

Ui f !Hptqf nmpg
Ui f Tj1 i Hv sv t

by

Dr. G.S. Chauhan

The Gospel of The Sikh Gurus

by :

G.S. Chauhan

Second Edition 2009

(For Free Distribution by Pingalwara)

Dedication

This book is dedicated to Bhai Vir Singh who discovered the rare manuscript of "Sikhan Di Bhagat Mala", published it, so that the present generations may learn the rare knowledge disseminated by the Sikh Gurus a few centuries ago. Bhai Sahib has done a great service to humanity and deserves heartfelt gratefulness from all the persons on spiritual path.

Published by :

G. S. Chauhan

B-202 Shree Ganesh Appmts.
Plot No. 12-B; Sector 7, DWARKA
New Delhi-110075
Tel: 011-25086357
email: gschauhan1@rediffmail.com

Printed at :

Printwell

146, Industrial Focal Point,
Amritsar. Ph.: 0183-2587036

Title Photo :

Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji giving dictation of DAMDAMI BIR to
Bhai Mani Singh Ji.

About the Book

This little book is a wonderful storehouse of wisdom for spiritual seekers. It was written three centuries ago by Bhai Mani Singh a great **saint-soldier-martyr** who was confidant of Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Master.

Human beings aim at attaining four targets in their lives i.e. *Dharma, Artha, Kama* and *Moksha* (moral responsibilities, wealth, worldly desires and liberation). This book answers varied questions on these subjects which are as valid to-day as were three to five centuries ago.

For spiritual advancement, there are paths like Knowledge, Service, Devotion, *Hath Yoga*, etc. This book gives finer details, subtleties, complexities and benefits of each discipline in simple, lucid and practical manner.

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	vi
<i>Preface to the Original Book</i> "Sikhan di Bhagat Mala"	ix
<i>Brief Life Sketch of Scholar-Martyr</i> <i>Bhai Mani Singh Ji</i>	x
1. Characteristics of a Perfect Disciple	1
2. The Disciples of Sri Guru Nanak Dev	12
3. Disciples of Sri Guru Angad Dev	38
4. Disciples of Sri Guru Amar Dass	49
5. Disciples of Sri Guru Ram Dass	52
6. Disciples of Sri Guru Arjun Dev	56
7. Disciples of Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib	122

Preface

Every religion has two components. One is the spiritual advancement of the disciples, the instructions for which are given by its founder and are eternal in nature and the second is the rituals and the way of life. The second part gets modified with time depending upon political and social circumstances. With passage of time, the understanding and practice of spiritual principles becomes secondary and ritual worship with outward signs of religion gains importance. Sikhism or the path of Guru Nanak Dev is no exception. To maintain correct balance between the two components of a religion, enlightened souls like Bhai Mani Singh, Bhai Vir Singh, Bhai Ditt Singh Gyani and other founders of 'Singh Sabha' movement have, from time to time, presented the devotees with ideas to enable them to correctly understand the teachings of the Gurus and emulate them. The book "*Sikhan di Bhagat Mala*" or the garland of the Sikh saints by Bhai Mani Singh *Shahid* is an attempt in this direction. In this book, stories of the disciples of Guru Nanak Dev to Guru Har Gobind are given.

Bhai Gurdas, in his 11th ballad has described the characteristics of a perfect disciple in the first twelve stanzas. Further 13th to 31st stanzas are only a catalogue of names and the places they came from. During the times of Bhai Gurdas, these names and their lives were fresh in the minds of the disciples. By the time of Guru Gobind Singh, these memories got faded. So the devotees requested Guru Gobind Singh to describe the achievements of these great disciples. Guru ji described their stories, which were written down by Bhai Mani Singh in the form of a book.

Bhai Vir Singh came across a manuscript copy of this book copied in early nineteenth century. According to Bhai Vir Singh, the language of this book made it clear that it was written more than 150 years earlier. This was first printed in book form in 1912 AD and is now available in reprint form from Bhai Vir Singh Sahitya Sadan, Bhai Vir Singh Marg, New Delhi.

Most of the disciples who came to Guru ji were desirous of liberation so as to end their cycle of birth and death. They were from diverse backgrounds like coolies, carpenters, businessmen, government officials, soldiers, farmers, teachers and learned persons etc. Depending upon their karmic and mental level, Guru ji prescribed the type of physical service, meditation, charities or *kirtan* and discourses etc. for them.

As explained in the story of Bhai Banwali and Parasram (para 7.8) Guru Granth Sahib has instructions for all types and levels of devotees. Just as a medical practitioner though has medicines for all diseases but before prescribing any one of them, he checks up the patient to diagnose the cause of the malady. Similarly a Guru oriented disciple will examine a seeker of Truth and advise him the correct course of spiritual discipline. This fact becomes amply clear on reading this book and every body may find advice to their state of evolution.

The teachings of the Sikh Gurus are about the Eternal Lord. These are therefore beyond time, space, country, race, caste or creed. These are as relevant today as they were five centuries ago, during the times of Guru Nanak Dev.

When I came across this book, I thought that this gem of spiritual instructions by the Sikh Gurus should be accessible to all seekers of Truth from the Sikh as well as other religions. Since the reach of *Gurmukhi* script was limited, its translation in English was inescapable, so that it could be circulated all over India and foreign countries. Hence I have undertaken the task of translation.

The subjects dealt with in this book are as varied as the number of stories. It has innermost secrets of meditation,

Vedanta, karam Yoga, bhakti Yoga, Gyan Yoga, renunciation, control of senses, mind, charity, achieving of single minded concentration, austerities etc. A number of stories help correct understanding of certain historical facts.

My thanks are due to Miss Puneet Kaur who set the book on computer with great devotion. May the Lord bless her.

I am sure this humble effort will help innumerable readers to learn what Bhai Mani Singh had heard from Guru Gobind Singh.

August 2009

G. S. Chauhan
 B-202 Shree Ganesh Appts.
 Plot No. 12-B; Sector 7, DWARKA
 New Delhi-110075
 Tel: 011-25086357
 email: gschauhan1@rediffmail.com

IK ONKAR
SATNAM SRI WAHEGURU

Preface to the Original Book *"Sikhan di Bhagat Mala"*

By
Shahid Bhai Mani Singh

Once some devotees requested Bhai Mani Singh that Bhai Gurdas in his 11th ballad has described the qualities of true devotees from the time of Guru Nanak Dev to Guru Har Gobind. So they desired to know the achievements and the way of life of these exalted persons to be able to emulate them.

Bhai Mani Singh appreciated the suggestion. He said that once he too had made a similar request to Guru Gobind Singh and whatever Guru ji very kindly explained, he would narrate that. He advised the devotees to listen very carefully with one pointed mind and act on it in their daily lives. They would thus be blessed with discipleship.

Guru Gobind Singh has blessed that the fruit of listening to the dialogues in this book will be the same as that of listening to all compositions of Bhai Gurdas. Bhai Mani Singh has stated that he is narrating the stories exactly as given by the 10th Master.

Brief Life Sketch of Scholar-Martyr Bhai Mani Singh Ji

At typically critical and chaotic times in the life of any community, some unique leader or a martyr does come up to save it from total canker and collapse. Sikh community was facing just such a situation after passing away of Guru Gobind Singh at Nanded (Maharashtra state) and martyrdom of Banda Singh Bahadur. Bhai Mani Singh played his role in such a critical time when the Sikhs were paralyzed and divided into self confronting groups and facing the threat of annihilation at the hands of Delhi's Mughal emperor Farrukhsiyar and Punjab's new governor Abdul Samad at Lahore. Bhai Mani Singh not only united all the warring groups but simultaneously completed the task of compiling the writings of Guru Gobind Singh in the form of "Dasam Granth", establishing the sanctity of "Guru Granth Sahib" as the reigning Guru, creating literature to provide spiritual needs of the Sikhs and preaching the tenants of Sikhism to the masses so as to instill faith in them.

Bhai Mani Singh was born at Kabowal village of Malwa (i.e. Patiala region) in a family of petty peasants. His grandfather Sh. Balu Ram is believed to have sacrificed his life at the battle of Kartarpur while fighting for the 6th Guru Shri Hargobind. Bhai Sahib's father, Sh.Kala Ram was a staunch follower of Sikh Gurus and used to visit Kiratpur, which was then the seat of the 7th Guru, Shri Har Rai.

On the eve of Baisakhi, Shri Kala Ram visited Anandpur, which was at that time the headquarters of the 9th Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur alongwith his 7 years old son then Mani Ram. Mani Ram and Gobind Rai happened to be of almost same age group. Therefore, during his stay at

Anandpur, Mani Ram was emotionally mesmerized by Gobind Rai. Both became play mates. This relation lasted for life. For the next 33 years of a concentrated historic era, both sustained an unbreakable bond.

Young Mani Ram, temperamentally tended extraordinarily towards spiritualism and educational pursuits right from his early age. He is said to have, soon mastered various branches of knowledge. With the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur in November 1675, the young Gobind Rai became the successor Guru. He and his impassioned followers reshaped their strategies for dynamic action. Mani Ram stood steadfastly with his mentor and master all the while. Bhai Mani Singh, for long, a constant companion of his Guru, was also a conspicuous writer and included in the galaxy of 52 picked up scholars at Paonta Sahib (Nahan in Himachal Pradesh). Bhai Mani Singh was a captivating *katha Vachik* i.e. narrator of history and explanations of Gurbani. His style was arresting. He was adept in stirring emotions and injecting new spirit among his audience. He was specially commissioned by Guru Gobind Singh for preparing 3rd and final edition of *Adi Granth* and he also himself scribed some copies of the *Adi Granth*. He also wrote some explicit annotations of selected compositions of Bhai Gurudas apart from those of *Japji*, *Asa di Var* and *Sidh Gosht* etc. His elaborations on "Rehat" and "Maryada" proved historic trend setters for the Sikh community during most critical times after Guru Gobind Singh. Later when he was *Jathedar* of *Akal Takhat*, he wrote *Bhagat Ratnavali* or *Sikhan di Baghat Mala* (this book), *Gyan Ratnavali* and some other inspiring books. He thus dispensed an amalgam of *Gyan* (knowledge), *karam* (action) and *Bhagti* (devotion), the needed antibiotic for social, cultural and political malaise so as to integrate the Sikhs into a community of fearless fighters, righteous crusaders and saint soldiers.

Some time before the creation of *khalsa*, Guru Gobind Singh appointed Bhai Mani Singh as his adviser-in-chief and *Dewan* in view of his credibility and qualities of head and heart. He was baptized as "Singh" on the historic

day of *Baisakhi* April 13,1699 A.D. along with his family by the *Panj Pyaras* in the first batch of *Amritdhari*s when Guru Gobind Singh also received baptism. Bhai Mani Ram thus became Bhai Mani Singh.

The Sodhi *Masands* in occupation of Sri Hari Mandir at Amritsar had not permitted Guru Tegh Bhadur to enter into the complex and had even threatened his life. In 1699 A.D., Guru Gobind Singh forcibly evicted them. He then deputed Bhai Mani Singh to take the charge there and also bestowed a commendation certificate upon him.

In the last and fiercest battle of Anandpur (1704 A.D.) when the Anandpur fort was vacated, the entourage of Guru Gobind Singh was scattered while crossing the flooded Sirsa, a tributary of river Sutlej. While Guru Gobind Singh with his two elder sons and a few companions went to Chamkaur, his mother Mata Gujri with two younger sons accompanied by their Brahmin cook Gangu went to his ancestral village near Morinda. The third group mainly comprising of Mata Sahib Kaur and Mata Sundari(wives of Guru Gobind Singh) accompanied by Bhai Mani Singh and some other members of the household reached Delhi safely. He later established secret contact with Guru Gobind Singh in Machhiwara forest and restored his family to him. This was a meticulous operation and speaks volumes of Bhai Mani Singh's sagacity, skill, courage and selfless devotion.

Bhai Mani Singh followed Guru Gobind Singh to Deccan. From there the Guru sent his wives again under most dependable care of Bhai Mani Singh. On account of sudden death of Guru Gobind Singh at Nanded in October 1708 A.D., Bhai Mani Singh could never meet his Master physically after that.

With the excruciating martyrdom of **Banda Singh Bahadur** in 1716 A.D., the Sikhs by and large felt themselves in terrible straits and rudderless. There was serious rivalry between the *Bandei* i.e. followers of Banda Singh Bahadur and *Tat Khalsa* the followers of original traditions of Guru Gobind Singh. Bhai Mani Singh who

had headquartered himself at Amritsar as *Jathedar* of Akal Takhat, as a father figure, played a key role in uniting the community. He even, resorted to force as and when needed. Mehnat Singh, the representative of *Bandei*s lost his life and supremacy of *Tat Khalsa* was restored. The union ceremony was performed under the leadership of Bhai Mani Singh as *Jathedar* of Akal Takhat. Bhai Mani Singh's efforts filled the vacuum in the leadership and the supremacy of the "Akal Takhat" was accepted by one and all in the community. There was a positive metamorphosis. The hiding "Singhs" started their swoops on the Mughal armies. In the following years even the terrible foreign invaders, like Nadir Shah Durrani and Ahmed Shah Abdali had to confess the reckonable force and perceptible feel of the Sikhs. It can be said that the foundation of Sikh empire of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was laid by Bhai Mani Singh.

Bhai Mani Singh paid special and meticulous personal attention to management of finances. "*Guru's Golak*" was a sacred community fund. He ensured that expences were judiciously incurred and properly accounted for. As a measure of abundant caution, he apprised Mata Sundari of the financial accounts periodically to discharge his personal integrity and responsibility.

Bhai Mani Singh not only performed preaching and discourses at Amritsar but also toured country side to kindle the flame of Guru's teachings and conversion of peasantry into "Singhs". These neo Sikhs provided the enforcement to the hiding groups keeping the Mughal armies at bay. Maintaining gorilla warfare for a long time needs lots of money, rations, armaments and manpower. As an intense observer and *Jathedar* Of Akal Takhat, Bhai Mani Singh realized the difficult situation and decided to bring all the sikh armies on a common platform for demarcating their goal and action plan. He therefore decided to organize a huge congregation of sikhs at Amritsar to serve as "*Sarbat Khalsa*" or general body meeting to pass common resolutions acceptable to all

groups. Bhai Mani Singh was not a *persona-non-grata* with the Mughal rulers. They took him as a harmless pious saint-academician Head Priest. So Bhai mani Singh obtained administrative approval from Lahore Durbar on the condition of paying Rs 1000/- as fees after the function.

Zakaria Khan, the governor of Lahore tried to be cunning. He thought of grabbing the money and also hit the gathered Sikhs hard by a deceitful swoop. Bhai Mani Singh being a pious man had many sympathizers among the Muslims and court officials. So the news leaked out and the whole plan misfired. The gathered Sikhs were on caution and quite alert. So a number of Zakaria Khan's men lost their lives at the hands of the escaping Sikhs.

Bhai Mani Singh refused to pay the agreed sum on the plea that the expected offerings did not materialize due to Zakaria's hasty and fraudulent action. Thus Zakaria lost not only the money but also a number of his men and made a mockery of himself before his superiors, rivals and commons. The angry, raging Zakaria obtained a *Fatwa* from a *kazi* and got Mani Singh and his companion Dewan Singh arrested. As punishment they were to either accept Islam and to denounce Sikhism or to be pincered into pieces. Zakaria thought that conversion of *Jathedar* of Akal Takhat would demoralize the whole of sikh community or his death would serve as a useful deterrent. Heroically, Bhai Mani Singh belied Zakaria's hopes. He was all smiles when he was cut piece-meal on June 24, 1737. He steadfastly refused to get converted or to divulge any information on the sikh armies. It is believed that when Bhai Mani Singh with his two sons in chains were produced in the court of Zakaria, defying the court etiquettes, they raised *jaikaras* (slogans) of "Wahe Guru Ji ka Khalsa, Wahe Guru Ji ki Fateh".

Bhai Mani Singh's life account undoubtedly shows that he was paradigm of greatness, self surrender, self sacrifice, scholarship and swordmanship. He served as an anchor for the sikh community in the most delicate times. He can rightly be called "*Sant-Sipahi*" or a saint soldier and a Martyr.

Chapter 1

Characteristics of a Perfect Disciple

Bhai Gurdas, a noted scholar had the good fortune of being the scribe of the original Guru Granth Sahib written under the instructions of Guru Arjun Dev ji. He has also authored a lot of poetry in the form of ballads (*Vaars*). The first twelve stanzas of his eleventh ballad describe the characteristics of a perfect disciple. From the 13th to the 31st stanza, he has listed the names of well-known disciples of Sri Guru Nanak Dev to Sri Guru Har Gobind Sahib.

This chapter contains the gist of the first twelve stanzas.

STANZA ONE

Guru Has Unlimited Treasures of Name & Divine Knowledge

The kings and emperors belong to this world and they collect wealth, which is perishable. They leave it behind when they die. Guru Nanak Dev and his successors are the true emperors as they have the true wealth of God's Name and Divine Knowledge. Those devotees who serve them are blessed with this true wealth and their cycle of birth and death is terminated. The worldly kings rule only in their own territory but the Gurus rule over the whole world. A king may bestow wealth on a servant, but only when he is pleased, by some service rendered. Therefore this magnanimity is false as it is merely an exchange. On the other hand the *Satguru* when pleased shows his kindness

by leading one to the assembly of devotees and showering the true wealth of God's Name and Divine Knowledge thus ending his cycle of birth and death.

The Gods in heaven who have drunk nectar of Lord Brahma, may live for one million years, but have not been able to eliminate their negative emotions i.e. jealousy etc. On the other hand the devotees who listen to Guru's words i.e., *Gurbani* realize their True Self. They get rid of anger, ego, lust, jealousy and other desires. They attain liberation.

In a king's court wine is served only to those who can maintain state secrets. The intoxication of wine lasts for half a day only but those intoxicated with Guru's words are infused with a sense of service and love all the time. They come to know about secrets of the past, present and future. There is an unlimited treasure of *Gurbani* (Guru's words) in the Guru's court.

STANZA TWO

Guru's Disciples are Egoless and Above Worldly Enjoyments

The knowledge that the disciples receive is of two types. One is from books and worldly teachers. The other is the True Knowledge, which comes directly from the Gurus in the form of '*Gurbani*'. One who absorbs the nectar of '*Gurbani*' becomes a friend and confidant of the Lord and attains Divine Knowledge. But a person who after achieving Divine Knowledge begins to boast and preach his own interpretation of Guru's wisdom is a sinner or a criminal.

In Urdu, a confidant is called '*mehram*' but with addition of a dot in Urdu script, it becomes '*mujrim*' i.e. a criminal. Bhai Gurdas with this example has explained the disastrous effect of personal ego (the dot), which changes a person from a confidant of the Lord into a criminal. This person is like a woman who is unfaithful while professing loyalty to her husband.

Nobody blames a blind man who falls into a well but everyone will condemn a man with a lamp in his hand and good sight if he falls into a well. Thus, if an ignorant person indulges in sinful activity, nobody blames him but nobody forgives a learned person who commits a sin. Such a person is unfit to enter the Lord's court.

When a devotee goes to the Guru with no ego or false wisdom and humbly serves the disciples with zeal and devotion and takes the Guru's teachings to heart, the purity of his mind and concentration in meditation increases day by day. Those driven towards the Guru, those who have tasted the love of devotion, rise above sensual pleasures. They know that the nourishment offered by a 'chapatti' is the same whether cooked over sandalwood fire or ordinary grass and wood fire. They also know that the purpose of their every breath is to recite the Lord's Name. Therefore, it is irrelevant what they eat i.e. a dry 'chapatti' or rich puddings. Baba Sheikh Farid has urged the people to eat simple dry 'chapattis' and drink cold water rather than crave for the buttered 'chapattis' as this would only lead to discontentment.

The Guru's disciples consider the *Gurbani* to be the Guru's image and the assembly of devotees as the seat of the Supreme Being. Their devotion is their only joy. When they bow to the assembly of devotees, they are bowing to the 'Waheguru', the Supreme Being and listen to His words in the 'kirtan' of *Gurbani*. They lead a disciplined life by getting up early in the morning and reciting the *Gurbani* after their bath. They perform their worldly business honestly and share their earnings with the needy. Even though the Supreme Being is beyond reach, He can be attained through meditation on *Gurbani*. The saints know that 'Waheguru' is everywhere and resides in all beings. With this understanding, they suffer hardships on their own body, but perform acts for others' good. The saints suffer hardships on their body for their own purification, before their self-realization and for others' good after self-realization.

STANZA THREE

Surrender and Contentment

The lives of the devotees who associate with the saints, attend services in the *Gurudwara*, bow before the Guru Granth Sahib, take the teachings of '*Gurbani*' to their heart and serve and help other devotees and the needy in all possible manner, have a fruitful life. Everyone bows to the devotees who surrender themselves totally to the Guru's words. Such disciples practice fidelity to the Guru. They never get angry but are tolerant to others' anger. They are sweet and humble by nature. They consider all the disciples of the Guru to be better than themselves.

They respect other women as they would their mother and sister and love all boys as their sons. They make an honest living and are satisfied with their own earnings. They share with the needy and are kind to the poor and ignorant. They firmly and sincerely follow their routine of worship. They meditate on the '*Gurbani*', 24 hours a day and contribute one-tenth of their income (*daswandh*) in the name of Guru.

STANZA FOUR

Accept the Will of the Lord

The Guru's disciples, while sitting in the assembly of devotees absorb the '*Gurbani*' through all their senses. Their mind becomes one with *Gurbani* and accept the Will of the Lord, thereby, gradually reducing their ego. They realize that they are the lowest of the lowly and that all the glory belongs to the *Satguru* and they should use this transient body of theirs to do as much good as possible. Then only will their life be worthwhile. The Guru's word is the cup of nectar that enables the devotees to endure austerities, control anger and desires, practice yoga and dispassion. It makes them sweet natured, humble, honest and generous.

As they see the Guru's form in everybody, they make no enemies, don't plot against anybody and are not vindictive. They are especially devoted to persons who follow the Guru's precepts. They are confident that the Lord will fulfil all their needs and therefore they request only Him and do not extend their hands towards anybody else for help.

STANZA FIVE

Humility and Discrimination

When one becomes the disciple of Sikh Gurus, one's life changes in obvious as well as in subtle ways. One has to be constantly aware of one's emotions so as not to allow anger and desires to influence him. One should constantly guard against any slip ups, as following the Guru's path is like walking on a sword's edge. The accumulated negativities of many births are dispelled by the grace of saints. One who has not yet renounced his ego cannot become Guru's true disciple.

The true disciples get rid of their desires like oil that is pressed out of seeds in the oil press. They develop their sense of discrimination, which allows them to differentiate between truth and falsehood just like the royal swan, which can separate milk from water. They become firm in Divine Knowledge and while reciting the *Gurbani*, they renounce their ego, false pride, attributes, etc. This happens because they realize that the human body is perishable and hence they renounce the bodily pleasures.

