo”*

“All men are the same  
It is only through error  
That we see them different.  
All men are endowed with the same eyes,  
The same ears and same body  
They are built of the same elements.”

## THE SPIRITUAL CLEAN UP

**G**URU Nanak, in the first instance, exhorted the people to rid themselves of the dirt and dross of superstitions, irrational beliefs, meaningless rituals and baseless taboos, and to reorient their entire fabric of thinking on sound rational lines.

Many anecdotes and parables connected with the life of Guru Nanak indicate that wherever he went his first effort was to eradicate the mist of ignorance and superstition and to instil faith in One Omnipotent and Omniscient God. How he emancipated the masses from the shackles of malignant superstitions and how he ushered in an era of right spiritual thinking amongst countless agnostics is a marvel of history.

### (a) Bathing at Holy Places

When certain ends are long pursued as is frequently the case in religious life, people begin to fix their attention more and more upon the means, and gradually take them as ends in themselves which were originally intended only as means.

The visiting of holy places, which had begun in the desire that the mind might receive new strength from the impressions of the glorious past, had

become a regular institution claiming to purify men of their sins. As we have said above, the people believed at that time that bathing at the Ganges and other pilgrim places on certain occasions would absolve them of their sins; so the Guru proclaimed that mere act of bathing at the sacred places cannot cleanse the mind riddled with the pollution of ego.

*'Tirath bharṃas biadh na jawai'*

"Wandering through the pilgrim places,  
One is not rid of one's maladies."

*(Guru Nanak : Ramkali page 906)*

*Translated*

No abiding peace can be achieved without meditating on the Divine Name. According to Sikhism, *Nam* is the only sacred place for true pilgrimage.

*'Tirath navahan jao tirath Nam hai*

*Tirath sabad vichar antar gian hai'*

"Shall we go to bathe at the pilgrim places ?

No. *Nam* is the only sacred place of pilgrimage.

The Holy of the holies is the contemplation of the Word  
That gives inner light or spiritual illumination."

*(Guru Nanak : Dhanasari Page 687)*

*Translated*

The Guru again and again repeats that it is futile to rush to the sacred bathing places for the expiation of sins or for the achievement of spiritual progress. Dwelling on His Name is the only effec-

tive means of securing abiding bliss and contentment.

*'Tirath tap dya dat dan, je koi pawe til ka man'*

"Small indeed is the merit of making  
Pilgrimages, penances, compassion and alms giving  
If one hath not been within oneself  
And bathed in the Ambrosial River within.  
If one hath not felt holy inspiration within,  
If the seed of *Nam* is not put in the soil of heart  
If love hath not yet sprung."

*(Guru Nanak : Japji)*

*Translated*

Guru Arjan, the Fifth Master, supports and confirms the same idea when he says :—

*Tirath nae ar dharni bhamta agai thaur na pavai*

"If one goes about bathing at holy places,  
And wanders about on earth as a mendicant,  
He gets no peace hereafter.  
Yea, this availeth not in the world to come  
At best, one may create false impression of oneself among  
the ignorant people."

*(Guru Arjan: Gauri)*

*Translated*

From the above it is abundantly clear that according to Sikhism those who visit the places of pilgrimage and bathe there with a view to secure salvation, shall be disappointed on the day of reckoning. Such physical ablutions are just self-deception and would be of no avail at all at the time of final stock taking.

*'Tirath Navahan je tis bhavan'*

"I would bathe at the sacred places  
If by doing so I could please Him,  
But what use is this bathing  
If it pleaseth Him not that way  
How can mere bathing help?  
When in the whole wide world that I see around  
Nothing can be gained without right action."

*(Guru Nanak : Japji)*

*Translated*

The Guru leaves absolutely no doubt in the mind of the seekers of Truth when he emphatically pronounces the uselessness of wanderings and going about bathing at the places of pilgrimage :—

*'Man Kamna tirath deh chhuteai'*

The hankering of mind would be still there,  
It availeth not tho' one dieth at *Tirath*  
For pride and conceit continue to pollute one's mind.  
Even if one washeth one's body again and again.  
The filth of one's mind, even then is cleaned not  
Howsoever one may discipline the body by hard  
austerities,  
But this way one gets not rid of the poison of *Maya* from  
one's mind.  
One may wash the mortal frame as well as one may,  
But could the wall of mud be washed clean ?  
O my mind, super excellent is the glory of Divine Name,  
O Nanak, many a sinners have been transfigured by this  
Holy Flame."

*(Guru Arjan : Sukhmani)*

*Translated*

The Guru asserts that the mind affected with the filth and pollution of ego can never be washed clean by dipping the body in any kind of water at any where.

However, visiting the holy places with the idea of participating in the Sat-Sang (holy congregations) there and to revive the memory of past great deeds and thus to get inspiration and devotion is desirable. But visiting the holy places with the idea that by bathing there sins would be washed off and our minds would become pure has been abundantly refuted by the Guru.

So according to Sikhism mere going for bathing at places of pilgrimage is of no merit and it is only waste of time, energy and money.

*(b) Observances of certain Lunar & Solar Days:*

According the Guru's wise guidance, it is strictly forbidden to attach any social importance or sanctity to certain lunar or solar days or to fast on certain days considered traditionally sacrosanct. The Guru says:

*"Satgur bajhoh andh gubar  
thiti Var seven mugadh gavar"*

"Without the true Guru there is utter darkness  
And he is outright foolish and vulgar  
Who invests certain lunar or solar days with

auspiciousness.

*(Guru Amardas : Bilawal)*

The Guru, thus, assails those who, being victims of ignorance and superstition, observe fasts and other austerities on certain lunar or solar days for the expiation of their sins. The Guru warns such mis-guided people that these foolish acts would only sap their energies. The Hindus, at the advent of Guru Nanak were steeped in those rituals and superstitions and the Guru rescued them. It is a matter of common knowledge that, many Hindus even today would not undertake journey on a certain day, would not start a new venture on another day, would not lay the foundation of a new house on a certain day because that particular day is considered inauspicious for the occasion. They would not fix the marriages of their sons and daughters on particular months and particular days etc.

But Sikhs have no such superstitions. For they have the Guru's guidance and strict injunctions in the matter. They do not care what the stars foretell this week or what the astrologers have to say for the years. Only ignorant and misguided people attach any importance to that.

Guru Nanak and his successors, thus, brought about a new consciousness, a new awakening, shaking all the old foundations of time-worn society. There was a new creation, a new life. There is no parallel in the Indian history to the awakening that took its birth in the mind of Guru Nanak. He spoke with the voice of a deliverer, up-braided the rulers of the day and condemned the imposition on



the people of the priest class and their hypocrisy. He thus delivered the people's mind from blind superstitions, empty rituals, mechanical ways of worship and dry formulae, which were so contrived as to make no demand upon the conscience of man, and in fact sapped the spirit of faith.

### (c) Renunciation Denounced

The Indian mind lay enmeshed and distracted in the intricate toils of its own creation. The simple rules of self-control had been elaborated into dogmatic systems of ascetism. The people's minds had to be freed, made healthy before they could comprehend the ideals of solid virtue. So the hypocrisy of renunciation, the dogmatic systems of asceticism, the observance of fasts, vows of celibacy, meaningless penances, and mortification of the body in several ways were all denounced in Sikhism. The physical Yogic feats acquired through physical exercises and control of breath were declared to be irrelevant. Even the so called Yogic practices, were considered of no merit. For, even if the mind could be stilled by these practices, the man remains still remote from the love of God in this meaningless state of blankness, even as he was when disquietening thoughts filled his mind. The mind of a yogi, so long as he remains in dormant state, may remain still, as in deep slumber, but as soon as he becomes active again and starts breathing, his mind begins to hanker after desires as before. Anyhow, nothing spiritual can be attained that way.



“And may be able to practise all the eighty-four postures :  
 One may achieve longevity  
 But shall born again and again and meet not God.  
 One may become ruler of land and indulge in regal  
 pleasures

And may swell by ego for commanding men  
 One may sleep on a cosy couch perfumed with sandal  
 But falls into hell at the end.

The highest deed is to Praise the Lord in the company of  
 the Saints  
 Say O Nanak, he alone attains to it in whose lot it is  
 so ordained  
 Thy servant, O God, is imbued thus with Thy Love  
 The Lord has been compassionate to him and destroyed  
 his pain and grief  
 And his mind is inebriated with Thy Praises.”

*(Guru Arjan : Sorath)*  
*Translated*

The Yogic cult had become very popular before the advent of Guru Nanak. The people believed that the world was a snare, a place of pain and suffering and hence an evil and release could come through complete dissociation with it. They further believed that body was impure and an hinderance in attainment of salvation and that it must be subjected to rigorous penances like fasting, exposure to cold and other hard austerities; so that all its desires were killed and emancipation attained.

Married life in particular was considered despicable and woman was looked down upon and her status in life was too low. In pursuance of this philosophy many people renounced the world and

went to the forests and exposed themselves to the rigorous ascetic exercises, such as standing on one leg, holding of breath and constantly sitting in different postures. Most of them went about wandering purposelessly, visiting tombs and places of cremation, living on roots, bathing at places of pilgrimage. Many people accepted this philosophy and they felt convinced that for a spiritual attainment, it was necessary to turn away from society.

Besides the yogis, millions of other people donned the garb of orange colour to look like Sadhus. These recluse and mendicants wandered about aimlessly from place to place without any spiritual aspiration. They did no work and depended entirely on charity and begging. They were a sort of parasites and burden on society. Most of them indulged in debauchery, intemperance and other vices. All this philosophy of renunciation signalled the voice of despair and of pessimistic resignation and defeatism. And, what is worse, this morbid view of life is expressed and admired even today by many secular minded and well intentioned Hindu thinkers.

As against these views Sikhism does not accept the postulate that life was sinful in its origin, and that evil was inherent in it, as some school of thought believe it.

On the contrary Sikhism believes that the world emerges from the Pure Source and is, therefore,  
• pure in essence.

“God is true and so is His creation”

(Guru Arjan : Sukhmani)

“This world which appears to you gall and sore  
It is an expression of God Himself.  
It is His Image,  
His Rain-bow vision.

(Guru Amar Das : Anand Sahib)

*Translated*

“O, ignorant man torture not thy body as if on furnace  
Feed not the fire within with thy bones  
There was nothing wrong, why hang thyself upside down.  
Look within thyself for the Lord, and you will attain  
peace.

(Guru Nanak : Shalok)

*Translated*

On the other hand, the search for the Lord will necessitate the care of the body which needs to be fed properly in order that it may live and function in a suitable manner to achieve its goal.

The Guru says:-

“Take care of the body that you may meditate upon the Lord and apply it for His service.”

Sikhism is thus not a philosophy of passivity, negativity or that of inaction. It is a dynamic faith that gives to life a meaning and to a man a breadth and a comprehensiveness of vision. The world, according to Sikhism, is a beautiful place to live in and human life is a splendid gift of God to be cherished for a good living. Undergoing

self suppression in a hard way cannot avail men in the path of realization. Of course these unnatural processes of self torture and self annihilation cannot be the purpose of an all loving God.

It is true that one has to release himself from the bondages of Maya but it does not come through self-torture or mere escape from the battle of life. Renunciation is unhealthy outlook on life. Maya overtakes man everywhere whether one lives in a jungle or in a hut or in a palace.

“Abandoning home, one may go to the forest,  
He may live on roots and wild fruits  
But so vicious is the mind  
That it foresakes not evil still.

(*Kabir Ji : Bilawal*)  
*Translated*

The mind carries with itself its thoughts, feelings and its desires, its likings and dislikings, wherever it goes and these have to be conquered and mind subdued. Austerities practised on the physical body can never change the inner ‘Rasas’ or the instincts and impulses of the mind which is above the physical plane.

“Mechanical mutterings of ‘mantras’, penances,  
And all learnings and fixing the mind on any object,  
The discourses on the six shastras and the Simrities,  
The practice of Yoga, the religious rites and rituals,  
Renunciation of the world and wandering about in the,  
woods,

And all kinds of efforts made,  
Giving jewels in charity and oblations to the sacred fires,

And getting the body cut into bits even  
And offering each bit as a sacrifice to the deities,  
And observances of fasts and vows and other deeds of  
merit,

Yet these, of all these, the dirt of Ego will not depart.  
Nothing can equal the Divine Name, and its  
contemplation.

O Nanak, through the Guru, dwell thou then on *Nam*,  
If but once, realise this wonderful, O wonderful  
revelation."

*(Guru Arjan : Sukhmani Ashatpadi 3)*

*Translated*

## SOCIAL REFORMS BROUGHT ABOUT BY SIKHISM

**B**EFORE the advent of Guru Nanak, the religious teachers in India usually impressed upon the people that the world was a mere empty dream and advocated renunciation. They did not at all concern themselves about the social, economic, and political conditions of the masses. Guru Nanak realised what they failed to see : that a religion, if it is to be a living force, must be a practical religion, one that teaches mankind not how to escape from the world but how to live worthily in it, making the best use of life, not how to avoid evil but how to meet and overcome evil and live a victorious life.

So along with living a godly life as an individual, the Sikh was to form a part of a corporate life—be it in a society, community or a nation; thus a Sikh must tune himself to several strings. The development of this kind of life is most difficult and the teachers of the world have often ignored it. It is the glory of the Sikh history that the Guru had in mind the duties of a society or a community or a nation as much as the duties of an individual. This was a task not to be achieved in a life or two. Hence it was that successive Gurus by their precept and example inspired men, to cultivate human



nature both in mundane and spiritual sense, in all its aspects and in all its bearings. We thus see that while the principles of life remained the same, the Sikh community as a whole underwent transfiguration, assuming a great variety of forms according to circumstances that arose from time to time.

### **Temple of Bread**

(Guru's Free Kitchen known as Langar)

Blind ritualism, caste restrictions and the code of taboos of eating and drinking among the Hindus, had smothered the essence of religion in them. So Guru Nanak and his successors, to hit at the heart of the artificiality, established a liberal and free common kitchen known as Guru-ka-Langar. It was the injunction of Guru Amardas, that none was to see him unless he had first partaken of the Bread of Grace at the Temple of Bread. Thereby, Guru Amar Das intended to remove the caste restrictions, caste prejudices and the curse of untouchability. In his 'Langar' Hindus or Muslims, Brahmans or Sudras, rich or poor, all were to dine together without any distinctions. When Raja of Haripur or even Akbar, the Emperor of India, came to see the Guru, they had to sit with other common people and dine together with them before the Master would consent to see them. In this way people were made to renounce their social prejudices.

Thus Sikhism opens its doors to all men and women and looks upon them as brothers and sisters. They have no social prejudices.

### Status of Women

The status of women in Hindu society at that time was very low. When the husband died, she either voluntarily burnt herself on the pyre of her husband or was thrown into the fire where the corpse of her husband was being cremated. Guru Amar Das carried out a vigorous campaign against this practice of Sati, thereby he brought about the emancipation of women from this social oppression and religious cruelty.

Through the Guru's teachings, men began to see and realise the worth of women and the women began to receive the respect and honour they deserved.

In this way Sikhism rooted out many evils prevalent in the society.

Guru Arjan felt that there could be no hope for the social and political regeneration of our people as long as they did not take interest in the development of arts and industries. Men of high castes kept aloof and left the hard work to be done by the so called lower classes. All those who were spiritually minded shunned work, as it was looked down upon by them as mean, degrading and worldly. The Guru said that every man must work. It is only those that work and earn and share their earnings with others that find the true path.

Renunciation of the world, as already said, was against the teachings of the Gurus. He pre-

ched that retirement from the world was a confession of failure, like a run-away soldier from the battle field.

The Guru recognised that the reform of a nation meant the reform of the masses. A nation is as great as its rank and file. It is the common man that was of utmost significance and therefore the Guru took great care to up-lift the common man. All classes of men were declared equal. All occupations, that were honest, were glorified as sacred. There was to be no prejudice against any trade or profession. Wordly riches were no longer to be considered as 'Maya'. These could be helpful in the conduct of human affairs.

For a religious man, it was not irreligious to acquire wealth by honest and fair means; provided he makes use of his wealth beneficially to give comfort and derive comfort, but not to be attached to it.

Centuries of Mohammedan rule had demoralised the Hindus so much so, that in frustration they had come to believe that all pain and suffering was meted out to them by God, because of their sins and that virtuous men would never suffer.

They believed that King Dasrath, Rama's father, suffered agony in the exile of his son, because he had caused pain to the father of Sarwan. So all actions that involved pain and suffering, began to be shunned. The concept of sacrifice and patriotism were thrown to the winds.

Guru Arjan Dev laid great stress on the service of love and self-sacrifice for a virtuous cause. His purpose was to show that whatever suffering one had to undergo in the cause of doing good to others, was not the outcome of one's sins, but a necessary co-relative of virtue. How can a conscientious man remain at ease as long as his fellow brethren are suffering before his eyes.

Thus the social and ideological reforms which the Gurus introduced required in their converts a complete and drastic change in their whole way of thinking. It was a big step for any one in those days to accept equal brotherhood instead of the caste system, the equality of women instead of their inferiority and the complete alteration of traditional worship, ceremonies etc., etc.,

Inevitably, it was not easy to completely change the people of those days from old prejudices, superstitions, meaningless rites and rituals. The remarkable thing is, that by the Guru's preaching, the Sikh principles were whole-heartedly adopted even by those of other faiths and even by men who had been hitherto most backward and unlettered.

## RELIGION PURIFIED

**T**HERE are many systems of faith in India and elsewhere in the world. But unfortunately what passes on for religion often appears to contain more of husk than kernel. In some of the hoary religions, the spirit of truth is buried deep under heap of senseless dogmas, meaningless rituals and bundles of ceremonies. Ever so many absurd superstitions have been associated with religion. They are like the thick clouds obscuring the Light of the Day. This darkness of ignorance and hypocrisy of the renunciation and of the priestly class had to be cleared before we could understand the true religion in its pristine glory.

There are many so called Sadhus in India who go about naked, mortifying the body and depriving themselves of the different graces of life. For such men as these Guru Nanak says :—

“The more he wears ascetic garbs, the more he afflicts his body.

Suffer it, O man, as thine own doing !

He who abstains from eating corn deprives himself of God-given blessing

And, being led astray, suffers much discomfort.

He who wears no clothes, remains day and night in tribulation.

By practising silence man stupefies himself;

How can he be awakened from the stupor except by the  
Guru ?

If he goes barefooted, he suffers as he deserves.

If he eats filth and puts ashes on his head,

The blind fool only loses his self-respect.

If he lives in the wilderness—at grave-yards and  
crematoriums,

The foolish man does not know that he will have to  
regret it afterwards.

Only that man finds peace, who meets the True Guru.

And enshrines the Name of God in his heart”.

*(Guru Nanak : Asa-di-Var)*

They who eat filth are no better than swines,

They who roll in dust no better than elephant or donkeys !

They who live in crematorium no better than jackals :

They who abide in grave yard , no better than owls !

Thou wanderest in the woods ? So do the deer !

Thou livest in silence ? So do the trees !

Thou art a celibate ? So are the eunuchs !

Thou wanderest barefooted ? So do the monkeys

And, how wilt thou, O slave of the woman, lust and wrath,  
attain God without Love of the Lord ?

*(Guru Govind Singh : Swaya)*

Some there are who wander about hungry and naked

While some others invite death by practising rigorous  
austerties

They know not the worth of life.

.....

.....

.....

Some there are who go about visiting the pilgrim places,

And eat not corn, believing it a good religious act;

While some others expose themselves to blazing fire

And torture their bodies thus.

But they can get no salvation this way. How could they?  
They, who do not take the Guru's Wisdom.  
They wander in wilderness.  
And being ego-centric and with no control on them,  
They dwell not on God's Name  
Practising falsehood, they waste away their life  
And this wise fall into the noose of death.

*(Guru Nanak : Maru)*

When the Light of Truth dawns on man, he undergoes a natural phenomena where all superficial beliefs and misconcieved notions drop off. So all the way-side views and view points have been discarded in Sikhism. All gods and goddesses are eliminated and dispensed with, in our faith. All the so-called man-made religious systems of philosophy are rooted out. All the chaff that was mixed up with the pure corn of religion was thus separated from it and discarded.

Guru Nanak, unlike the Hindus of the mediaeval ages, does not lay much stress on the metaphysical philosophy, which could be intellectually grasped and comprehended. Instead, he emphasizes the practical way of life which must be lived and experienced. It is true, there can be no practice without the doctrine. Sikhism therefore, has for its view of Reality, its view of the nature, of man and his behaviour and his inter-relationship. But it lays primary stress on the practice, the discipline and the way of life, which is based not upon rules and laws but on discipleship and following the pattern or model of life set before him. In the career of

the disciple, the Guru is all along operative, commanding his whole being and shaping his life to the divine ends.

“They on whom Master casts his Glances of Grace  
Toil with patience at their crafts as smiths  
Chastity of thought, speech and deed is their furnace,  
Understanding is the anvil on which they shape it out,  
Divine Word serves as hammer for those toilers at life,  
With the fire of sufferings and bellows of God’s fear  
They make the heart of love the vessel in which melts  
the Gold of *Nam*  
True is this mint where man casts and recasts his  
being in the Image of God.”

(*Guru Nanak : Japji*)

We find Guru Nanak never preached but only planted with his own hand the seedlings of spiritual life in the soul of the seeker of truth, and watched it steadily grow into a beautiful flower, as the gardener watches the flower plants.



## THE TRUE RELIGION

**A** THIRST for the Divine and the goodness of actions is the essence of Sikh religion.

“Hark ye all ! hear ye people.

I proclaim the eternal truth,

Only those who betake themselves to love find the Lord”.

(Guru Gobind Singh : Swayas)

*Translated*

Religion to us Sikhs is inspiration of Love. The Beloved is in His people. The service of the people is the service of God. For God's creation is an expression of Himself.

Sikhism, therefore, enjoins upon us ‘*Kirt Karo*’, ‘*Wand chhako*’ and ‘*Nam Japo*’

It means that :—

Thou shalt earn thy livelihood by honest creative labour,  
Thou shalt share the fruits of thy labour with thy fellow  
beings,

Thou shalt practise the discipline of *Nam*.

It means to practise the presence of God,

To live and move in Him in love of Him.

**A Sikh must not leave his home and family and must not become a sanyasi or mendicant.**

**A Sikh is a house—holder. He must work hard to produce the necessities of life. He must earn his living by honest and fair means and by sweat of his brow and then lovingly share the fruits of his labour with others, not in charity but in spontaneous sympathy, as rose gives away its fragrance without knowing, without asking for it. The Guru says:—**

“We are children of the same father,  
He who earns his living by the sweat of his brow  
And shares it with others  
He only gets glimpses of the Path to the Beloved.”

**A Sikh is not to renounce the world like a run-away soldier from the battle field of life, but he is to fight the evil while living in the world.**

“We are not here to dream and drift,  
We have heavy loads to lift  
Shun not the struggle,  
It is God’s gift.”

**While living in the world, we are to live above it, as a lotus in the pond, unaffected by waves, always rising above the water level; or as a swan in the lake, its wings unwetted by water. This purity of character, this higher life of the spirit is achieved by the Sikhs by constantly remembering God, and living by Gurbani—the Divine Word.**

*‘Man re greh hi main udas sach sanjam karni  
so kare gurmukh hoi pargas’*

“O my mind, the person whom the Guru enlightens,  
He remains a house-holder without being attached.  
He leads a life of truth  
Of right actions and controlled desires.”

*(Guru Amardas : Sri Rag)*

**The discipline of Nam**

There is a Spiritual Presence that mysteriously sustains the universe of phenomena which we call *Nam*. This Spiritual Presence is absolutely Real. Man finds himself not only in need of arriving at an awareness of this Absolute Reality but also to be in communion with it, in touch with it. There is a basic urge in man which demands that unless this is done, he cannot feel himself at home in the world in which he finds himself born and living.

A sikh is thus to practise *Nam*. It means to practise the presence of God by repeating the Divine Name, and by keeping Him ever in mind, by singing his praises or dwelling on His excellences, by living in Him and in love of Him.

A flower will not retain its fragrance, lustre and beauty if plucked from the plant on which it grows. The water cut off from the main stream to form a pool, will become dirty and impure. So also man will meet the same fate if he remains cut off from his source. Selfishness in man is transcended by love. By *Nam* the man attains his manhood which is for ever divine and unselfish.

Sikhism is thus the Way of *Nam* (*Nam Marg*). Sikhism believes that the writ of 'Karma' (fate) can be erased here in this one human life by the Grace of One Personal-Absolute God, which is to be invoked not merely through the Way of works (*Karm Marg*), or the Way of knowledge (*Gyan Marg*) but

through His Love-Worship by dwelling upon, and following the Way of *Nam* (Nam-Marg) as enshrined in the Guru's Word. Not through renunciation, but actively participating in all aspects of life, yet not being attached, or involved in it, is the culture of *Nam* to be imbibed by man. And this is open to the woman as much as to man; for both are equal in the eyes of God. No particular language is sacred to Him. No priest or intercessor is necessary to initiate one in the Realm of God. In the Guru's Word itself is enshrined the Way which like the national high way (Gaddi-Rah) is open to anyone, who cares to tread it, irrespective of his caste, colour and country or birth and station in life.

The Guru thus brought home to the people that they should not nurse their own soul in loneliness. Instead they should be <sup>be</sup>holy-heroes while fully engaged in the affairs of the world, they should remain unattached. Their holiness should appear in the abundance of their love for God, in the utter selflessness of their lives and in their firm devotion to the cause of righteousness.

## THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

**T**HE life of the average man of the world flows out in a deadly stream of monotony. The eternal treadmill of eating, sleeping and working for a living; and living for eating, sleeping and working goes on till a man ultimately finds himself physically spent up and spiritually bankrupt. Charmed by the fascination of the materialistic world and lost in the wilderness of 'Sansara' he gives little or no thought to the eternal values of life.

Consider a flower——a rose. How it is blooming with joy. It radiates the fragrance of its joy all around, without asking, without knowing. It is the symbol of the joy of life. One is happy only if one carries out the function for which one was created. You may well ask what is the purpose of human life. ? The Guru gives us the answer to this question:-

"This time, having gained a human body  
A rare opportunity thou hast got.  
This is thy turn to meet the Lord.  
Thy other activities will be of no avail at the end.  
Seek the company of holy men  
And learn to contemplate on God.  
Set thy mind  
On crossing the sea of life

Life is being wasted away,  
In pursuits of pleasures of the world."

(Guru Arjan: Rag Asa)  
*translated*

So long as man remains attached to his flesh and hankers after the pleasures of the world in utter forgetfulness of God, the Lord, he is a poor miserable creature, a bond-slave of passions and is living in darkness and is led away from sin to sin. He gambles away his valuable life for a mere trifle and trash. The spiritually ignorant man casts away the pearls of eternal values for the pebbles of the temporal gain.

"The day passeth in strife, the night in sleep  
Yea, the ego centric suck-in poison,  
Uttering untruth, and so one quitteth in pain,  
Over one's head is the tyranny of 'Yama'  
One loseth honour, led astray by duality  
One cherisheth not the Name of the Lord  
And so one cometh and goeth (on the wheel of  
birth and death)"

(Guru Amar Das: Shaloka Ram Kali ki var.)

To realize God is the very object of life. And human life, as the Guru tells us, is a rare opportunity. So this precious span of man's life should not be frittered away without achieving the purpose for which it was created. We should give primary importance to speed up this glorious transformation. Everything else is to be considered as means to this

end. Scholarship, wealth, progeny all have only secondary value in so far as they contribute towards the advancement of realization of God. If they cannot be made to serve this purpose, they are mere trash.

“Cursed be eating, cursed be sleep,  
Cursed be the wearing of clothes,  
Cursed the body and cursed be the family with it,  
If one attaineth not to God in this birth  
For, if once this rare chance is lost, the life is a waste.

*(Guru Arjan: Rag Bilawal)*

For so long as man foresakes God and chooses to go astray from him, there is suffering and anguish and he has many times to be thrust into the red furnace of the hell and many times to be re-born, re-shaped and re-tempered until he learns to accept God and submit to the Lord, and attain to him.

“Yea, who cherisheth not the Lord’s Name,  
They are unforunate, they waste away their lives.  
They are made to go round from birth to birth  
They are born only to die.  
They are sentensed in the Court of the Supreme Judge  
And meet punishment in the ‘Yamas’ region.

*(Guru Ram Das: Rag Maru)*

All life is transient. There is no staying here. It moves on and on the whirling wheel of transmigration in accordance with its ‘Karmas’ or actions good or bad. The human soul has come up after passing through many stages of life. This is the

door for liberation, but charmed by the materialistic world, the man loses his chance.

“For several births, thou hast been a mere worm  
For several births, thou hast been an elephant, a fish, a  
deer.

For several births, a bird, a serpent,  
For several births thou hast been yoked as a bullock and  
a horse

.....

Meet thou the Lord of the Universe, for now is the time  
After ages hast thou attained the human body, lose not  
the chance.”

*(Guru Arjan: Gauri Garari)*

“Having wandered through eighty four lacs of species  
Thou hast obtained the very precious human life  
Nanak, remember thou then the *Nam*  
For thy days are numbered.

*(Guru Arjan: Sri Rag)*

“O man ! thou comest to earn merit  
But how vainly art thou engaged;  
While the Night of Life passeth away.

*(Guru Arjan- Sri Rag)*

“Sleeping through, man wasteth the night,  
Eating, he wasteth the day away  
And lo. the Jewel of Life is bartered away for a trite.  
He, who knoweth not the Name of Lord  
Regrets he, the ignorant man, in the end.”

*(Guru Nanak: Gauri)*



"O self-willed man, bereft of Lord's Name  
 Be not enticed away by the attractive colour of safflower  
 Its colour will last a few days, little is its worth.  
 Through attachment to duality,  
 The foolish, blind and stupid persons rot to death  
 They are as worms in the filth and perish over and over  
 again."

(Guru Angad : Shloka Sri Rag)

"Those, who forsake the Lord's Name  
 And do other conventional religious deeds,  
 Are bound down and punished by 'Yama'  
 Like a thief caught red-handed on the spot."

(Guru Amar Das: Shloka, Var Sarang)

"All other acts come under the Sway of Death Angel  
 Without the Love of Lord, naught else availeth."

Guru Arjan: Sukhmani)

From the few quotations given above from  
 Guru Granth Sahib, it is abundantly clear that the  
 purpose of human life is to seek God, find Him and  
 be united to Him. Just as all waters must flow down  
 back to sea whence they came, so must all life go  
 back to God in whom it was. Human life is the  
 opportunity, which if man avails of, he gets sal-  
 vation and then no more birth and death for him.  
 But if this chance is lost, he goes down again on  
 the whirling wheel of transmigration.

"The Human life is rare and precious  
 This is not obtained again and again  
 As the ripened fruits once fallen  
 Cannot be attached back to the tree".

(Kabir)

But the man in the dark wilderness of ignorance, under the spell of 'Maya' goes astray, loses this opportunity. Forsaking God, the Lord he barter away his soul for a mess of pottage. He repents, laments and bewails when he appears before the Supreme Judge (Dharm Raj) after death but then nothing avails. O, this blind mind had wasted away the Jewel of Life. There is then suffering, pain and anguish. Passing through the burning hell he is sent down again on the cycle of births and deaths. This goes on for ages before he gets again human life.

"This, pray, is the only opportunity, seize it thou,  
And Reflect thou (on God) and see Him thou within.  
Sayeth Kabir: "I' ve proclaimed the Truth by beat  
of drum:

Now, it is up to thee to win or lose the battle of life."

*(Kabir: Bhairo)*

## WHAT TO MEDITATE UPON

**W**HEN Buddhism began to degenerate, idol-making received a fillip among them. Statues of Buddha and Budhisattvas became very common. When Buddhism was ultimately driven out of India, the latter Hindu Society that was rebuilt on the ashes of Buddhism took a wrong turn in imitation to them. They set up like them their own gods and goddesses and began to worship their stone-images. They stooped down from the lofty ideals of their ancestors.

However, there were some people still, who were longing for Life, searching for Light and hungering for Love but without any clear direction or guidance.

But certain misconcieved notions regarding the object of meditation had come into vogue. Idols, stone-images and portraits and pictures of several deities, gods and goddesses attracted countless Hindu devotees for the concentration of mind, under the wrong belief that this would lead them to a sublime spiritual state.

The Gurus gave the specific lead on this subject of vital importance. The object was to give them a clear understanding, that idol worship will lead them nowhere. He gave a clear decisive mandate to dwell upon One Formless God only.

He removed all those ambiguities and uncertainties from the minds of the seekers of Truth and gave them a clear and right conception, that they must dwell upon and fix their minds on The Supreme Being who is the Creator and sustainer of this vast universe.

So it is forbidden in Sikhism to contemplate and meditate on any visible object, be it an image, idol, portrait or picture. (Though it may be of Guru Nanak even).

Thus speaks Guru Nanak:

“He who hath created thee and hath created the whole  
universe  
By the Guru’s Grace dwell thou on Him, the Infinite  
Lord.”

Guru Nanak further says:

“O man dwell on *Nam*—The All-Pervading Divine Spirit.  
And thus return to your Eternal Home with honour and  
Glory.”  
(*Guru Nanak : Rag Malhar*)

Guru Nanak, thus maintains, that in order to be re-united with Reality, one must contemplate upon Formless God only. To a question asked by the master Yogis, the Guru answers:

“With mind intent upon One Lord, within and without  
The Fire of ‘Trishna’ shall be quenched by Guru’s  
Grace.”

(*Guru Nanak : Sidh Gosh*)

Guru Angad (Guru Nanak the Second) confirms that those who meditate on the Eternal Lord, Who is fearless, without enmity, above birth and death, and is All-Pervasive, are not only themselves emancipated, but they rescue many others from this net work of illusion.

Guru Amar Das, the Third Master, assails those as stupid and mis-guided, who meditate on false gods. He applauds those who concentrate on the attributes of One Eternal God alone in the following verses:

“Dwell thou on the One Lord, O ignorant mind  
That thou may be ferried across in no time”

*(Guru Amardas : Besant)*

Then again:

“O mind contemplate thou the Lord's Name  
That thou attainest glory at the Lord's Court.  
And art rid of all thy sins of ego and I-am-ness”

*(Guru Amardas : Shlokas Varan to Vadhik)*

In the above quotation, the Guru urges upon his followers to meditate on One God only; for that alone will result in the elimination of the evils of ego and out of sinful life restore the human spirit to the path of righteousness leading to Reality.

The Fourth Master, Guru Ram Das defines the object of meditation in the following verse:



that he was constantly meditating on the vision of One Eternal God only. He says:

“I cherish the Timeless Being and contemplate on Him  
alone night and day.”

*(Guru Arjan : Rag Maru Var)*

Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth Divine Master describing at length a large varieties of deities worshipped by countless devotees of different faiths and beliefs emphatically exhorts his followers to concentrate only on the Eternal Supreme Lord. He says:

“Some believe in Brahma, and consider him the Creator  
of the universe

And some recognise Shiva, as the incarnate of God.

Some others claim Vishnu, as the master of the creation  
Whose remembrance, they believe, absolves one from the  
sins,

But be thou on guard against such futilities,

O simpleton!

For none of them will avail thee in the end.

Meditate, therefore, on the Eternal Supreme Being,

Who ever was, still is and shall ever be.

*(Guru Gobind Singh : Sawyas)*

Defining the qualities of Khalsa, its founder, Guru 'Gobind] Singh, forcefully assails any thought of duality practised in any form, and lays a clear mandate for the Sikhs to devote their entire energies towards the worship of One, Eternal Ever-Awake Divine Light, the Perfect One, Who is without an equal. He says :—

Inspired by devotion  
And awake to the Divine Light,  
Singing perpetually  
The Name of the Lord,  
Having no faith in any  
Except the one Lord,  
Absorbed in His Splendour  
Absorbed in His love,  
Even amid error  
Never believing  
In fasts and tombs,  
Temples and idols,  
Or in anything but  
Devotion to the One :  
Caring not even for  
Compassion or charity  
Not for penances,  
Not for bathings  
In the holy places,  
Not for the Yogi's  
Self-maceration :  
Such a child of Light,  
Such a paragon,  
Such a complete man,  
Fully enlightened  
In heart and soul  
To be of the Khalsa  
Is worthily deemed !



## THE WAY TO GOD

**W**E have already seen that the purpose of human life is to seek God, to find Him and to be united to Him.

Now, the questions arise : Where is God ? How to find Him ? What is the Way to Him ? What stands between Him and the man ? How can that hurdle be removed ? Who will give us the Light and show the way ?

“He, who hath realized not the Quintessence yea, the  
Self,

All his deeds are Blind, False and Vain.

Sayeth Beni : “One must Dwell upon God, by the Guru’s  
Grace,

For, without the true Guru, one knoweth not the Way”.

*(Bhagat Beni : Prabhati)*

The Guru gives answers to all these questions for the guidance of the seekers of Truth.

- (1) “O ! give me, give me some intelligence of my Beloved.  
I am bewildered at the different accounts I hear of Him.  
O happy sisters, my companions, say something of Him.  
Some say that He is altogether outside, far above the  
world;  
Others that He is altogether contained in it.  
His colour is not seen; His features cannot be made out :

O happy sisters, tell me truly.....”

“He lives in everything; He dwells in every heart;

Yet He is not blended with anything; He is separate entity.

(Guru Arjan : Jaisri)

Why dost thou go to the forest in search for God ?

He lives in all, is yet ever distinct; He abides with thee too

As fragrance dwells in a flower, or reflection in a mirror,

So does God dwell inside everything;

Seek Him, therefore, in thy heart”.

(Guru Tegh Bahadur : Dhanasri)

In the Sikh Scriptures, God is described both as *Nirgun* or Absolute and *Sargun* or Personal. Before there was any creation, God lived absolutely in Himself, Formless and Self-Centred. When He made Himself manifest, He first formed Himself into *Nam* or Divine Name, and beside Himself, He made nature, which He sustains with His own presence in it. The universe and the objects in it are real, not simply true as opposed to false but real as opposed to imaginary and delusive, as conceived in Vedantism.

The world and all things in it are not creation of a dream but veritable existences set in their places with a real purpose and governed by His real laws.

For attaining God-consciousness, we must come into contact with *Nam* or the All-Pervading Divine Spirit. This will lead us to the vision of God and will transform our life. *Nam* heals the

wounded soul, wounded by sin, or by grief or by distress in life. *Nam* is unfailing in its effect.

“O, If thou findest *Nam*, thy mind is satiated  
 Without *Nam*, cursed is the life  
 O could I meet such an enlightened person  
 Who would reveal to me the Lord, the treasure-house of  
     all virtues.  
 I would be a sacrifice every bit to him  
 Who enlightens my mind with *Nam*.  
 O my Love, I would live by keeping my mind intent upon  
     *Nam*.  
 O my True Guru reveal to me the secrets of *Nam* (Pause)  
*Nam* is the priceless jewel that the Perfect Guru hath  
 If one dedicates oneself to the service of the True Guru,  
 He bestows on one the jewel of *Nam*  
 That sets alight the mind.  
 Blessed is the fortunate one who goes to meet the Guru”.