The true disciples collect the precious pearls of the Lord's Name, charity, purity, dispassion etc from the ocean of *Gurbani*. Knowing that the world is perishable they do not accept anything from anybody other than from the Supreme Being. They treat *Gurbani* as the form of Unmanifested Lord and the assembly of devotees as the Lord's Dwelling, and therefore they visit the *Gurudwara* regularly.

Once they take *Gurbani* to heart, they merge with the Lord. From then on they are filled with Divine Fervour and

are like a dumb person who is not able to describe the taste of sweets. Having been thus blessed with the Divine Knowledge they are fully satiated.

STANZA SIX

Deep Love of Guru's Lotus Feet

When the disciples meditate on the Guru's lotus feet, they drink the nectar of his teachings, '*charanamrit*' (the water in which the Guru's feet have been washed). While in deep meditation they are intoxicated with the essence of *Gurbani* just like the sunflower, which blooms only when the sun comes out and follows its direction throughout the day. Their hearts glow with divinity when contemplating on the Guru's lotus feet. The gentle lady disciples are likened to the beautiful moon faced flower as they think of the Guru's lotus feet as the moon. Their hearts glow and murmur with joy like a black bee (*bhanwara*), which sustains itself on nectar. When the devotees contemplate on the Guru's lotus feet they don't need the light of the sun and the moon to show them the path. They are all aglow with the pleasure of having attained the nectar of the Guru's feet (*charanamrit*).

Such disciples are blessed with the powers to weed out ignorance from the minds of other devotees. They overcome their tendencies to worship graves, tombs etc and can discriminate against knowledge and actions that are of worldly nature. This can be likened to the disappearance of stars when the sun rises. The disciples are then in a state of permanent bliss.

STANZA SEVEN

Guru's Teachings – A Great Uniting Force

With his mercy on humankind the Guru has made all the four social classes as one. Once a person becomes a devotee he automatically becomes pure irrespective of his class. Bhai Saheb has explained this with the example of

the betel leaf (*paan*), which contains white lime paste, grey catechu, yellowish areca pieces and the green betel leaf. When one chews such a prepared betel leaf it produces a uniform red color. Similarly, the four social classes of the Hindus i.e. *Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishas and Shudras*, all become *Khalsa* (pure).

The Guru's word is like the philosopher's stone that has the power of turning everything it touches into gold. The *Gurbani* converts the people from the four social classes, the four stages of life i.e. eight walks of life to "*Atam Gyanis*" (those who know the Truth). Such liberated souls, when in physical body, function like other human beings but they do not possess body consciousness. They are always one with the Supreme Being. They are absorbed in Him once they leave the body.

A Guru's disciple blessed with Guru's word and scent of the Guru's precepts can liberate any sinner and convert him into a spiritual person with his teachings and influence. Thus, such disciples who have drunk the '*charanamrit*' are invaluable as rare precious pearls. The Guru's disciples absorb his teachings and produce pearls of wisdom for the liberation of sinners. They develop psychic qualities like clairvoyance etc and are always in bliss of the enjoyment of spiritual oneness with the Supreme Being.

STANZA EIGHT

The Extent of Devotion of the Gurmukhs

The Guru oriented devotees, when they sit in the company of saints ("*sadhu sangat*"), get completely absorbed in the *Gurbani* and enjoy the intoxicating effect of the love of the Lord in this state. Their condition is like that of the Indian red legged partridge ('*chakore*') who waits for the nectar rays of the moon or that of the male peacock who dances on hearing the thundering clouds, or that of the honey bees who hover on the flowers to collect the nectar.

Just like we cannot predict the movements of the fish in

the ocean, the mental and spiritual state of the *Gurmukhs* is beyond assessment. The *Gurmukhs* know what is beyond the scope of human knowledge and assessment and thus can put up with that what is beyond the capacity of ordinary human beings.

These *Gurmukhs* have transcended the three qualities of *Maya* i.e. *Satwik*, *Rajsik* and *Tamsik* states. They are in the fourth state i.e. *Turia* or beyond *Maya*. This is due to the greatness of the Lord, the Supreme Being.

STANZA NINE

Dedication to the Master (Guru)

A very high level of dedication is required of a devotee towards his Master or *Satguru*. Bhai Gurdas has given us a few examples of extreme devotion from nature.

1. The tortoise lays and buries its eggs on the sandy bank but itself lives in the water. The eggs hatch due to its continuous thought towards its eggs and when hatched, the babies are drawn towards the mother in the water.
2. When the Siberian cranes lay their eggs, they are hatched due to the continuous thought towards the eggs. When hatched, they take the babies and fly away.
3. The duck lays its eggs near a hen who hatches its eggs. When the eggs are hatched, the duck comes and leads the chicks to the water. The ducklings wade into the water with the duck and the chickens start foraging for food in the litter with the hen.

This explains the state of high souls who are born and brought up as ordinary people but suddenly change into highly Self-realized souls on meeting their Mentor. (For example, Swami Vivekanand became a great Swami from an ordinary worldly boy called Narayan on meeting Paramahansa Sri Ramakrishna.)

4. The Indian cuckoo lays its eggs in the crow's nest, but as soon as they are hatched, the cuckoo comes and takes the babies away.
5. The babies of the royal swan do not find their food in the ordinary pool and have to finally go to the Mansarover lake (in Tibet) where they find the pearls. Similarly, the potential saints gravitate to their destinations, as they are not satisfied with the worldly surroundings.

The great Gurus have therefore devised the system of the assembly of saints or "sadhu sangat" where the true devotees can find the spiritual food and can be dispassionate towards *Maya*. The *Gurmukhs* are aware of the past, present and future. Thus, they are omniscient. Yet they are humble and do not let anybody know about their true state. Nobody other than the Lord is aware of their beautiful, spiritual state.

STANZA TEN

What is so Special About the Guru's Sikhs ?

In this stanza Bhai Gurdas has explained how the devotees are always in an exalted state or "*Turia*" or the fourth state that is beyond *Maya*. They can do more good than the philosopher's stone, *bawan chandan* tree or the holy rivers put together.

'*Bawan chandan*' is a sandal wood tree, which is so fragrant that all the trees around it become sandalwood and start spreading fragrance. The *bawan chandan* does not bear any fruit but is priceless for its power to convert other trees into sandalwood. The changed trees cannot convert other trees into sandalwood, but a *Gurmukh* who is blessed by his Guru can change other people and turn them into *Gurmukhs* like him.

Even if the **herons** go to Mansarover lake, they cannot change into royal swans. Similar is the case with the world-

oriented people because they are still absorbed in the world and the three qualities of *Maya*. This is true for the impostaers who pretend to be *Gurmukhs*.

STANZA ELEVEN

The Guru can Elevate the Devotee to be the Guru

Guru Nanak Dev elevated Bhai Lehna as Guru Angad Dev and Guru Angad Dev made Bhai Amardas the next Guru. Thus, the deserving disciples can become the Guru by the Guru's grace.

A *Gurmukh* is always in the fourth state i.e. *Turia* (beyond the three 'gunas' or the qualities of *Maya*). Other than the Saints and the *Gurmukhs*, the whole world is in these three states. The yogis (practitioners of *Hath Yoga*) are in the state of *Turia* only till they are in the state of *samadhi*.

Iron that is changed into gold is as good as any other gold; the *neem* tree which is very bitter becomes sandal wood under the influence of '*bawan chandan*'. Similarly, the worst of criminals change into exalted saints under the influence of *Gurmukh*, like Valmiki , a dacoit who became a great sage (and wrote '*Ramayana*') under the influence of Sage Narada.

Any river, which joins the Ganges also becomes holy. A crow can become a swan, but rarely does a swan ('*hans*') become '*Paramahansa*' i.e. an ascetic of the highest order. An ordinary person can become a saint but becoming a Guru is a rare occurrence. A *Paramahansa* is one who has the power of discrimination and such a power is bestowed upon a disciple by the rare grace of the Guru.

STANZA TWELVE

The Final Ascent of the Saints to Heights of Spirituality

In this stanza, Bhai Gurdas has explained that after the initial life as ordinary people, the saints at the appropriate time rise to heights of spirituality without any impression

of their earlier lives on their souls.

A newly hatched tortoise easily takes to the water without any fear; a baby crane is able to soar to great heights with its mother. This is very similar to the "*Shunya Samadhi*" practiced by saints. The babies of the royal swan play fearlessly in the Mansarovar Lake, a very spiritual place as great sages have meditated on its banks since time immemorial. All this happens because they have the Guru's protection and guidance.

The Indian cuckoo and the duck retrieve their babies from the crow and hen respectively just as Lord Krishna was united with his father Sri Vasudeva after growing up with the Yadavas in Vrindavan. Similarly, once the Gursikhs imbibe Gurbani and become "*Jiwan Muktas*" or Self-realized souls, they never go back to their ignorant self. Instead, they live honest and frugal lives and humbly serve the needy.

At this stage the disciples of Bhai Gurdas eagerly wanted to know whether persons having the qualities described by him in the foregoing stanzas were actually living among them. In answer to this query Bhai Gurdas has listed in the stanzas 13 to 31 the names of all the great souls who were transformed from ordinary worldly persons into great saints as a result of coming into contact with Guru Nanak Dev and his successors.

The following chapters deal with thus mentioned saints individually. Their stories were told by Sri Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru, to Bhai Mani Singh, who recorded them in his book "*Sikhan Di Bhagat Mala*". I have made an humble effort to translate them into English for the benefit of the English-speaking devotees.

Chapter 2

The Disciples of Sri Guru Nanak Dev

The Importance of Purity of Mind for Reflecting God-Like Qualities

2.1 Bhai Taru Popat

Bhai Taru Popat was only around twelve years old when he met Guru Nanak Dev. He expressed a desire to surrender himself to Guru ji as he had learned that total surrender brings peace of mind. On hearing this Guru ji asked him what was the hurry to renounce all as he was so young, he had not even tasted the worldly pleasures? To this Bhai Taru replied that when he observed his mother light the stove using small twigs and big pieces of wood he noticed that the small twigs burned first. So he assumed that death too would take the young first. Therefore he did not have much time to waste and wanted to save his soul as soon as possible from the cycle of birth and death.

Guru Nanak Dev was so pleased with this answer that he blessed him saying, "O Taru, you will be the savior of your whole dynasty. Earn an honest income and share it with the needy, meditate on 'Waheguru' as you inhale and exhale. Protect your mind from anger, jealousy etc and keep it pure".

Then Guru Nanak Dev gave the following illustration:

A king once made a beautiful temple and installed idols studded with jewels. On the wall opposite the idols he placed a highly polished large opal stone. The stone was so

skillfully polished that it reflected the idols just like a mirror. Thus the mind, which is free from negative emotions and is very pure, is capable of reflecting the qualities of the Lord.

Bhai Taru Popat henceforth meditated on the Lord, worked honestly and served the other devotees. He became a great saint of his time.

If You Shield Others the Lord Will Shield You

2.2 Bhai Moola Keer

When Bhai Moola Keer met Guru Nanak Dev, he was living recklessly. Guru ji advised him to stop drinking, gambling and womanizing. He showed him the way of a true devotee. Bhai Moola followed Guru ji's instructions and changed. He began to associate with the assembly of devotees '*Sadhu Sangat*' and immersed himself in the kirtan of '*Gurbani*'. He made an honest income and served all the Guru's devotees with love.

A thief heard of Bhai Moola's generosity and planned to cheat him. He memorized '*Gurbani*' and gained entry into Bhai Moola's house and heart, pretending to be a great devotee of Guru Nanak Dev. While enjoying the hospitality, the thief found out that the family jewels were kept in a box in the bedroom. One night he crept into the bedroom and stole the box. However, as he tried to leave the house he found the front door locked. He hid the box near the door and woke up Bhai Moola to open the door on the pretext of going to the fields for toilet. When he was told of the toilet facility in the house, he still insisted on visiting the fields. Not wanting to annoy a guest, Bhai Moola opened the door to let him go out. As the thief was picking up the jewel box it fell down. Bhai Moola quietly picked up the box and handed it to the thief and allowed him to go.

The next morning when his wife found her jewels missing, Bhai Moola quietly took her aside and narrated

the incident of the previous night and later bought new jewels for her. When Guru Nanak Dev heard about this incident he was very pleased with his magnanimity and blessed him thus "Just like you have kept the secret of one who deceived you by pretending to be my disciple, the Lord too will keep all your secrets. Treat the Guru's words as your Guru and meditate on them as your true master '*Satguru*'. May God bless you."

Bhai Moola Keer followed Guru ji's instructions and lived to become a highly revered saint.

Worship the Unmanifest Aspect of the Lord

2.3 Bhai Pirtha and Bhai Khera

Bhai Pirtha and Bhai Khera belonged to a Soni Kshatriya family. They met Guru Nanak Dev at Kartarpur (now in Pakistan) while he was giving a discourse explaining the meaning of '*Gurbani*'. They were mesmerized by Guru ji's words. At the end of the discourse Guru ji asked them to express any desires they had to which they prayed "O savior of the helpless, always keep us under your protection, take away our desires, bless us with devotion and always keep us under your protective umbrella".

Answering their request Guru ji asked them to always serve the saints and devotees with all their resources and visit *dharamshalas*, as they would find him present in the assembly of saints. They would be under his protection when they made an honest living and shared it with the needy.

Guru Nanak Dev explained that one should be attached to his word, which is his unmanifest form rather than to his body or his manifest form. If the devotees are attached to the Guru's body, they will have to face the grief of separation when he is not physically present. But if they focus on his word ('*Gurbani*'), they would never be separated from him, as it is Eternal.

Note: *Ashtpadi* 16 of *Sukhmani Sahib* explains this aspect in greater detail.

True Significance of Namaz and Rozas

2.4 Bhai Mardana Rababi

One day Guru Nanak Dev was sitting at Talwandi Rai Bhoi (Nankana Sahib, now in Pakistan) when a professional musician came and played on his *rabab* (a stringed instrument) and sang pure Hindustani *ragas* (musical notes). Guru ji was enthralled and impressed by the musician and on inquiring about him found out that he was Dana belonging to the *Mirasi* caste, a community of singers and jesters in Punjab. Guru ji complimented him on his skill and knowledge of *ragas*. He asked him to play the '*rabab*' only in the praise of the Lord and in return promised him success in this as well as the next world. At this Bhai Dana replied that he was a poor man and earned his livelihood by playing for the rich patrons. As for earning the blessings in the next world, he offered '*namaz*' five times a day and also observed thirty '*rozas*'. If he stopped playing for money his family would go hungry.

Guru ji then explained to him that it was God who was feeding him and his family .It is God who takes care of the entire world. Therefore he should get rid of his mistaken assumption. Then Guru ji asked him to explain the real significance of the *Namaz* and *Rozas*. Bhai Dana was not able to explain its significance but only knew that the *Namaz* is offered five times a day and the *Rozas* come once every year. Then Guru ji asked him if he knew where the *Namaz* and *Rozas* were at other times? Bhai Dana replied that they were at God's house but he had not seen it.

Guru Nanak Dev told him that God lived in the hearts of saints and saints live in the heart of God as saints meditate on God with each breath. Therefore *Namaz* resides in the hearts of saints. The saints have no desires and eat frugally

therefore the *Rozas* reside in their hearts. So those who accompany the saints are blessed with contentment. Guru ji told Bhai Dana that when God would ask him about his good deeds i.e. if he had shared his wealth with the needy, if he remembered God with every breath {twenty four thousand times per day} he would not be able to give any answer but would only hang his head in shame. Then, when the angels would beat him and he would turn to the prophets and saints for help, they would not be able to help him as he never meditated on the Lord's name inspite of their prodding. Then, when he would turn to his family members for help he would find that they were also in the same boat. Finally he would be imprisoned in a dark cell and be forced to repent for his sins.

Guru ji promised him that if he became Mardana from Dana, meditated on His Name '*Waheguru*' and devoted his life to singing praises of the Lord while keeping the company of saints, he would be spared from such a horrible fate and be released from the miserable cycle of life and death. Mardana bowed to Guru Nanak Dev ji's will and agreed to accompany him on his mission of mercy and awakening the world from the slumber of ignorance. Guru ji promised to look after his family and relatives.

Guru Nanak Dev then recited the following:

*"Panj Niwaja wakhat panj panja panje Nau,
Pahila Sach halal dui tija khair Khudai,
Chauthi niyat raas mun pajawi sifit sanai,
Karni kalma akh ke tan Muslaman sadai,
Nanak jete kuriar kure koori pai".*

i.e. there are five *Namazes* observed at five times, all these are the Names of God. The first thing to be observed is Truth; the second is honest earning; the third is to wish well for all and share one's earnings with the needy; the fourth is to keep one's mind clean and have faith in the Lord; the fifth is to remember God with every breath; and the sixth is to perform good deeds.

This is the true precept (*Kalma*) and by observing this only, can one be called a Musalman. Thus, Bhai Mardana became Guru ji's disciple and companion for life and accompanied him everywhere. Finally upon his death Guru ji performed his last rites himself.

The Meaning of Satwik and Rajsik Austerities

2.5 Bhai Prithimal and Rama Didi

Bhai Prithimal and Rama Didi were two great saints blessed by Guru Nanak Dev. On their first meeting, they requested Guru ji to show them an easy path to enable them to merge in Lord Vishnu. Guru Nanak Dev ji told them about three types of austerities i.e.

- 1) Tamsik austerities. It is like staying naked in winter and summer, starving oneself, sitting in water etc, or causing oneself extreme physical discomfort. These are again of two types. One is to perform these austerities with specific desires in mind. This results in attainment of '*Siddhies*' and '*Riddhies*'. The second is to perform these austerities without any desires, which results in purification of the mind.

But these austerities are very difficult and do not guarantee ridding oneself of anger and desires. Guru ji advised them to follow Satvik or Rajsik austerities, which he has explained as under.

- 2) Rajsik austerities. It means controlling of one's senses i.e. restraining the eyes from seeing wrong, ears from hearing falsehoods, tongue from backbiting, hands from theft and evil deeds and the feet from going to undesirable places. Instead, the eyes should be used for seeing saints and reading holy books, the tongue should be used to praise the Lord, the hands should be used to serve the saints and give charity and the feet should lead one to *Gurudwaras* and the abode of saints.

3) Satvik austerities. Guru ji explained that when one sits in meditation, various thoughts arise and the mind wavers. One should then make all efforts to bring the mind back from the desires to meditation. One should not tire of this effort. Guru ji likened this to feeding medicine to a horse. When the horse keeper puts the medicine in the horse's mouth, the horse spits it out. The keeper continues to keep his hand in the horse's mouth till it swallows the medicine and thereby recovers from his illness. If the keeper had lost heart and not persisted in feeding the medicine, the horse would not have become healthy. Similarly, the mind also tries all the tricks in its bag and swings from thought to thought. It needs great effort and stamina on one's part to stay focused on meditation. Once the mind stops fluctuating, one enjoys peace and bliss.

The two devotees accepted and acted on Guru ji's advice. When they served saints and meditated on Gurbani, they realized that when the Holy Word sinks into the heart via the mind, one attains freedom from the cycle of birth and death. All their family members were also liberated along with them by the grace of Guru Nanak Dev.

Rise Above Body Consciousness

2.6 Daulat Khan Lodhi

Daulat Khan Lodhi was the *Nawab* of Sultanpur Lodhi (near Jallandhar). Guru Nanak Dev's brother-in-law Bhai Jairam (husband of Bibi Nanaki) was in charge of his stores. On his recommendation, Daulat Khan Lodhi appointed Guru Nanak Dev to be in charge of the ration shop. When the weights were placed before Guru ji, he saluted the quarter seer weight saying that it is the smallest and humblest weight, therefore worthy of praise. It is like the feet, thought to be the lowest part of the body and yet it is only the feet,

which are worshipped and no other part of the body.

Guru Nanak Dev would offer food and clothes to all the holy people visiting Sultanpur. As estimated by the others, Guru ji's expenses on charities became exorbitant. One day, Daulat Khan's minister reported the matter to him and said that Guru Nanak Dev was spending on charities five times more than what is spent by Khan on his army. Daulat Khan summoned Bhai Jairam and ordered an audit of the ration shop. The audit revealed that everything was in order and even ten thousand rupees were due to Guru Nanak Dev. Then Daulat Khan said that the person in charge of the ration shops appear to be an exalted soul and that he should be made his minister. Guru ji declined the offer and left the services of the *Nawab*. From then on he started spending all his time in the company of saints.

One day when Daulat Khan sent for Guru Nanak Dev, it was time for prayers. So the *Nawab* and his '*Qazi*' (officer in charge of justice and religion) began to offer the *Namaz*. While they were praying Guru ji began to smile. The *Qazi* noticed it and complained to the *Nawab* that Guru ji was making fun of their prayers. Guru ji explained that while both were going through the motions of praying, their minds were not on God. The *Qazi* was worried about his newly born calf falling into the well. Therefore God had not accepted their prayers and since the *Qazi* was leading the prayers, he was the culprit.

Daulat Khan Lodhi was impressed and convinced that Guru Nanak Dev was an exalted soul and a prophet who should be worshipped. The *Qazi* immediately objected saying that if he was a real prophet then he should convert to Islam.

One day Guru Nanak Dev went to the river for a bath accompanied by a companion. When he dived into the water he did not come out. The companion reported the drowning of Guru ji to his brother-in-law, Bhai Jairam and *Nawab* Daulat Khan. They tried their best to find him by sending divers with fishing nets but to no avail.

After eight days, Guru Nanak Dev appeared upstream. When the *Nawab* and the *Qazi* went to meet him, the *Qazi* remarked that the Guru ji must be a magician and that the *Nawab* was mistaken about his holiness. Then the *Nawab* inquired whether Guru Nanak Dev was a Hindu or a Muslim, Guru Nanak Dev replied

*"Koi akhe bhutna, koi kahe betala.
Koi akhe aadmi Nanak bechara.
Bhaia diwana Shah ka Nanak baurana.
Hau Hari bin awar na jana."*

Guru Nanak Dev said that this body was composed of five elements (earth, water, fire, air and ether). Some one said that he was an apparition; some said he was a ghost and others said that he was a man. After the saints gave him Divine Knowledge, he considered himself a witness to this body. The body consciousness, which was with him since his birth had now gone. He was firm in the conviction that he was the '*Atma*' or the soul and that there was no distinction between him and the Supreme Being. He and the Supreme Being were like the water and its' waves. Since he was convinced about this instruction by his Supreme Teacher (the Lord), he did not recognize anything but the Supreme Being. It was the body, which was Hindu or Muslim. He was the witness to his body and hence separate from the body.

Nawab Daulat Khan, on hearing this, bowed before Guru ji and said that he recognized Guru Nanak Dev as the prophet of the Supreme Being. He said that he had but one desire, which was to see the *Khwaja Peer* (angel of waters) as he had heard that *Khwaja Peer* was an eternal sage since the earth and sky were destructible, the air and water were permanent.

Guru Nanak Dev told him that, if the *Nawab* so desired, he could elevate Khan himself to be the *Khwaja Peer*. *Nawab Daulat Khan* replied that though Guru ji was capable of doing anything, he was desirous of having at least one glimpse of the *Peer* himself.