(*Guru Ram Das : Sri Rag*)

A body is dead without life and life itself is dead without *Nam*. *Nam* is the Elixir of Life without which life would be a blunder and purposeless waste. There is no spiritual awakening, no peace, no joy without *Nam*. Realization of *Nam* is the essential condition for a true and fruitful life.

“Only he lives, in whose heart God dwells  
 Nanak others do not live a true life  
 And without that life, they go dishonoured  
 They waste what they eat and drink”.

(*Guru Nanak : Rag Majh*)

“Unhappy, most unhappy are those  
 To whom is not granted the Sweet Savour of *Nam*.  
 Hard is their lot after death

Who have not sought refuge with the True Guru,  
 Nor have come to the congregation of the saints  
 Accursed be their lives,  
 Accursed be the hopes they set on living”.

(Guru Ram Das : Rag Asa)

That being so, what, first of all, is *Nam* ?

Finite man cannot directly realize the Formless, Infinite, Ineffable and Incomprehensible God. God Absolute is Transcendent and above nature.

“The Supreme Lord is unperceivable  
 Say how is one to attain Him ?  
 He has neither form nor feature and is unseen.  
 Then how is He to be dwelt upon ?  
 He is Formless, Immaculate and Unknowable  
 Then what attribute of Him shall one sing”.

(Guru Ram Das : Sorath)

It is only when He deigns to reveal Himself by taking some manifest form that creatures can become aware of Him and that too to a limited extent. That manifest form into which *Ik-Onkar* (yet unmanifested God) formed Himself is *Sat Nam*--The Eternal, All Pervading Divine Spirit. Thus *Nam* is the first manifestation of the unmanifested.

The whole universe flowed out of *Nam*. He is all that *is*. All things were made by Him ; and without Him was not anything made that was made. Matter and soul emanated from Him. It is *Nam* that

ultimately leads back the manifest into unmanifest One.

“*Nam* sustains and controls all beings  
*Nam* supports the universe and its regions”.

(*Guru Arjan : Sukhmani*)

Thus God has two aspects——Impersonal (*Nir-gun*) and Personal (*Sargun*). The Impersonal God is unfathomable and beyond human reach. But when He reveals Himself in His creation, He becomes related and Personal and also conceivable though to a limited extent. *Nam* sets alight the devotee's mind. *Nam* is the key that admits us into the Kingdom of God. And the Kingdom of God is within us.

As one's mind comes in touch with the holy *Nam*, and is illumined, one begins to make progress in the upward direction and slowly, the aspect of God changes within and lifts up the devotee from the Personal to the Impersonal. Then the man rises above the three *gunas*——three modes of matter, above time, space and causality. All distinctions of name, form and colour disappear. The sense of past, present and future is lost. All boundaries, limitations and barriers are broken and the individual soul becomes one with the Supreme Soul, as water is blended with water, the light is blended with Divine Light

“But the whole world goes about repeating the Name of  
 God

And yet God is not realized by any one”.

(*Guru Ram Das · Var Bihagra*)

“Sayeth Kabir there is a secret in uttering God’s Name,  
Whereas every one utters His Name and attains nothing  
But those who know the secret  
Do attain Him and wonder at His glory”.

(*Shlok—Kabir*)

Therefore, it has been said :—

“I am a sacrifice unto my True Guru  
Who hath revealed the secret  
And hath set alight *Nam* within me”.

(*Guru Ram Das—Jaitsari*)

“All repeat God’s Name, yet He is not attained  
But when through the Grace of the Guru  
God comes to reside in the mind  
It is only then that one’s life becomes fruitful”.

(*Guru Amar Das—Gujri*)

Though man is born in the very image of  
God, as the Guru says :—

“O man thou art divine in essence  
Discover thyself and whence thou hast come”.

And yet man knows not whence he came and  
he knows not whither he is going. In this wilder-  
ness, which we call the world, many an aeon is  
lost——we are born to die, to be reborn again and  
again and this weary wheel of coming and going  
continues.

Man has a profound relationship with God,  
but his petty self does not allow him to see the  
Truth. This is what is called the veil of egoism.

“Within one’s self is the Nectar  
 But the ego-centric knows not its taste  
 As the deer, beguiled by ignorance  
 Knows not the musk within, and wanders about”.

Yet there is an eternal yearning for God lying dormant in the human heart. Man’s desire cannot be satiated and he can have no peace unless he discovers his antecedent. A flower will not attain its fragrance and beauty, if plucked from the plant. The water cut off from the main stream to form a separate pond will become dirty and polluted. So with the man, he meets a similar fate if he remains cut off from his source. He must, therefore, seek and find God within him.

• It is only when by great good fortune we meet a Reflected Ray—from the Divine Master, an echo of Gurbani comes to us, the news of the Bridegroom. We prick up our ears and hear—then, follows again a deep draught of sleep under the spell of ‘*Maya*.’

The Guru-given word comes again and again, and on some lucky day, the day we feel the pangs of separation: we feel a vacuum in our soul, some void. We come to the Master in Guru Granth sahib; for that is the Living Flame come down from the Heaven, contained in Words, vibrant with New Life. The Master speaks to us, the Master prescribes a sure remedy for the fatal disease.

“The Guru hath, unravelled one mystery;  
 That there is but one Benefactor of all creatures  
 May I never forget Him.

This is *Simran*, this is repetition of Divine Name”

(*Guru Nanak—Japji*)

Live in the presence of the Lord from dawn to dusk and from dusk to dawn. This practice of living in the Holy Presence is called Nam-Simran, that rhythmic-remembrance, which knows no abatement, which heaves like a surge of holy love, in order that the potentiality in man may awaken and come into real life. It is in this love-green simran that the Lamp is Lighted, and up wells joy spontaneously. It is the life in full glow that the Guru kindles with his touch. Duality yields to consciousness of unity of all life and in consequence Truth, Love, Freedom and Goodness flow continuously from the man of simran, as naturally as light and warmth from the sun.

To practice *Nam*, therefore, means to practise the presence of the All-Pervading Divine Spirit by keeping Him ever in mind with love and devotion and by singing His praises or dwelling on His excellences. Simran literally means loving remembrance. The *modus operandi* is the repetition of His Name. Simran—aching remembrance : “Without Him my soul takes fire and is reduced to ashes.” says Guru Nanak, “The tongue that is not lyrical in repetition of His Name, better it be cut out in ribbons, bit by bit.”

But of what use is it to turn the beads in my hands, if my heart, like the earth, turns not around its Sun, in its eternal journey unbroken by a step?

Simran is the planetary march of our life round a higher life of Heaven. The heart-beats, the breath, the tongue, the pores of skin, the mind,



the footfalls, all must repeat. "Hail Master, Hail Holy One, Lord Thou art Wonderful !"

With a rosary made of beads of love, of tear-drops for all, not as a priest with beads, but as the rosary ourselves, obedient to His Will; we live as the children of the Divine Song. True, to turn our beads in our hands may mean nothing, but to turn our beads may be all.

As the planets revolve round the central sun, so the faith-born people, Guru-born, revolve round the Guru, the Impersonal-Personality that lives for ever. This planetary constellation of living, song-life men, emitting the music of the very spheres, is the Society of Remembrance, of Simran of the Beloved. Such are the disciple—saints of Simran. The earth tries to run away from the sun but it is sun that holds it on. The disciple is under the centrifugal forces of individuality but the Guru holds him on under the centripetal forces Himward. This inspiration of Simran is not of the individual, but of the cosmos. The Guru's universal brotherhood fosters salvation from the selfishness of the inner forces of man, which tend to draw him towards individually "I-am-ness."

It is the entrance of Brotherhood, that life blossoms into the universal life of spontaneous service, cosmic service. The flower that grows on its stem sends its fragrance all around. The man who enters into the spirit of Simran immerses himself in the service of the Guru—the Impersonal-personality. Bhai Kanhaiya said, "I see Thee in the

wounded! Let me nurse the sick, for he that lies in bed and groans, appears to me so strikingly to have Thy image in him. O Love, Service is my love of Thee. I serve driven by Him. Not of my will but of His Will shall all service be. 'Naming Him' Loving Him is the True Service."

It is not in the churches, nor in the temples but in man's own shrine of the heart within, where he, having cast off all outer clothes of piety and impiety, of evil and of good, enters into the pure nudity of soul, and sees face to face His Personal God.

There is a lotus blooming in the shrine of the heart of the man of Simran. His eyes like those of live bees, hover within. A million flowers may call them away, but they cannot rise out of there. Have you seen the eyes of Beethoven? They cannot fly, satiated, drinking the Light of the Lotus, they are dead yet alive. Simran is thus, living inwardly, with open eyes, yet seeing naught of the outside.

Men who do not repeat His Name physically by the tongue, think of many things through all the hours of the day. They have waves of wandering thoughts in their minds. Why put the sand and rubbish of unnecessary and unproductive worry into the cog-wheels of the mind and be so uneasy about life. Learn to de-clutch your mind and soul from the burden you have to carry. That can only be done by Simran. Simran is grafting ourselves on to the Roots of Life. And by the Grace of the Guru, it grows in spite of ourselves. It blossoms in

spite of ourselves. Thus, one thing is needful, all else is added unto us :

“O when I acted upon the Guru’s word  
I found the Jewel of *Nam* in my very mind  
And with this my body was refreshed and my mind calm  
and cool.

(Pause)

My hunger was appeased, my desire was satiated  
And all cares and worries were forgotten.  
For on my forehead was the hand of the Perfect Guru.  
With the conquest of my mind  
I conquered the whole world.

Within my heart I feel fulfilled  
And my mind now wavers not.  
The Guru-given Treasure is inexhaustible.  
And of it there is no limit  
O what a wonder ! Harken ye, O world  
The Guru hath revealed such a mystery:  
He lifted the veil and I stood face to face with the Lord  
And I lost all feelings of otherness.

Wonderous it is, and ineffable  
He alone knows it who tastes it  
Says Nanak, Truth dawned on me  
When I treasured in my heart the Guru-given *Nam*.

(Guru Arjan : Rag Gauri.)

“O man ! All other ‘*Rasas*’ (things of relish) thou tasteth  
Sate not thy thirst even for a moment.  
But if thou ever tasteth the Heavenly Elixir (*Hari-Ras*)  
Thou shalt be simply wonder struck.  
O my dear ! taste thou the savour of Nectrine-*Nam*  
For, with this alone thy desires shalt be satiated”.

(Guru Arjan: Gauri translated.)



## CONCEPT OF GURU IN SIKHISM

“In this materialistic age *Nam* lieth hidden,  
Though the Lord filleth all hearts.  
The Jewel of *Nam* becometh manifest  
In the hearts of only those  
Who resort to the Guru’s Refuge.”

(*Guru Amar Das : Parbhati*)

“Thou canst not worship thy Lord  
Except through the Guru’s Word.  
O man ! quench thy Fire of desire with the help of the  
Guru,  
And fill thy mind with the Word and rend asunder  
The veil of ego that hides the Truth from thee.”

(*Guru Nanak : Sri Rag*)

“Let no one in the world remain in doubt  
That it could ever be possible to be saved without the  
Guru.”

(*Guru Arjan: Guari*)

THE life of the spirit really begins when the rain of His Mercy falls on man. No spiritual regeneration is possible unless the Guru kindles the disciple’s soul by a Spark of Life. All worship in temples, churches and mosques is but futile without aspiring for this Glow of Life. It is the phenomenon in a spiritual world, as cosmic as the revolution of the solar system. If this Jewel-of-Nam is not embedded in one’s consciousness, life is but one of sorrow, misery, distress and death. But when it

glows within one's soul, life is one of joy, prosperity, freedom and immortality.

That being so, we must have a right concept of the Guru in Sikhism. For he shows the Light and the Way. Nay, he is the Light and Way himself.

“Were a hundred moons to appear  
Were a thousand suns to arise  
With so many lights  
There would still be utter darkness  
If there were no Guru.”

(*Guru Angad : Asa-di-Var*)

They, who are smug in their own wisdom and do not cherish the Guru in their minds, can never have a spiritual life. Unless the Guru Sur/arises in the firmament of man's soul, he remains spiritually blind and his soul consciousness is petrified. None has ever realized the Truth without the Divine Master, none without him. For God has enshrined Himself in the Guru and has manifested and declared Himself through him.

When godliness suffered an eclipse in India and falsehood overshadowed the land as a thick veil of darkness and the Moon of Truth could be seen nowhere, than the All Pervading Divine Spirit that lives for ever, unfolded and manifested its attributes in human form, in order to awaken in human mind the consciousness of God, the Creator. And through this awakening and illumination to inspire and lift the erring humanity back to God.

When the Impersonal God (*Nirgun Brahm*) manifested His attributes in person, He was called Guru Nanak.

“*Jot rup har ap Guru Nanak kahayo*” (Swayas Bhattan)

Guru Nanak came to show the True Way to humanity, out of darkness of superstition and formalism. He came to cure the sickness of soul.

Guru Nanak was born free from self-centring instincts, had no traces of egoism in his mind and he was in perfect tune with the Divine Will and could see the things in their true perspective. He was rooted in Truth. Nay he was Truth himself. He was radiantly innocent, sinless by nature, pure of thought, pure of word and pure of deed.

The Guru Impersonally (in his *Nirgun sarup*) resting in God and His Wisdom, was a perfect channel for the expression of the Divine Will for the understanding of human intellect and through him, God poured forth into the world, Divine Word (Shabad) or Gurbani pregnant with sweet Love and Light (Prem and Gyan), a veritable Elixir of Life.

In Hinduism, the word ‘guru’ applies to a teacher, particularly to a religious teacher or to one who interprets the scriptures or to a learned Brahman. Such gurus are human and not divine. Learned persons and scholars may not require any guidance from such human gurus or teachers and

they can dispense with such gurus at one stage or the other.

But in Sikhism the term Guru has a special meaning. It is used for the Divine Master, the Spiritual Enlightener, in the sense of the Cosmic Personality-Impersonal. The Guru is really the Divine Spirit that manifested itself in Guru Nanak and his successors and not their bodies. But when this spirit reacts on an individual, and transforms him to a new life, it becomes his Personal God and the consequent inspiration and companionship of its presence becomes continuous. So there is a great technical difference between the Brahmanical man-worship as guru-worship and the Sikh ideal of Guru. Guru Nanak always takes care to say Sat-Guru.—The Guru that lives for ever and never dies.

“My True Guru lives for ever and ever  
No birth can envisage Him  
No death can take Him away  
He is Immortal Being and He is All-Pervading”.

*(Guru Ram Das : Rag Suhi)*

That is the Sikh ideal of Guru consciousness.

Thus when a man comes in contact with the Impersonal-Personality of the Guru in the inner realm of his soul, then all of a sudden his innerself bursts forth into a new universe of white blossoms. Just as spring is to the trees, so is the advent of the Guru, an inspiration to the human race. And it is worthwhile to put up with a thousand winters for the sake of one day of blossoming as in spring!



Guru is the highest and most perfect being who brings about this spring of inspiration to human race.

The Satguru The Master-Spirit is He,  
Who freely imbibes the Light  
Direct from the spirit.Divine,  
The soul of the Common man,  
When comes in touch with Master-spirit  
He begins to sing the glories of the Lord  
And by His Grace,  
Realizes the spirit Divine

(Slok—xviii Sukhmani)

This is what, according to Sikhism, makes the Guru. He is superb as he possesses divine attributes and is born rarely and only when God so ordains. He is God illumined and is in constant communion with the Eternal Reality. He is an inspired being with a God's message for mankind and comes to fulfil His purpose on earth. In this limited sense he is God-like.

It must, however, be borne in mind that the True and Perfect Guru cannot be a common occurrence.

For thousands of years, the Narcissus weeps  
For the light in its eyes,  
It is rarely after ages, that  
There appears the Divine Enlightener  
In the Garden of the World.

(Dr. Iqbal)

But nowadays the lofty institution of Guruship has been reduced to a mockery by some fake gurus, pretenders, hypocrites and cheats. Some clever and

unscrupulous self-seekers, nowadays, are amassing great wealth by posing themselves as gurus and are exploiting simple minded and spiritually ignorant people. Such fake gurus are appearing here and there like mushrooms. But the Divine Guru, God-illuminated personality, impersonally ever abiding in Him, flows out in charity towards Heaven and upon earth. He accepts no remuneration for the peace of mind he gives. He unites man with God. His activity is based on love and spontaneous sympathy. He is sweet, meek and perfect in self-abnegation.

“The True Guru is the one whose very presence provides  
bliss

Mental doubts depart and the supreme state is attained.”

*(Guru Ram Das: Gauri)*

The term Guru, according to Sikh faith, is applicable only to the Ten Masters—Guru Nanak and his Nine successors and to Guru Granth Sahib, the embodiment of the Divine word. God showed forth His Divine Reality through the Ten Gurus, in order to recall to humanity the purpose of life on earth and in such a way that their human minds could understand and be inspired by the Guru personality.

The Ten Gurus (Guru Nanak-Guru Gobind Singh) were on a Divine Mission. The same Divine Spirit manifested itself in ten bodies as ten rose flowers have the same fragrance or ten gems have the same sparkle.

All other so called gurus are human beings. They only quote and interpret the scriptures according to

their intellect and abilities, but they cannot impart the Spark of Life nor can they give Inner Glow.

only ten gurus were divine and only they could give spiritual enlightenment.

#### **Humility and Piety of the Guru:**

The Guru, putting on the God-given robe of humility and piety, moves about in the world under the guise of a simple man. The Divine Spirit stooping down to earth takes up the form of a servant and draws humanity Godward through himself. Thus the Guru, saviour of humanity, in whose hands God has given all things, resting in deep humility considers himself the servant of the Lord and speaks of himself as such. He bears all the hardships of life. He prays to Heaven through thick and thin and in so doing is fulfilling the perfect Will of God.

"Hell to those who call me God,  
I am an humble servant of the Lord,  
There is absolutely no doubt about it."

*(Guru Gobind Singh)*

But in the Sikh scriptures when the Guru is spoken of as God Himself, it apparently refers to the Divine Spirit (*Jot*) manifested in the persons of Guru Nanak and his successors. So Guru is the

(*Jot*) the Divine Spirit, manifested in the person of Guru Nanak, and not the body of Guru Nanak. Though blessed was the body too in which the Divine Spirit was enshrined.

According to the Sikh belief, God does not descend on earth and does not assume human form as the Avtar theory in the Hindu literature portrays. Such ideas as God can be born as human being would even raise the Gurus' anger:--

"Burnt be the tongue that says the Lord takes birth and undergoes death."

(Guru Arjan : *Bhairon*)

The concept of God in Sikhism is as under :—

He is formless, colourless, markless,  
He is casteless, classless, creedless,  
His form, hue, shape and garb  
Cannot be described by anyone.  
He is the Spirit of Eternity.  
Self-Radiant, He shineth in His splendor

(Guru Gobind Singh)

"There is but One God,  
The Eternal All Pervading Divine Spirit,  
The Creator, the Supreme Being,  
Without fear, without enmity  
Immortal Reality,  
Unborn, Self-Existent,  
He can be realized through the Grace of the Guru."

(Guru Nanak : *Jappi*)

In the following quotations the term Guru evidently refers to the 'Jor' the Divine Light that lives for ever and was manifested in the form of Nanak and his successors. Guru Nanak was Guru because he was embodiment of God's light.