Guru Nanak Dev advised the *Nawab* to meditate. He said that all the elements like earth, sky, water, fire and ether had the power of '*Atma*' (the Spirit) and that he was also the '*Atma*'.

The *Nawab* tried to meditate, but was not able to do so for a long period of time. So he requested Guru ji for help. Guru ji asked him to try and continue the meditation. He asked the *Nawab* to concentrate on the tip of his nose (the middle of the eyebrows or the '*Ajna Chakra*') and to bring back his concentration as soon as it drifts away. Guru ji assured him of his blessings in this effort and that he would have a glimpse of *Khwaja Peer* in the night.

After about nine hours, early in the morning, *Khwaja Peer* appeared in a vision to the Khan. The room became brightly lit as the *Peer* appeared holding two vessels brimming with jewels. First he bowed to Guru Nanak Dev and offered him the jewels. Guru ji informed the Khan about the arrival of the *Peer* who then bowed before him. Guru spoke to the *Peer* telling him that henceforth Daulat Khan would be the King of the Water Kingdom. The *Peer* immediately expressed his happiness and was ready to serve him or Guru ji, as he desired. *Nawab Daulat Khan* said that as the *Peer* was an expert in the management of the water kingdom so he should continue his good work as his minister.

Guru ji then declared that *Nawab Daulat Khan* would continue in the world for another five years and then would join the *Peer* on leaving the earthly body. So the *Peer* should continue to work as his minister and after five years both would merge with the Supreme Being.

The *Nawab* was thoroughly devoted to Guru ji and spread his message all over Punjab.

Control of the Mind and Senses is the Highest Austerity

2.7 *Bhai Malo and Bhai Manga*

Bhai Malo and *Bhai Manga* were very devoted disciples of

Guru Nanak Dev. They used to give discourses explaining the God's word and sing His praises in *kirtan*. One day they prayed to Guru Nanak Dev and asked him to bless them so that they may attain self-realization.

Guru Nanak Dev told them about '*Tamsik Tapas*' or hard austerities. In this the aspirants sit inside fires, in the water, in extreme cold, observe fasts, live at holy places, roam about from place to place and live on roots and fruits to attain self-realization. Though this method is very difficult and tough on the human body and might result in the aspirant attaining some psychic powers, it does not result in the attainment of Divine Wisdom or Knowledge.

However, if one can control one's senses, and make the mind free of desires, spend one's time in listening to and singing the praises of the Lord, one then gains much more as compared to the earlier method.

Bhai Malo appeared a little confused and confessed that he was under the impression that the harder the labour the sweeter the fruit. And how was it that an easier and more comfortable practice of controlling the senses and mind brought greater gains.

Guru Nanak Dev ji then explained that people doing hard labor were generally illiterate and earned less. For example, a woodcutter or a potter worked very hard and for long hours but earned much less than a shopkeeper. The cloth merchants or jewellers worked even less, but the profits were higher. They led very comfortable lives and even their servants were well paid and learnt special skills like scrutiny of jewels and precious stones and pearls. Therefore, just doing hard labour was not enough to make a good living. Similarly, subjecting the body to hardships did not automatically endow one with Divine Knowledge. But those who controlled their senses, mind and sang the praise of the Lord were blessed with firm faith, devotion and Divine knowledge.

Both Bhai Malo and Manga were convinced by Guru ji's words. Bhai Malo spread Guru ji's word by explaining

his compositions (*katha*) from *Pothi Sahib* (a book in which Guru Nanak Dev's compositions were recorded). And Bhai Manga would sit and listen with a focused mind. Then both would sing the compositions (*kirtan*). They performed the *katha* and *kirtan* with so much devotion and love that all those who listened to them were deeply influenced and turned towards spirituality. In this way the two great souls were responsible for their own liberation as well as that of many others.

Who is Guru Oriented? (*Sanmukh*)

2.8 Bhai Kalu Khatri

Bhai Kalu Khatri came to Guru Nanak Dev as he wanted an answer to his question, "Who is Guru oriented?" Guru ji replied that he who shies away from sins and acquires virtues is Guru oriented or *Sanmukh*. Such a person should very carefully listen to the Guru's instructions and also be aware of his own state of mind. He then explained that there were four states of mind, which should be possessed by a Guru oriented person.

1. **Maitri** or Friendship: In this state of mind, a person realizes that all the good things and happiness are not only for him and that he will get only as much as is due to him as per his '*karma*' or fate.

He considers all beings as his friends and their happiness as his own. Such a person shares his wealth, knowledge and any skill that he possesses for other's well being. This state of mind is called '*maitri*' or friendship.

2. **Karuna** or Compassion: In this state of mind, if one finds others deficient in wealth, knowledge, skill, education or powers, he treats them like his own sons or younger siblings and tries to bring them up in life. Yet, there is no sign of ego in this regard. This is called compassion.

3. **'Mudta' or Appreciation:** In this state of mind, if one finds others higher than oneself in status, wealth, education or skills, he is thankful to the Lord for creating such high souls too. To put it simply, one should be as happy to hear the greatness and good of others as he is when he hears about the greatness and good of his father or Guru. One should never talk ill or gossip about others. This is called '*mudta*' or appreciation of others.
4. **'Upekhia' or Disregard:** One should teach others according to the instructions of the guru or according to one's own self acquired knowledge. One should pursue only such pupils who accept, take interest in and follow the instructions. Those who do not take interest or accept or purposefully argue and belittle the instructions should be disregarded or ignored and left alone. One should not persist with such persons, as the deep understanding required for this knowledge is not in their '*karma*' or fate. This is '*upekhia*'.

Bhai Kalu and his disciples faithfully followed these four states of mind and were liberated.

'Waheguru' Name is the Giver of the Four Boons

2.8 Bhai Seehan and Bhai Gajan

Bhai Seehan and Bhai Gajan were first cousins. They came to meet Guru Nanak Dev, and asked for his blessings to be liberated from the cycle of births and deaths. They also wanted to be blessed in this life itself with the four boons i.e.

1. *Dharma*, fulfilment of all worldly responsibilities.
 2. *Artha*, the worldly wealth.
 3. *Kama*, fulfilment of worldly desires and
 4. *Moksha*, liberation from the cycle of birth and death,
- Guru Nanak Dev told them that the Lord's or the Supreme

Being's Name was 'Waheguru'. If they meditated and repeated this Name, they would be gifted with all the four boons. Hearing this they were curious to know about the meaning of the name 'Waheguru'.

Guru Nanak Dev explained that 'Wahe' is the expression of exclamation on seeing something wonderful and beyond human understanding. The Supreme Being created the universe, humans, the animals, vegetation etc, but we are not able to see or visualize the Creator himself. This is the wonder. 'Go' means the darkness or ignorance i.e. not to be able to see or visualize the Creator is the ignorance. 'Ru' is the light, which expels darkness. Thus, it is the Supreme Being who removes our darkness of ignorance and helps us to comprehend the Lord or the Creator of the universe. Hence, He is known as 'Waheguru'.

The duo then asked, how would mere recitations of the name 'Waheguru' bestow upon them the four boons? Guru Nanak Dev explained thus:

1. When we go to meet the assembly of saints or '*sadhu sangat*', every step is equal to the fruits of 100 '*Ashvamedha Yagnas*' (horse sacrifice). This is '*Dharma*' or the fulfilment of spiritual and worldly responsibilities.
2. The worldly people work tirelessly and run after worldly possessions. But it comes automatically to the devotees of the Lord as people come to them on their own with offerings. This meets the need of '*Artha*' or wealth.
3. The desires of the devotees are fulfilled by the Lord Himself when His name is meditated upon. This is the accomplishment of '*kama*' or desires.
4. When the name 'Waheguru' is understood and its meaning finally seeps into the body, mind and intellect, one is blessed with '*Brahma Gyan*' or the Divine Knowledge. This will grant one '*mukti*' or liberation.

Hearing these words of wisdom, both Bhai Seehan and Bhai Gajan would wake up early in the morning, bathe,

recite the '*Gurbani*' i.e. Guru Nanak Dev's compositions and then go to work. All day long they would meditate on '*Wahe*' while inhaling and on '*Guru*' while exhaling. Thus, they were continuously reciting the name '*Waheguru*' all the time. They would also offer food to the disciples of the Guru ji out of their earnings. The other devotees were also aware of the generosity of the duo.

It so happened, Bhai Seehan's daughter's marriage was fixed and the groom and his people were to arrive the next day. Delicious food was cooked for the marriage feast. In the evening before the marriage, a large number of Guru Nanak Dev's devotees on their way to meet Guru ji stopped at Bhai Seehan's house. They were tired and hungry. Bhai Seehan humbly offered them the food prepared for the marriage. This worried his wife very much. Bhai Seehan was however unperturbed and said that since the food was served to Guru ji's disciples, Guru ji himself would save his honour.

The marriage party duly arrived the next morning. The lady of the house was extremely worried, but Bhai Seehan was unshakeable in his faith. He offered his prayers and unlocked the door to the room where the food was kept. Lo and behold! it was full of food fit for the king. The guests enjoyed the feast for full five days. The groom and his people, overwhelmed with Bhai Seehan's hospitality, happily left with the bride. This shows how undoubting faith in '*Waheguru*' fulfills all our desires and needs.

Note: Mary Pat Fisher in her book 'Everyday miracles in the house of God' has narrated such an incident at Shiv Sadan; home of Baba Virsa Singh in chapter 11 on page 99 which illustrates the power of faith.

Kali Sweeps the Floors of Guru Nanak Dev

2.9 Chaudhary Bhagirath

Chaudhary (the village head) of Malsihan village was a devotee of Goddess '*Kali*', and respected all holy people.

When Guru Nanak Dev visited Malsihan village, Chaudhary Bhagirath devotedly served him. At night he would sleep where Guru ji was sleeping. Early in the morning when Guru ji got up for prayers, Bhagirath went to fetch water for his bath. When he was returning with the buckets of water from the well, he noticed a beautiful lady with eight arms sweeping the floor with a broom. Bhagirath inquired who she was and why she had come from her house so early. She replied that she was the Goddess *Kali*. Bhagirath at once fell at her feet and prayed. He then asked her why was it that she being the mother of the whole world, supporter of all Gods and destroyer of the demons was sweeping the floors of Guru Nanak Dev's room? She replied that this holy person was none other than the Unmanifest aspect of the Supreme Being himself, whereas she was the Manifest aspect and her powers were derived from the services of saints like Guru Nank Dev.

On hearing this, Bhagirath became a disciple of Guru ji and devoted his life to the service of saints and meditation on '*Waheguru*'. He was thus liberated from the cycle of life and death.

Hath Yoga and Bhakti Yoga

2.10 Bhai Ajita Randhawa

When Bhai Ajita Randhawa came to Guru Nanak Dev, he said that he had been to a number of saints but none had been able to clear his doubts and requested Guru ji to clarify them so that his mind may be at peace.

Guru ji told him that there were two methods for achieving peace of mind. *Vedas* and *sages* have advised that one should follow the method that is suited to one's mind. Bhai Ajita then requested Guru ji to explain the two methods and promised to do his best to follow them.

Guru Nanak Dev ji said the two remedies were:

1. *Hath Yoga*
2. *Bhakti Yoga*

On further request Guru ji explained both of these methods.

1. Hath Yoga. Hath Yoga has eight stages or parts.

1. Yama
2. Niyama
3. Seclusion
4. Asanas or postures
5. Pranayama or breath control
6. Dhyana or concentration of mind
7. Dharna or making the mind single pointed
8. Samadhi or state of trance or deep meditation

On hearing this, Bhai Ajita said that he being a simple peasant did not understand these terms and requested for an explanation. Guru ji explained thus:

1. Yama. These consist of ten practices. They are:

- 1) Renounce violence. There are three kinds of violence:
 - a) Violence of mind i.e. thinking ill of someone.
 - b) Violence of speech i.e. speaking ill of someone.
 - c) Violence of action i.e. doing physical harm to someone.

Renunciation of these three kinds of violence is called 'Ahimsa' or non-violence.

- 2) To know the Lord or *Paramatma* as the Truth.

- 3) Renounce theft. There are two types of theft:
 - a) Physical theft i.e. to steal somebody's goods and hide them.
 - b) Theft by mind i.e. to commit sins of mind and then conceal them.

- 4) Celibacy. True celibacy means to win over our seven types of desires or actions. These are:

- a) To talk about women.
- b) To listen to the talks about women.
- c) To sit with women in seclusion.
- d) To look at a woman with lustful eyes.
- e) To physically touch a woman
- f) To dress like women.

g) To commit sexual intercourse with a woman.

One must renounce all these activities to practice celibacy or '*Bhramacharya*'.

- 5) Forgiveness. This means to tolerate all good and evil actions and words and endurance of all good and bad times with a smile on one's face.
- 6) Forbearance. To remain happy and satisfied in all kinds of circumstances and not to become restless or sad.
- 7) Compassion. To show concern and to help the needy as much as one can.
- 8) To possess a sensitive heart and never wish bad of anybody.
- 9) To take food with self control i.e. to eat one quarter less than needed.
- 10) Cleanliness of the body and mind i.e. to take bath regularly and to clean the mind of attachments and hatred.

2. Niyama. There are ten niyams or rules to be followed. They are:

- 1) Austerities or penances. There are three types of austerities i.e. '*Satwik*', '*Rajsik*' and '*Tamsik*'.
 - a) Tamsik austerities means to endure heat, cold, sit in water and to starve. Such austerities do give benefit in the form of '*siddhies*' but do not lead to Divine Knowledge.
 - b) Rajsik austerities means to control one's sense organs from evil actions and to divert them towards good and pious actions.
 - c) Satwik austerities are to divert one's mind from bad thoughts and actions to God's words or *Gurbani*.

One should follow Rajsik and Satwik austerities as these two lead to Divine Knowledge.

- 2) Contentment. Real contentment means that one

- should remain happy whether one has got a thing or not. Under both circumstances, one should be grateful to 'Waheguru' since only He knows one's needs the best.
- 3) Faith. One must have full faith in his master's words.
 - 4) Charity. Charity can be of wealth and knowledge. There are three types of charity. They are:
 - a) Tamsik charity. In this, the recipient is not treated with respect and the donor thinks that he is helping the recipient. This kind of charity gives little benefit to the donor.
 - b) Rajsik charity. In this type, the donor indulges in charity to enhance his prestige in the society. This also does not offer much benefit to the giver.
 - c) Satwik charity. In this type of charity, the donor does not make the recipient feel that he is doing him a favor by making the offering. This type of charity is most beneficial.
 - 5) Devotion. Whatever one does, like praying, worshiping or serving it must be done with full devotion.
 - 6) One must follow the precept of the master faithfully. He should not follow any other faith or belief or read or listen to any other matter against master's teachings.
 - 7) One should be humble about one's knowledge and competence when dealing with others.
 - 8) One should possess satwik bent of mind i.e. one should speak and behave humbly.
 - 9) Follow the routine of prayers or *japa* strictly. One must not speak while practicing *japa*.
 - 10) Oblation. This means making an offering in the sacrificial fire. This is done to please the Gods. The best way to offer oblation is to feed the hungry. This is because the God of mouth is fire

and any food given to the hungry and needy people is an offering to Him. The Lord is pleased when a hungry person on receiving food, utters the Name of the Lord.

The other type of oblation is called '*Gyan Hom*' or knowledge sacrifice. In this, we offer or sacrifice our enjoyments in the fire of knowledge as all the enjoyments and senses are temporary like the body. Only the Divine knowledge is permanent.

- 3) Seclusion. One should stay in a place where nobody else would disturb (in these times one should find a peaceful place in his own house itself).
 - 4) Yogic Asanas or Postures. In yoga, there are 84 *asanas* based on the sitting posture of some of the 84 lakh creatures. The main two postures are
 - (a) *Padama asana* or lotus posture and (b) *Siddha asana* or ascetic posture.
 - a) In lotus posture, the left foot is placed on the right thigh and the right foot is placed on the left thigh. The arms are crossed behind the back and the big toes of the left and right foot are caught in the right and left hand.

Before assuming this posture, the earth is dug up to make it soft and some grass is spread over it to make a comfortable seat.
 - b) For '*siddha asana*' prepare a soft and comfortable seat like earlier. Sit with back straight, place left heel below the anus and the right foot over the left foot but over the reproductive organ.
- In both of these postures, concentrate on the tip of the nose or in the middle of the eyebrows.

Note:

- (1) These *asanas* are meant for celibate persons. Married persons should practice these *asanas* with caution.

- (2) Lotus posture is not easy particularly for the aged. They can adopt any position of feet and legs that is comfortable, provided the back is straight.
- 5) Pranayam or Breath Control. The brain centers, which control our breathing and thinking affect each other. Breath control helps us to calm down our thought waves that can improve the quality of concentration in meditation.

Breath control has three parts. They are:

- Inhalation. Be fully aware of your breath. Inhale through the right nostril simultaneously concentrating on the middle of the eyebrows. Repeat 'IKONKAR' 12 times during inhalation.
- Retention. Now keep concentrating on the middle of the eyebrows and repeat 'IKONKAR' 3 times while retaining the breath.
- Exhalation. At the end of retention, exhale through the left nostril and repeat 'IKONKAR' 12 times while concentrating on the middle of the eyebrows.

Repeat the above process by inhaling through the left, retaining the breath and exhaling through the right nostril. Continue this alternate inhalation and exhalation through the left and the right nostril.

Note: A beginner should start with only 3 cycles of alternate inhalation, retention and exhalation. Increase the number gradually under expert guidance as too much *pranayama* may lead to complications like hallucinations etc.

By gradual progress in pranayama, the Ajna Chakra, which is located in the middle of the eyebrows opens and the prana stays in the tenth door i.e. the Sahasrara or the crown chakra. Then, mystical sounds are heard and the practitioner sees lights. The concentration on the mystical music improves its duration.

- 6) Dhayana or Concentration. This is also of two types:

- concentration on the manifest aspects of the Lord like the 4 armed Vishnu or a *mantra* given by the Master from 'Gurbani'.
- Concentration on a chakra like the navel chakra, middle of the eyebrows or Ajna chakra or the heart chakra.
- 7) Dharana or Persistence. While meditating, the wandering thoughts will try to break the concentration. One has to persevere and bring back the mind to the object of concentration till one succeeds in completely eliminating the thoughts.
- 8) Samadhi or Deep Meditation. When the thought process completely subsides and concentration becomes continuous, it is called samadhi. This is also of two kinds:
 - Swikalp Samadhi*. In this case, the meditator, the object of meditation and the process of meditation are different entities i.e. the meditator is not one with the object of meditation like the Lord or a Mantra.
 - Nirwikalp Samadhi*. In this samadhi, the meditator, the object of meditation and the process of meditation become one.

These are the eight limbs of 'Hath Yoga'. The practitioner of Hath Yoga may enjoy the meditation, and when free, should read the 'Gurbani' or the Guru's words given in the Guru Granth Sahib.

2. Bhakti Yoga. Bhakti yoga also has eight limbs. They are:
 - Yama. Always be humble and do not feel proud if you possess any good quality or knowledge.
 - Niyama. One must attend the assembly of saints ('sadhu sangat') and listen to *kirtan* (musical singing of 'Gurbani') and *katha* (explanation of Gurbani and the history of the Gurus and their Sikhs) with full concentration. If one can read, then

- one should read *Gurbani*, otherwise listen to it being recited.
- 3) Solitude. One must feel the presence of 'Waheguru' or the Lord everywhere and be firm in conviction that there is nothing except the Lord everywhere.
 - 4) Asanas or postures. This is to fix one's mind in the Lord all the time.
 - 5) Pranayama. In Bhakti yoga, the three parts of *pranayama* are:
 - a) Inhalation. It is to digest and preserve the instructions given by the master.
 - b) Retention. It is to always practice the instructions of the Master, which has been understood.
 - c) Exhalation. It is to renounce the undesirable qualities or actions as instructed by the Master.
 - 6) Dhayana. When one sits to read or listen to the Master's instructions, one must concentrate one's mind fully on it and not permit other thoughts to arise,
 - 7) Dharana. In case the mind begins to wander and other thoughts arise, one must persist in bringing back the Master's instructions to the mind.
 - 8) Samadhi. If the mind stays on a Mantra or the Guru's words like *Gurbani* for some time, one should try to increase this duration by practice. When the mind stays on the Guru's words for full 24 hours, it is the perfect *samadhi*. This is of two types:
 - a) Swikalp Samadhi. In this type, one thinks that he is listening to the '*shabad*' or the Guru's word and he fully understands the meaning of it.
 - b) Nirwikalp Samadhi. In this type, one does not repeat or concentrate on a '*shabad*' but the mind stays on the true meaning or understanding of the '*shabad*' or '*mantra*' or

Guru's words.

These are the eight parts of 'Bhakti Yoga'. Bhai Ajita Randhawa, on hearing these prayed to Guru ji to bless him with the wisdom to accept Guru's will sweetly. Guru ji blessed him with this boon and said that many others will also be liberated along with him.

The Wise Child, Baba Budha

2.11 Bhai Boora Budha

As a child, Bhai Boora was grazing his cattle when he met Guru Nanak Dev. The child Boora offered Guru ji milk and requested that he may be blessed with wisdom to be liberated from the cycle of birth and death. Guru Nanak Dev asked the child as to who has put these wise thoughts into his mind. Bhai boora said that when the Mughal invaders came to their village, they cut all the crops standing in the fields without considering whether the crops were ripe or just grown to feed their horses. This led him to think that since no one was able to stop the mighty Mughals from destroying the crops, how could anybody hold the hands of messengers of Death. Death may come as easily to a child as to an old man. Hence, he was worried about his salvation.

Guru Nanak Dev smiled and said that although he was only a child, he spoke like a wise old man (*budha*). From then, he was called Bhai Budha. Guru ji promised that he would bless Bhai Budha with Divine Knowledge in His incarnation as the fourth Guru, Guru Ramdas. He blessed Bhai Buddha saying that his progeny would also be great saints.

Bhai Budha was a great saint and served as a faithful and trusted lieutenant to six Gurus. He had the honour and the privilege of anointing five Gurus i.e. Guru Angad Dev (second Guru) to Guru Hargobind Sahib (sixth Guru). When he died at a ripe age, Guru Hargobind Sahib personally

performed his last rites out of regard for his services to the Gurus.

Guru Nanak Dev told Bhai Budha that if he meditated on 'Waheguru' with single pointed dedication, he would be duly liberated. Bhai Budha further inquired as to the mode of meditation on Gurbani.

Guru ji said that there are four methods of meditation. The object of all the methods is to achieve single-minded concentration. One has to adopt a method depending upon his nature.