- (1) "The great Guru Nanak was the embodiment of God's Light  
From him was Guru Angad, Quintessence merged  
in Quintessence.
- (2) "The Light of Formless God was manifested in the  
form of Guru Amar Das,  
And this Divine Light illumined the world through  
him."
- (3) "For salvation of the world,  
Ram Das Guru passed on the Divine Light to Guru  
Arjan."
- (4) "Evidently God, the Supreme Lord, hath enshrined  
Himself in the heart of Guru Arjan."
- (5) "Guru Arjan, as the embodiment of God's Light,  
Pervades the earth, the sky, the nine continents  
Sayeth Mathra, there is no difference between  
Guru Arjan and God.  
Guru Arjan is evidently the very presence of  
God."

*(Swayyas Bhattan)*

- (6) "My True Guru lives for ever and ever,  
No birth can envisage Him,  
No death can take Him away.  
He is Immortal Being. He is All-Pervading."

*(Guru Ram Das: Suhi)*

- (7) **"The Guru is All-Powerful**  
**The Guru is Himself the Formless Lord.**  
**The Guru is Highest, Unfathomable and Limitless**  
**Ineffable is His praise; what can a sayer say?"**  
*(Guru Arjan : Sri Rag)*
- (8) **"No one is at par with the Guru : I have searched the**  
**whole universe through."**  
*(Guru Arjan : Sri Rag)*
- (9) **"The Guru and God are One**  
**He is the Divine Master, Pervadeth all and is**  
**everywhere."**  
*(Guru Arjan : Sri Rag)*
- (10) **"The Guru is Beneficent, the sanctuary of peace**  
**The Guru is the Light of the three worlds.**  
**He is the Eternal Being.**  
**O Nanak, who believes in Him with his whole**  
**heart**  
**Attaineth peace."**  
*(Guru Nanak : Shalok. Var Majh)*
- (11) **Guru's glory cannot be described, For, the Guru hath**  
**merged in the Transcendental Lord and is at one**  
**with Him.**

The attributes of the Guru are synchronised with those of the Supreme Being. Transcendent Lord, implying thereby the inseparable unity of the two seemingly separate entities.

**(The body like the sea is full of invaluable gems and jewels)**  
**I churned the sea of body and lo**

Within it a wonderful thing of utter beauty shone.

I saw that the Guru was God,

And God was Guru Himself.

Nanak, there was no difference between the two.

(Guru Ram Das Rag Asa, Chand)

The above quotations evidently refer to the Divine Spirit that illumined Guru Nanak's mind. All these verses have a bearing that the Guru's mind was illumined by God and he had assumed the attributes and virtues of God and so there was no difference in the character of God and that of the Guru. Guru is God-like in that sense, Guru is Divine because by the Grace of the Lord, he was illumined by the Spirit of God. There was a display of the Divine attributes through human personality when that personality was chosen and made completely free of ego-centric tendencies and was completely identified with the Divine Will. It was a rare phenomenon intended to fulfill God's own purpose on earth.

"The servant of the Lord is like the Lord Himself,

That he is in human body makes no difference.

Just as a wave rises in water

And then it merges into water, water blending with water."

(Guru Arjan: Maru Sohle)

There is ever living presence of the Guru in the Spiritual world. Meeting the Guru the personification of God, in the subjective realm within us is the whole spiritual enlightenment in a glance. When the Guru the impersonal (Joti sarup, Nirgun) manifests himself in our soul consciousness, he merges out as our personal God, and thereby in-

pires us with his continuous and enduring companionship.

*"Gur mere sang sada hainale"*

*"Safal murati gurdev sawami, sarab kala bharbhure  
Nanak gur Parbrahma Parmeshar sada sada jahure."*

"Fruitful is the Lord's vision; The Master, the All Powerful God of gods. Our transcendental Lord, the Guru is ever present."

Gurbani tells us :

*When the True is met with, one meets with the  
Perfect God.*

*"Satgur milia tan pura parai"*

"On meeting the Guru, Nam dwells in the mind and all hungers and wordly craving cease."

The Gurbani directs the disciples thus to pray :

*"Har Jio Kirpa karo tum piare  
Satgur data mel milavo har nam devo adhare."*

"O Lord : Do me the favour as to cause my meeting with the beneficent Guru, so that I may be blessed with Nam by him

*"har har satgur purakh milavo gur miliai sukh hoi ram"*

"O God lead me to the True Guru the pursha, meeting with whom I abide in bliss". (All these quotations refer to the Guru Impersonal-Personality and Not to Guru Granth Sahib).

*"bin satgur ko nam na pae parbh aisi banat banaie"*

Yea, without the Nam no one there is that is emancipated and without the True Guru none findeth the Nam for such is the scheme ordained by God. There is but One God and He can be realized through the Guru that lives for ever and ever.



*"Har har daya karo gur melo purakh niranjan soi ram"*

**"O God : be merciful and kind and lead me to the Guru, who is indeed the immaculate, detached person.**

*"gur paras ham loh mil kanchan hoa Ram joti jot milai kata garh schia ram"*

The Guru is like the philosopher's stone  
And we are like the iron ore :

O God, grant that we may come in touch with the Guru and be turned into gold.

The Guru gives us the Divine Light

The Human Life then becomes beautiful and Godly (IV Guru Nanak, Tukhari).

"Sabd guru nu sadi namaskar hai, we bow to shabad Guru. Guru Granth Sahib (Embodiment of Brahm Gyan) brahm gian (nu sadha parnam) is the Gyan Guru. Shabad Guru, is not the body of the Guru as is being wrongly interpreted.

- a) Guru Granth Sahib is Gian Guru.  
Gian is eternal, that lives for ever and ever, but body (deh) is transitory, short lived and subject to change.
- b) O Saints, believe this body to be transitory God who dwells in it should be considered Eternal. (Guru Tegh Bahadur Rag Basant Hindol).

*"Gyan guru atam updesahu gurbani is jag mai chanan"*

Gurbani is the Light that shows us the way of Life — — the Path of Truth and Righteousness that we have to follow.

Gurbani is surcharged with Divine Spirit. It sings the glory of Guru — God who stands in the back-ground. It has been put into the mouth of the disciples. We should shower the flowers of this lyric on the Divine Bridegroom, when we get into His presence.

Gurbani leads us to the Guru-Purkh. It is a means to an end. The end is Guru in Spirit (Nirgun). Gurbani has the potency to lift man from depth of ignorance to illumination. It gives us wings to rise up in the Heaven within and touch the "Rainbow".

The Divine word is the voice of the Guru ever calling us to spiritual awakening. It is the call of the Heavenly Father to his children, reminding them that it is time to stop play and come home—offering to wash and cleanse their dusty faces and mudsmeared hands and feet with the Soap of Shabad. Those who heed this call are purified in mind and body, receive and drink Nam Ras—the Honey of Life which the Divine Master gives them. Henceforth they are brought under the loving care of the Father, their faces glowing with the bliss of innocence and love.

*"hari ke jan satigur satī purkha, binao karau gur pas ham kire  
kīram satigur sarnai kar daia nam pargas"*

O God-Man, my Sat Guru, the True purusha I make a supplication before thee. I am a humble worm, have sought thy refuge, mercifully bestow on me the Light of God's Name O True Guru.

(All these quotations of the gurbani refer to the Guru-God Impersonal-Personality and Not to Guru Granth Sahib).

*"dā dan mangat jan dijai, mai pritam dihi milae  
andin gur gopal dhiai, ham satigur vitahu ghumae"*

O Guru, Bless me with Thy Mercy and lead me on to my Lord Yea, I dwell on Thee ever O Guru-God and I am ever a sacrifice unto Thee.

*"kar Prasadu gurdev"*

It is the living Jot Guru the conscious super Being (chetan hasti), who can bestow Grace and Not Guru Granth Sahib, Lord I beseech Thy Grace, it is through the Grace of the Guru that God is realized.

Thus when a man comes in contact with the Impersonal personality of the Guru in the inner realm of his soul, then all of a sudden his inner-self bursts forth into a new universe of white blossoms: Just as spring is to the trees, so is the advent of the Guru, an inspiration to the human race. And it is worthwhile to put up with a thousand winters for the sake of one day of blossoming as in spring :

Guru is the highest and most Perfect Being who brings about this spring of inspiration to human race.

*“lakh khushia patshahia je satigur nadar kare”.*

He on whome the Guru's Grace is bestowed, he gets millions of joys, and happiness as of Kings.

*“Guru, the Divine Master is abounding and fruitful Being,  
With all powers endowed.  
Being Supreme, Infinite Spirit,  
Nanak, Guru, is for ever and ever in presence”*

*(Guru Arjan : Bilawal)*

There is an ever living presence of the Guru

Gurbani is surcharged with the Guru's Spirit. Gurbani—the Divine Word enlightens and inspires the seeker of Truth. The disciples of the Master live not by bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord. The Gurus Word is the voice of God arousing the soul of spiritual effort.

The Master is still before us in his Khalsa. Khalsa is he, who day and night constantly abides in Ever-Awake Divine Light of Consciousness and in whose mind the Full Moon of the Divine Light shines forth. The Man is still the centre of life. The Gurmukh (saint) reminds us of the Father's

life and he speaks with confidence. Beware : Let not the Guru given spark of Life become dim-keep up the Flame of Nam and let not the Flame die out : Love for the Man of God is very love of God. This common thing is precious beyond value.

This is what Jewellers know. My soul : rise awake and say "Hail Master : Hail Holy one. Lord Thou art wonderful —Waheguru, Waheguru, Wah-jio.

In the glorious presence of the Guru, every one wrapped in wonder and worship utters God's Name. He asks us to say "Wahe-Guru" Hail Lord, Thou art Wonderful (Subhan Allah). Thou ! Thou ! Thou ! O Lord ! "I-am-ness" (*Khudi*) or egoism has no place where the Guru abides. All must praise God and sing His glories.

The disciples in the early stages of their spiritual life usually wished to remain very close to the Guru in person. They were fascinated by his spiritual beauty and were attracted out of themselves by the glory on his face and celestial bliss that was around him. The disciples had profound love and faith in him. They saw in the Guru, the Divine Spirit living before their very eyes in flesh and blood. In him '*Nirgun* and '*Sargun*' (Impersonal and personal) both were reconciled. In him they had dear, loveable, concrete world of shape and form, of individual and personal existence. So this clinging of the disciples to the outer form

is easily intelligible, but it clearly had its own weakness. For the disciples, as they were to grow in the things of the spirit, it was necessary for them to pass on to a still higher stage. There was, so to say, a 'weaning' process whereby this clinging to the concrete evidence of the senses passed on into a realization of the Guru's inner presence in the realm of the soul.

The Guru appearing once rarely in ages and fascinating the disciple consciousness, vanishes in the eternal background of the inner spiritual Infinities. The disciples thence forward remain restless without that presence or sense of presence. The devotees who cherish ardent love for the Lord, ever yearn for the holy vision of their Beloved, but the human eyes are of the earthly matter ; while the Lord is the Light of the Heaven ; how can these physical eyes see the Divine Light ? Yet those who live the Lord, with their minds full of longing, ever crave for his holy 'darshan'.

*O Long awaited Eternal Reality:  
Unquenchable is my thirst for Thee  
Pray Manifest Thyself, though once my Lord;  
In a tangible garb of Shape and Form.  
For at my forehead thousand of salutations  
Are restlessly quivering ready to bow down  
At Thy Feet and pay their homage*

(Dr. Iqbal)

Our relationship with the Guru is not confined to the body alone, but it is beyond the physical relationship. It is a communion of the soul with

the soul, the spirit with the spirit. He is the life of our lives, ever abiding with us, our constant companion and comforter. In his '*Jot-rup*' he is luminous as the sun. The sun-rise and sun-set are relative expressions on a lower plane. In reality the sun never rises, nor does it ever set. It is ever present. So is the Guru, being at-one with God, he is omnipresent, perpetual and immortal in spirit (*Jot-sarpui*). The Guru—God's Light is eternal, everlasting, ever-shining, and all-pervading. True in the past, True at present and True for ever and anon.

All hail, All hail unto him—the Master-Spirit, Wonderful Lord. Wahe-Guru, Wahe-Guru, Wahe-Jio !

## GURBANI—THE DIVINE WORD

**T**HE All-Pervading Divine Spirit, that manifested itself in Guru Nanak, passed on from him to Angad. So to say Nanak assumed the body of Guru Angad. Afterwards the same Nanak was called Amar Dass. This happened the same way as one lamp were lit from another. And this transformation went on from one person to the other up to Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth Guru Nanak. They were all one, as ten flowers have the same fragrance or ten gems have the same sparkle. The same Divine Spirit manifested itself in the Ten Masters.

“The Light was the same,  
The Way and Mode were the same.  
The Master had merely changed the body.”

(*Satta Balwant: Var Ram Kali*)

The Guru, embodiment of the Divine Spirit (*Rabbi-Jot*) and being at-one with the Eternal Reality, was the perfect channel for the expression of the Divine Will. It was God's revelation that became the Guru's Word. Gurbani is the voice of God to us arousing the soul to spiritual effort and leading it to God consciousness and salvation.

Thus God, Guru and Gurbani are identical terms meaning the same thing. God was speaking



to humanity through the Guru. Guru Nanak himself confirms it and so do his successors :—

“O Lalo! As comes the Divine Word to me,  
So do I narrate it.”

(*Guru Nanak: Tilang*)

“Yea, I’ve said what Thou, my Lord,  
Inspired me to say.”

(*Guru Nanak: Wadhans*)

“I say what He commandeth me to say.”

(*Guru Nanak: Suhi Chhand*)

At another place he says :—

“Nanak revealeth the True Word.”

(*Guru Nanak: Tilang*)

Guru Amar Dass, Guru Ram Dass and Guru Arjan further confirm the same Truth that it is God’s Word that is being revealed through the Gurus.

“From God springs ambrosial Gurbani  
The exalted Guru narrates and preaches the same to  
the world.”

(*Guru Amar Dass: Majh*)

“O, what a wonder! Glory be to the Word,  
For, it hath come from God, the Lord,  
Yea, nothing can be equal to the Divine Word.

(*Guru Amar Dass Shaloka, Var Gujri*)

“This Word comes from Him, who hath created the  
World.”

(*Guru Ram Dass: Gauri*)

“Ye, the Sikhs of the Guru, take the Word of True Guru  
as True,  
For, the Creator Himself hath put it in the Guru’s  
mouth.”

*(Guru Ram Dass: Gauri)*

“This Word that hath come from God,  
It dispelleth all woes and worries.”

*(Guru Arjan : Sorath)*

“I speak but what is the Will of the Lord,  
For, the Lord’s devotee narrateth the Word of the Lord.”

*(Guru Arjan: Sorath)*

Thus Gurbani is God’s Voice and is, therefore, always new, whole and indestructible. Gurbani—the Divine Word, possesses such a wonderful influence on men that it has infused and stimulated life in many people and will continue to do so for all times to come. Gurbani has the potency to lift man from the depth of ignorance to illumination, leading to the achievement of the highest stage of manhood.

## KIRTAN

It is a matter of common experience how martial music stirs up men to arms, sad dirges bring tears to the eyes, loving strains bewitch the

mind, doleful songs strike the mind, solemn notes inspire awe and reverence. When the hymns of the holy scriptures are sung in accompaniment with musical instruments and in proper tune, it is called "Kirtan" : and this acts as a soothing balm for the lacerated minds.

The Devotional music of Gurbani is called Kirtan. The effect of Kirtan in imparting Divine Light is seen in congregations where the verses are sung in Measure and Rhythm (Rag and Ghar) prescribed for the Shabad. This devotional Music and Rhythm find their way into the secret recesses of the soul. They inspire the one to rise to a domain of feelings where the Spiritual Light and life is radiated and Gurbani is infused in the mind of the listeners. Devoid of this celestial music, life is barren, prosaic, and dull.

Modern life with all its multifarious activities, economic struggle, social exploitation, results into imbalance, dis-satisfaction, ill health, and boredom. It leads to depression, abnormal growth of hippy culture and meaninglessness of life. **The present day unstable equilibrium in life can be cured by living the mode of life taught by Guru Nanak.** Devotional music of Gurbani, whereby spiritual relaxation and harmony is achieved by subconscious awareness of man's bearing of life in the Cosmic existence.

Kirtan plays a vital role in this age of materialism. Kirtan acts as a healthy tranquiliser that declutches the mind from the stress and strain of day-to-day living and brings joy and bliss. A change comes in the scale of values of materialism which loosens its grip on the mind. The man while engaged in action remains free from the bondages of fruits of action. Kirtan moves the subconscious mind of the listeners to new vistas of Cosmic Life.

Celestial music makes the soul ring in harmony, the heart sings the praises of the Lord, attuned in His Glory. Kirtan is a call from God to the soul and ecstasy is the answer of the soul to the call. It ultimately results in the merging of the soul in God (Turia-Avasta, above time, space and the three modes of the matter).

The Guru's hymns are sung to fill the disciples with the peace of God when they are faint and exhausted. Gurbani is the living fountain from which hundreds quench their thirst. It is like a snow-fed river in which we can dip our soul. This cools down all fire of passions and we feel refreshed. Guru's songs give us joy, they vitalize the whole of our spiritual being, elevate it and ennoble it. We meet the Master in his hymns and kiss his Lotus Feet. Nanak pours the infinite of

his soul in his lyrics, which is then poured into the hearts of the disciples who then participate in the Infinite. The Guru so completely identified himself with the sorrow and sufferings of the people that he gave expression to their agony and their sufferings and degradation in words of self **affliction**. The world mind became his mind, the world-soul spoke through his soul. The Master thus made prayers for the humanity in the name of himself in the first person and said, "Come ye little children, let us pray to the Lord."

"Mother O, How shall I know my Lord?  
 My mind is enveloped  
 By the darkness of ignorance and undue attachment.  
 The whole life I wasted away,  
 Deluded by doubt my mind was never in poise,  
 I was ever lured by vice,  
 And my mind remained defiled by sin.  
 I never joined the society of the holy  
 And sang not the praises of the Lord.  
 Sayeth Nanak: 'O Lord, I am devoid of all merit.  
 But bless me Thou with Thy refuge.'"

*(Guru Tegh Bahadur: Sorath)*

The Divine poetry is thus disciple poetry. Words have been put in the mouth of the disciple for prayer and praise. We love to recite the Guru's song and repeat them over and over again. So profound has been the influence of the constant repetition of the divine lyric that its pure cadence has dissolved in the very blood and bones of our people.

A remarkable change was brought about by the Gurus in the concept of Guruship, which no one else had done before them. They said the Divine Word, that had been revealed through them, was identical with the Guru :—

“The Word is the Guru,  
And the Guru is the Word,  
The Guru’s Word is full of life-giving Elixir,  
Whosoever shall obey, what the Word commands,  
Verily he shall get salvation.”

*(Guru Ram Dass: Rag Nut)*

“Through the Guru’s Word,  
Man comes to know God, the Lord.  
And through Gurbani, he is imbued therein.”

*(Guru Nanak: Sri Rag)*

“Through the Guru’s Word, do we attain to the Lord  
And Love of God sprouts within our heart.”

*(Guru Nanak: Sri Rag)*

“Burn be ye, O my ego and **worldly** love,  
May my avarice and my pride be consigned to fire.  
Nanak, by deliberating over the Word,  
The Lord, Treasure-house of all **excellences** is attained.”

*(Guru Nanak: Sri Rag)*

“No one can get emancipation without following the  
Guru’s Word.”

*(Guru Nanak: Bilawal)*

“Through the Guru’s Word,  
One is Ferried across the Sea of Life.  
And knoweth the One God alone  
Here, there and everywhere.  
Yea, the One, who neither hath colour, nor sign  
And is not an illusion but Reality.”

*(Guru Nanak: Sidh Goshat)*

“Above every thing is the contemplation of Guru’s Word:  
I say not of aught else; for, all else is but dust.”