- a) 'Vaikhri'. These are the spoken words of Gurbani. In this process, the tongue and mind are used.
- b) 'Madhyama'. In this method, meditation on Gurbani is synchronized with the breathing, like saying 'Wahe' while inhaling and 'Guru' while exhaling. Here, the subtle forces are working with gross organs.
- c) 'Pasyanti'. In this method, the mind concentrates simultaneously on the heart chakra and recitation of Gurbani.
- d) 'Para'. In this and all the preceding methods, subtle forces are applied to the maximum. The mind concentrates on the navel and recitation of Gurbani.

Guru Nanak Dev advised Baba Budha to recite Gurbani in 'Para' mode and to serve the saints. He further told Bhai Budha that the Lord's name is of great benefit. Just like clarified butter(ghee) adds taste to all kinds of food preparations, **Meditation on the Lord's name with one pointed dedication benefits all elements of life. This also improves health and life expectancy.**

Humility and Service along with Meditation is the Secret

2.12 Bhai Firna Khahira and Bhai Jodh

Bhai Firna Khahira and Bhai Jodh came to Guru Nanak Dev ji and prayed for his blessings and advice so that they

may become His disciples and attain liberation.

Guru ji told them that to become a good disciple, one must be humble in his words and actions and should also serve other disciples and needy in the best possible way. One should get up early in the morning, bathe and then meditate on the Lords name. Simultaneously, one must practice humility (as spiritual practices often lead to pride). One must treat the Lord as the Master and himself as the servant. One must also attend the assembly of saints ('sadhu sangat') and listen to the Guru's word with love and devotion. When two disciples meet, they should discuss only the Gurbani and the Lord.

The two devotees followed this advice and were thus liberated.

Chapter 3

Disciples of Sri Guru Angad Dev

Accept the Will of the Lord as Sweet

3.1 Bhai Jiwa

Bhai Jiwa used to serve Guru Angad Dev and would bring 'khichri' (a dish of salted rice mixed with lentils and vegetables) for the Guruji's free kitchen for breakfast. Once it rained very heavily and there seemed no prospect of the rain stopping till the next morning. Bhai Jiwa requested Guruji to stall the rain so that he may bring the food in time for next morning. Guruji told him that rain and wind were very important for the crops and the ships. Many insects living under the ground depended upon the rains for food. If the rain and the wind stopped untimely, lot of harm would be caused, whereas, the breakfast delayed by a few hours will not make much difference.

To accept the Will of the Lord is the fundamental principle Of Guru Nanak's teachings (in the first stanza of Japji Sahib, Guru Nanak Devji has advised all to accept the Will of the Lord which He has written for us).

Guruji further said that the saints should accept the Will of the Lord like a faithful wife who accepts the will of her husband. Bhai Jiwa should therefore remain happy in the Will of the Lord and He will then accept his services.

Bhai Jiwa faithfully followed these words of wisdom and attained salvation.

Meditation on His Name and Serving the Needy Leads to Self Realization

3.2 Bhai Gujar Lohar (Blacksmith)

Bhai Gujar was a blacksmith and worked hard to earn his living. One day he came to Guru Angad Dev and prayed that as he was very busy trying to make the two ends meet, how could he attain liberation? Guruji advised him to recite *Japji* in the morning and not charge any money from the poor, considering it as Guru's work.

Bhai Gujar obeyed the Guru's words for many years. Once there was a holy man who was imprisoned on false accusations. One night he escaped from the jail and came to Bhai Gujar. He requested him to cut off his handcuffs. Bhai Gujar, considering it as the Guru's work cut the handcuffs off. The holy man was pleased and blessed Bhai Gujar with clairvoyance and knowledge of the three times i.e. the past, the present and the future.

When Bhai Gujar reported this matter to Guru Angad Dev, he was very pleased and blessed him.

Disciple is the Corpse and Guru is the Grave

3.3 Bhai Dhing the Barber

Bhai Dhing the barber regularly visited Guru Angad Dev. He served the Guru's disciples by giving them bath with hot water, massaging their bodies and serving them food. One day he prayed to Guruji for spiritual instruction. Guruji told him "The disciple is the corpse and the Guru is the grave. When the limbs of the disciple stop all movement, only then is he fit for the grave. Thus, when the ego in the mind of the disciple is expelled, only then can he abide by the instruction of the Guru. When Sain, the barber served the saints with full devotion, the Lord Himself took up his form and served the king in his place. Therefore, he should also serve with the same devotion."

Bhai Dhing served the Guru's disciples with full dedication and attained the True Knowledge. His whole family was also liberated with him.

The Paramhansas Discriminate Between the Body and the Soul (Atma)

3.4 Bhai Paro Jhulka

Bhai Paro Jhulka came to Guru Angad Dev and asked, what are the *Paramahansas*? Guruji said that he would explain to him the story of the *Paramahansas* and that if he listened to it and always kept it in his heart, he too would become a *Paramahansa*. And whosoever keeps his company will also attain the status of a *Paramahansa*.

Hans (swan) is a bird that feeds on pearls from the lake. If milk and water are mixed and kept before a swan, it separates the water and drinks the milk. This is because its beak has a sour taste and the milk thus splits into cheese and water. The swan then feeds on the cheese and leaves the water.

A *Paramahansa* (a saint of very high order) is one who treats his Guru's words as pearls of wisdom and lives by them. By studying and meditating on them, he gains the power of discrimination and the Divine Knowledge. His power of discrimination is his beak. Our body and the soul, which appear one to us, have to be considered as separate. Our body is temporary, gross and the cause of all our misery. The soul is the Truth, the Consciousness and the Bliss (*Sat-chit-Ananda*). Due to an illusion, we believe that our body and soul are one and that the qualities of the soul are seen in the body. Body being temporary, dies. Only a man who does not know that he is not the body says that he is dying.

When man meditates on this with his power of discrimination, he finds that he is present in all the three times; past, present and the future. He lives off the *karma* or actions of the past in this life and shall reap the fruit of the present actions in the future. Thus a *Paramahansa* is the

knower of the three times. He knows the *Parmeshwar*, the Creator and can discriminate between what is gross and what is consciousness. He is the consciousness.

Our tongue has taste buds to taste 36 types of food, but it is not the tongue that enjoys the food. One who eats the food enjoys it. Similarly, your suitcase may carry beautiful and expensive clothes, but the one who wears them gets the pleasure from it. The Holy Scriptures are written on the paper that does not enjoy it. It is the reader who revels in its bliss.

In this way, the one, who by his power of discrimination considers the body and the soul as separate is a *Paramahansa*. One who knows that he is not the body does not commit sins for the pleasure of the body. A lotus grows in the water but faces the sun. It is not moistened by the water. Similarly, a *Paramahansa* lives in the body in this world, but his attention is always directed towards his *Atma*. He is beyond the happiness, the sorrows and the pleasures and pains of the body. He lives like ordinary people but treats the world as a dream. He is not bonded in any kind of bondage.

Hearing these words, Bhai Paro vowed to separate the pearls from the pebbles by exercising his power of discrimination. His relatives also followed this path and were liberated along with him.

Do Your Duty Do Not Fear the Death of the Body

3.5 Bhai Mallu Shahi

Bhai Mallu Shahi, who was in the service of the Mughal Emperor, came to Guru Angad Dev and prayed for advice as he longed to live well and to have a good name in this world.

Guruji told him that the body is destined for destruction the moment we are born but the soul is eternal. Therefore, fulfil your worldly duties by treating them as an illusion and simultaneously be firm on the teachings of the Guru.

This very instruction was given to Arjuna by Lord Krishna in the 'Gita' i.e. fight in the battle, give charity and do not fear death of the mortal body. The body is destroyed only when three factors come together. They are:

- 1) The time when the number of breaths allotted to an individual, are over.
- 2) The individual is in the place where he is destined to die.
- 3) The weapon, which is to cause his death is there.

Unless all the three factors are present all together, death cannot take place and time itself will become a protector. Thus, do not fight unjustly with any one. But if a fight is inevitable, do not be afraid of the strength of the enemy. Also, whatever you earn, share it with the saints and the needy.

Bhai Mallu took this advise to heart and from that day onwards he lived a true life which lead to his being liberated in this life itself.

How to Escape the Fire of Anger and Desire

3.6 Bhai Kadari

Bhai Kadari sought refuge with Guru Angad Dev. He said that the whole world was burning in the fire of lust and anger and prayed to Guruji to save him from this fire.

Guruji explained that when the forest is on fire, the deer run away and seek refuge in the river. Similarly, the people who come to the company of saints are saved from the evils of lust, anger and desire. Those who read and act on the words of the Guru (Gurbani) are also saved. Therefore, one must keep the company of saints and serve other disciples. This is the only path to attain Divine Knowledge, which would save him from the fires he mentioned.

Bhai Kadari acted faithfully on Guru's instructions and was liberated.

How to Escape the Cycle of Birth and Death

3.7 Bhai Deepa Deo, Narain Dass and Boola

Bhai Deepa Deo, Narain Dass and Boola came to Guru Angad Dev, prostrated before him and prayed to him to save them from the cycle of birth and death. Guruji advised them to practice devotion (*bhakti*) to 'Waheguru', the Supreme Lord. The disciples replied that they were ignorant and did not know what '*bhakti*' or devotion meant. They prayed for an explanation.

Guruji explained that the Supreme Lord created '*Maya*' or the creative powers. He then ordered it to create the universe and keep it under its control by illusive powers. He also created four Gods, three male and one female, and said that whoever will seek refuge with any one of them shall attain Him. They were:

- 1) *Vairagya* or dispassion.
- 2) *Yoga* or asceticism or renunciation.
- 3) *Gyan* or path of knowledge.
- 4) *Bhakti* or path of devotion.

The first three are males. *Maya* can entice them with evil ways and means and make them fall from their objectives. But '*Bhakti*' is a virtuous wife. *Maya* can therefore entice the devotees of the first three Gods and not the devotees of *Bhakti*.

The disciples then prayed for the description of the four paths so that they may follow them correctly.

Guru Angad Devji said that '*vairagya*' is of two types:

- a) When one renounces his home, clothes, and food etc for the love of the Lord.
- b) Other is not to get too involved in the world and take as much as is necessary for maintaining the body.

The *Yoga* is also of two types:

- a) The first type is the *yoga* of hardships i.e. ashtang *yoga* and *pranayama* etc.
- b) The second type is to draw away the mind from

desires and enjoyments and direct it towards the God.

Gyan is also of two types:

- The first is to believe that this world is an illusion and only the Atma is real. God resides in each one of us. Thus, wash away the dirt of anger and hatred towards others.
- The second type is the '*sarwan gyan*' i.e. act faithfully on what the Guru says.

Then there is the "*bhakti*" or 'Devotion to the Divine'. This is to consider God as the master and oneself as His servant. One has to surrender the mind, body and wealth to the God i.e. total surrender.

"Surrender His objects to Him.
Follow the Will of the Lord happily.
He will bless you with everything four-fold.
Nanak says that the Lord is ever merciful."

On hearing this, the disciples started serving the saints and other disciples. They were devoted to the Guru's words and were thus liberated.

Benevolence

3.8 Bhai Lallu Badhwar, Durga and Jiwanda

Bhai Lallu Badhwar, Durga and Jiwanda came to Guru Angad Dev and prayed to know, how could they achieve liberation? Guruji told them that there is no act equal to benevolence. Benevolence is of three types:

- Use your resources very carefully and distribute the rest to help the poor, the orphans and the saints.
- Serve the needy and speak sweetly to all.
- Explain the spiritual knowledge or meditative powers you possess to others with full faith and wish well of every one.

The disciples started behaving with benevolence towards everybody and were thus liberated due to their service to others.

What is True Renunciation?

3.9 Jagga Dharni

Jagga Dharni came to Guru Angad Dev and sought shelter with him. He wanted permission to renounce his home and yearned to become a mendicant. He declared that he had met a *yogi* who told him to renounce the world, as the worldly duties were chains of bondage. And only after he did so would the *yogi* give him spiritual instructions.

Guruji told him that if renouncing the home and hearth and becoming a *yogi*, one could attain liberation, why did the *yogis* go round the shops and quarrel for alms? The correct path is like a lotus flower, which is in the water but untouched by it and always meditating on the sun. Similarly, the *Gurmukhs* (disciples who are Guru oriented) live in their houses as family men and serve their Guru.

If one is a beggar and begs for food, he gives away his spiritual powers to the donor of the food. If a householder meditates on the Lord, the fruit of meditation would remain with him and when he serves the saints and the sadhus, the fruit of this service shall also remain with him like a master who feeds grass and oil cakes to his cow, enjoys its milk.

Bhai Jagga then decided to remain a householder and attained his liberation by serving the saints and other disciples.

Types of Bhakti (Devotion)

3.10 Bhai Khanu, Mahia and Govind

Bhai Khanu, his son Bhai Mahia and Bhai Govind, a Bhandari

Khatri sought refuge with Guru Angad Dev and prayed "O Lord, savior of the poor, kindly instruct us about a virtue which contains all the virtues".

Guruji told them that devotion to the Lord; the Creator is the highest virtue. He also told them that **devotion was of three types.**

- a) Nine fold devotion (*Naudha Bhakti*)
- b) Devotion of love (*Prema Bhakti*)
- c) Devotion to the Unmanifest Lord by renouncing desires as a result of Divine Knowledge. (*Para Bhakti*)

The trio requested for details of the three types of devotion. Guruji explained as under:

1. **NINE FOLD DEVOTION.** This is of nine types. If the disciple becomes perfect even in one type, he is liberated. If all the nine types are perfected, it results in his absorption in the Supreme Being. The various types are:
 - 1) The first type of devotion is to listen to the discourses of the Guru very carefully and with full faith.
 - 2) The second is to sing devotional songs and to give discourses on spiritual subjects.
 - 3) The third type is to remember the Lord's name all the time and meditate with each breath.
 - 4) The fourth is to meditate on the Lord's feet all the time, washing the feet of the saints, offering them water, fanning them and massaging their body.
 - 5) The next type is to offer good clothes and food to the saints.
 - 6) The sixth type is to pray at the Guru's feet, visit Gurudwaras and go around them in circumambulation.
 - 7) The seventh type is to consider the Lord as the master and oneself as His servant and to treat the body, the mind and the wealth to be the

- property of the Lord.
- 8) The eighth type is to treat the Lord as a friend. Since a friend always thinks about his friend, the Lord will think about us.
 - 9) The ninth type is the total surrender i.e. offer the body, mind and wealth to the Lord. Do not consider anything of one's own.

 2. The second type is 'PREMA BHAKTI' or 'DEVOTION OF LOVE'. Take the example of a fruit on a tree. When it is not ripe, it is green in color and bitter in taste. Then, it becomes yellow in color and sour in taste. When it is fully ripe it becomes red and sweet. The lovers of the Lord have the same characteristics. In the early stage, when they feel separated from the Lord, they cry bitterly and gasp for breath. They are like the raw green fruit. As the love for the God increases, their food and worldly dealings reduce. Now they are like the semi ripe yellow fruit. Gradually, as their association with the saints increases, their word and action become one. Finally they become like the fully red ripe fruit. The glory of the Lord's love fills their personality with sweetness.
 3. PARA BHAKTI (highest form of devotion).

Proceeding further, the devotees get more absorbed in the Lord and a stage comes when they find no distinction between them and the Lord. This is the stage of Existence Knowledge and Bliss (*Sat-Chit-Anand*). Both the Lord and the disciple are then (*Sat Chit Anand Swaroop*). But there is a slight difference. The human beings have desires due to ignorance. The Lord does not have desires. Thus, the state of being desirous and being without desires are illusory. When one goes beyond the difference, he becomes one with '*Brahma*' or the Supreme Being.

By practicing *bhakti*, the three disciples, Bhai Khanu, Mahia and Govind were liberated.

Selfless Service is the Highest Austerity

3.11 Bhai Jodh (The Cook)

Bhai Jodh the cook was serving Guru Angad Dev. He was a Brahmin and was doing selfless service. He did not touch money for the Guru's kitchen. He would collect food etc from the disciples, cook it and serve it to the visiting disciples the whole daylong. As for him, he would wash the leaves on which the food was served to the disciples and drink the same. He considered that more he serves the Guru's disciples, more merit he would collect. As soon as a disciple would arrive, he would serve them food. He was never tired of serving. Bhai Jodh, the cook was liberated in this way.

Chapter 4

Disciples of Sri Guru Amar Dass

Disciples from Village Dalla

4.1 Bhai Prithi Mal Bhalla and Tulsia Bhalla

When Guru Amar Dass visited Dalla village, Bhai Prithi Mal and Tulsia, both from the *Bhalla* sub-caste, came to Guruji and told him that they were from the same sub-caste as Guruji. Guruji told them that a Guru does not belong to any caste. The caste is of the body and the body is subject to destruction.

*"Agge jat na jore hai, agge jiu nave.
Jin ki lekhai pat pawe, change sei kei."*

In the Lord's court, there is no consideration for caste or powers. Only the meditation on the Lord's Name will be taken into account and only the people who had done good actions would be approved of.

Guru Nanak Dev has said that the body is born in this world and shall die and remain in this world, so the caste does not reach the Lord's court. Those who had meditated on the Lord's Name and served the Guru's disciples; their good action will result in their being honoured.

4.2 Bhai Mallan

Then Bhai Mallan also came and prostrated before Guruji and prayed for instructions. Guruji told him to serve the saints with his heart and soul.

4.3 Bhai Ramu, Deepa, Ugarsain and Nagauri

These people came, paid their respects to Guruji and prayed

for spiritual guidance. Guruji told them to serve the visiting disciples and meditate on the Guru's word (*Gurbani*), early in the morning during ambrosial hours for one and a half hour (four 'gharis'; one *ghari* is equal to 22 and 1/2 minutes).

Think of a boat that is fully loaded. It still stays four fingers (3 inches) above the water and safely crosses it. In the same way, out of 24 hours (8 'pahars') of worldly activities, one should take out four *gharis* (one and half hour) for meditation on the Guru's word. The Guru shall then solve all his problems.

4.4 Bhai Mohnu, Ramu, Mahita, Amru and Gopi

These men came to Guruji and prayed for spiritual instructions. Guruji told them that the ego is a very evil force. It does not have any existence of its own and yet appears and makes them forget the Lord. When they were able to get rid of the ego, they would start loving the Lord with everything they owned.

They then enquired, "O savior of the poor, how is the ego expelled?"

Guruji explained that the human body is false i.e. it is perishable. If someone passes unflattering remarks about the body, tolerate it. Slowly, the ego shall vanish.

4.5 Bhai Saharu, Gangu and Bhagu

These people came to Guruji and implored him to tell them the way to spiritual enlightenment. Guruji told them to welcome and serve his disciples and share the food with them. As soon as a disciple comes, promptly serve him food. Love the name of 'Waheguru' and act according to the instructions in the '*Gurbani*'. Do not worship any tomb or grave.

4.6 Bhai Khanu, Churra, Taru, Wega Passi, Ugru, Nandu Sudna, Puro and Jhanda

These people came to Guruji and prostrated before him.

Guruji told that in '*kaliyug*', serving food to the Guru's disciples with love is like performing a '*yagya*' (a public feast as an act of charity). This is the '*yagya*' of '*kaliyug*'. The wealth increases manifold in this life of those who share their wealth with others. They get the benefit of their virtuous acts in their next life also.

4.7 Bhai Malia and Saharu (The Washermen)

Bhai Malia and Saharu, the washer men, came to Guruji. Guruji told them to wash the dirty clothes of the disciples and repair the torn ones. By this service, they would be blessed and would strengthen their bond with the Guru. This action of theirs would remove the dirt from their heart.

4.8 Bhai Moola Panoha

Bhai Moola Panoha the teacher, came and prostrated before Guruji and prayed that being a scholar and a teacher, he could not perform any physical service. Guruji advised him to perform '*kirtan*' (musical singing) and give discourses on *Gurbani* to the disciples. He should also make copies of *Gurbani* and not ask for any money in return. He must accept whatever was offered and use it to meet his needs.

Guru Amar Dass then addressed all the disciples of Dalla and said that the collective instruction to all of them was to celebrate Guru's auspicious days like *Diwali*, *Baisakhi*, *Sangrand*, full moon and new moon days. On these auspicious days they should collect money as per their capacity to give and then after reading of the scriptures and *kirtan*, should distribute food and offer *halwa* ('*karah prasad*') to the gathering. Distribute clothes and other necessities to the needy disciples. In case some disciple desired for some boon, gather together and offer collective prayer. Their prayers would be accepted. This would continue in their progeny. The faith of Guru Nanak Dev shall remain in their families. They should have no doubt about this.

Chapter 5

Disciples of Sri Guru Ram Dass

Truth is the Supreme Faith

5.1 Bhai Tirtha Sabharwal

Bhai Tirtha came and prostrated before Guru Ram Dass and prayed for guidance for his liberation. Guru ji told him that there is no faith superior to truth. He should always speak the truth and be firm in his heart. There is no sin worse than untruth. Thus, he should never speak lies. Bhai Tirtha followed this precept and was liberated.

Consider Yourself and Your Family as the Servants of the Lord

5.2 Bhai Puro, Manak Chand and Vishan Dass

These three persons came to Guru Ram Dass and prayed for instructions so that their cycle of birth and death was terminated and their families were also liberated.

Guru ji told them to serve the Guru's disciples along with their families. They should consider themselves and their families to be the servants of the Lord.

As for their worries for the welfare of the families, Guru ji gave them the example of the horse and its attendant. When the attendant ties the horse in front of the owner's house, the owner becomes responsible for its welfare. Similarly, their families are also the responsibility of the Lord and He will take care of them and the family would prosper at all levels.

By following this precept, the three disciples and their families were liberated.

The Lord Provides for Everyone

5.3 Bhai Padarath, Taru and Bharu

When these three men came to Guru Ram Dass, Guru ji was addressing the congregation. After listening to Guru ji's address, they were greatly moved and became concerned about their liberation. They thus requested Guru ji for instructions. They said that they were all family men and being involved in their worldly affairs, were not able to recite or listen to *Gurbani*. Under these circumstances, how could they seek their salvation?

Guru ji replied that they were unduly worried about their families. It was not them but the Lord who was providing for their families. He quoted Guru Nanak Dev
*"Sir sir rijak samhahe Thakur
 Kahe mun bhau karia"*

All the beings created by the Lord were being taken care of by Him. He has provided for their needs beforehand. So why should you have any trepidation for nothing? (Like the mother's breasts are provided with milk before the child is born).

Guru ji advised them to have full faith in the Creator to provide for their families wherever they were.

The three of them called their children and told them that they were grown up to look after the family business. They should offer one-tenth of their earnings to the Guru ji and serve the visiting disciples of the Guru in their houses. From then on, the three of them would stay in Guru ji's place and serve Him and the visiting disciples by providing drinking water, waving the hand fans and carrying out any other service asked of them. Rest of the time they would spend in listening to the *kirtan* and the Guru's words. This would result in their as well as their families' liberation.

By following this lifestyle, they and their families were liberated.

Know Thyself. You Are Not the Body

5.4 Bhai Mahan Nand and Bidhi Chand

Bhai Mahan Nand and Bidhi Chand came to Guru ji, prostrated and surrendered themselves with the request that Guru ji may kindly sever their cycle of life and death. They had suffered a lot in this and their previous births. They said that they had come with full faith that Guru ji would bless them with salvation.

Guru ji asked them if they knew their true forms? On hearing this they replied that all they knew was that they were 'Kshatriyas' (the fighter class among the Hindus). On hearing this Guru ji told them that it was their parents who had told them that they were *Kshatriyas* and this was the name for the body. They were not the body. This body shall remain here in this world. They were enjoying the fruits of actions of their last birth in the present, and fruits of the actions of this birth shall be enjoyed in the next. Think of the body as a dress and themselves as a witness wearing that dress. Then only could they seek liberation.

They then requested as to how could they realize their true form? Guru ji advised them to listen to the religious discourses and musical singings (*kirtan*) regularly. They would then be blessed with the knowledge of their true form.

They acted on this advice and were truly liberated.

Relinquish Your Ego

5.5 Bhai Dharam Dass, Dugar Dass Etc.

Bhai Dharam Dass, Dugar Dass and five other persons came to Guru Ram Dass. They prostrated and prayed to Guru ji to take them under his protection and lead them to their salvation.

Guru ji advised them to relinquish their ego from their minds, serve any disciple who visited them and if his needs were more than their individual capacity; they should join together and contribute to fulfil his needs. If there was a

religious congregation where spiritual discourses or *kirtan* was being done, they should attend it in the morning and in the evening. They should build a *Dharamshala* (*Gurudwara*) in their village.

They must get up early in the morning, take bath and meditate on the Name 'Waheguru'. After sunrise they should visit the *Dharamshala* and read '*Gurbani*'. In the evening, 45 minutes before sunset and 45 minutes after sunset (total one and a half hours) recite '*Rehras*', listen to religious discourses and recite '*kirtan sohila*' before retiring to bed. Always speak the truth. Whatever business or profession they may follow, Guru ji said, he would always be with them.

Following these precepts, all these disciples were liberated.

Recite His Name with One Pointed Mind

5.6 Bhai Maia, Japa, Naina Khullar and Tulsavohra

Bhai Maia, Japa, Naina Khullar and Tulsavohra, came to Guru Ram Dass and prayed for directives, following which they could attain renunciation or non attachment with the worldly objects while living in this world as house holders.

Guru ji advised them to love '*Gurbani*' as much as they loved their worldly works. When they would sit to recite or listen to *Gurbani*, they should pay full attention to the meaning as well as the intent of the words. They should think that the Guru is in front of them and recite his compositions with full devotion. To treat a sick horse, you have to give him medicines and also do the massage for his full recovery. Similarly, recitation of Name and one pointed attention on the Guru dispels one's ego. The rest of the time they were advised to do the physical work and meditate on the Name 'Waheguru'. Name is everything. In these dark ages (*kaliyug*), the Lord's Name is the ship, which will take them across the world of illusions (*maya*) and then they will be liberated.

By following these precepts, these disciples were liberated.

Chapter 6

Disciples of Sri Guru Arjun Dev

Be Stead Fast in Truth

6.1 Bhai Puria and Chuhar Chaudhary

Bhai Puria and Chuhar Choudhary were the village headmen. They came to Guru Arjun Dev and said that they being the village headmen, had to speak a lot of lies. They asked Guru ji for advice as to how they could seek their liberation.

Guru ji told them to stop speaking untruths. But they said that their work would not allow them to do so. Guru ji then advised them to build a *Dharamshala* (*Gurudwara*) in their village and install the holy Guru Granth Sahib there. Listen to religious discourse for about two hours everyday with full attention. Whatever lies they uttered during the day, they should write them down on a piece of paper at night. When they visited Guru ji once a month, they should read the list of lies in his presence in the congregation.

Gradually, with their association with *Gurbani* and recitation of His Name, their tendency to speak lies reduced and they began to be afraid of telling lies, as they had to write them down and read them out in the presence of Guru ji. In six months time, their tendency to commit sins vanished and they started speaking the truth and indulged in virtuous acts. Being steady fast in speaking the truth liberated them.

Charity in the Name of the Guru Will Never Leave One in Want

6.2 Bhai Paira and Durga

Bhai Paira and Durga came to Guru ji and prayed for his guidance. Guru ji told them that the people who had given charity in their previous births were getting its fruit in the present birth. Those who are giving now would get the fruit in the future. So, if they have wealth more than their needs, they should give it to the needy. They should distribute food to the disciples and give them blankets, shawls and other clothes in the winter.

Once, a very large number of devotees came to Guru ji and said that they did not have anything. These two disciples mortgaged their houses and with that money, provided food to the disciples. After this many more disciples came. It was winter and this made matters worse. They were worried as to how to feed and protect them from cold. The two disciples went to a nearby forest and pondered upon the situation. They casually started digging the earth with wooden sticks. Lo and behold! They discovered a large vessel full of gold coins. This money helped them to bring food and clothes to the other devotees and also release their houses from mortgage.

Guru ji was very pleased and said that he will never abandon those who give in the Name of 'Waheguru'. They will never face scarcity. So they should be firm in their discipline of charity.

Before Preaching Precepts, Work on them

6.3 Bhai Bala and Kishna

Bhai Bala and Kishna Jhingran were two Pundits of great repute. They came to Guru ji and prayed that although they could give discourses on six '*Shastras*' and eighteen '*Puranas*' and satisfy the audience with the explanation,

they had no peace of mind themselves.

Guru ji advised them to first make their own minds understand the knowledge fully before explaining it to others. Then only will it benefit and give them peace of mind. When they themselves understood the knowledge of the scriptures, they were at peace with themselves and were liberated.

Faith in the Guru is the Ultimate Remedy

6.4 Bhai Tiloka Suhar

Bhai Tiloka Suhar was a valiant fighter in the army of the Mughals. One day he came to Guru Arjun Dev and prayed that being a soldier, violence was his profession. So, how could he seek his liberation?

Guru advised him not to indulge in violence intentionally, but be firm in his duties as a 'kshatriya' (warrior) i.e. fight when he was forced in a battle.

One day Bhai Tiloka went out hunting on his horse. He killed a doe with his sword. On finding out that the doe was pregnant, he became very upset. He was afraid of having committed a sin. Since then he got a special sword made of wood with the proper steel handle and started wearing it as a part of his official dress.

The people who were envious of him reported to the army chief that though Bhai Tiloka was getting five rupees per day as a warrior, he was wearing only a wooden sword. The army chief ordered Bhai Tiloka to show his sword. Bhai Tiloka was in great fear and prayed to Guru ji in his mind with full faith. When he pulled out his sword in front of everyone, it was made of the finest steel. All those who had complained were disgraced publicly and the army chief was highly pleased with Bhai Tiloka.

From that day onwards Bhai Tiloka started donating one and a quarter rupee to Guru ji, distributing one and a quarter rupee among the poor and needy and managed for himself and his soldiers with only two and a half rupees

out of his salary of five rupees. He would also offer food to the visiting disciples of Guru ji. Bhai Tiloka was thus liberated on account of his good deeds.

Who are Guru Oriented (Gurmukh) and Self Oriented (Manmukh)

6.5 Bhai Samunda

Bhai Samunda came to Guru Arjun Dev, prostrated and requested to be enlightened as to who were *Gurmukhs* (Guru oriented) and who were *Manmukhs* (self oriented) disciples?

Guru told him that when a person is asked to run an errand, if he goes happily and satisfactorily completes the work, he is then a *Gurmukh*. If he spoils the work, he is not Guru oriented. The Almighty 'Waheguru' have sent the disciples to this world for meditating on His Name and purifying their souls. They should get up early in the morning, bathe, meditate on His Name and give charity. Such people are Guru Oriented. Those who indulge in acts of passion, anger, jealousy, hatred etc and spend their lives in selfish activities are self-oriented.

After hearing this description, Bhai Samunda prayed to Guru ji for his grace so that he may become Guru oriented. Guru ji told him that when a disciple becomes Guru oriented, the grace is unlimited. Bhai Samunda was thus liberated, as he became a Guru oriented.

Gradation of Guru Oriented and Self Oriented Persons

6.6 Bhai Kulla, Bhulla and Bhagirath

Bhai Kulla and Bhulla Jhanjhi and Bhai Bhagirath Soni came to Guru Arjun Dev, prostrated and said that they have been suffering a lot in this and their previous births. They requested for deliverance from this cycle of birth and death.

Guru ji advised them to follow the actions of Guru oriented

persons. He told them that there are three types of guru oriented and three types of self oriented persons in this world.

1. Guru-oriented

- a) Those persons who renounce evil actions and carefully listen to and act on the Guru's advice; always do good to others; never forget a good turn done to them and never talk or remind people about their own good actions to others are Guru oriented.
- b) Those persons who renounce evil actions and always are good to others irrespective of the others doing good or bad are comparatively better Guru oriented.
- c) The best Guru oriented persons are those who have attained Divine Knowledge. They always do well to others, even to those who do evil deeds to them.

2. Self-oriented

- a) Self-oriented persons are those who indulge in evil deeds. They forget the good turn done to them but never forget the bad ones.
- b) The persons, who always do evil to others irrespective of the fact whether the others have done good or bad to them, are the worse type of self-oriented persons.
- c) The worst type of self-oriented persons are those who always indulge in evil deeds and never try to understand or act on spiritual advice. Instead they believe and say that any moral instruction or Guru's words would harm them and evil acts were beneficial to them. They will be consigned to hell and undergo great sufferings.

On hearing this, the three disciples started working on the actions of Guru oriented persons and were thus liberated.

Be Humble, Sweet and Sharing with Others

6.7 Bhai Lallu and Ballu Vij

Bhai Lallu and Ballu Vij, Bhai Haridas and Piara came to Guru Arjun Dev and prayed for guidance to seek their liberation.

Guru ji told them to always speak sweetly and smilingly, share their wealth with others and be humble as is said in a poem "If you be humble sweet and sharing, the Lord is in your own wrap or shawl. Why go to the forest in search of Him?"

They were liberated by following this precept.

Guru Nanak Dev is the Supreme Being

6.8 Bhai Bir Nihalu and Tulsa

Bhai Bir Nihalu and Tulsa Bulachandia came to Guru Arjun Dev ji and prayed that some people say that Guru Nanak Dev is an incarnation of Raja Janak while others say that he is an incarnation of one of his disciples. They requested Guru ji to clarify this so that they would have full faith and devotion in Guru Nanak Dev.

Guru Arjun Dev said that Guru Nanak Dev is an incarnation of the Supreme Being (*Poorn Brahma*) and Gods like Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and Raja Janak offer worship and praise to him. They cannot fathom his limits.

His disciples, the Sikhs, in their previous lives had prayed that *Poorn Brahma* may kindly incarnate and gift *Gurbani* in common man's language i.e. other than Sanskrit, giving explanation of the Divine Knowledge so that they may attain their liberation. This is why Guru Nanak Dev has given the gift of Divine Knowledge in an easy to understand language. The disciples should love and meditate on *Gurbani*. There is no greater virtue than meditation and deliberation on Guru's words.

Due to full faith in Guru's words, these disciples were liberated.

Meditate and Act on Guru's Word

6.9 Bhai Gokhu and Toda Mehta, Tota and Maddu

These four disciples came to Guru ji and prayed for instructions so that they would attain liberation. Guru ji advised them to mutually discuss and meditate on *Gurbani* and act on the do's and avoid the do nots.

They then inquired about the benefits of reciting the *Gurbani* and its meditation. Guru ji answered that recitation of *Gurbani* is virtuous and it cleans one's intellect. Unselfish recitation and meditation results in attaining of the Divine Knowledge and one's life and death cycle is terminated.

Guru ji gave the example of the fire in the wood. To bring out the fire inside the wood, one has to make an effort by rubbing the wooden sticks. When the wooden sticks catch fire, all the wood becomes the form of the fire. Similarly, with Spiritual Knowledge and meditation, one's body consciousness is eliminated and Divine Knowledge dawns.

Meditating on *Gurbani* thus liberated these four people.

Fruits of Recitation, Kirtan and Discourse on Gurbani

6.10 Bhai Jhajhu, Mukanda and Kedara

These three persons came to Guru Arjun Dev ji and prayed for guidance so that they may attain their liberation. Guru ji said that they, being proficient in classical music (*ragas*), should perform *kirtan*. There is no higher penance than *kirtan* in *Kaliyug* and *kirtan* is also a virtuous austerity.

On hearing this, they inquired about the fruit of (a) recitation (b) *kirtan* and (c) discourse on *Gurbani*. Guru ji explained that the recitation is like irrigating the fields adjoining a well. If you irrigate the fields from that well, there will be a good crop. The water can irrigate other fields too. But a well cannot supply water to far off fields.

Kirtan can be compared to the dark monsoon clouds that cause rain and irrigate the fields over a vast area. The

crops in all the fields then produce a good yield.

Discourse on *Gurbani* is like gentle and soft continuous drizzle from the clouds. When the fields are well prepared after ploughing etc, every drop of rain is absorbed by the earth. Similarly, the intelligent disciples absorb all the wisdom in the *kirtan* and discourse, meditate on it and adopt the wisdom in their daily lives. They are thus blessed with Divine Knowledge.

Kirtan and discourses, when combined, become even more glorious. Discourses increase the benefit of *kirtan* and *kirtan* generates love and dispassion in the minds of the devotees. To illustrate this with an example, a mother looks happy and satisfied when she has children and the children are brought up and nurtured by her. Each fulfills the other's needs. Discourse and *kirtan* of *Gurbani* have the same relation. Discourse is the mother and *kirtan* is the son.

Then the disciples prayed as to who was the father of *kirtan*? Guru ji said that the love is the husband of discourse and father of *kirtan*. Performed with love, both the discourse and *kirtan* are glorified.

After hearing this, the three disciples used to perform the *kirtan* wholeheartedly in the presence of the Guru and never asked for anything in return. They used to manage their needs with whatever the disciples would offer them. They were thus liberated.

Supreme Being is Beyond any Limit

6.11 Bhai Gangu and Nau Sehgal Etc.

Bhai Gangu and Nau Sehgal along with two other disciples prostrated before Guru ji and prayed that all the scriptures of various religions had described the Supreme Being to be limitless. Since Guru Nanak Dev is the manifest form of the Supreme Being, he must have known the limits of the Supreme Being and therefore, must have given a clue about it. They requested Guru ji to enlighten them on this issue.

Guru ji said that if you can call the limitless as limitless,

this would be the correct description of the Supreme Being. Those persons who try to describe the limits of the Supreme Being by their own wisdom are contradicting the scriptures. Guru Nanak Dev has therefore correctly described the limitless Supreme Being as limitless. Therefore, they should know the Supreme Being as limitless and love and meditate upon Him. Remember Him all the time as '*Waheguru*'. They would be liberated accordingly.

They were therefore liberated by following these instructions.

All Humans Must Have a Guru

6.12 *Bhai Jattu, Bhattu and Firna Etc.*

Bhai Jattu and *Bhattu*, *Veta* and *Firna Sood*, *Bholu* and *Bhattu Tiwari* came to Guru Arjun Dev, prostrated before him and prayed to be enlightened about some doubts. They said that they had gone on a pilgrimage to the river Ganges where the Pundits told them that everyone who is born as a human being has to adopt a guru (teacher). Since Guru Nanak Dev has also incarnated as a human being, whom had he adopted as the guru? These people had replied that they would enquire about this aspect and let the Pundits know.

Guru Arjun Dev said that the guru of Guru Nanak Dev is the Unmanifest Lord who is 'All Knowing'. The Supreme Being therefore divulged the Divine Knowledge to him from inside him. For the consideration of having taken the body, he adopted Guru Angad Dev as his Guru and had prostrated before him.

Then these people asked another question that the guru is a person after meeting whom, 'go' (darkness) is expelled and 'ro' (light) comes in. But Guru Nanak Dev was himself the manifestation of light (knowledge).

Guru Arjun Dev replied that when **Brahma**, **Vishnu** and **Mahesh** were created by the Supreme Being out of '*Maya*', whom did they adopt as their guru? Then **Brahma** and

Shiva adopted **Vishnu** as their guru. Vishnu was the incarnation of '*Satwa*' (one of the qualities of *maya*) i.e. virtuosity which is white. Shiva was the incarnation of inertia (*Tamas*), which is black. **So when Vishnu meditated on Shiva, he became dark in complexion. When Shiva meditated on Vishnu, he became white.** Vishnu was already the form of Divine Knowledge. He adopted Shiva as Guru only as a worldly custom as he had incarnated as a human being. Similarly, Guru Nanak Dev ji was also the form of the Divine Knowledge but adopted Guru Angad Dev as his Guru as a tradition of the bodily form. So, they should have full faith in Guru Nanak Dev and they would be liberated.

These persons were thus liberated accordingly.

The Lord's Name is the Bridge for Liberation

6.13 *Bhai Dalla, Bhagirath, Japu and Niwala*

These four persons came to Guru Arjun Dev, prostrated and prayed to be enlightened on the fact whether Guru Nanak Dev was a worshipper of the Lord in the manifest form. Guru Arjun Dev said that differentiation between the manifest and unmanifest aspects of the Lord could be made if there are two Supreme Beings. Since He is only One, this question does not arise.

Guru Arjun Dev then quoted a shloka from guru Granth Sahib which is explained as

"He (the Lord) is Manifest, Unmanifest as well as Nothingness (*Shunya* as described by Buddhists).

He created Himself (*Saibhang*) and He worships Himself."
(*Sukhmani*, *Ashtpadi* 21)

When He desires, He manifests in any form, destroys the tyrants and reverts back to His Unmanifest form. Take the example of a king. The same king, when he desires, wears his weapons and formal dress and sits in his court. When he desires, he retires to his palace, removes his formal

dress and weapons and rests on his bed.

When anybody calls for the king, and asks for his help, the king helps at both times, when he is in his court and when he is resting in his palace because the king's servants are always ready to carry out his orders.

Similarly, **Guru Nanak Dev was a worshipper of the Lord's Name.** With the grace of His Name, His manifest form helps in the physical worldly affairs and His unmanifest form blesses one with Divine Knowledge. Therefore, the worship of His Name is superior to the worship of either the manifest or the unmanifest form.

As an illustration, when Lord Rama was to cross the ocean for going to Sri Lanka, he having all the spiritual powers could have dried up the ocean. But he wanted to teach the people the greatness of His Name. As not many would get rid of their ignorance by meeting him personally, but everyone could worship His Name. He therefore wrote 'Ram' on the stones, built the bridge with them and crossed over. This proves that worship of the Lord's Name is superior to His worship in the manifest or unmanifest form. **He in His 'Existence-Consciousness-Bliss' form happens to be everywhere, inside and outside of our bodies.** But without recitation of His Name, the mind and intellect are not purified and thus such beings keep on re-incarnating. Those who have meditated on His Name, purify their mind and intellect and the Divine Knowledge dawns upon them. Therefore, their cycle of birth and death is terminated. His Name is thus more distinguished than his manifest and unmanifest form.

The devotees then asked Guru ji that Lord Rama had built a bridge but Hanuman jumped over the ocean. How could he do that? Guru ji replied that Hanuman was a worshipper of His Name and His Name being supreme had given him the power to jump over the ocean. In spiritual science, there is another interpretation of this incident. Worship of the Lord's Name gives one the knowledge and the power to jump over the ignorance of the manifest world.

But only a few can possess this power. Whereas, even the feeble and the weak can walk over the bridge. There are very few who possess dispassion to the world, pain and pleasure and follow the path of knowledge. But those who worship His Name are numerous. By worship of His Name, many sinners and the virtuous have attained liberation.

Guru ji advised these persons to meditate on the Lord's Name and seek the company of devotees (*sadhu sangat*). From that day onwards, these devotees always sought refuge with Guru ji and devoted their time to his service, meditation and listening to *kirtan* and spiritual discourses. They were thus liberated from the cycle of birth and death.

Fruit of Karma

6.14 Bhai Moola, Sooja, Chandu Etc.

Bhai Moola, Sooja Dhawan, Bhai Chandu Chauchar, Bhai Ramdass Bhandari, Bhai Bala and Saindass came to Guru Arjun Dev ji, prostrated before him and prayed for clarification about the fruit of *karma*. They said that the account of all the actions of the human beings were evaluated by Dharam Raj, and every virtuous and evil act had its own fruit. They wanted to know whether the account of the sins is subtracted from the account of virtues and fruit of only the resultant actions is to be enjoyed by the individual or the fruits of both the evil and virtuous actions have to be enjoyed separately. They wanted this to be explained in detail.

Guru ji said that there were four types of disciples i.e.

- (1) Those who perform virtuous acts with specific desire to be fulfilled in return for the virtuous act.
- (2) Those who perform virtuous acts without any desire.
- (3) Those who are the true worshippers or '*bhakats*'
- (4) Those who are blessed with the Divine Knowledge or the '*gyanis*'.

Guru ji enquired about the category of the disciples

they wanted their question to be answered.

The disciples prayed that Guru ji might kindly explain about all the four categories of disciples in detail.

Guru ji said that a king has four types of subjects and there are different types of rules for revenue collection from each type. Similarly, rules for evaluation of *karma* are also different for different types of people.

- 1) The lowest classes of subjects are the share croppers. They cultivate the land and share the produce with the king. As soon as the crop is ready, king's officials arrive and collect their share. They punish the croppers for any dishonest deal. These people are always in fear of the officials.
- 2) There are some subjects who are given land on lease. They pay the amount fixed in the deed at regular intervals and a collector comes to take the money without any hassles.
- 3) There are some subjects, particularly on the kingdom's borders, who offer only gifts like horses, hawks etc to the king. They also join the king in his battles. They do not pay any taxes but collect revenue from their tenants.
- 4) The fourth category of subjects is the freeholders. They collect revenues from their tenants and maintain armies on behalf of the king. For maintenance of their private armies, the king pays them. In their own territories they exercise full control.

In the same way, humans created by the Lord can also be divided into four categories.

- 1) Those human beings, who act with an intention or desire to be fulfilled are always dealing with untruths, sins etc. Whatever spiritual activities they do, like visiting holy places or fasting etc. are for gaining a specific objective like wanting of a son, success in business or love etc. They are always under the fear of punishment by Dharam Raj for their sins. They

have to enjoy the fruit of their sins and virtues separately.

- 2) Those humans who have mastered their desires are always doing virtuous acts. However, sometimes they may commit a sin unintentionally. In their case, their account of virtues and sins is combined. If their virtues exceed the sins, they enjoy the fruit of the balance virtues after subtracting the sins. In case their sins exceed their virtues, they enjoy the fruit of the sins after subtracting the virtues. Normally, their virtues always exceed their sins.
 - 3) Those who are the true worshippers of the Supreme Being always perform virtuous acts with full faith in the Lord. Any sin they commit is just incidental, but the virtues are always performed with full intention. Whatever minor sins are there, are exempted and they are always close to the Lord. If they incarnate again in the world, they indulge in devotion and are thus liberated from the cycle of birth and death. If they have not overcome their desires, they first enjoy heaven. After their tenure in the heaven is over, they take birth in a rich man's house and attain their liberation. If they have overcome their desires, they incarnate directly in the house of a saint, undertake devotional activities and are liberated. This is the fruit of true worship. It is similar to the case of the king's subjects who offer gifts of horses and hawks to the king and enjoy all benefits. The true worshippers are always happy doing devotion and meditation.
 - 4) The fourth category is the '*gyanis*' or those who are blessed with Divine Wisdom. They consider their bodies as an illusion or all actions or *karma* as perishable. They are beyond *karmas*. The *karmas* cannot affect them like darkness cannot exist near the sun. They are always '*jiwan muktas*' or liberated while in the body.
- The disciples then enquired as to what happens to their

karma if they are not to enjoy the fruit? How the 'gyanis' in this world act while in this body?