(*Guru Nanak: Ram Kali*)

“The Word is the Guru, deep and serene  
Without the Word, the World goeth about like mad.”

(*Guru Nanak: Sorath*)

“Yea, my mind was convinced through the Guru’s Word  
And I attained to my God, the chief support of my  
vital breath.

This Way the Bride meeteth her Spouse,  
And becometh the beloved of the Divine Bridegroom.”

(*Sri Rag: Guru Nanak.*)

“I enjoy the real peace and abide in equipoise  
For, through the pure Word, the illusion on my mind  
has been cast away.”

(*Guru Nanak: Gauri*)

“The Word is the True Guru and True Guru is the Word;  
And the Word revealeth the Path of Salvation.”

(*Guru Ram Dass: Kanra*)

“Nanak representeth: “If anyone reflects on the True Bani  
with devotion, he attains salvation:

There is no other ‘Jap’ and ‘Tap’ (penances) equal to it.  
Gurbani is supreme and covers everything.”

(*Guru Nanak: Dhanasri*)

“He, who yearns for the vision of God,  
Yea, he should love the Guru’s Word  
Verily, verily ~~Sa~~ye~~th~~he will attain to the Lord.”

(*Guru Nanak: Malar*)

“The True *Bani* is sweet-Nectar  
Whosoever **sucked** it in, he finds the door of salvation.”

(*Guru Nanak: Malar*)

From the above few quotations, I have given, it is abundantly clear that the Gurbani or the Divine Word is Gyan Guru that enlightens the human mind. Through Gurbani the disciples realize the ever abiding inner presence of the Guru, an Impersonal-Personality in the Realm of the Soul.

The Guru thus became Impersonal in character, above name, form, time and space, and without any human limitations. The Guru is now a permanent entity. Guru Nanak's physical form and that of his nine successors could perish but the Guru in the form of Divine Spirit and the Word (Gurbani), has become imperishable, and is available at all times and everywhere.

“The Guru is everywhere and now always with me.”

(*Guru Arjan: Rag Asa*)

“My True Guru is for ever and ever.  
He is not born, nor does he ever die.”

(*Guru Ram Dass: Suhi*)

The disciples thus experienced the true meaning of the ‘Guru’s coming and how such an inward ‘coming’ in the Realm of the Soul, brought with it an abiding peace. But still the language used in Gurbani (Guru’s hymns) of ‘Coming’ and ‘going’ ‘*Charn Kanwal*’ (the Lotus Feet), ‘*Gur-Murat*’ (Guru’s Being), and such other words as these, are mere metaphors and similes. All these symbolic expressions refer to the Divine Spirit in the inner realm of soul.



For ten generations, different aspects of Sikh religion were given shape to, under the living guidance of the Ten Perfect Divines, the aim being to produce a class of God-conscious people, who would operate in the mundane world of phenomena, with the object of transforming and spiritualizing the life of earth into a higher and more abundant plane of existence. The God-conscious man is animated **with** the intense desire to do good in this world.

Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth Nanak, after inaugurating the Khalsa Brotherhood—Global Fraternity of Knights of Honour, fully awakened to a new and inspired life, blending the undaunted courage of the soldier with the enthusiasm of a fully enlightened devotee; and after re-kindling the dead soul of India with the Spark of Life by a flash of his sword; he ascended to Heaven. But before he physically left this planet, he said to his disciples "I give you now these Divine Songs. The incorporated sacred hymns will be the voice of the Guru to his disciples. The Divine Word—Gurbani, is the Guru and now I name this Embodiment of the Word, as Guru Granth Sahib."

The Spirit of the Guru (*GurJot*) abides in the mystic person of Guru Granth Sahib. Guru Granth Sahib is Man with Divine appointment. Guru Granth Sahib is embodiment of Brahm Gyan. We bow to Gyan Guru.

The Master also promised to live in Khalsa. Guru himself declared :—

“The Khalsa is on my own image  
And I reside in the Khalsa.”

Khalsa is he, who day and night constantly abides in Ever-Awake Divine Light of Consciousness and in whose mind the Full Moon of the Divine Light shines forth.

We are to seek the company of the Khalsa. Love for the Man of God is very love of God. This common thing is precious beyond value. This is what Jewelers know. My soul ! rise, awake and say: Hail Master, Hail Holy One, Lord Thou art Wonderful !



It is a well recognised fact that individual progress cannot be achieved apart from Society. This is particularly true of spiritual progress, which is promoted through '*Satsang*'—Congregational devotion and worship. In the vast majority of cases, spiritual awakening is brought about through the company of the holy. The Lamp of Divine Light is lit by contact with a spirit aflame. A soul in human bondage learns to be free and to soar heavenwards from a liberated and a highly evolved personality with magnetic attraction. It is for this reason that the Guru emphasises the value of '*Satsang*' and of keeping company with a holy person or persons who have achieved spiritual enlightenment.

It is gratifying indeed, and of great significance that there are even to-day present among us, the Sikhs, personalities of high spiritual attainments, contact with whom can light the Lamp of Divine Love in the hearts of poor mortals like ourselves and they can direct us to the path that leads us to the Abode of Truth.

The Society of the Holy is thus the means of destroying egoism and helps one in freeing oneself from evil passions. One may try to cure oneself of egoism during the whole life but it cannot be removed without the influence of the Company of the Holy.

“The dirt of egoism of ages which has soiled the soul,  
Will be removed only in the Society of the Holy.

Just as iron floats when tied to timber  
 So will one cross the Ocean of Life by following  
 The Guru's Word in the company of saints.

*(Guru Ram Das :: Kanra Ashtapadi)*

"O friend, tell me how I might cross  
 Through the difficult Ocean of *Maya*;  
 If God in His mercy gives me the fellowship of the  
 Truthful  
 Nanak, *Maya* cannot then touch with its destructive  
 influence."

*(Guru Arjan: Gauri Bawan Akhari)*

So every Sikh always prays to the Lord :

"O Lord, be so merciful and kind  
 That I pass my days in the Society of the Saints;  
 For, they who forsake Thee  
 Are born to die over and over again  
 And they never get rid of worries and grief."

*(Guru Arjan: Shlok: Var Ram Kali)*

Those who came in close contact with the Gurus were transformed to veritable angelic beings. But as I have said above, the means used were not miracles, but the Word and Sangat or Holy Association, which means the work of transformation was carried on by imparting Word and by bringing the erring man into fellowship with the Guru and his associates.

By and by local Sangats or holy associations were established at different places under the leadership of the authorised inspired persons. The Guru was the central unifying personality. The love that

existed between the Guru and the Sikhs was more intense than had ever existed between most romantic lovers of the world. But the homage paid to the Guru was made impersonal by creating a mystic unity between the Sikh and the Guru on the one hand and the Word and Guru on the other. The only form of worship was the meditation on and singing of the Word. The Sikh assemblies also acquired great sanctity, owing to the belief that the Spirit of the Guru lived and moved among them. They began to assume higher and higher authority, until collectively the whole body called the Khalsa Panth came to be regarded as an embodiment of the Guru.

If we read the Sikh history aright, the Sikh community would appear as an organised unit and to have undergone a course of discipline in the hands of the Ten Gurus until its character was fully developed and the Guru merged his personality in the body of the Sarbat Khalsa thus reared.

Now after ascension of Guru Gobind Singh, the Personality and the Word were separated. The Khalsa was invested with the Personality of the Guru and the incorporated Word in Guru Granth Sahib became the Gyan Guru. That is, in simple words, the Khalsa was to be the Guru in future, not in supersession of the previous Gurus, but as authorised to work in their name ; and it was invariably to guide itself by the teaching of the Gurus as found in the Holy Granth and keeping in

regard the discipline imposed by the Guru at the time of administering Amrit to the Sikhs.

When we talk of the Guruship of the Khalsa Panth, Sangat or Society, we thereby mean rule of the Holy Spirit that pervades humanity at its best. As I have already said above, Khalsa is he, who day and night constantly abides in Ever-Awake Divine Light of Consciousness and in whose mind the Full Moon of the Divine Light shines forth. But most of us Sikhs today are mere candidates for Sikhism. Only such persons as have attained the Khalsa state of mind really form the Khalsa Panth. Just as contact with the Guru ennoble the spirit of the disciples, the influence of Sadh Sangat or association of the Khalsa have the same effect on those around them.

The influence of such a Society of the inspired persons on the character of its associates is but quite natural. The most important factor that helps in the direction of individual progress, is the result, of contact and contagion. To imbue the mind of a society with ideas and belief, three expedients are employed——affirmation, repetition and contagion. Those who have seen the Sikh Sangat know what an important part these factors, especially the influence of contact, play in the formation of the personality and character of its members.

There is a repetition of the sacred Word to keep one firm in one's faith, there is music and

singing of the Guru's hymns to inspire one with love and worship of the Holy ; there are practical examples of service and sacrifice to imbue one with the spirit of selflessness. All this leads to make the Sikh Sangat or Khalsa Panth as representative of God and Guru.

It is for this reason that a Sikh is exhorted again and again to keep himself in constant touch with the Sangat. It keeps the inspiration fresh ; it helps in overthrowing the recurring influence of *Maya* and egoism, and finally, it leads to collective attunement of the individual and the community with Universal Spirit and the Universal Mind.

“Trees which grow near Sandal are perfumed like Sandal.  
If any of the base metals be touched by the Philosopher's  
stone,

They turn into gold,  
The river streams and rivulets  
Which fall into the Ganges, become the Ganges.  
So the society of the Holy saveth sinners  
And washeth away the dirt of their sins.  
It saveth countless souls from hell  
And associates with itself hundreds of thousands of the  
lost :  
The Holy see God in their midst”.

(*Bhai Gurdas : Var*)

Sai Sangat or the Society of the really enlightened or inspired person is not available without good fortune. It is a blessing bestowed on mankind in the Grace of God :



"It is by great good fortune  
 That one meets the society of the God-loving ;  
 Unfortunate people knock about in doubt and darkness.  
 The society of the truthful is not available without good  
 fortunate ;  
 Without such society, man lives in dirt."

(Guru Ram Dass : *Majh*)

"Those who have found the Society of the Holy,  
 Are dyed crimson with the love of the Supreme Being ;  
 They are freed from all fetters and chains.  
 With devotion they worship the Lord,  
 Their hearts are in perfect union with Him ;  
 Their eyes are pleased with the sight of the Lord,  
 Their tongues praise the Lord in all His manifestation.  
 With the Guru's Grace, their thirst is extinguished.  
 In the love of the Lord, their hearts feel fully satisfied.  
 The servant serves the Lord in His glory  
 Who is the Primeval Being, the Highest of the High.

(Guru Arjan : *Basant*)

## SEVA——Unselfish Service

**G**OD'S creation is an expression of Himself. The bondage begins with the self-hood (*Hau-main* or *Khudi*); liberation begins with the breaking of the bondage of egoism. The first step on the path, according to Sikhism, is to be useful to others and render them unselfish service. To do good without any motive or reward is the starting point in our religion. Religion is inspiration of love. The Beloved is in His people, and the service of the people is the service of God. And it is through service that love is realized.

We are never selfish when we are in love. 'And all those that are of God and knoweth God, loveth. He that loveth not knoweth not God. For God is love.'

Love means little unless it is translated in action, so the Sikh cannot rightly remain inactive. He must engage himself in the service of mankind, while also following the path of earnest meditation. He is expected to seize every opportunity of helping his fellow-beings and serving them in any way he can, without yearning for anything in return. To do this, therefore, he must have no selfish desire ; his mind must be free of greed and attachment to power or riches or name and fame and he must have a truly humble heart.

The Gurus made service a part of our daily worship. Gurdwaras were converted into a sort of laboratories where service was actually practised as a matter of daily routine in order to prepare, in the long run, for service of the whole mankind. Sweeping floor or cleaning of utensils in the Guru's kitchen (The Temple of Bread) were intended to teach the art of true service which needed unassuming devotion and humility.

Sikhism does not isolate God from man and religious worship from material well being. So with this concept, the Sikh temples or Gurdwaras are made multi-purpose institutions. They feed the hungry, lodge the travellers, educate the young and ignorant, shelter the destitute and even provide a meeting place for social intercourse.

Sikhism incorporates within the system of its fundamental values *Deg*, *Tegh* and *Fateh*. *Deg*—kettle to supply food to the needy. (It stands for economic adequacy). *Tegh*—sword. (It stands for organizational strength to resist tyranny and oppression.) *Fateh*—implies confidence in victory. To have a firm faith of victory of the righteous cause.

It is, therefore, customary for the Sikhs to feed the hungry, to nourish the sick and to physically help the disabled. They enjoy supreme bliss in helping others. They sacrifice their own comfort and share their earnings with the needy. Through

the teachings of the Gurus and practice of 'Nam-Simran' men got rid of all kinds of superstitions. They became fearless. All barriers of inequalities and differences between man and man got eliminated. Thus the men's minds were enriched and nourished with the love of God, so that they did not entertain any class feelings or that of duality.

Such people came and laid their selfishness under the Feet of the Master and engaged themselves in his 'Seva'. For this life of inspiration is the Master's gift. To serve the people is to serve the Master.

Here is a religion that makes love and labour the common property of man. The true renunciation of the individual can only come when man lives elevated above the sordid details of right and might, and finds better occupation in love. In spontaneous renunciation of his little self in the love of the Lord, he freely distributes and shares the fruits of his labour, almost sub-consciously. From a self-less and God conscious person goodness flows naturally and spontaneously as fragrance from a flower without knowing, without asking. We have the love of God, the basis of service, so it automatically becomes unselfish. The Sikh is to act, he is not concerned with the result. The fruit of action is not his motive and not his concern.

It is worthwhile to mention here that mere social service, that is not based on the love and devotion to God is never unselfish and unattached.

“The world is smeared with the dirt of ego and duality  
If one tries to cleanse it off at the holy places, the  
impurity goes not.  
If thou practisest the Way of Action (Karm Yoga)  
Thy impurity sticks to thee even more.  
By learning, these impurities leave thee not.  
Yea, ask thou, any man of letters  
O my mind seek refuge in the Guru that thou becomest  
pure.

Yea, thou findest Peace only in the Divine Word,  
Take then the Name of the Lord in thy heart".  
(Guru Amar Das:—Sri Rag)

**“O whom shall I serve ?  
What shall I meditate upon ?  
I go and ask the True Guru.”**

**“Submit to the Will of the Guru-God  
And lose thy self-conceit from within thee.  
This is the service and meditation  
That pleaseth the Lord  
Then only *Nam* will be enshrined in thy mind.”**

(Guru Amar Das Sri Rag)

"What is the service and worship of the True Guru?  
To abide by the Divine Will and to obey His  
Commands."

*(Guru Ram Das : Shalok var sarang)*

"To act up to True Guru's Word  
This indeed is true philosophy and true service."

*(Guru Arjan : Sri Rag)*

"Serving the True Guru,  
*Nam* is enshrined in the mind  
Yea, meeting with the Guru  
The Lord's Name is cherished.  
All other loves are illusory and false."

*(Guru Amar Das : Bilawal)*

"O ye men do as the Guru bids you to do  
And, reflecting on the Word, come into the House of  
Poise."

*(Guru Amar Das : Bilawal)*

"O man, this is how thou art Ferried Across  
Contemplate thy God, dying to thyself  
And ridding thyself of the sense of duality."

*(Guru Arjan : Maru)*

"Dye thy mind in Guru's Word  
And thy tongue in the love of God.  
Without the True Guru,  
No one has ever realized God.  
Reflect on it in thy mind and see  
The filth of ego-centric is not washed off  
Until he comes to have affection for Gurbani in his  
heart.

O my mind walk in the Way of the True Guru  
Thus thou shalt abide in thy own Home,  
Drink Nectar and get at peace of Lord's presence."

*(Guru Arjan : Sri Rag)*

He, who exerts himself and performs good actions, without a thought of reward is truly a holy man. Whosoever is absorbed in the service of love and the hymning of God, praises and has no desire for the fruit of his labour, is indeed, a lotus-like soul in the world's ocean. He, who cherishes the *Nam* in his heart and beholds the Lord reflected in all others and adores Him every moment of his life, is verily a saint, capable of saving others too.

From a hope of rebirth on the earth  
A lily blooms, fragrant and pleasant  
A lotus with its roots in mud,  
Its leaves resting delicately  
On the rippled waters of existence,  
The white petals spread to the free world  
And its golden heart pointing to the Self,  
The centre of life  
From a man of wisdom and love,  
Thus arises the double lotus, Divine Man,  
Shining with exalted splendour.





The fact is that the way of religion, as shown by the Guru, is not a set of views and doctrines, but a way of life lived according to a definite model. It is based not upon rules and laws, but upon discipleship. In the career of the disciple, the personality of the Guru is all along operative, commanding his whole being and shaping his life to its diviner issues. Without such a personality there would be no cohesion, no direction in the moral forces of the society, and in spite of a thousand kinds of book knowledge 'there would still be utter darkness'. There would be no force to connect men with men and then with God. Everybody would 'exist for himself in moral isolation, 'like suprious sesame left desolate in the field with no master to own them'. It is the Guru who removes all barriers, of caste and position, of colour, country and creed set up by men among themselves, and gathering them all unto himself unites them with God. In this way foundations are laid of a society of the purified, who as an organised force strives for the good of the individuals as also of whole mankind.

Religion, as taught by the Guru, is a force that not only ennobles individuals but binds them together to work for nobility in the world. Organization is a means of enlarging the possibility, scope, and effectiveness of this work for preserving the ideal and projecting it on from generation to generation.

As soon as a Sikh boy or girl grows up and is able to read and understand the writings of the Gurus and comprehend the articles of Sikh faith, he or she, as the case may be, is administered *Amrit* or Sikh Baptism. *Amrit* is really '*Hari Nam*'. There is no other *Amrit*. In this ceremony of initiation, the Guru puts the Seed of *Nam* in the soil of the heart of the recipient through the selected Beloved Love. *Amrit* is given, sanctified by the dagger and is given in an open congregation, called *Diwan*, in the presence of *Guru Granth Sahib*. The hidden Spark of Life that is imparted at that time, gives the disciples, the starting point or initial capital to earn the Wealth of God's Name.

The seeker of Truth, thus initiated, is enjoined to keep the Divine Spark of Life ever bright and unflickering by *Nam Jap* of '*Gur-Mantar*'—"*Wahegaru, Waheguru*" (Hail Lord! Thou art wonderful) and then by *Simran* by heart. *Guru Ram Das*, our fourth Guru, has laid down the daily routine which a Sikh is to follow :—

"He who deems himself a Sikh of the Guru  
Should rise at an early hour before dawn  
And meditate on *Nam*—the All-Pervading Divine Spirit.

He should bathe and make an effort  
To cleanse his mind in the inner Tank of Nectar.  
He should repeat the Name of the Lord  
As taught by the Guru.  
This will wash away the stains of sins from his mind.  
Then at day break, he should sing the hymns of the  
Guru.

And throughout the busy day,  
**He** should practise to live consciously in presence of  
 God.

He, who constantly remembers God, the Lord  
 Such a Sikh is indeed dear to the Guru.  
 The seeker of Truth on whom the Lord bestows His  
 Grace

Receives the gift of *Nam* from the Guru.  
 Nanak seeks the dust of the feet of such a Sikh,  
 Who himself consciously repeats God's Name  
 and inspires others to do the same".

The discipline prescribed by the Guru at the time of administering Amrit is briefly as follows:—

A Sikh must wear 5-Ks.

(1) '**Keshas**'—unshorn hair like the ancient sages (Rishis) as a pledge of dedication to the Guru.

'Kesha' is the first token of Sikh faith.