Guru ji replied that those who serve them enjoy the fruit of their virtues and those who cause them suffering or criticize them enjoy the fruit of their sins and go to hell similar to the case of the close associates of the king, who enjoy their free hold states. The 'gyanis' live in the world as '*jiwan muktas*' or as liberated souls while still in the human body. They are not affected by their karma.

Service of the Saints also Results in Liberation

6.15 Bhai Bishnu Bihra and Sunder

Bhai Bishnu Bihra and Sunder came to Guru ji, prostrated and prayed for their liberation. Guru ji told Sunder to bring firewood for the kitchen and fetch water (in those days water was carried in buffalo skins wrapped around the shoulders of the carrier). Bhai Bishnu was asked to heat water early in the morning, bathe the devotees and wash their feet.

The devotees did these services with full faith and devotion and were thus liberated.

Seek the Remedy for Your Liberation with the Saints

6.16 Bhai Jattu, Bhanu Etc.

Bhai Jattu, Bhanu, Tirtha and Nihala, all Chadda Khatri's came to Guru Arjun Dev ji, prostrated and prayed that in Gurbani, it is said that

"*Mare rakhe eko aap. Manukh kai kichhu nahin haath*"

i.e. it is the Lord who punishes or exonerates a being. The humans have no say in the matter.

But it is also said

"*Jaisa bije so lune karam eh khait. Akirt ghana Hari visriya joni bharmet*"

i.e. you reap as you sow, it is your *karma* that your

body enjoys. The ungrateful people have forgotten Hari (God), so they incarnate again and again.

The two statements being contradictory, they were not clear as to which one to follow.

Guru ji said that in the holy Guru Granth Sahib there are instructions for all kinds of people. All the persons get different types of treatment from the Lord depending upon their state of evolution i.e.

- 1) For the persons who are entitled for the fruit of the karmas, the instruction is
"*Jaisa bije so lune karam eh khet*" i.e. you reap as you sow.
- 2) Those who are treated differently for the Lord's worship, the instruction is "*Mare rakhe Eko Aap*" i.e. He Himself may punish or exonerate.
- 3) Those who are entitled for the Divine Knowledge or "*Gyan*", for them the instruction is "*Tu ghat ghat antar sarab niranter, Hari Eko Purakh samana*" i.e. the Lord is prevailing everywhere continuously and always Hari, The Lord is only One, as *Atma* of all beings is present in all beings

Guru ji further explained that a doctor has medicines for the patients of all types of diseases. He has separate medicines for fever due to heat, cold, cough etc. The doctor examines the pulse of the patient, diagnoses the malady and only then prescribes the medicine. If the doctor is not experienced, he can administer the wrong medicine, which will not cure the disease.

Similarly, the saints diagnose the spiritual disease of the people by their dialogues, actions and senses. From the senses, they find out the condition of the mind. Just as the disease is diagnosed by the feel of the pulse of the patient, a person is diagnosed by his actions. The saints dispel the ignorance of the devotees according to their state of evolution. They give the instructions depending upon the entitlement of the devotee.

Guru ji told the four devotees that they were entitled to

devotion. Thus, they should engage themselves in meditation and serve the disciples. They were thus liberated after performing the service and devotion.

Criteria for Adopting the Mode for Personal Evolution

6.17 Bhai Nau, Bhulu Etc.

Bhai Nau, Bhulu, Jattu and Moola came to Guru Arjun Dev, prostrated before him and prayed for clarification on some aspects of '*Gurbani*'. They said that *Gurbani* contains instructions for '*Seva Yoga*', i.e. service mode of evolution; '*Bhakti Yoga*' i.e. devotion and meditation mode; and '*Gyan Yoga*' i.e. path of knowledge. They were not clear as to for which mode or path they were eligible. They therefore requested Guru ji to enlighten them on this aspect.

Guru ji replied that the eligibility for the three types of paths or modes for personal evolution could be found out by the following criteria.

- 1) If you listen to spiritual discourses and are able to discriminate between sins and virtues, and you desire to perform virtuous acts and stop committing sins, but due to the effects of past bad *karmas*, you do not succeed, then you should follow '*Seva Yoga*' i.e. serve the disciples, listen to '*Gurbani*' with full attention, let it soak in your mind and expel evil tendencies.
- 2) If by listening to *Gurbani*, your evil tendencies are expelled or hardly a few are left, you are then eligible for '*Bhakti Yoga*'. You should then recite and meditate on *Gurbani* all the 24 hours and expel the remaining evil tendencies.
- 3) When you understand that by dint of meditation on '*Gurbani*', you do not differentiate between good and bad or sin and virtue, all good and bad tendencies are stopped and you have achieved dispassion from the worldly affairs, you are eligible for '*Gyan Yoga*'.

You are then able to realize the Divine knowledge and see and experience His presence in everyone and everywhere.

Therefore Guru ji told them to adopt the mode of evolution or type of *yoga* as per their eligibility for their liberation. There are instructions in *Gurbani* for all types of disciples. When you go to a saint, he will instruct you according to your eligibility and position in life. Otherwise, you can find out your eligibility as per the above criteria. The three Yogas are not contradicting. Thus they may be performed simultaneously.

They understood and followed the instructions and were thus liberated.

When the Lord Wills, His Grace Falls on the Sleeping Ones Too

6.18 Bhai Chattar Dass and Moola Etc.

Bhai Chattar Dass, Moola, Haru and Garu came to Guru Arjun Dev, prostrated and prayed for certain clarification. They said that all the saints and holy persons advise to get up early in the morning, meditate and make positive effort to do good deeds. But in *Gurbani* it is said "*Dati Sahib sandiyan, kiya challe Tis nal. Ik jagande na lahan, ik sutiyan dei uthal*" i.e. all the blessings are with the Lord and nobody can take them by force. If He desires, He may not give them to those who are awake and still wake up the sleeping ones and bless them with His Grace.

They said that as per their understanding, if the Lord's Grace is available to the sleeping ones too, why should one make any effort? Guru ji told them that this has two interpretations.

- 1) Those who are awake, get the boons which are given to the sleeping ones also after waking them up. When '*prasad*' or grace is distributed in the gathering of devotees, it is given to those who are awake and

- also to them who are sleeping after waking them up.
- 2) Secondly, it is said that the grace is not given to the waking ones, yet the sleeping ones are woken up and offered the Grace. This also has two interpretations. It can be understood by this example.
- a) Once there were two merchants. They came to know that a ship would depart the next day. So they travelled a long distance and reached the port. One of them boarded the ship and the other one waited on the shore. He thought that when the ship will depart there would be a drum beat. He can then board the ship. But he failed to hear the drum beat and the ship left without him. The passengers on the ship were tired after having travelled a long distance and soon fell asleep. But the merchants on board woke them up purchased their wares and they made good profits. Those who failed to board the ship, though they were awake, lost the opportunity to do business. On the way back home they were looted by robbers.
- Similarly, those who come to the gathering of devotees will receive the Lord's Grace even if they fall asleep. They would also be made to listen to the Guru's words. Those who are in their houses, though awake, will not receive the Grace or be able to listen to the *Gurbani*.
- b) The second interpretation is that the Lord's Grace is received by the humble minds. There are some people who read some spiritual text or delve in yogic practices, become proud of their attainments and think that they are awake and alert and are acting fearlessly on their own strength. They never receive the Lord's Grace. But those who are ignorant and have a keen desire to expel their ignorance go to the assembly of devotees regularly.

The saints and the Guru dispel their sleep or ignorance. They evolve just like a businessman who makes little profits daily but in the end becomes rich. Similarly, a person who is humble and is regular in attending the assembly of devotees ('*sadhu sangat*') is blessed with Divine Knowledge.

Thus, these disciples became humble and attended the assembly of devotees regularly and were liberated.

Significance of the Word 'Waheguru'

6.19 Bhai Phirna, Jetha and Changa

Bhai Phirna Behl, Bhai Jetha and Changa came to Guru Arjun Dev and prayed that some people meditate on the Name 'Rama'; some meditate on 'Krishna'; some on 'Om' and yet some on 'Sohum'. They have been instructed to meditate on 'Waheguru'. They wanted to know the Name on which they should meditate.

Guru ji said that all the boats on the riverbank are capable of taking you across the river. But you should be concerned with the boat that you have boarded. Similarly, all the Names of the Lord are capable of leading one to liberation. But the disciples of a Guru will be liberated only by the Name given by their Guru.

For the disciples of Guru Nanak Dev, he has meditated nine '*yugas*' or ages on '**Wasdev**' and from this Name he has taken the letter '*Wawa*' of Gurmukhi script. Then he meditated on '**Hari**' for nine ages and took the letter '*Haha*' from it; thereafter he meditated on '**Govind**' for nine ages and from '**Govind**' he has taken '*Gagga*' letter and then he meditated on the Name '*Rama*' and took the '*Rara*' letter. These four letters make the word '**Waheguru**'. Thus, **there is the fruit of thirty-six ages of meditation on the word 'Waheguru'**.

Thus, those who will meditate on the Name '**Waheguru**'

will terminate their cycle of life and death.

The disciples and their descendants were liberated by meditating on 'Waheguru'.

The Manifest and the Unmanifest form of the Incarnations

6.20 Bhai Vesa and Gopi Etc.

Bhai Vesa, Gopi and Bhai Tulsia Bhardwaj Brahmin and Bhai Bhaira came to Guru Arjun Dev and prostrated before him. They prayed for clarification of two seemingly contradicting verses of Saint Namdev.

1. "*Pande, tumra Ram Chand, so bhi awat dekhia tha. Ravan seti sarbar hoi, ghar ki joi gawai thi*" i.e. O Pandit! I saw your Ram Chandra's advent into this world. He had a fight with Ravana and lost his wife.
2. Again Namdev has said: "*Jasrath Rai nand Raja mera Ram Chand parnawe Nama tut rus Amrit pije*" i.e. O Raja Ram Chand, son of king Dashrath, I worship you and drink the immortality giving nectar of your name.

From the first verse it is seen that the incarnations are belittled and in the second verse, the incarnations are praised. They were not clear as to how to understand this seeming contradiction?

Guru ji said that one type of worship is of the 'manifest form' i.e. '*sargun*' and the other type is the worship of 'unmanifest form' i.e. '*nirgun*'. To understand this, take the case of the ocean. There are innumerable waves on its surface. Then there are rivers. But the ocean, the waves and the rivers are only one thing i.e. water. Similarly, the Supreme Being also manifests in many forms. He is giving power to everybody in the form of existence-knowledge-bliss through the incarnations and saints. But the Pundits or the priests who are devoid of real Spiritual Knowledge worship the incarnations in the manifest form and harbour malice against the saints. The first verse of Namdev is addressed to these

Pundits.

Suffering and enjoyment is connected to the form of human body. But those who are blessed with Divine Knowledge know that the body is temporary and false. So, they also treat pain and pleasure as false.

Therefore, there are worshippers of the Supreme Being or the Original Source of all creations and there are worshippers of Its manifestations. The first type know that everything and everybody is the manifestation of the Lord. So they do not harbour enmity or malice towards anybody. On the contrary, the worshippers of the manifest forms are the opposite. The believers in Lord Rama show malice towards Lord Krishna and the believers in Lord Krishna harbour malice towards Lord Rama.

Guru ji advised them to worship the Unmanifest Lord fearlessly and without harbouring hatred towards anybody. They were thus liberated.

Adopt Virtuous State for Peace of Mind

6.21 Bhai Charu, Bami Etc.

Bhai Charu, Bami etc. accompanied by many others, all residents of Sultanpur Lodhi came to Guru Arjun Dev , prostrated and said that they were all devotees of Guru Amar Dass. They were instructed by him to earn an honest living, serve the disciples, be humble, sing '*Gurbani*' in the morning hours after taking a bath and after sunrise recite from the sacred books of the Gurus and then start the worldly business. Although they were following these instructions faithfully, they were not at peace with themselves. They humbly requested for some suitable advice to help them in their endeavour.

Guru ji advised them to abandon '*tamsik*' and '*rajsik*' qualities and adopt '*satwik*' or virtuous quality for peace of mind. The devotees then asked, how could they recognize different '*gunas*' or qualities of the mind?

Guru ji explained that those who indulge in violence

and anger were '*tamsik*'. Those who were greedy and proud were '*rajsik*'. Those who talked politely and were humble were the '*satwik*'.

They then inquired as to what type of diets encourage these qualities in a person? Guru ji said that '*tamsik*' qualities were generated by stale food, excessive walking or physical work, excess sleep and by wearing dirty clothes. Eating a lot of sweets and salted food, more sexual enjoyment and liking self-praise generated the '*rajsik*' qualities. The *satwik* qualities were generated by eating simple food like rice, lentils, *khichri* (rice and lentils cooked together), meagre diet, wearing of clean clothes etc.

The test for the qualities of minds were as under:

- 1) When one listens to Guru's words with one pointed attention and is able to understand without any wavering of the mind then one is of '*satwik*' bent of mind.
- 2) If the mind wavers and stabilizes alternately, then it is '*rajsik*' bent of mind.
- 3) If the mind was all the time wavering and not able to understand anything of the spiritual discourses, it was of '*tamsik*' bent of mind.

Concentrated attentive mind is a sign of '*satwik*' quality. One attains knowledge only in '*satwik*' state of mind. There are two types of warriors. One who conquers the enemy outside and the other who wins over the enemy within. The balladeers sing the praise of the warriors who conquer the outside enemy. But the praise of those, who have won over their internal enemy i.e. their own minds, is sung by the saints. (There are a number of ballads {*vaars*} in Sri Guru Granth Sahib)

A '*sadhu*' or a saint is one who has won over his senses. A devotee or '*bhakta*' is one whose no breath goes waste without remembering the Lord's Name. Guru ji thus advised the devotees to always remain in the '*satwik*' *guna* or state of mind. They will then be able to attain their peace of

mind. Early morning is the time when the illusive powers of '*Maya*' or the Lord's creative and sustaining power throws its net over the human beings. This is the time when the devotees of "*Waheguru*" or the Supreme Being are awake and alert in meditation. They are thus saved from being entrapped in *Maya*'s net.

Guru ji also said that if a person comes to a devotee for food or clothes, he should be helped. If his needs are beyond one's means, more devotees should join together and meet his requirements. The devotees should help others very humbly like the rain that falls equally on all.

Guru ji further advised the devotees to visit him on the festivals like *Diwali* and *Baisakhi* and bathe in the holy tank at Amritsar. On other days, they should visit the *Dharamshala* two or three times. Guru ji said that Sultanpur Lodhi is a treasure house of devotion to God. The people of this place are very much devoted to the Lord.

One Lamp Lights More Lamps and the Darkness is Dispelled

6.22 *Bhai Deepa Kasra*

Bhai Deepa Kasra was residing in Guru Arjun's Dev's house and used to serve him. He would also prepare delicious food and offer it to the visiting devotees. He himself would eat only their leftovers. He would also wash their feet with warm water, massage their legs and offer clothes to the needy. He also discussed Guru's words with the disciples.

Guru ji was very pleased with his services and said that like one lighted lamp lights more lamps which dispel darkness, he has blessed *Bhai Deepa* (which literally means a lamp in Punjabi) with the light of Divine Knowledge. Whoever will meet *Bhai Deepa* shall also attain the Divine Knowledge.

Effort for a Holy Cause Brings High Dividends

6.23 Bhai Lala and Langah Chaudhary

Bhai Lala and Langah Dhillon, both village chiefs from Patti, came to Guru Arjun Dev. At that time the holy tank of Amritsar was under construction. These two disciples performed the service with great devotion. They would bring monetary contributions and also carry out physical labour.

Guru ji was highly pleased with them. He said that those disciples, who would dig out one unit of earth would liberate their descendants. Those who would dig out a full cartload, everyone with them would also be liberated. Those who would endeavor to make steps of the tank, his seat in the Guru's house shall be permanent i.e. his descendants shall be permanently devoted to Guru ji.

The tank of Amritsar is the Mansarover (a holy lake in Tibet) and the Harimandir in its midst is the ship to take the devotees across the world to liberation. Whosoever takes bath in the holy tank will be cleansed of his sins. Those who shall listen to the holy word of *Gurbani* in the Harimandir Sahib, take it to heart and act on it, their tendency to commit sins shall be expelled. They will be blessed with Divine Knowledge and live in the world as '*Jiwan Muktas*' or liberated souls while still in the body.

Bhai Lalla and Langah Dhillon and other 'Masands' (Guru's authorized representatives for collecting donations) and whosoever made an endeavor for construction of the tank and the *Gurudwara* were liberated.

Guru ji said " *Uddam karat mun nirmal hoa. Hari marag chalat bharam sagla khoia. Nam nidhan Satguru sunio mit gae sagle roga jiu*".

This means, those who will make an endeavor to come to Amritsar and participate in the construction of the holy tank and the Harimandir will purify their minds and intellect. Those who will make an endeavor to follow the Guru's precepts will dispel all their doubts. The Name of 'Waheguru' is the treasure house of wealth. All other kinds of wealth

remain behind in this world (after death) but the Lord's Name goes with one even after the death. One gets the God's Name from 'Satguru' (the true master). This God's Name dispels the darkness of ignorance, all diseases and sorrows.

If the Lord Wills, He can Sustain One without Breath

6.24 Bhai Ajah, Ajaib and Umar Shah

Bhai Ajah, Ajaib and Umar Shah were 'Masands' of Guru ji. They served in the *Gurudwara* and took an active role in the construction of Amritsar. They collected the donations to Guru ji and lived on the offerings from the disciples. They were honest men. One day Guru ji asked them as to how they treated Guru's money? They replied that they treated it as a poison. Thus, they would not use it for themselves. Guru ji said that this honesty would be the cause of their liberation.

Then they prayed that it is said in the *Gurbani* "*Prabhu bhave bin sas te rakhe. Prabhu bhave ta Hari gun bhakhe*" i.e. if the Lord desires, He may keep one without breath. If the Lord desires, He may cause one to say His praise. But as per their knowledge, no one has ever lived without breath. Once Bhisham Pitama (of Mahabharata), son of Santal, got a boon from his father that he could die at his will. When the time for his death came, the Sun was in the south of equator. He waited for his death till the Sun came to the north. But he still maintained his breathing. They requested to be elucidated as to how one can live without breath.

Guru ji said that this power to keep one alive without breathing lies with the Supreme Being. The trees and the mountains are alive without breathing. A child in the mother's womb has no breath for the first six months but it is still growing. It is only after six months that the child in the womb starts breathing. Thus, the Supreme Being is omnipotent.

The second interpretation is that only those breaths are

fruitful which are spent in the praise of the Lord. Otherwise, these are like the skin bellows of the blacksmith. So, do not waste your breaths, but remember the Lord.

Amritsar is the Highest Place for Pilgrimage

6.25 Bhai Paira Chajjal and Kandu Sanghar

Bhai Paira Chajjal and Kandu Sanghar came to Guru Arjun Dev and prostrated before him. They prayed to Guru ji for advice so that they may be liberated.

Guru ji told them to have bath in Amritsar, meditate on *Gurbani* and serve the disciples. He further explained that Amritsar is the original pilgrimage center but over a period of time it had become obscure. Once the Third Master, Guru Amar Dass was pleased and told the Fourth Master, Guru Ram Dass " The people of *kaliyug* (dark age) will have very short lives and blunt intellects. They will also be short on resources. They will not be able to take a holy dip at the pilgrimage centers. Let us create a pilgrimage centre in Punjab, where a holy dip will be equal to a pilgrimage to all the holy places in the world".

Guru Amar Dass ordered construction at a site nearby which was in ruins. Guru Ram Dass constructed a tank at that place and said that his successor, the Fifth Master will complete it by paving it with stone. Guru ji named this pilgrimage center as Amritsar (the tank of holy nectar) and said that this will be a major place for pilgrimage. All other pilgrim centers like Kashi (Varanasi) etc shall be subservient to it. When *kaliyug* will destroy all other pilgrim places, all temples, places of worship and pilgrimage will come here in Amritsar. This will be the Lord of Universe (*Jagan Nath*).

When Ganges river becomes invisible, there will be hermitage of *rishis* (hermits) around **Amritsar** upto a radius of 25-30 kilometers.

Guru ji constructed another tank near Amritsar known as **Santokhsar** and said that whosoever takes bath in this tank will dispel his sins and shall attain *santokh* (contentment).

Human Being is not the Body

6.26 Bhai Kapur Dev

Bhai Kapur Dev was a very dedicated disciple of Guru ji. He, his wife, sons and daughters-in-law, all used to welcome the Guru's disciples and serve them whole-heartedly. One day he expressed his desire to Guru Arjun Dev to meet a disciple who was very dear to Guru ji. Guru ji said that one such man, Bhai Samman, lived in Sahbazpur and he could go and meet him.

Bhai Kapur Dev went to Sahbazpur and met Bhai Samman. Bhai Samman treated him with great pleasure and hospitality. He bought a lot of firewood and spent a lot of time in repairing the floor mats. Bhai Kapur Dev inquired of him as to why he was spending so much time on repairing torn floor mats when Guru ji had sent him to have discussions with him. Bhai Samman replied that repairing of mats and arranging firewood was also an important work which had to be done first. He would talk to Bhai Kapur later.

The whole night, **Bhai Samman** and his son performed *kirtan*. Next day dacoits came and drove away all the cattle of the village. The villagers followed the dacoits, there was exchange of fire and one bullet hit Bhai Samman's son and he died. Bhai Samman cremated him with the wood he had purchased the previous day. After the cremation, the village folks were returning home singing devotional songs i.e. *kirtan* when they met Bhai Kapur Dev. A large number of Guru's disciples came to give condolence. Bhai Samman spread the floor mats which he had repaired. Bhai Kapur Dev now understood that Bhai Samman had prior knowledge of his son's death. He asked Bhai Samman that since he knew about his son's death, why did he not get him pardoned from Guru ji and prayed for his long life?

Bhai Samman replied that since the human body was false or perishable, there was no surprise that it had died. Those who expressed sorrow on death of the body were

fools. If one had to ask for something from Guru ji, one should request for the Lord's Name, which would be helpful even after death. No body was a father or a son. It is a game for a few days. The Lord had created the body by combining five contradictory elements i.e. earth, water, fire, air and ether. After death they separate again. Nobody is born and nobody dies. Human beings suffer because they have forgotten their true form i.e. 'Atma'. If one fully understood, accepted and acted on Guru's words i.e. 'Gurbani', he would be liberated from the cycle of birth and death.