The fair and beard is a part of the personality of the Khalsa. Khalsa is a Spiritual Holy order. It is not a military or civil organisation, as some misinformed people take it. The personality of the Sikh with fair and beard reflects his outlook of life. It symbolises the Khalsa Ideal.

(2) '**Kanga**'—a comb to keep the hair clean.

(3) '**Kara**'—a steel bracelet on the wrist, symbol of dedication to the Divine Bridegroom.

(4) '**Kachha**'—or an underwear to denote chastity.

(5) '**Kirpan**'—or sword for self-defence and a symbol of dignity, power and unconquerable spirit.

A Sikh is to observe the four Taboos.

(1) Not to remove hair from any part of the body.

(2) Not to commit adultery.

(3) Not to use Tobacco in any form and to abstain from other intoxicants.

(4) Not to eat 'Kutha'—the meat of an animal killed by slow degrees, as they kill in the Mohammedan way

(5) A Sikh is further enjoined to recite the five Sikh prayers daily

(a) A Sikh is never to worship stocks and stones, idols, statues and pictures, tombs and *Samadues*. He is not to fix his *Dhyanam* on any visible object. He is not to worship any god or goddesses except One God, the Formless, the Creator and Immortal Lord, not subject to birth and death

(b) He is not to observe any fasts, rites and rituals of either Hindus or Muslims. He is not to believe in penances and mortification of the body. He is to pay no heed to places of pilgrimage

(c) A Sikh must earn his living by honest and fair means. He shall not beg alms. He should share the fruits of his labour with brother workers and thus give away one tenth of his earnings for Dharmic purposes

**KESHAS** The Master sprinkled Amrit on our Keshas. He touched our hair and blessed us, we nestle the fragrance of his touch in our tresses. So every hair of the Sikh is sacred for all times. Those who love the Guru and have a regard for him and crave to be accepted at the feet of the Master, must adhere to the Keshas and other Ks. The absolute truth of the matter is that there is no substitute for love and devotion in the realm of spirituality. Divested of these two essentials, the relation between the Sikh and the Guru is snapped.

It may be observed that behind these 5-Ks, now lie our noble tradition and inspiring history that carried us triumphantly through many a crisis. They gave us a sense of

unity, moral prestige and religious zeal that resulted in many shining deeds of heroism and sacrifice. They have enabled us to up-hold and keep aloft the Guru's Ideal as distinct from the old Brahmanism. Assuredly, without the hair-idea of Guru Godind Singh, there would have been no Sikh song, no life and no inspiration to day. But for them we would be extinguished, absorbed and lost in the mass herd.

*KIRPAN* : As said above, every Sikh is to wear it. It is a gift from the Guru. It is not a mere instrument of defence. It is an outer symbol of the inner spirit that knows no defeat, no disappointment ; the personality that is unconquerable in its hope in its spiritual radiance. Guru Gobind Singh says "I will make my one stand against a lakh and quarter". The presence of a great spiritual man fascinates and over-powers millions.

When Guru Gobind Singh imparts the Spark of *Nam* and initiates, a single man becomes strong enough in spirit, to stand against over a lakh and a quarter of the foes of Dharma. Each disciple, deriving inspiration from the Guru, has his soul filled with such wonderful heroism. And Kirpan is a symbol of dignity and power.

*KARA* : Similarly Kara (Iron ring) comes to us as a gift from the Master, our personal God, who is dearer to us than our dear and near ones. He gave all these 5-Ks as gifts to us and they are sacred. We carry them lovingly as signs of His remembrance, as souvenir.

## GOD REALIZATION

**T**HE Kingdom of God is within us. But Divinity lies deep in our beings. We do not perceive It, as our vanity and self-conceit obstruct our vision. Just as light of a lamp cannot be seen through a smoky and blackened chimney; so God's Light cannot be seen through the veil of 'Ego' though all the while God is within every one of us, One-in-all, and all-in-One.

Human body is the true temple of God. Great indeed is man. He lives in a God-made temple along with God Himself. His very consciousness (Spirit) is just an Infinite Point in the fathomless ocean of Divine Life, Universal Consciousness. Between God and human soul (Jive-Atma) there is no other obstacle but that of veil of the mind. If this veil of ego, I-am-ness, were to stop fluttering in the breeze of desires, the conscious mind is illumined and can take in directly, the Cosmic Energy, Psychic Energy, from its very source. The finite mind is constrained by time, space and causation, and is incapable to comprehend the Infinity.

It befits man to worship God in the God-made temple in which He resides. To realize Him one has to enter into the laboratory of the human body, which in the truest sense is the temple of God. Real worship and devotion are purely internal and mental

processes, unconnected with and independent of any and everything outside the human frame. Outside the human body, all places of worship are made of water, clay and stone.

The true Thought, or Supreme knowledge, is ingrained in the depths of the conscious mind of all beings. It is latent and inherent and appears in the form of a search after Everlasting Peace and Supreme Joy. When this awakening comes to man from within then he lives a pure life by thought, word and deed (action). This pure life supplemented by constant loving remembrance ("Simran"), "Kirtan" and "Ardas" of the Lord sows the seed of devotion to the Lord and the "Divine Will" is revealed unto him by communion with the Holy "Naam", the Divine "Word".

The seed of "Naam" blossoms and he attains the Super-conscious State. Self-realization is more a matter of inner experience and revelation than of comprehension and apprehension on the intellectual level. With Self-realization all distinctions of names and forms, past, present and future; time space and causation; all boundaries, limitations and barriers are broken. The individual realizes his true Nature, Known as Self-realization (merger of "jivatman" with "Parm-Atman"), as water is blended with water, the light is blended with the Divine Light. It is only now and here and in this very life that he aspires to see the end of his journey and the fulfillment of his aim of life, for which he has come on this planet.

Why do you go searching in the Forests ?  
 All pervading, yet always detached from all,  
 God dwells with you,  
 As the fragrance dwells in a flower, and an image  
 dwells in a mirror.  
 God dwells within you in the same manner.  
 Search for Him in your heart, O brother.  
 The Guru enlightens you to realize that the same  
 One (God) pervades within you and without.  
 Sayeth Nanak, without realisation of the soul-  
 realself, the dirt of doubt is not removed.

(Guru Tegh Bahadur, Raj Dhanasri)

The curtain of 'I-am-ness' separates jiv-atma  
 individual soul) from Parm-Atma (Supreme cosmic  
 soul).

The Guru says:-

- (1) *'Antar Alakh nah jai lakhia wich, parda Haumain*  
*paii*  
 God, The Incomprehensible, is within us but not  
 perceived;  
 For the screen of 'Ego' hangs in between.

(Translated)

- (2) *'Haun Haun bhit, bhai hai bichon'*  
 Man's ego, self-assertion is like a veil that obstructs  
 the vision

(Guru Arjan; Sorath translated)

- (3) Through ego or self-conceit, one attaineth not to  
 God  
 Even if one uttereth the Gospel or readeth it aloud  
 to others

(Guru Nanak: Ram kali translated)



- (4) Where 'I-am-ness' is, Thou art not  
Yea, when Thou art within me, then 'I' am not.

*(Guru Nanak Shloka Var Maru translated.)*

- (5) O ego! the cause of our coming and going (birth  
and death)  
O the root of sin!

*(Guru Nanak : Sidh Goshat)*

Lust, anger, greed, worldly attachment and conceit all these impurities are the off-shoots of 'ego'. So long as these sway our minds, we behave, more often than not, like brutes. Our impurities not only fill our cup of misery but also bring untold sufferings upon others. It is this ego which gives man his individuality and leads him to action. But it also ties him down to the world and sends him on a round of births and deaths.

The questions arise: Where from comes this ego? How shall we get rid of it? How shall we become truthful and how shall the veil of falsehood be rent asunder?

**The Guru says:-**

- (a) "Ego comes to man from the Will of God  
It is a great disease, but there lies also a remedy  
for it.  
When God sends grace to man,  
He begins to practise the word of the Guru  
Says Nanak, hear ye all,  
This is the way to cure the disease".

*(Guru Nanak: Asa di Var)*

(b) "Ego lays snares that bind the man  
 "Sarkh, it is but *Nam* that liberates him"  
*(Guru Arjan Gauri Bayan Akhri)*

(c) "How then to attain the Truth?  
 "How can the veil of falsehood be rent asunder?  
 "Coming by the Divine Will only,  
 "Truth is ingrained in our being"  
*(Guru Nanak Japji)*

(d) "Without devotion to the Lord,  
 "Doubts and delusion cannot be removed  
 "Mystery has been revealed by The Guru"

All human beings, we are endowed with the power of removing all these impurities of our minds that stand in our way to realize the presence of Divinity within us.

Now the seeker of Truth is likely to ask:

"What is the Divine Will or His commandment following which the curtain of ego be lifted and we can work our way for the unfoldment of divine consciousness within us?"

Our conscience has been blighted by sin, or by the truth of our past deeds, in the life and previous lives we, therefore, cannot directly pick up and receive the Divine Command. Our minds have gone out of tune with the Infinite. So in order to realize the concept of *Hukam* (Command), we must approach the Guru or the Divine Master, who is pure of heart, sinless by nature, clear of conscience and at one with God, the Lord.

*"Jah lag Hukam nah bijhta tab lag dukhia  
 Gar mil Hukam pachania tab hi to sukhia"*

"So long as the man does not realize the commandment,  
 he suffers,  
 But when after meeting the Guru,  
 The Commandment is realized, he acquires peace and  
 comfort."

"O my mind seek ye the True Guru  
 By serving whom the pain of death and birth would end,  
 There should be no scope left for any doubt  
 And the ego may be burnt up with the Guru's Word.  
 The veil of falsehood in between be removed  
 And Truth may abide in the mind.  
 Nanak saith the True Guru is met by good fortune  
 May the Lord's Grace be upon man."

*(Guru Amar Das Sh'ok Var Wadhans M.4)*

The Guru gives us the concept of the Com-  
 mandment as under:-

(1) *"Eko Nam Hukam hai Sat-Guru dia bijhai jio"*  
 To contemplate upon One Nam is the Lord's  
 Commandment.  
 It has been made clear to me by the True Guru.

(2) *"Simir Gohind man tan dhur likhia"*  
 Lovingly remember the Lord, this is the Com-  
 mandment.  
 It is embedded in the very core of human  
 personality.

(3) *"Mal kuri Nam utarian, Jap Nam hoia sachiar"*  
*(Guru Amar Dass: Var Ram Kali)*

It is the love of Nam that removes the dirt of  
 falsehood  
 By repeating His Name, man becomes truthful.

- (4) "*Sift salahān tera Hukam rajain*"  
To praise and eulogize the Lord is the Commandment.
- (5) "*Tis ka Hukam bujh, sukh hoi, Tis ka Nam rakh  
kanth proie*"  
Realize the Divine Commandment and be happy  
Lovingly remember Him always in thy mind.
- (6) "*Hukam manio Guru kera gawo sachi Bani*"

(Guru Amar Dass: Anand Shaib)

Obey the command of the Guru :  
Sing ye the True Word.

- (7) "*Bin Sabde bharam na chukai na wichon haume jai*"  
Without the Divine Word, the illusion cannot be  
removed,  
Nor can the ego go from within.
- (8) "*Ahagbud bandan pare, Nanak Nam Chhutar*"  
Egoism lays the snares that bind the man  
Nanak, it is the *Nam* that liberates the man from  
bondages.

(Guru Arjan: Gauri Bawan Akhri)

- (9) "*Har ki bhagat hina nah sansa chuke Gur eh bhet  
batawe*"  
Without devotion to the Lord, the doubts and  
delusion of *Maya* cannot be removed  
This mystery has been revealed by the Guru.

So by praise (singing of Guru's hymns in praise of God), by prayer (Guru speaks for us and puts words in our mouth and teaches us how to pray) and by *Nam Simran*, the mind is washed clean of the dirt of sin sticking to it, and Love of God is awakened in the heart. *Nam* acts like a.

balm that heals the wounded soul, wounded by sin, grief or distress in life.

As this transformation is effected through the Grace of the Guru—the Divine Enlightener, we must first bow to him.

“All hail unto the Guru—The Divine Enlightener  
That was in the beginning,  
Even before time **had** its brith.  
All hail to the Divine Spirit,  
That existed in the past infinity of ages,  
All hail unto the Master Spirit, who is,  
And shall ever and ever be Truth Eternal,”

(*Guru Arjan: Sukhmani I—1*)

“I am a sacrifice to my Guru a myriad times a day,  
Who made angels of men, and yea, without delay”

(*Guru Nanak: Asadi Var*)

- (1) Blessed is the tongue that utters the Lords praises  
through the Word  
For, through the Perfect Word is met the Perfect  
Lord.

Yea, fortunate are they who praise their Lord  
They who praise their Lord, look beauteous  
And the world cometh to worship them, yea:  
It is through the Lord's grace that one is blessed with  
the Lord's praise;  
And one attaineth glory at the Lord's gate.

(*Guru Amar Das: Shlokas*)

- (2) The God-wards praise their Lord ever,  
But the self-wards eat the poison (of Maya) and die.  
For, they love not the Lord's praise,  
And they pass their days in woe.

The God-wards drink the Nectar, yea:  
 And, praising their Lord, they are attuned to the  
Lord  
 Nanak they who praise their Lord, are the pure  
ones,  
 And to them is revealed the mystery of the three  
worlds.

- (3) Glory be to the True Lord, whose Name is Nectar  
sweet.

They, who serve the Divine Master are blessed:  
 Yea, I am a sacrifice unto them,  
 Glory be to the Lord, the Treasure of Good  
 But he alone hath His taste who is blessed.  
 Glory be to the Lord, who pervadeth the land, the  
seas,  
 Through the Guru is He attained.  
 Say ye all, O Devotees, 'Glory be to the Lord',  
 For, the Perfect Guru is pleased with the Lord's  
praises.  
 Nanak: he who praiseth his Lord with the whole  
mind  
 Him the couriers of the 'yama' touch not.

- (4) Glory be to the Lord, who is unfathomble and deep.  
 Glory be to the Lord, the Giver of Merit, of poised  
mind  
 Glory be to the Lord, who pervadeth all.  
 Glory be to the Lord, who sustaineth all.

(*Guru Amar Das: Shloka*)

- (5) Great is Thy Glory, for great is Thy Name.  
 Great is Thy Glory, for Thy Justice is true,  
 Great is Thy Glory, for eternal is Thy Seat.  
 Great is Thy Glory, for Thou knowest our speech.  
 Great is Thy Glory, for Thou divinest our inner  
thoughts.

Great is Thy glory for Thou givest unasked,  
Great is Thy Glory, for Thou art all-in-all.  
Nanak: all Thy doings one cannot tell;  
For what is and will be, is all in Thy Will.

The life of the spirit is not achieved in one step. The path to Reality cannot be traversed in a short time. For the journey is quite a long one. But sooner or later everyone has to travel it through. There is no staying here anywhere, just as all waters must flow down to sea whence they came and so all life must ultimately go back to God in whom it was. And so long as man denies God and chooses to go astray from Him, there is suffering and anguish and he has many times to be thrust into the red furnace of the hell and have many time to be reborn, reshaped and re-tempered untill he learns this lesson to submit and accept God as his Lord.

There are stages in the spiritual development. Guru Nank has given us description of five main stages which are briefly as under :—

This physical world of ours lies amidst the subtler elemental world and the grosser planes of nether region. It comes under the sway of Time and Space.

Our earth is flower-dyed with diverse species of life, infinite their names, forms, hues and habits. How various is the mankind : The Lord hath created and set this earth as the abode of Dharma—the

**Region of Righteous Actions.** As we sow here, so shall we reap. The spirit of judgement rules over the Region of Action. The Court of God separates chaff from the corn. Each man shall be judged according to his deeds. The approved ones will be honoured there. When we shall get there after this life of the earth, we shall know this to be true.

Then comes the Realm of the Divine knowledge—the Plane of Wisdom and Joy. The mind is lit with God's Light and Knowledge is resplendent in this sphere. In the inner Realm of the mind, the devotees now and then get visions of the other worlds, of countless planets, moons and suns and of other habitual spheres and of congregations of holy men in them. And of countless angels, gods and goddesses, of countless saints, sages, Sidhas, of countless skies and earths, countless races, countless languages, countless emperors and lines of kings, of countless sources of life, formulating countless shapes and forms of various colours and complexion.

There is infinite in the Infinite.

There is transcendental music from which myriads of joy proceed. There is bliss untold and unbroken.

Then comes the higher Realm of Ecstasy. There is naught else but Beauty and holy rapture. In the Realm of Ecstasy the most exquisite forms are fashioned, intellect, understanding and discriminations awakens in the heart, intuition wells up.



It is there that awareness is bestowed on sages and seers. Beyond all words is the sphere of Ecstasy.

In the Realm of Grace spiritual power is supreme. There dwell mighty heroes and brave warriors of great prowess, who have completely conquered and vanquished 'Maya' : They are brimming with the divinity of God and their minds are firmly attached to the glory of the Lord. They are ineffably beautiful. God dwelleth in their heart and they are firmly attached to it. They neither die nor can they be deceived. There's the infallible stage. In that Region of Grace dwell the devotees of several worlds and keeping the True One in their hearts they rejoice. In Sukhmani Sahib, they are called Sadh or Saints whose magic touch can change a man.

Higher than all is the Realm of Truth, here dwelleth the Formless One (God Absolute). In this Realm are contained all Regions and all the starry heaven without end. Out of the Formless Infinite, come the forms and finite beings, never hasting never resting. He, who gets a vision of it, rejoiceth to think of it. This is the last stage complete oneness has been realized. In Sukhmani Sahib such a Perfect Man is called Brahm Gyani. He is himself God.

The plane of Truth or of Eternal Reality is where God alone abides in eternal bliss, because all these who reach that plane are quite One with Him, for here there can be no 'otherness' – here HE IS,

and from here he watches all other regions. This seems paradoxical, but how can we speak of the Infinite at all. Time and Space is not applicable there. In the plane of Truth it has been, IS and always will be Now. For it is not here and there but everywhere, within or without all sense of Space and Time is lost. It baffles all attempts to describe the Realm of Truth.

Thus thou pray to the Lord:-

- (a) "Thou art the Master; to Thee I pray.  
My body and soul are Thy gifts to start life with.  
Thou art the Father, Thou the Mother, and we Thy  
children!  
We draw manifold blessings from Thy grace.  
None knows Thy extent:  
Thou art the highest of the high.  
All creation is strung on Thy will:  
It has to accept all that comes from Thee;  
Thou alone knowest what informs Thy purpose.  
I am ever and ever a sacrifice unto Thee."

(Guru Arjan: Sukhmani 4—8)

- (b) "O Destroyer of the pains and sufferings of the poor  
O Thou who fillest every heart and gatherest under  
Thy wings the forsaken and the lost.  
I come to throw myself on Thy mercy.  
O God, be with me!"

(Guru Arjan: Sukhumani)

- (c) O Lord, be Merciful to me, I enter into Thy refuge  
I know not how to serve Thee, for I am low and  
unwise

But I pride on Thee, O my Love,  
That while I, the sinner sin,  
Thou my Beneficent Lord, forgivest.  
I commit myriads of errors every day  
But, Thou, my immaculate Lord while see-est, Ye  
forgiveth.

I keep company with '*Maya*', Thy slave,  
 While forsaking Thee, the Lord and Master,  
 Yea, such are my deeds,  
 Thou blessest me in Thy mercy,  
 While I, the ungrateful wretch, acknowledge it not.  
 Yea, I love that what Thou givest,  
 But not Thee, the Giver, my Spouse,  
 O Thou can ferry me across the Sea of Existence,  
 Without Thee there is not another.  
 I have now sought Thy refuge,  
 O compassionate Guru, Emancipate me the unwise  
 wretch."

(*Guru Arjan: Balawal*),

- (d) "I am but a beggar at Thy door, O Lord,  
 Thou art the only Beneficent, Self-dependent Being,  
 Be Merciful and Bless me with Thy Name  
 That I'm a sacrifice unto Thy True Name,  
 For, Thou art the cause of Causes:  
 And there's not another without Thee.  
 Lord have pity on me now,  
 I have wandered through many lives,  
 O God, bless me with Thy vision:  
 Yea, be Thou so Beneficent to me".

(*Guru Amar Das: Rag Dhansri*)

### Nam Simran

*Nam* (The Divine Name) is the word used to describe the *personal aspect* of the Godhead. God is the Absolute, and He Himself became the Related, when He became manifest and created the universe. In relation to God the Absolute, we cannot think of virtue and vice, pain and pleasure, salvation and bondage, matter and mind, life and

- (1) "If a man meditates on the Divine Name, he will not  
go the round of births,  
He will be immune from the torture of Death,  
And will shed off all mortality.  
His enemies will keep away from him,  
And he will be safe from all harm.  
His mind will be always on the alert,  
And will not be affected by fear,  
Or troubled by pain.  
This meditation is learnt in the company of the holy.  
All riches in abundance for him who is God-  
intoxicated !"

- (2) "The praising of His Name is the highest of all practices.
- It has upraised many a human soul.  
It slakes the desire of the restless mind,  
And imparts an all-seeing vision.  
To a man of praise, Death loses all its terrors ;  
He feels all his hopes fulfilled ;  
His mind is cleared of all impurities ;  
And is filled with the ambrosial Name.  
God resides on the tongue of His saints  
O that I were the slave of their slaves !"

- (3) "Uneasy feels the king who rules the world ;  
Even he will get relief if he loves *Nam*.  
A man may possess millions, his desire will still be  
unbounded.  
He could get release from this desire by obtaining the  
wealth of the Name.  
The various enjoyments of the world will not allay  
his thirst ;  
It could be appeased by drinking the nectar of *Nam*.

In the Valley of Death which man has to traverse  
alone,

*Nam* will be with him to comfort him.

Such a Name, O my soul ! should ever be remem-  
bered.

When heard from the lips of the Guru, It leads to  
the highest destiny".

- (4) "In difficulties where a million resources avail thee  
nothing,

*Nam* will lead you out all safe.

When a thousand crosses threaten to ruin you,

The Name of God will rescue you at once.

A man who goes through the interminable rounds of  
births and deaths,

May yet attain to final rest, if he loves *Nam*.

Self-conceit defiles the soul ; and nothing can wash  
it clean

Except *Nam* which purges out all sins.

Such a *Nam*, O my soul ! should be loved with the  
fullness of the heart

It can be realized in the company of the saints.

- (5) "The Name of God to His lover is the way of life  
and the emancipation of the soul.

It is his meat and drink.

It crowns his vision of beauty and love.

It smooths down all the creases of life.

With it the man of God feels exalted,

And glorified in the sight of man.

In *Nam* he finds the joys of flesh and of mind ;

And he never feels lonely,

As he is absorbed in the service of *Nam*

And is wrapped in the splendour of God in His  
sanctuary."

- (6) "Imbued with the Lord's Name, one is rid of ego,  
Imbued with the Name, One abideth in Truth.

Imbued with the Name one knoweth the way of  
(true) Yoga.

Imbued with the Name, one is emancipated ;  
And knoweth one the Mystery of the three worlds,  
and is ever in Bliss”.

(*Guru Nanak Siddh Gosht*, 32)

### Nam-Ras

Gurbani or *Nam* disperses the mist off the mind and enlightens it. But the mere mechanical uttering of the Word does not land one to the spiritual realization, so long as one's action are not in accordance to the Divine Commandment. It is, therefore, essential for one treading this path to make all efforts to control the mind. Sikhism being a Way of Life, one has to grapple with life in all its aspects and manifold activities.

Through all these spiritual stages the Guru's helping hand is there. If the disciple takes one step on this path, the Guru comes forward millions of steps to receive him. The Guru, the Divine Spirit that lives for ever, continues to inspire the disciple:-

“Listen, listen thou to the instructions of Master Perfect,  
Feel, feel the Living Presence near—here, there and  
everywhere !

With every breath ye breathe, | remember thy Lord, yea  
Him remember,  
Thus all painful aches in thine heart, all worries, shall  
disappear.

No more care, no anxiety, fleeting waves of desire, no  
more !

Live, live ye, in the Life-giving Dust of the saints  
 evermore !  
 Give up, give up the little-self and betake thyself to the  
 Higher,  
 Thus cross, in the company of the saints, this Ocean  
 of Fire !  
 Fill up, fill up thine hearts' Stores with the Wealth of  
 His Name,  
 All hail, all hail, O Nanak, unto the Perfect Master—the  
 Divine Flame."

(Guru Arjan : Sukhmani)

By constant loving remembrance of the Lord in the heart, 'Nam-Ras'—Amritam or Elixir of Life wells up within us. When we once have a taste of this sweet savour of 'Nam-Ras', all other '*rasas*'—savours become insipid and tasteless. Not until this ambrosial *Nam* fills the heart, can the mind be subdued. It then no more flutters in passions' flame, but remains self-restrained and begins to look within; instead of running out after objects of temptations. The man then keeps wide awake in this world of illusion and lives a pure life by thought, word and deed.

"O tongue, dry-parched, seared and withered,  
 Thou art infatuated with earthly savour  
 The more thou tasteth these, the more thou art athirst,  
 Thy thirst shall never be quenched by aught else,  
 Not until thou obtaineth the Heavenly Elixir,  
 Thou shalt then pant not, thirst not, ye, never never,  
 But this nectar is obtained only by those  
 Who by good fortune come in contact with the Master  
 Spirit."

(Guru Amar Dass : Anand Sahib)

"The Cat (mind) now eateth not, though it see-eth the  
meat

And the great Butcher (mind) throweth away his knife.

The Lord when abideth in one's heart.

The Fish, caught in the net, now breaketh loose.

And dry wood blossoms forth into green shoots,

And, on high and dry plateau flowereth the Lotus of  
incomparable beauty.

The fire within one is quenched;

And the servant is dedicated to the service of the Lord.

*(Guru Arjan : Ramkali)*

"He who drinketh the Lord's Essence is forever  
intoxicated,

All other intoxications wear off in a moment.

Imbued with the Lord's Essence, the mind is ever in bloom  
and bliss,

While intoxication of worldly savours bring one to woe  
and care.

He who drinketh the Lord's Drink is for ever in Ecstasy

But all other drinks are futile. (Pause)

The Heavenly Elixir is invaluable,

And it is at the Saints' stores that it is available

It cannot be had even though one may spend millions  
upon millions

He who attaineth to the company of the inspired persons,  
him the Lord giveth.

Nanak is wonder-struck tasting the Lord's Essence,

Yea, he, by the Guru's Grace, hath tasted its taste,

And then it leaveth him not here, or hereafter,

Nanak is so inebriated with the Lord's Essence."

*(Guru Arjan : Rag Asa)*

*Nam* endows the mind with Light and power to turn from unreality to Reality. It enables man to surrender himself to the Divine Will. And by complete and unconditional surrender, the aspirant



attains to the highest pinnacle of spiritual advancement.

In the act of self-surrender it is the 'self' (Jiv-Atma) that is offered first of all, and along with it the mind, the ego, the intellect and the body, all are dedicated to the Lord. This being done, the aspirant distinctly begins to feel that it is the Lord who is functioning through his body, mind and speech. Prior to this he *believed* that it was he himself who did everything; whereas now he feels that it is God who is doing everything. The consciousness that he is the doer is merged in the Divine consciousness; for the mind and intellect have been surrendered to the Lord. The man holds himself as naught, the Beloved becomes the heart and focus of life, and no thought can be performed except in relation to Him. The mind and intellect cease to function independently at this stage; the Divine Will is his will now, the Divine Thought is his thought, and the Divine Activity is his activity. The devotee, even when performing action, becomes actionless. The Lord takes the whole responsibility in respect of such a devotee.

"My mind is athirst, it panteth and craveth to meet Thee,  
my God.

How shall I see Thy Beautiful Face my Lord?

If Thou *condescendeth* to speak to me even for a moment  
I'd deem to have come upon an invaluable Treasure.

I have searched the four corners of the earth.

But there's naught one like Thee, O God!

O Saints, show me the Path that will lead me to my Lord.

Yea, **surrender** thy mind, give up egoism  
 And tread on this path:  
 Serve thy Divine Master for ever and ever,  
 Associating with the saints.  
 O all my desires have thus been fulfilled  
 The Guru-God hath called me in, within His Palace.  
 I think of no one else at par with Thee  
 O my beneficial Lord! The Master of the universe."

(Guru Arjan : *Dakhni Pauri*)

As the man thus continues to practise the presence of God and sings His praises, a day comes when the veil of Egoism that blurs man's vision of Truth and Reality is completely lifted. And by the Grace of the Guru (Divine Master) the soul of man comes in blissful contact with the Supreme Soul already within him. The Divine Light shines forth. There is no more delusion, no more sin. The sense of duality is lost and we work and move in the Lord's Being. There is everlasting Bliss. The spark of fire merges in Fire, the wave merges in the expanse of sea. The drop of water goes back to Ocean, whence it was. We may say the man flows out of one's self into the Supreme Being.

### The End—The Magic Touch of the Master!

It is by the Grace of the Divine Master that such a devotion fills the heart of the disciple and he becomes One with God, It is not after death in some unknown region but *now* and *here*.

- (1) "There comes a moment in the life of man  
 When he gets into touch with the holiest of the holies  
 There is a miracle ! No coming back from thence.

Then, in his heart, the Torch of Wisdom is set  
 aflame,  
 That state is 'Sahaj' : Equilibrium—Eternal immutably  
 the same,  
 His mind and body are wholly Coloured in the  
 Colour-Divine,  
 Thereafter, he dwelleth e'er and e'er with Thee above  
 all Time !  
 As a running Rivulet is with the Ocean indissolubly  
 mixt  
 So also is this—light in Light—Transcendent blended,  
 admixt,  
 No more the weary wheel of coming and going, for  
 peace is won.  
 A love-suffused sacrifice am I, O Nanak, to Thee  
 O Being Supreme".

(Guru Arjans : Sukhmani 11-8)

Translated

- (2) " Such a devotee is not aware of grief,  
 Even when afflicted with grief.  
 He is not attached to comfort, and is free from fear.  
 To him a lump of gold and clod of earth are the  
 same.  
 He talks evil of none,  
 Nor is affected by praise.  
 Free from greed, attachment, conceit  
 Pleasure and pain, honour or dishonour,  
 Hope and fear, desiring nothing from the world  
 No more affected by passion and anger ;  
 On whom the Guru bestows His Grace,  
 He alone knoweth the way to this conduct,  
 Nanak he becomes one with God  
 As water with water."

(Guru Tegh Bahadur : Rag Sorath)

When this spiritual re-awakening and re-generation of 'man' is complete and there is resurrection of human values and restoration of God-consciousness, even then, the man so enlightened does not sit idle. But he operates in the mundane world of the phenomena with the object of transforming and spiritualizing the life on this earth into a higher and more abundant plane of existence. The God-conscious man is animated with an intense desire to do good in this world and elevate mankind to the higher life of the spirit, ever fresh, progressing and marching forward.

Guru Arjan calls such a man a combatant—a master wrestler of the Lords' own legion—come to play his part in the tourney of life. He manfully faces the realities of life like a gifted wrestler in the tourney and inspired soldier in the field of action. He enters the **Arena of Life**, while bugles, drums and trumpets play. The Lord Himself beholds the deeds of valour of His Saint-Soldier. He wrestles, fights and knocks down the deadly Satan with his five sinful youths (lust, anger, greed, attachment and conceit) that they can rise never again from the floor and raise their heads. The master wrestler comes out victorious and is patted by the Guru on his back. The Guru-given plume flutters high on his turban. He receives the Lords' blessings and is invested with a Robe of Honour in the Court of God.

**G**OD enshrined Himself in Guru Nanak's heart. The same Divine Light illumined the minds of his successors; Guru Gobind Singh being the Tenth and the last Master. This transformation from one Guru to the other happened in the same way as one lamp were lit from another. The holy men realized this transformation and they recognised all the Ten Gurus as one. They had all come direct from the Heaven on the Divine Mission. They were all from the same Flame; although the Divine Hand had kept some of them concealed for some time in the garb of Seekers of Truth in order to demonstrate the ideal of love and service that one should cherish for the Divine Master. All the Ten Gurus were one in spirit and in the mode of their teachings.

In the formation of Sikh religion, the important factor is that there was the direct Divine inspiration experienced by Guru Nanak and his nine successors, who by their personal contact with God's Power made Sikhism a living faith and a strong weapon with which to fight the battle of life.

God poured forth Divine Word into the world through the Gurus, who were the perfect channels for expression of the Word for the understanding of human intellect. Sikhism is not a reproduction of earlier religions, but a new revelation altogether. Of course, the Gurus had to clothe their doctrines in the language and termin-

ology familiar to their hearers. But the teachings, they gave to the world, came to them direct from God, the Lord. And their teachings are quite different from Hinduism and equally distinct from Islam. Their teachings may be said to have certain relationship to those of Hinduism or Islam, much as the teachings of Christianity arose out of the Jewish environment and to some extent do reflect its higher ideals.

Guru Arjan also gave a clear distinction and peculiarity to the Sikh movement by declaring that with all the sympathy and brotherhood that the Sikhs were to maintain with others, they were in no way to confuse their ideals with codes of conduct of other religions established around them.

"I don't keep the Hindu fast, nor those observed by  
Muslims in Ramzan

I serve Him, and Him alone who is my refuge.

I believe in One Lord, who is also Allah.

I have found release from the Hindus as from Muslims  
rites, rituals and ceremonies

Neither I visit the pilgrim places of Hindus

Nor do I go to the Kaaba for Hajj

Yea, I serve only the One God and no other.

I won't worship idols or read Nimaz.

I lay my heart at the Feet of one Supreme Being.

I am neither a Hindu, nor a Muslim

But I have dedicated my body and soul to Allah-Ram".

(Guru Arjan ; Bhairon).

As a result of the teachings of the Gurus, there had been set up a distinct community that differed from its neighbours in religious outlook, social customs and in political ideals. They had

a common object of worship of One and only God (no gods and goddesses) and common source of divine knowledge—Gurbani. The pride of caste and inferiority complex that prevailed amongst Hindus due to Muslim rule had been replaced amongst the Sikhs by feelings of love and brotherliness and fearlessness. Hundreds of thousands of people from amongst Hindus and Muslims as also from Jains flocked around the Gurus, fascinated by their teachings, purity of thought and godliness of their character.

Guru Nanak and his successors not only promulgated a new system and belief but they had also the whole community on anvil to give shape and form to its character. All their teachings and actions were designed contribute to the making of the new order.

Along with living a godly life as an individual by constant 'Simran', the Sikh was to form part of corporate life, be it a society or nation. It is the glory of Sikh history that the Gurus had in mind the duties of a nation as much as the duties of an individual.

From the beginning to the end there was no digression in the developing programme of the Sikh life. It was like an organism experiencing even while it performed its work, developing new organs and functions, because it was daily challenged to exercise new energies. Its principles of life remained

**the same, though it underwent transfiguration assuming a great variety of forms to meet all circumstances and exigencies.**

The Guru's genius comprehended both the mundane and the metaphysical. They roused the dormant energies of a vanquished people and filled them with a lofty, although fitful, longing for social freedom and national ascendancy, the proper adjuncts of the purity of worship preached by them.

Thus Sikhism deals with life in all its aspects, so a Sikh must tune his mind to several strings, like his Guru, who as Sayyed Mohammed Latif says in his History of the Panjab: "He was a law-giver on the pulpit, a champion in the field, a king on his masnad, and a faqir in the society of the Khalsa". It was his godliness practised in the midst of worldly duties that won the hearts of enemies. Sayyed Beg, a Mohammedan general, came to fight with Guru Gobind Singh but when his eyes fell on the saintly patriot he turned away with shame and vowed never again to fight in aid of tyranny.

The Sikhs have generally been known to the world as soldiers. Soldiers, truly, they are—of finest and bravest type in the world. But they are essentially and basically godly people. A Sikh, at the height of his spiritual glory, after taking Guru's Amrit, is known as Khalsa. The word Khalsa comes from an Arabic root signifying purity and emancipation. **Purity because it overcomes all narrowness and because all words and actions of its**



votaries come out from the depth of truth. Emancipation because it indicates freedom from superstition and conventions and because their minds are without fear and their heads are held high. *The Khalsa is a Spiritual holy order* which does not renounce the family. It is not a military or civil or a secular organization. The personality of the Sikh with his long tresses tied into a knot at the top of his head and covered by a turban and his beard reflects his outlook of life, just as a clean shaven head and ochre robe of a monk reflects his outlook of life. The Khalsa Ideal is symbolized by the *Keshas* and sword. These long tresses conserve spiritual energy even as those forests in the Himalayas conserve the moisture dropped by the benign monsoons. Guru Gobind Singh combined the holiness of the Rishis and of Christ with the social and political responsibility of a soldier and a statesman. He is a Saint-Soldier and a statesman. *The Khalsa of Guru Gobind Singh is a sage in regal splendour.* A Sikh who lacks spirituality and does not live according to the ethical code of Guru Gobind Singh ceases to be a Khalsa. His name is struck off the rolls. The Guru said, "The Khalsa is the living image of my spirit. I will eternally abide in the spirit of the Khalsa".

In order to understand the compatibility of martial character with saintliness and appreciate the brave spirit of the Sikhs, it is essential to realise

the utter wretchedness to which this country was reduced. Just imagine that Mohd Bakhtyar Khilji, when he conquered Bihar, he put to sword over fifty thousand Bhuddists and Hindus with a band of only 200 cavelry. Feroze Shah Tughlak destroyed all temples in the city of Bhopal, removed the idols from them, and placed them in front of the fort and had them daily bathed with the blood of a thousand Hindus. It is matter of history that Mahmud Ghazanvi invaded India seventeen times and went right up to Som Nath and smashed the Idol of Som Nath and razed the temple to the ground. He was always successful in his crusades of destruction and loot. We need not further repeat here the history of that period of bloodshed, tyranny and treachery.

The Punjab, through successive raids from the North West, had become utterly helpless and ruined and lay like a door-mat at the gate of India. Its people had become physically and morally bankrupt. They had lost all self-respect and fellow feelings.

At present, the people of the Punjab are renowned for their bravery. They are social and charitable. The same people before the birth of Sikhism were content to see their wives and daughters being led away like cattles without attempting to protect and save them.

The negative philosophy of life of self-denial, renunciation, and non-violence of the Hindu India had demoralised and devitalised the people so much so that they felt quite helpless and impotent before

the might of the despots. India suffered grievously from this philosophy and remained in subjugation for centuries.

For centuries, countless Hindus men, women and children had fallen under the sword of Muslim invaders but this had not softened the stone-hearts of their oppressors. They had become even more brutal. On the other hand the barbarous inhumanities and debasing tyrannies committed on the Hindus had totally demoralised them. They were overtaken by defeatism and pessimism, so much so that this inhuman treatment roused no thought of protest in their minds, much less of resistance.

At times, it might be possible to reform the evil doer by opposing urtruth and injustice by love and non-violent methods. The silent resistance and suffering for a righteous cause might enable the tyrant and fanatic to see the evil in his ways and he might be reformed. But no amount of non-violence can succeed against tyrant, who is hardened and steeped in criminal oppressive ways and pays no heed to the basic values of moral and civilised conduct. Against such men non-violence is only another name of disgraceful cowardice. Who had ever succeeded with humility and non-violence with a wolf or a mad dog? Human brutes are more difficult to deal with than a pack of wolves and hounds.