Guru ji has said "*Nah kichu janme, nah kichu mare. Aapan chalit Aap hi kare*" i.e. no one is born and no one dies. It is all the Lord's play. Just like when there are clouds the blue sky cannot be seen. But it is always there. It is neither created nor destroyed. Similarly, the human beings are always there in the form of "Atma". Their birth and death is simply an illusion.

Mere Glimpse of Amritsar Destroys All Sins

6.27 Bhai Jodha and Jallo Etc.

Bhai Jodha and Jallo, two *masands*, were living in Tulaspur. Bhai Mohan and Bhai Alam Chand, also two *masands* were living in Ganj area of Lahore. They used to bring donations to Guru ji at Amritsar. They were meticulous in ensuring that these donations were not tempered with. They would say that any dishonest use of Guru's money was like a fly in the food. It spoils the whole food and makes one vomit. Similarly, any dishonesty with Guru's funds would destroy all wealth and also affect one's physical health.

One day these four *masands* were coming to Amritsar with the offerings, riding on a chariot. On the way a big black cobra blocked their way. The snake would turn its hood in whichever way they turned. Bhai Mohan then got down from the chariot, took a copper pot and requested the snake to climb into the pot if it wanted to visit Guru ji.

The snake quietly crept into it. Bhai Mohan covered the pot with a bronze vessel and kept it in the chariot.

When they reached Amritsar they prostrated before Guru ji. Guru ji asked them, how many they were? They replied that there were four of them. Guru ji told the attendant to give them *prasad* for five persons because the fifth i.e. the snake which had come with them was also a *masand*.

The disciples wanted to know why he had become a snake? Guru ji told them that in his previous life he was very proud and did not bow to other disciples. Thus now its hood was raised. He had also dishonestly misappropriated **Guru's money**. As a result, he had become a poisonous snake.

Guru ji ordered the copper pot to be brought in his presence. It was brought and kept in the congregation. The snake crept out and stood vertically and raised his hood. Guru ji asked an attendant to bring holy water from the Amritsar tank and sprinkle it on the snake. As soon as the nectar was sprinkled, the snake discarded its body, took the form of a god (*devta*) and rose to the sky.

Then, Guru ji said that the mere glimpse of Amritsar destroys all the sins of the devotees.

One is a Brahmin by Deeds not by Birth

6.28 Bhai Dhesi and Jodh

Bhai Dhesi and Jodh were Sanghar Brahmins. They came to Guru Arjun Dev, prostrated before him and said that although they were Brahmins, the other Brahmins did not allow them to sit with them in formal functions because they had adopted a *Kshatriya* as a Guru (Sikh Gurus were *Kshatriyas*). They had stopped worshipping Ganges and Kashi, which are the places of Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu. Instead they were visiting Amritsar. They had deserted Sanskrit, which was the language of the *Vedas* and were reading and singing *Gurbani* in local Punjabi language. They were not observing fasts on *Shivratri*, *Janamashatami* and

Ekadashi (11th day of moon) and were eating the food offered by the disciples of Guru ji. They had left the customary ritual ceremonies for birth and death as followed by the other Brahmins. Instead they were performing prayer (*ardas*) and took '*karah prasad*' (pudding made of wheat flour, sugar and clarified butter). Therefore, they had come to seek shelter with Guru ji who had destroyed their pride in being Brahmins. They were blessed with the sweet blessings of '*Gurbani*'. They therefore prayed to be enlightened as to what answer they should give to other Brahmins.

Guru ji said that Amritsar is the residence of the Supreme Being in Unmanifest form. Brahma's, Vishnu's and Shiva's pilgrimage centers obtain their purity from here. Therefore, they are all present here. Amritsar is the pilgrimage center of water (tank) and holy saints also reside here.

"*Ganga Jamuna Godavari Sarusti te karhe uddam dhoor sadhu ki tai. Kilwikh mail bhare pare hamre wicch, hamri mail sadhu ki dhoor gawai*".

i.e. when the sinners take bath in Ganges, Jamuna, Godavari and Saraswati rivers which are considered holy, they leave their sins there. But those who came to Amritsar for pilgrimage, their sins were dispelled with the dust of saints' feet.

Secondly, when they hear the holy words of Gurus (*Gurbani*), they become purified.

The disciples then said that dirt is removed by washing with water. How can it be removed by the dust of the saints' feet?

Guru ji explained that dirty clothes are washed away with an alkaline mineral (unpurified carbonate of sodium known as '*sajji*' in Punjab and used by washer men). This *sajji* was also a kind of dirt but it cleans the clothes. Similarly, the dirt of the saints' feet can wash away the sins of the sinners. The sound of Guru's words (*Gurbani*) was also a type of subtle dust which generated love and devotion. All other pilgrimage centers were located at water bodies whereas at Amritsar, there was a water tank as well as the source

of the holy Name of the Supreme Being (in Harminder Sahib *kirtan* is continuous from early morning till late night). Thus, Amritsar was a pilgrimage center of water as well as the holy Name.

The disciples asked on what basis Harminder Sahib has been built? Guru ji said "Harimandir Sahib is a ship. Whosoever comes with faith and listens to His Name is taken across the ocean of the world. Harimandir Sahib is the ship and the Lord's Name is the navigator".

"*Tirath nawan jau, tirath Naam hai.*

Tirath Sabad vichar anter Gyan hai."

i.e. why go on a pilgrimage for a holy dip? The Lord's Name is the real pilgrimage. Meditation on *Gurbani* is the Divine Knowledge, and therefore is the real pilgrimage.

Whatever enters the pilgrimage centers on Ganges, Godavari etc goes to the ocean which is the destination of all rivers therefore these rivers can lead the bathers only to their destination, the ocean. On the other hand, when you meditate on the *Gurbani*, it takes you directly to the feet of the Unmanifest Lord Narayan. Hence, Amritsar was blessed with both the holy water and the Lord's Name.

As regards fasting, the Guru's disciples always eat frugally, and hence were always on fast. The others fasted only once on *Ekadashi* day (eleventh day of the moon). Bhagat Namdev has said "*Ram sang Namdev jan kau Pritagya aai. Ekedashi barat rahe kahe kau tirath jai*" i.e. Namdev has pledged in the Name of Lord Rama that he would neither fast on *Ekadashi* nor go on a pilgrimage because those saints who had full faith in the Lord's Name were blessed with fruit of all fasts and visits to the pilgrimage centers.

It was because of ignorance that the Brahmins were proud of themselves. But Guru's disciples were blessed with knowledge of '*Atma*' or Divine Knowledge. They did not consider themselves as a body. Those who were proud of being born in high caste were the ones who were really the lowborn or the '*chandalas*'. The real Brahmin was a person who knew that the Lord is prevailing everywhere and in

everyone. Such persons did not have any enmity with anybody (when everyone is the form of the Lord, how can one have enmity with Him in any form?). The physical body of the Brahmin and the '*chandala*' is made up of the same type of bones, skin, flesh etc.

Saint Kabir has said:

*"Kahu Kabir jo Brahm Bichare.
So Brahman kahiat hai hamare."*

i.e. the real Brahmin is the one who meditates on the Supreme Being and has attained Him.

Guru ji thus told the disciples to discover their True Self. The offerings to Gayatri and oblations to the dead would only take one to the land of the Dead. By meditating on the Lord's holy Name, one reached the Supreme Being directly. The Guru's disciples were not satisfied with the land of the Dead. As an example, the king of the whole world would not be satisfied to rule over one village but a poor man would only be too pleased to acquire one small village. Similarly, the people who deserve hell would only be too pleased to reach the land of the dead but a Guru's disciple does not even desire heaven. They would be satisfied only when they reached the Supreme Being.

Remember Death

6.29 *Bhai Goind, Gola and Mohan*

Bhai Goind, Gola and Mohan came to Guru Arjun Dev, prostrated and requested for advice so that they would be liberated.

Guru ji advised them to recite Ram's Name and always remember death. When they remembered their own death, they would not commit any sin and recitation of Ram's Name would destroy the past sins. Thus, they would be liberated from the cycle of birth and death.

How to Make the Mind One Pointed

6.30 *Bhai Jodha and Jamu Dhute*

Bhai Jodha and Jamu Dhute came to Guru ji and said that as per Guru ji's instructions, one should recite the Lord's Name with a focused mind. But they were not able to achieve that frame of mind. What should they do?

Guru ji told them that previously they were ignorant about their mind's behavior, but now they had become aware that it is wavering. Therefore, as soon as the mind went astray they should bring it back to the Lord's Name. Gradually it will become focused and they would be liberated. They were thus liberated.

Faith in Guru is the Highest Austerity

6.31 *Bhai Manjh and Pirana*

Bhai Manjh and Pirana came to Guru Arjun Dev and requested to be blessed as his disciples. Guru ji told that they already were the disciples of '*Sarwar*' (a Muslim *pir*). Guru's discipleship being very rare, could not be given to them as they would not be able to work on it. They said that since they had come to Guru ji and heard him, their mind had turned away from '*Sarwar*'. They had come to seek shelter with Guru ji to attain liberation.

Guru ji told them to go back and demolish the altar of '*Sarwar*' and then return to him. Bhai Manjh and Pirana went home and demolished the altar and returned to Gururji. Guru ji advised them to serve the disciples so that their intellects were purified. After that they would be blessed with the precept. Bhai Pirana was told to fetch water and stroke the fires in the free kitchen. Bhai Manjh was told to bring firewood for the kitchen and wash the used plates. Both were told to listen attentively to the discourses on '*Gurbani*', morning and evening. In the time left with them, they should recite the Name. They followed these instructions meticulously and used to eat in the free kitchen.

One day, Guru ji asked Bhai Manjh, where were they eating their meals? Bhai Manjh replied that they were eating in the free kitchen. Guru ji said that if they were eating and working in the free kitchen, they were performing paid labor.

After hearing this, they started eating whatever food was offered to them by the disciples and served in Guru ji's free kitchen.

One day, Guru ji asked Bhai Manjh, where were they eating their meals? They replied that they were taking food offered by the disciples. Guru ji said that when the food was given to them by the disciples voluntarily and in good faith, they should eat only one chapatti and distribute the rest to the needy. With this, their bodies became weak and emaciated.

One day they received news that thieves had taken away their cattle in the village. Guru ji said that their fields and property in the village were neglected as they were away from home. So they should go back and look after their business. Moreover, the Mughal rulers had confiscated their houses. The people were gossiping that since Bhai Manjh and Pirana had demolished the place of 'Sarwar', they had lost their wealth. The two disciples replied 'O True King, if the wealth was lost in a dream, one does not really lose anything. By Guru's Grace they were blessed with the wealth of the Name of "Waheguru".

Guru ji advised them to recite 'Waheguru' with every breath. They were also given the holy water touched by the Guru's feet and made disciples. After this, all their property and wealth were restored to them. The disciples then requested that Guru ji may bless them so that their mind may rest at his lotus feet.

One day Bhai Manjh went to collect firewood. When he was returning with the load there was a very heavy storm and Bhai Manjh fell into a well. But he kept the wood on his head to save it from getting wet and thus kept standing in the well. At that time Guru ji happened to be passing

that way and asked his disciples to find out the reason for the sound coming from the well. The disciples went to the well and inquired as to who was in there. Bhai Manjh disclosed his identity and requested to be taken out of the well. The disciples threw a rope inside and requested him to climb out with its help. Instead, Bhai Manjh insisted that the wood meant for Guru's kitchen be taken out first. Bhai Manjh then followed the firewood.

Guru ji was highly pleased with Bhai Manjh's devotion. Guru ji embraced him and with this Bhai Manjh was enlightened and came to know the three times i.e. the past, present and future. Then Guru ji told him to ask for something. Bhai Manjh replied that whatever was needed was given to him by Guru ji, therefore, he only wanted to be blessed with having no more further desires in life. Guru ji blessed him with this and yet told him to ask for something else. Bhai Manjh prayed that Guru ji should not make his disciple pass through such hardships and tests the likes of which he had to pass through. This being the dark age i.e. *kaliyug*, human being were not able to withstand such hardships. Guru ji agreed and again asked him to ask for something. Then Bhai Manjh requested for the boon of faith. Guru ji was highly pleased and said

*"Manjh piara Guru nu, Guru Manjh piara
Manjh Guru ka bohitha jug langhan hara."*

i.e. Bhai manjh loves Guru ji and Guru ji loves Bhai Manjh. He is the Guru's ship who can take the people across the world. Guru ji addressed Bhai Manjh and Pirana and blessed them with faith. Those who met them were also blessed with faith.

Amritsar is the Highest Pilgrimage Center

6.32 Bhai Hamja Jajja Etc.

Bhai Hamja Jajja, Bhai Bala Marwaha, Bhai Nano Ohri and Bhai Suri Chaudhry came to Guru Arjun Dev and said that they had heard that Kashi was a very sacred pilgrimage

center. All the Shaivite '*Jangams*' who die at Kashi go straight to Shivpuri or the abode of Lord Shiva. So they requested Guru ji to describe the importance of Amritsar.

Guru ji said that all the holy places or the pilgrim centers of the three ages, having suffered the bad times of *kaliyug* have been established in an area of about 30 kms radius around Amritsar. When he started work on 'Taran Taaran' tank, one of his dedicated disciple used to bring one rupee out of his hard earned money. He would offer half a rupee and take back the balance half rupee. So Guru ji thought that he should only establish half the pilgrimage center there. In the mean time, people of Noordi police station area took away the bricks meant for Tarn Taran Temple from the kiln itself. Then Guru ji said that the foundation of walls made with these bricks will be uprooted and the bricks will be brought back to Amritsar. The other half of the pilgrimage centre would be constructed there.

One day a woman came with her husband and said that she was a daughter of a rich man who had become angry with her and married her to a leper. She was carrying her husband in a basket when she reached the berry tree (the tree on the Amritsar tank known as '*Dukhbhanjani beri*' or the berry tree capable of removing all sufferings). She placed the basket in its shade and went to the village for begging for food. It was *Baisakhi* day. There was a pond near the tree. One crow took a dip into the water and became white. Her husband saw the miracle and somehow managed to crawl into the water. He became perfectly healthy. When she came back after begging, she found a handsome man who told her that he was her husband. He tried to convince her, but she still had a doubt. So she came to Guru Arjun Dev to clear her doubt.

Guru ji meditated on Guru Amar Dass who confirmed that this man was the woman's husband. In meditation, Guru Amar Dass told Guru Arjun Dev that he had first established the pilgrimage center at Goindwal Sahib where one open well (*Bowli Sahib*) with 84 steps was constructed.

Whosoever will recite *Japji Sahib* on the 84 steps with one pointed mind would escape 84 lakh birth and death cycles and would be liberated. Now, Guru Arjun Dev should construct a tank known as Amritsar with a temple in the middle known as Harimandir Sahib. He should install Guru Granth Sahib there. Those who would take bath in the tank and listen to Gurbani from Guru Granth Sahib, their ancestors would also be liberated. He further directed that Harimandir be constructed at the location where Guru Ram Dass's body was cremated. Guru Ram Dass was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu and Vishnu is also known as Hari. This is why the name of the temple is Harimandir. There is no distinction between the Name and the person. Hari's Name will be recited here all the time. This is why it is correctly called Harimandir Sahib.

Just as on the Ganges Haridwar is an auspicious place, '*Hari ki pauri*' around Harimandir shall be very auspicious and a bath at the '*Hari ki pauri*' would be specially rewarding.

Then Guru Arjun Dev inquired about the holy place of Taran Taaran. Guru Amar Dass said that this place of pilgrimage would heal the sick disciples as well as lead them to liberation. In due course, this will be properly paved in stone. Bath in this tank on the new moon day would be highly auspicious.

Guru Amar Dass instructed Guru Arjun Dev in meditation to construct Amritsar Tank and Harimandir Sahib temple. Guru Amar Dass also said that while digging the ruins in the city Guru Arjun Dev will find a yogi who should be blessed with Divine Knowledge by him and liberated.

Guru Arjun Dev came to that spot, dug it up and found a tomb inside it. There was a yogi in deep *samadhi* who was revived with some herbs and medicines. On being revived the yogi said that his birth in the human form had become fruitful. This place was the meridian of a very holy place to be known as Amritsar. All the holy pilgrim centers would be established around this place in a radius of 30 kilometers. This was the place where a holy tank construction

was blessed by Guru Ram Dass. The foundation of this shrine was eternal and all around it the Lord's praise would be sung.

The yogi said that in *Treta Yuga* (the third age), he was a disciple of Raja Janak (father of mother Sita, wife of Lord Rama). At that time he could not be firm in Divine Knowledge. So Raja Janak told him to sit in this place and continue deep meditation, and that in *kaliyug*, Guru Nanak Dev's fifth incarnation would bless him with Divine Knowledge. He felt blessed by meeting Guru Arjun Dev and was assured of liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

The yogi also asked Guru ji to answer and clear his doubts whether this world was real or an illusion? If it was illusion, why should it look real? If it was real, why did it appear to be illusion to those blessed with Divine Knowledge?

Guru ji replied that like the things in a dream seem very real and disappear in the waking state, the world and the body seem real in the state of ignorance. As soon as one became a *Gyani* i.e. is blessed with Divine Knowledge, the world and the body seem an illusion. This is explained in '*Suhi Raga*'.

"Bajigar jaise baji pai. Nana roop bhaikh dikhla. Saang utar thamio pasare. Tab Eko Ekankara. (1) Kawan roop distio binsaio. Kathe gaiyo te kat te aio. (1) Rahau. Jal te uthahe anik taranga. Kanik bhookan kine bahu ranga. Bij biji dekhio bahu parkara. Phal pake te Ekankara (2) Sahas ghata mahi ek akas. Ghat phoote te ohi paragas."

i.e. when the Lord like a magician puts up a show, he shows numerous costumes or garbs. When the show is over, He is again One Unmanifest Lord or *Nirankar*. How many forms are shown and vanished. Where did they come from and where did they go?

The water takes the form of many waves and gold is made into many types of ornaments. There are many fruits on a tree, but when the fruit ripens, all have the same kind of seed within. There are thousands of clouds in the sky. When they clear out, there is only one sky. The sky is neither

made nor destroyed by the clouds.

The magician's trick is an illusion or false but the magician is a fact or truth. The puppets act as the puppeteer wants them to.

Then the yogi said that the puppeteer uses wood and tools to make the puppets. The gold moulds itself and becomes ornaments. Guru ji replied that gold remains gold in the ornaments and water remains water in the waves. Similarly, this world is all '*Braham*' or Supreme Being. Those who see the Supreme Being in this form are the *Jiwan Muktas*. Like the clouds did not make and destroy the sky, the Supreme Being was neither created nor destroyed by the manifest world. Like the same seed was in all the fruits of the tree, the same '*Braham*' was present in all the beings. Only because of illusion, everybody looked different from others.

The yogi said that he was satisfied and had learned what he wanted. He could now leave his body. The yogi discarded his body at Santokhsar in Amritsar.

After this Guru ji started construction of Amritsar tank. The steps on all the four sides were divided and entrusted to different '*Masands*' for construction. They were firmly directed to do a good job. If the construction was of good quality, their progeny would be liberated. If the work was of poor quality, their secrets would be exposed.

Guru ji stood at the site of Harimandir Sahib and recited the following composition:

SORATH MOHALLA 5

"Wichi Karta Purakh Khaloa. Wal na winga hoa. Majan Gur aanda rase. Jap Hari Hari kilwikh naase (1) Santahu Ram Dass sarowar nika. Jo nawe so kul tarave udhar hoa hai ji ka. (1) Rahau. Jai jai kar jug gawe. Mun chindiare phal pawe. Sahi solamat Nai aai. Aapna Prabhu dhiai. (2) Sant sarowar nawe. So jan paramgati pawe. Mare na awe jai. Hari Hari Naam dhiai. (3) Ih Braham bichar su jane. Jis dyal hoi Bhagwane. Baba Nanak Prabhu sarnai. Sabh chinta ganat mitai.(4)
i.e. when Guru Arjun Dev meditated, the Supreme Being

manifested and in His manifest form He has blessed Amritsar. His Name is His Unmanifest form. Thus He is present in Amritsar both in the manifest as well as the unmanifest form. Who soever will take bath in the tank will get rid of all his sins and the sufferings will be dispelled with meditation on His Name. O saints, this Ram Dass's tank will be very auspicious. One who takes bath here will liberate his whole progeny. Whoever sings praise and ovation of this holy place, all his desires and tasks will be fulfilled. Those who meditate on His Name will be safe and will be blessed with Divine Knowledge. Those who surrender themselves to this holy place will be relieved of the three types of sufferings (sufferings of body, mind and soul) and will be relieved of all the anxieties and worries. Anyone who bathes in this tank made by the saint (Guru Ram Dass) will attain the highest state. Those who simultaneously take bath and meditate on His Name cleanse their bodies and minds and terminate their cycle of birth and death. Those who will leave their body here will attain peace at the holy feet of the Lord. There will be places of pilgrimages all around in hundreds.

What Happens to 'Tamsik' People Who Leave their Body in Amritsar ?

6.33 Bhai Kala and Nihalu

Bhai Kalu Mehra and Nihalu were residing in the hills and were devoted to Guru ji. They used to serve the visiting disciples with great dedication. They came to Guru ji and asked him "What happens to those sinners and tamsik people who leave their body in Amritsar"? Guru ji replied that they take birth as wasps, crows, ghosts, dogs, rats and snakes. But if they die in Amritsar again and again, they will also be blessed with Guru's devotion and will finally be liberated from 84 lakh birth and death cycles.

Destiny of Warriors in Future Lives

6.34 Bhai Kakka Kalau

Bhai Kakka Kalau was a great warrior. He requested Guru ji to clarify as to what state was attained by the warriors after death? Guru ji said that those warriors who leave their bodies in religious wars with the Name of the Lord on their lips attain the highest state i.e. the feet of the Lord. Those warriors who die fighting go to heaven, are reborn as rulers after passing their designated duration in heaven.

Feeding the Poor is the Highest Oblation

6.35 Bhai Paira and Jaitha

Bhai Paira Chandalia and Jaitha Sethi came to Guru Arjun Dev ji and said that they were earning and sharing their food with the other disciples. But the Brahmins say that when the grains of wheat are ground into flour in a mill or pounded in a mortar and heated in the ovens; life is destroyed. So the Brahmins were conducting sacrificial fire (*hawan*) with oblations to alleviate the sins of destroying life and only then they eat the food. But Guru ji's disciples were not conducting any sacrificial fire or '*hawan*' etc. The Brahmins were asking the Guru's disciples, how was their food purified? These disciples wanted Guru ji to answer their question.

Guru ji told them that if they share their food with other disciples and eat after reciting the Name of '*Waheguru*', their food will be purified and the Supreme Being would also be pleased with them.