If a scoundrel breaks into a house with a dagger in hand to rob, to commit rape and to kill, would it be right for the headman or the owner of

the house to close his eyes and remain non-concerned? Indian history teaches us one grim lesson that to eschew non-resistance of evil in all circumstances is not a sensible doctrine. It had destroyed almost root and branch noble faiths like Buddhism and plunged this country into centuries of slavery and humiliation at the hands of petty conquerors.

So long as human beings have not started to lead a peaceful and moral life, virtuous people cannot allow rascals to destroy all that man had built up. Self protection or the protection of the weak is also a duty and on some occasions, it is of much higher value than the principle of non-violence.

The Guru like an able doctor saw clearly that when the affairs go beyond all remedies and there is no other alternative, then the poisoned limb had to be amputated to save the whole body.

Guru Gobind Singh expresses two very important principles of sword philosophy in '*Zafarnama*'—the Epistle of Victory, he wrote to the Emperor Aurangzeb:-

- (1) Those who use sword recklessly for cruelty, oppression and exploitation, themselves meet the same fate and are chastised in the end by the punishing Sword of Heaven
- (2) When all other alternatives fail, it is right and just to take up the sword for the defence of Dharma or righteousness.

Yes, the evil is to be resisted and up-rooted, but the sword is never to be struck in hatred or in

anger or in a spirit of revenge. The weak are to be defended against injustice oppression and tyranny but without entertaining any aggressive intentions. Sikhism has its roots in Truth, love and selfless service. They do not bear ill-will against any. They even love their enemies in distress.

Once, when Aurangzeb's army invaded Anandpur of Guru Gobind Singh and the battle was going on, Bhai Kanhya, one of the Guru's disciple was on duty to serve water to the wounded. He was seen serving water to friends and foes alike. When asked by a new comer in the Guru's army as to why he did so, he said, "The eyes that the Guru has given me see no friend or foe. I serve my Beloved only". When reminded of the battle that was going on, he said, "We are fighting the evil in men and not against their sufferings".

The Khalsa wields the sword as a shield to defend and protect the weak and the oppressed, to uphold truth and righteousness, and to defend the country. Sword in Sikhism has never been used for the gratification of 'self', for material gains at the cost of sufferings of others. It has always been used for freedom of conscience, freedom of worship and for protection of Dharma.

Most of the people, who have not truly lived religion and have no deeper insight, usually think that religion is to live humbly, in poverty and to pass one's life in renunciation and self-abnegation. A man who lives a life of suffering, and self-denial is considered a religious man. The so called

religious men, therefore, abstain from the gratification of natural desires, though yet desiring them. This had led to forced celibacy 'tyag' (physical renunciation of the world) and mortification of flesh. Such has been the philosophy of latter Hinduism that was built on the ashe of Buddhism. Its natural conclusion was one of pessimism and defeatism.

Ever since the time of Buddha, the Indian philosophy is pre-occupied with the problem of pain and suffering and the solution has been : "extinguish your desires and your suffering will go". This remedy did not work. Men became anaemic, life grew feeble ; yet the flame of desire shone brighter through the pallid skin.

Guru Gobind Singh tackled the problem from a different angle. It was not to extinguish desire as such. It was to prepare for the self-sacrifice at the Alter of Love. He boldly asserted :

"Hark ye all, I proclaim the eternal truth, only those who betake themselves to love reach the Lord".

His exhortation was that all the soldierly strength, all the victories on the battle field, all the triumphant drums that proclaim your conquests *are of no avail, if the deeds are not actuated by love*. It is the love which provides the motive force for sacrifice. The petty pains rooted in desires are thus conquered. The willing suffering, grounded in the vaster passion of love's sacrifice, is the remedy for the ills of living in this world of morbid desires.

And love is awakened in the hearts only by prayer, praise (singing of Gurus hymns in praise of God) and by repeating the Divine Name in all awareness.

The true religion is thus to live a life of fullness in all its aspects. Sikhism teaches mankind how to live worthily in the world making the best use of life, not how to escape from the world and avoid evil but how to meet and overcome evil and live victorious life, and in high spirits. Such a life of true religion springs of '*Dhyanam*', the inspiration alike of Lord Krishna, Christ, Buddha and Nanak-Guru Gobind Singh. It comes of art and not of philosophy. Philosophy creeps in, when inspiration leaves us. Philosophy is incapable of giving eyes to the spiritually blind. It cannot impart life to the dead souls. A Living religion does not stand upon the crutches of philosophy.

Besides the Buddhists, the Hindus of medieval India also followed the path of self-denial. Even Sufis and some schools of Christian chose this path. Men endowed with the Divine Spirit are rare and these are the rare gifted men, who by their living example lead humanity to the right path. Without such men to guide, people often go astray. The Truth of life has been repeatedly mistaken by the dead creeds. The Mohammedans of middle ages and of modern times on the other hand have taken up just the opposite view of life. Unlike Christians and Hindus, who follow the way of self-denial, Muslims have followed the philosophy of self-

assertion. Dr. Iqbal, a great philosopher among Muslims of this century, propagated the philosophy of self-assertion like that of German philosopher Nietzsche.

Now according to Sikhism, self-assertion and self-denial, both these ways of thought take the world to the extremes and each one of them is one-sided and incomplete by itself. The Ideal Way is the Khalsa Way—The Balanced State or *Sehj Avastha*. Those, who are inwardly awakened by the Divine Spirit, they feel a sort of elevation within themselves, some perception of inner beauty and bliss, that keeps their minds in poise, in equilibrium. They are neither in passive, nor in active mood, yet assertion and denial both work in them simultaneously. Humility and the martial spirit are accommodated spontaneously in their inner-selves, like the two wings of a flying bird. Yet they remain above board. Neither concept affecting them.

How the Sikhs awakened by '*Nam*' remained in high spirits in extreme circumstances and vindicated faith, love and devotion is abundantly illustrated in the Sikh history.

During the reign of the Mughal Emperor Muhammed Shah, Zakariya Khan was appointed the governor of Lahore in 1726 A.D. He was determined to exterminate the whole Sikh nation. He ordered a general massacre of the Sikhs men, women and children, and reward was offered for the head of every Sikh brought to Lahore dead or alive.

Sayyed Mohd. Latif, M.A., in his History of the Punjab writes:



“The Governor of the Punjab now issued proclamation for a general massacre of all Sikhs, wherever they could be found. Death was the punishment of all persons, who invoked the name of Guru Gobind Singh, and a reward was offered for the head of a Sikh. Thousands were put to death daily and their heads brought before the Subedar of Lahore for reward”.

The Sikh history of the period is a record of their struggle against the Mughal tyranny and oppression. The Sikhs not only fought for their very existence, but they all along carried on a revolution for the emancipation of their motherland. A will was created in the Sikh masses to shake this empire of loot, larceny and lie. So they lived and died for the national cause.

Being outlawed, the Sikhs had to leave their homes and hearths in the plains and had to take shelter in the hills. They now resorted to guerilla war-fare and made it impossible for revenue from villages to reach the government treasury and still more impossible for the forces of the government to catch the outlaws, as they ran away to their hiding places in forest or other places difficult of access.

Zakarya Khan sent out moving columns in all directions to hunt them out. In hundreds and thousands the Sikhs were daily brought in chains to Lahore and were offered the choice of Islam or the sword. They were put to death with unspeakable tortures. The more daring and desperate among them being not easy in the reach of the Government, the wrath fell on peaceful, innocent Sikhs living in towns and villages. There was no exception made. Soldiers, scholars, peasants and petty shop-keepers; men, women and children all who wore long hair and followed the path of Sikhism were condemned to the same fate. ‘Nakhas’, the horse-market of Lahore became the site of execution of Sikh captives. Its earth turned red with their blood.

Out of the many thousands of Sikhs, who laid down their lives for their faith and ideal, we take the case of Bhai

**Taru Singh.** He was resident of village Poolha, Tehsil Kasur in the District of Lahore (now in Pakistan), where he had a small farm. The corn he produced, he joyously shared with all those who called at his abode under his roof for a night's repose.

Taru Singh was a pious and devoted Sikh. He lived by 'Gurbani'. 'Nam Simran' had wholly transformed him. The people of his village loved him for his very goodness. So, for sometime he continued to live in his village unmolested, a unique privilege.

But being a Sikh, he could not live long un-noticed by the authorities. One, Niranjan of Jandiala, a traitor betrayed him and reported to the authorities at Lahore that a Sikh farmer was still living in his village Poolha. The informer got a reward for it. Bhai Taru Singh was captured and was taken in chains to Lahore.

The Nawab, when he saw this strikingly handsome youth of 23, was over-whelmed with his presence. There was a spiritual charm around him which made the Nawab exclaim: "Ya Allah! what a glory on his face! Oh, if he were a Musalman!" Addressing Taru Singh, the Nawab said, "Young-man! I take pity on you and wish I could spare your life".

Taru Singh retorted: "Spare my life! Why dishonour me, while my brethren are being martyred here before my eyes?"

The Nawab said, "You are bravest of the braves! Somehow my mind does not wish to wreak my anger on you, but you must cut and present me your Tress-knot (*Jura*)".

Taru Singh replied, "The Sikh and his hair are inseparable. I can give you my head with my tress-knot, more than what you ask for".

It is a religious sacrilege for a Sikh to have his hair cut. It amounts to discarding his faith. The Nawab then said, "Taru Singh! You are too young. You have not seen the world yet, and the joys of life. Come, I will get you married with the most beautiful girl you had ever seen. You will get

a high office in the Mughal army. You will get a Jagir and you will be handsomely rewarded and I promise you all sorts of comforts you can imagine, but you must give up your faith and accept Islam."

But Bhai Taru Singh refused to abjure his faith and disdainfully rebuffed all offers and all temptations made to him.

The Nawab was then enraged and changed his looks. He sent for a cobbler and ordered him to scrape the scalp off Bhai Taru Singh's head and with it hair and all that. Taru Singh was thus executed in most cruel and barbaric manner. The people were taken aghast at the suffering and the severity of punishment for sticking to one's faith.

Glory, Glory to Bhai Taru Singh! We still remember him and the other martyrs in our daily prayers.

In 1739 it was proclaimed that no Sikh existed in the land and that all have been massacred. Then at that time Bhai Bota Singh declared himself. The Khalsa could not be finished, he felt, and he decided to proclaim its existence at the peril of his own life. He would not now go into the hiding. He took up a position open on the high way, near Lahore with the help of another Sikh Bhai Garja Singh, and levied a tax to attract the attention of the government, But as every one quietly paid the tax and no complaint was carried to the government, no notice was taken by it.

Bota Singh felt restless. For he had not taken up the position to collect tolls and taxes but to prove to the fanatical rulers that in spite of their all-out efforts to exterminate the Sikhs, they very much existed. He, therefore, wrote direct to the governor, Nawab Zakariya Khan Lahore,

announcing himself and how he stood on the road with a stick in hand and collected the tax. They thus sacrificed their lives to keep up the dignity and honour of the Panth.

This is how the Sikhs abiding in *Nam* and awakened inwardly made light of danger and sacrificed themselves in high spirits and maintained the prestige of the Khalsa.

The first lesson, the A B C of Sikhism is the solution of the great riddle of existence, that of '*Atma*' or '*Nam*'. It is this which Sikhism tackles first. For once contact is established with that transcendental world of beauty, the Sikh is then on the highroad which leads to the second step, "activity". Tangled in this silken knot of spirit, naught else but '*Simran*' will undo this web of '*Maya*'.

The self-less seva of the saint of Nam-Simran must be distinguished from the so called activity, misnamed service, which is an easy method of catching the public eye ; for the latter is ego-centric whereas the activity of Khalsa is centred only in the cosmos. Here it is that Sikhism parts company with all morbid forms of mysticism, rightly dubbed quietism.

"The possession of God", says Ruysbroeck ; the prince of western mysticism, "demands and pre-supposes perpetual activities. He, who thinks otherwise, deceives himself and others. All our life, as it is in God, is immersed in blessedness. And these two lives form one, self-contradictory in

its attributes rich and poor, hungry and full, active and quiet”.

“The fact of the matter is that the Sikh movement is the only healthy form of mysticism in India—the mysticism that has stood the test of time.” Thus wrote the late learned saint T.L. Vaswani.

A faqir of self-denial lives like a down-cast weakling cart-pony ; while a spirit-born man, who truly lives a religious life is like a steed with head raised high and living always in exalted spirits. This is the Khalsa Ideal. But this life of inspiration is the gift of the Guru—the Divine Master and not of a religious teacher or a human guru. Men achieve this illumination through the goodwill and Grace of the Divine Master.

During the Mohammedan invasions from the North West and those days of oppression and tyranny, it was the women, who suffered most. It is very sad that the Indian men failed to protect the honour of their own women folk. But with the advent of Sikhism, however, the dignity and respect of the noble Indian women were restored. It resulted in a magnificent role of the chivalry. The Sikhs pledged their lives for the honour of the Indian women. Such chivalry was even unknown in Europe and Rajasthan. The Sikhs were the knights, who performed deeds of honour with no personal motives of attaining glory, no passions of worldly love to inspire them in the performance of the duty. The mere sight of wronged innocent or exploitation of weakness goaded them to action.

The Sikh chivalry rose to such heights of greatness that there is no parallel to it in Indian or world history.

Ahmed Shah Abdali made several invasions on India and brought the Mughal empire to its knees. He also defeated the Marathas in the battle of Panipat.

Once, on his way back, he captured 2100 Hindu young girls and was carrying them off to Afghanistan. The girls were screaming, bewailing for help. It is regretted that their lamentation of anguish and pain did not awaken in Hindus the spirit of man-hood and did not stir them to rise in the defence of the daughters of the land. No attempt was made to get them rescued. The teaching of "*Ahinsa parmo Dharma*" non-resistance to evil and non-violence had utterly demoralised them.

The Sikhs, who at that time, were proclaimed out-lawed and were ordered to be exterminated by the government were hiding themselves in jungles. When news were brought to them, that so many Hindu girls were being lifted away, they came out from their hideouts and suddenly fell upon the Afghan forces, when they were relaxing at night-fall. After a serious fight involving sacrifice of numerous Sikhs, they got the girls released from the hands of their captives and arranged to send them to their respective homes.

It will not be out of place to give here an estimate of the character of the Sikhs of mid-eighteenth century from the pen of Qazi Nur

Muhammad, a Baluch writer, who accompanied Ahmed Shah Abdali during his invasion of 1764-65. In his jang Nama he records his own first hand impressions. He says :—

“Do not call the Sikhs dogs  
Because they are courageous like lions in the battle field.  
How can a hero who roars like a lion be called a dog  
by us?

If you wish to learn the art of war,  
Then come face to face with them in the field.  
They will demonstrate it to you in such a way  
That one and all will praise them for it.  
If you wish to learn the science of war,  
O swordsmen, come to learn from them;  
How to face an enemy like a hero  
And yet to get out safely unhurt  
O! it is unjust to call them dogs, as we do.  
Leaving aside their mode of fighting,  
Hear ye another point, how they excel all other fighting  
people:

In no case would they slay a coward,  
Nor would they put an obstacle in the way of the  
fugitive.

They do not plunder the wealth or ornament of a woman  
Be she a well-to-do lady or an humble servant.

There is no adultery among these ‘dogs’  
Nor are these mischievous people given to thieving.

There is no thief at all among these ‘dogs’  
Nor is there any house-breaker born among them.

They do not make friends with adulterers and house  
breakers.

They are not among the Hindus.

They have a separate religion of their own”.

Qazi Nur Muhammed further pays a glowing tribute to the Sikh spirit of self-sacrifice. As an eye-witness, he tells us :—

"When Shah (Ahmed Shah Abdali) arrived at Chak Amritsar (and entered Darbar Sahib on December, 1st 1764 A.D), there was not a single 'Kafir' (Sikh) to be seen there. But a few of them had remained in an enclosure (the Bunga of Akal Takhat). When they saw the renowned King (Ahmed Shah) and the army of Islam, numbering about thirty six thousand, they rushed out of the enclosure. They were only thirty in number.

*Na Kardand yak Zarrah i tars bak*

*Na Khaufe zi quatal o na beem az halak*

"They were unmindful of the overwhelming strength of Shah's army. They had not a grain of fear in them. They had neither the fear of the slaughter nor the dread of death. Thus they grappled with the Ghazis. And all of them were killed."

It is worthy of note that the Khalsa maintained an unsullied record and exemplary character both in times of war and peace. In 1807, the Sikh soldiers crossed swords with Jahan Khan, the General of Ahmed Shah Durani near Sialkot. The Afghan General fearing a defeat, fled away to Peshawar, leaving behind a number of Muslim women who fell into the hands of the Sikhs. Ali-ud-Din, the Muslim historian, pays a compliment to the Sikhs for escorting all the Muslim women safely to Jammu.

The Khalsa were inspired by a sense of Divine Mission, and no fear of any earthly power was to deflect them from their duty. Bravery, as much as truth, purity and devotion to God, is the Sikh religion. Guru Gobind Singh created a community which is not only iconoclastic and fighting against all shams and taboos of caste, untouchability, and



against dirt and dross of superstition, irrational beliefs, and meaningless rites and rituals but Khalsa, being a worshipper of One God, looks upon all humanity as one. Khalsa is a Global Fraternity.

Guru Gobind Singh, by a flash of his sword, filled the dying soul of India with new life, and lo ! it shone in all its glory again, in the life of the new born Khalsa ! The Light of Reality had kindled the Spark of Life in the dead bones of the nation.

He who keeps the Light of the Divine Life,  
The Torch of Truth,  
Burning for all the twenty-four hours  
In the shrine of his heart,  
He alone is to be deemed  
As the pure Khalsa.

So defined the Master. If the Lamp of Simran burns out, if the Torch of Truth is extinguished, the Sikh would spiritually die. His name would be struck off the rolls. Those of us, who have not yet realised *Nam* (All-pervading Divine Spirit), are still on the waiting list.

‘For Thy Grace, O Lord, I wait,  
Teach me Thy Name,  
Let me breath in Thy love,  
And make of me Thy Khalsa’.

*(The author).*

The creation of Khalsa is the culmination of Guru Nanak’s genius.

“The harvest which ripened in the time of  
 Guru Gobind Singh was sown by Guru Nanak  
 and watered by his successors. The sword which  
 carved the Khalsa's way to glory was, undoubtedly  
 forged by Gobind, but the steel had been provided  
 by Nanak”.

(*Sir Dr. Gokal Chand Narang*).

The Amrit of the Tenth Master, completely transmuted and transformed the man irrespective of caste, creed or colour or country. After taking Amrit, the Khalsa resembles no parent type of his own. Just as lime, betelnut, catechu and betel leaf, which are the ingredients of ‘Pan’, they all turn into one and same blood-red colour, when chewed, similarly in the Khalsa, there is blending of the whole spiritual character of the man of the past, present and future. It is quite a new creation, a universal man of God, belonging to no one class or caste. Khalsa is the Super-Man saturated with the glories and powers of the infinite, yet exuberating sweetness, innocence, and brotherliness. He strikes no fear in others, nor does he fear any. Peace and Goodness radiates from the Khalsa. God is One. Man is one. Love is one. One with the inner Light, one with Truth, one with Love is the Khalsa.

*“Wahe-Guru ji ka Khalsa  
 Sri Wahe-Guru ji ki Fatch”.*

The Khalsa belongs to the Glorious Master  
 All triumph be to His Name'  
 He is Truth,  
 And Truth triumphs now.