'Waheguru' is the Ship for the Sinners

6.36 Bhai Latkan Ghoore Etc.

Bhai Latkan Ghoore, Bhai Gurdita, Bhai Katara Saraf and Bhai Bhagwana came to Guru Arjun Dev, prostrated and prayed "What Name of the Lord should they recite?" Guru ji said, "All the Names of the Lord are capable of liberating

the devotee. But for them Guru Nanak Dev has given the Name 'Waheguru', which contains the power of all the four directions in it. So, those who meditate on 'Waheguru' will be liberated. This is like a ship. Sinners in *kaliyug* can cross the ocean i.e. the world aboard this ship. All those disciples who have understood the importance of this Name have been liberated.

The Lord's Name Expells Evil Tendencies

6.37 Bhai Murari Dhawan

Bhai Murari Dhawan was the resident of Rohtas city. He came to Guru Arjun Dev ji and prayed that although he was always reciting 'Gurbani', listening to it and meditating on it, his evil tendencies were not dispelled. He wanted to know the reason for this malady.

Guruji said, "A clean cloth can be dyed easily, but a dirty one cannot be dyed. But if the dirty cloth was first washed clean, it could be dyed." Bhai Murari then asked that the mind was subtle, so how can he clean his mind? Guru ji said that as described in Japji Sahib, (20th stanza) Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji had said in response to the Sidhas question:

*"Bharie hath pair tun deh.
Paani dhote utras kheh.
Moot paliti kapar hoi.
Deh saboon laie oh dhoi.
Bharie mut papan ke sang.
Oh dhope Nave ke rang."*

i.e. our gross body and gross clothes were washed clean with gross water and soap. But our sins being subtle have dirtied our subtle minds. The Lord's Name is also subtle, so it washes the mind clean of sins and evil tendencies and then makes it bright with the colour of the love of the Lord.

Thus, Guru ji advised Bhai Murari to continue reciting and listening to the Lord's Name. Slowly his mind will be

cleansed and filled with devotion for the Lord.

Duties of a Warrior

6.38 Bhai Adit Soni

Bhai Adit Soni was a warrior. He came to Guru Arjun Dev, prostrated and prayed that he being a warrior wore weapons and joined in battles. How could he attain his liberation?

Guru ji advised him to think of the Lord who killed evil people by taking the form of a lion (incarnation of Vishnu as Narsingh). Always fight for a noble cause. Treat your employer, whose salt you eat as God. This way you will always be victorious and your face will always be bright.

Practice Before You Preach

6.39 Bhai Chuhar, Sain, Lala and Nihalu

Bhai Chuhar, Sain, Lala Sethi and Bhai Nihalu came to Guru Arjun Dev. They would sing 'Gurbani' and give discourses with great love and devotion. The audience was greatly moved by their words. Great sinners would reform.

Guru ji was pleased with them and said that everybody should perform virtuous acts. If a person acts as he speaks, his impression on people is positive like

*"Pahlo de jur andar jame,
ta upar hove chhau."*

i.e. if a tree has firm and healthy roots, then only it will grow bigger and give shade to others. If a person is virtuous, only then will he impress others. Those who do not act as they speak seem false and do not impress.

Fire of the Lord's Name Destroys All Sins

6.40 Bhai Rama, Hemu and Jattu

Bhai Rama Jhanjhi, Hemu Soni and Jattu Bhandari were residents of Shahdra(near Delhi). They came to Guru ji,

prostrated and prayed that they listen to the Lord's Name but it does not stay in their mind. They thus requested for some remedy for this malady.

Guru ji said that if they would listen to the Lord's Name attentively, meditate and act on it, it would stay in their mind i.e. all the three stages should be achieved simultaneously. Guru ji said that hearing was of the following types:

- 1) The first is hearing when the mind is somewhere else. This is like a ghost fire. It destroys some of your sins but not all because you have no control on this type of fire.
- 2) When you are hearing with full concentration of your mind, it is like the fire in your oven. This fire cooks your food as you desire and then you can extinguish it. Similarly, listening attentively to the Lord's Name destroys your sins, but when you are busy in the worldly affairs the Name is forgotten.
- 3) The next type is listening attentively and meditating on the Lord's Name. This is like the fire of lightening. This cannot be extinguished by water.
- 4) The next is '*Nidhiasin*' or listening to, meditating on and also acting on the Lord's Name in practical life. This is like the fire of a volcano in an ocean. It can even dry up the oceans. Similarly, '*Nidhiasin*' can destroy all your sins and bless you with Divine Knowledge.
- 5) With intense faith in the Guru, you can have personal manifest appearance of the Lord. In this state one sees the Lord everywhere and in everyone. This is like the fire of the last judgment day. It destroys everything else and keeps burning.

Guru ji advised the disciples to listen to, meditate on and act on the Guru's words in their daily lives. They will then have personal manifest appearance of the Lord. After this there will be no further birth and death for them. They

will live in the body as '*Jiwan Muktas*' all their karmas will be burnt.

Service of the Guru is the Most Precious Gift

6.41 Bhai Sanhari

Bhai Sanhari Sodhi was a cousin of Guru Ram Dass and thus an uncle of Guru Arjun Dev. But he was a very devoted disciple of Guru ji. He used to perform a lot of service; he would give bath and wash the feet of Guru ji.

One day Guru Arjun Dev addressed him, "O my respected uncle, you are my elder. It does not befit that you should serve me. Rather I should serve you." On hearing this, Bhai Sanhari said, "You are a holy man. You should not deprive me of serving you. Please bless me to be devoted to you because there is no higher state than serving you."

On hearing this Guru ji was highly pleased and said, "O uncle, your mind is humble. You are thus blessed with discipleship."

People of Lahore Pray for the City

6.42 Bhai Sain Ditta Jhanjhi and Saido Jatt

Bhai Sain Ditta Jhanjhi and Saido Jatt were residents of Lahore. They had escorted Guru Amar Dass (third Guru) to Lahore and served him with great devotion. Guru Amar Dass was very pleased and asked the disciples to ask for a boon. The disciples said that when Guru Nanak Dev visited Kasab Pura in Lahore, he had said

Mahalla 1. "Lahore shahar, zahar, kahar sawa pahar."

i.e. Guru Nanak Dev cursed Lahore saying that for about four hours, there would be utter tyranny and poisonous circumstances.

So the residents of Lahore prayed that this curse may kindly be pardoned. Guru Amar Dass said

Mahalla 3. "Lahore shahar Amritsar sifti da ghar."

i.e. near Lahore there will be Amritsar which will have bazaars till Lahore. The nectar of the Lord's Name will be distributed. Amritsar shall be the house of all glory.

Guru Arjun Dev was very happy to receive the two disciples. Guru ji told Bhai Saido to meditate on '*Gurbani*' with the knowledge of Guru's words, treating manifest and unmanifest forms of the Lord as One. Whoever heard his words would also be purified. Then both the disciples fell down on Guru's feet, prostrated and prayed for his blessings. Guru ji told them to be firm in Divine Knowledge and their birth and death cycle will be terminated.

Your Faith Can Mollify the Curse

6.43 Bhai Budhu

Bhai Sadhu Mehta operated a brick kiln and had the alias of *Budhu*. He was a resident of Lahore and a great devotee of the Lord. He came to Guru Arjun Dev and prayed for his instructions. Guru ji said that whenever he started any new work, he should say the prayers, distribute '*karah prasad*' (pudding made of wheat flour, sugar and clarified butter); and whatever profits he would make, one-tenth of it should be kept separate in the Name of Guru ji.

Bhai Budhu had a brick kiln. So, before lighting the fire in the kiln, he offered food to the disciples of Guru ji. All the disciples reached in time except **Bhai Lakhu Patolia**. When he came, the door of the house was closed, so he stayed outside. Inside the house the disciples offered prayers for the bricks to be properly baked. When the assembly shouted 'baked', Bhai Lakhu from outside shouted 'half-baked'. So, when the kiln cooled and the bricks were taken out, they were found to be half-baked.

Bhai Budhu was very perplexed and came to Guru ji. He said that as per Guru ji's instructions he had said the prayers and also offered '*karah prasad*'. But his bricks were still found to be half-baked.

Guru ji replied that Bhai Lakhu was his dear disciple

but Bhai Budhu did not show him proper respect. So, Bhai Budhu should go to him and beg for his pardon. Bhai Budhu requested Guru ji to send some other respected disciple along with him. So Guru ji asked Bhai Ladha to accompany him and seek his pardon from Bhai Lakhu.

Bhai Ladha went to him and said, "Bhai Lakhu, you should not have become angry. Anger is a fire which destroys the fruit of austerities." Bhai Lakhu reflected and said, "The kiln load cannot be baked now. However there will be widespread rain in Lahore and people will find the supply of bricks very scarce. Thus these half-baked bricks will also be in demand and sell at a price higher than that of the full baked bricks."

Mere Show of Devotion is of No Use

6.44 Bhai Kalu, Nanu, Haari

Bhai kalu, Nanu and Haari Kohli came to Guru Arjun Dev, prostrated and prayed for clarification that some devotees hear and recite '*Gurbani*' and indulge in noble deeds. Yet others indulge in evil deeds even after reciting '*Gurbani*'. If the Guru's word is nectar, why are only some benefited and not others?

Guru ji said that those disciples who listen to '*Gurbani*' with the noble intention of terminating their birth and death cycle are liberated. Other who recite '*Gurbani*' to enhance their ego or achieving objects of enjoyment, how can they be liberated? They are like a snake that attracts other insects with the light of the proverbial jewel on his head (*mani*) and then swallows them. Similarly, evil persons who recite '*Gurbani*' make a show of it to others and cheat them. They are not benefited.

Those who meditate on '*Narayan*', the Unmanifested Lord with dedication and one-pointed mind are liberated.

A Real Warrior is One Who Battles His Own Mind

6.45 Bhai Kalyan Sood

Bhai Kalyan Sood came to Guru Arjun Dev and prostrated before him. He was a great warrior and said that he did not fear anyone. He can fight any enemy and come back safe to his own side.

Guru ji said that it is very easy to fight the outside enemy. The real warrior is one who enters the region of ignorance and fights his own desires, anger, lust etc with the weapon of Guru's words.

Guru Arjun Dev explains it in his Sanskrit *slokas* (no. 29) as under:

Assembly of saints is the army of a devotee. They are unmatched braves who conquer desire, anger, lust etc. They wear the armour of humility and the praise of the Supreme Being is their weapon. Whenever any evil thought or tendency arises, the thought of '*Gurbani*' is their protective shield. Devotion to Guru is like riding horses in a battle. Devotion with love is like riding a chariot and the supreme devotion to the Lord is equivalent to riding an elephant into the battle. Thus, those devotees who take guidance from the assembly of saints and fight fearlessly with the army of ignorance are the real warriors. They win over the evils of worldly existence and conquer over the five enemies i.e. senses.

Practice Before You Preach

6.46 Bhai Bhanu Bhagat

Bhai Bhanu Bhagat used to meditate on '*Gurbani*'. Whatever instructions he got, he would first try on himself and then preach to others. The disciples who heard him also got the gift of devotion.

One day somebody told him that many evil persons were residing in Mujang village and were always condemning Guru's disciples. So Bhai Bhanu took Guru Arjun Dev's permission and went to Mujang village. There Bhai Kishna

and Seth Mangina , their sons and their wives served him with devotion and started attending discourses on *Gurbani* every morning. At night they sang *kirtan*. All the people in Mujang became devoted to Guru ji and started sharing their wealth with the needy.

This is the effect of a person who practices before he preaches.

Only the Practitioners can Impress the Audience

6.47 Bhai Moola and Tirath Etc.

Bhai Moola Berry, Bhai Tirath, Bhai Mukanda and Bhai Nihala the goldsmith went to Guru ji, prostrated and prayed that on hearing discourses by some disciples, their mind would get focussed whereas the others' teachings did not impress them. They wanted to know the reason for this difference.

Guru ji told them that the diamond and opal stones looked similar and shone equally well. But there was a test to distinguish between them. If you placed some colored objects near the two stones, the diamond is not affected. It has its own shine, but opal reflects the color placed near it. Similarly, the guru-oriented disciple may sit in any company and not get affected by it. But the self-oriented persons are affected by the company they keep. Guru ji quoted *Gurbani*, "Pahilo de jur andir jame ta upar hove chhau", i.e. first the Guru's word has to take root inside a disciple, only then is he able to grow into a full grown tree to provide shade to others.

Thus, when *Gurbani* enters the heart of the guru-oriented disciple, those listening to Guru's teachings from him are blessed with peace of mind. One should only keep company with men who are wiser than oneself and are deeply rooted in Guru's teachings.

Even a grave sinner can be purified by the company of saints. Any tree near a '*bawan chandan*' becomes scented. Even the snakes become docile and peaceful near a sandalwood tree.

Guru Saves the Honour of His Disciples

6.48 Bhai Bhana Malhan and Rekh Rau

Bhai Bhana Malhan and Rekh Rau were residing in Kabul and were in charge of the *Nawab's* general store. These two disciples would donate money to the needy and to Guru's disciples out of their savings.

Once a jealous official made a false report to the *Nawab* that the two were using underweight measures for weighing the merchandise. The *Nawab* called for their measuring weights for a comparative check. The two disciples prayed to Guru ji to save their honour.

At that time Guru ji was in Amritsar and a disciple came and offered him five paise. Guru ji would keep the coins sometimes in the right hand and sometimes on his left hand and went on doing this for a considerable amount of time. The disciples asked Guru ji as to what was happening. Guru ji said that he was correcting the measuring weights of Bhai Bhana and Rekh Rau in Kabul.

He had thus saved the honour of his disciples. He said that whoever gave in Guru's name, his honour would be protected.

Language is no Bar on Teachings of Divinity

6.49 Bhai Madho Sodhi

Some disciples who were residents of Kashmir came to Guru ji and complained that the Kashmiri Pundits did not allow the Guru's disciples to recite '*Gurbani*'. They said that Sanskrit was the language of the gods and the vernacular, the language of the humans. And since the Guru's disciples had left the ritual worship, they refuse to have any social interactions with them.

Guru ji told Bhai Madho Sodhi that he has blessed him with power of expression. He should go to Kashmir and establish the tradition of Guru's discipleship. Bhai Madho Sodhi said that the Kashmiri Pundits being ritual worshippers

did not understand devotion and meditation. Guru ji said that they knew it well but did not practice it. They would start practicing it after meeting Bhai Madho Sodhi. Just like the Pundits love Sanskrit, guru's disciples love *Gurbani*.

Bhai Madho went to Kashmir and started giving spiritual discourses. The Pundits said that they did not accept the vernacular language as used in *Gurbani*. Bhai madho argued, "*Ghee* may be contained in a metal or earthenware vessel, the purchaser of ghee is not concerned with it. He is only concerned with the quality of *ghee*. Similarly, spiritual instructions or the Lord's Name may be in Sanskrit or vernacular language. It is immaterial. Whatever the language, the Lord's Name is capable of granting the boon of liberation. Even the Pundits explain their teachings in the local language". The Pundits replied that they used local language only while explaining to the dull witted. Bhai Madho said that this was *kaliyug*, the age of ignorance. Thus Guru ji had composed '*Gurbani*' in local language or vernacular and not in Sanskrit. The knowledge of *Vedas* made one a clever person and enhanced one's ego. It did not make one humble. Only Guru' word or *Gurbani* made one humble.

After this dialogue a number of people became followers of Bhai Madho Sodhi. He established a *Dharamshala* where spiritual discourses were given in morning and evening as well as *kirtan*. Thus the tradition of discipleship of Sikh Gurus was established in Kashmir by Bhai Madho Sodhi.

Faith in Only One Guru Pays

6.50 Bhai Bhiwa and Roop Chand

Bhai Bhiwa and Roop Chand were businessmen in Sirhind city. They shared their earnings with other disciples and also celebrated Guru's auspicious days. They offered good quality food to the disciples.

One day a Mughal brought a cloth bag containing gold coins for safe keeping since he was going to Delhi. Bhai Bhiwa took the bag and kept it inside a vessel and forgot

to record it in the account book. Five years later the Mughal returned and asked for his bag. Bhai Bhiwa checked his account book and did not find an entry for any such bag. He had completely forgotten about it and told the Mughal that he had no such bag. There was an argument and they went to the *Nawab* for justice. Bhai Bhiwa thought of Guru ji and made a vow to offer five gold coins if his honour was saved.

The *Nawab* ordered a cauldron of oil to be heated. The Mughal and Bhai Bhiwa were asked to put their hands in the oil. The Mughal's hand was burnt but Bhai Bhiwa's hand was not burnt. The *Nawab* thus said that the Mughal was a liar and his case was dismissed.

Bhai Bhiwa returned to his shop and told his partner Bhai Roop Chand about the incident. Bhai Roop Chand suggested to check the inside room. There they found a cloth bag kept in a vessel. They took the money bag and gave it to the Mughal. The Mughal asked Bhai Bhiwa as to how much money he had vowed to offer to his Guru. Bhai Bhiwa replied that he had vowed to offer five gold coins. The Mughal then said that he wanted to meet Guru ji. The two disciples brought him to Guru ji. There he asked Guru ji, how was it that though Bhai Bhiwa was in the wrong, he came out clean in the oil test, whereas he being right was proved wrong? Guru ji replied that Bhai Bhiwa had faith in only one Guru but he had faith in many *pirs*. Only the woman who is the wife of her only one husband can really be happy.

Charity Enhances All Virtues

6.51 Bhai Pratap, the Warrior

Bhai Pratap was a great warrior. He came to Guru ji and prayed that his profession was wielding of arms. So how can he be liberated?

Guru ji told him that when the time of death comes,

nobody can save anyone. But if it has not yet arrived, the God of Death himself protects one. A warrior should always fight as per rules of morality. He should give in charity whatever he can afford. Charity enhances the effect of weapons and spreads goodwill. Goodwill was like nectar and illwill like poison.

Speaking the Truth is the Highest Virtue

6.52 Bhai Nanda Vithal and Sami Dass

Bhai Nanda Vithal and Sami Dass Vachher were residents of Thanesar town. They made an honest living and served the Guru's disciples. They were known for always speaking the truth and were called '*Ik Sukhnia*'.

Guru ji was highly pleased with them and said that they were liberated for speaking the truth.

"Sach braber pun nahin, jhooth braber paap.

Aswamedh sum yagna nahin, Braham hatia santap".

i.e. there is no virtue like speaking the truth and no greater sin than speaking lies. *Aswamedh yagna* is the highest sacrifice and killing a Brahmin is the worst crime.

The duo would offer the best food to the Guru's disciples and give clothes as charity in winter. They were so humble that they would wash the feet of the disciples themselves. Their sons and all the ladies of the house also served the disciples and read *Gurbani* from Guru Granth Sahib.

Compilation of Guru Granth Sahib

6.53 Bhai Gopi, Tirath, Natha etc.

Bhai Gopi Mehta, Tirath, Natha, Bhau Mokal and Dhilli Mandal came to Guru Arjun Dev. They prostrated before him and said that after reading his compositions one felt love for the Lord but after reading the compositions of Prithi Chand and Mahadev (brothers of Guru Arjun Dev)

and Sodhis (kinsmen of Guru ji), one's ego was enhanced even though they also carry the Name of Guru Nanak Dev. These inspired cleverness instead of devotion to the Lord.

Guru ji addressed Bhai Gurdas and said that at that point of time all was fresh in the mind of the devotees and they could distinguish between genuine '*Gurbani*' and the other compositions masquerading as '*Gurbani*'. But in due course, this differentiation would not be possible. He thus directed Bhai Gurdas to collect all the compositions of the Gurus and compile them in one volume in Gurmukhi script. This would be easy for the disciples to read.

Bhai Gurdas collected all the books in one room. Guru ji directed Bhai Gurdas to go to Bhai Mohan at Goindwal (Guru ji's maternal uncle and son of Guru Amar Dass) and bring the books lying with him. But Bhai Mohan refused to part with the books. Then Guru ji himself went to Goindwal Sahib and in utter humility requested for the books. Bhai Mohan refused and locked himself up in his room on the first floor and the stairs leading to it. Guru ji sat down below the room and sang in praise of Bhai Mohan in '*Gauri Raga*'.

Gauri Mohalla 5

*Mohan tere ooche mandir mahal apaara.
Mohan tere sohan dwar jiu sant dharamsala.
Dharamsal apaar dwar Thakur sada kirtan gawhe.
Jah sadh sangat ikatar howahe taha tujhe dhiawahe.
Kar daia maiya swami hohe deen kirpara.
Binwant Nanak daras piase mil darsan sukhsara. (1)"*

This is in praise of Bhai Mohan saying that his house is like a holy place or temple, a palace and *dharamsala*. Here, *kirtan* is always sung and the saints assemble to worship him. So, Guru ji requested Bhai Mohan to be kind and generous to his lowly person and appear in person.

When the first stanza was sung, Bhai Mohan opened the door of his room. After the second stanza, the door of

the staircase was opened. When the third stanza was sung, Bhai Mohan came down and appeared before Guru Arjun Dev. After the fourth stanza, he brought the books, gave them to Guru ji and touched his feet. Guru ji gave the books to Bhai Gurdas and directed him to take them to Amritsar with great reverence.

Guru ji thus compiled the 'Granth Sahib' in Gurmukhi script. It included his compositions and those of his predecessors. Then, **saints like Kabir and others appeared in Bhai Gurdas's vision and requested him to include their works as well.** Bhai Gurdas requested Guru ji for permission. Guru ji told him to include their compositions and complete the compilation.

Bhai Jiwanda and Jagsi Seth came from Fatehpur and said that there have been saints in the past but asked if there were any saints now? Guru ji said that all through the ages, there have been many saints but those whose compositions are in the praise of the Lord are the perfect saints. Then Guru ji sent invitations to Kanha Bhagat, Chhajju Bhagat, Pilo Bhagat and Shah Hussain Bhagat in Lahore.

Kanha was a yogi and a follower of the path of knowledge (*Gyan Marag*). He had maintained his body for five hundred years with yogic practices, but he could not control his ego. He came to Guru ji in a chariot whereas the others came on foot.

When all the saints arrived in the presence of Guru ji, he requested them to read their compositions. First, saint Kanha said,

*"Ohi re main Ohi re. Ja kau Bed Puran sabh gawhe khojat
khoj na koi re. Ja kau Narad Sarad sewahe, sewahe Devi Deva
re. Bramuhe Bisan Mahes aradheh, sabh karde ja ki sewa re?"*

i.e. He is that, whose praise is sung by *Vedas*, *Puranas* but have not been able to fathom him. Narad and other great saints worship Him. All the gods and goddesses also worship Him. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva also worship Him. Everybody is serving Him.

Guru ji said that this being the dark age or *kaliyug*,

such obscure compositions can mislead the people towards sins. Kanha was highly displeased and cursed Guru ji that his body will be destroyed by his enemies. Guru ji said that the body is perishable. It does not last. Only *Atma* is permanent and never destroyed.

Next, Bhai Chajju said,

*"Kagad sandi putri tau na triya nihar.
Iu hi mar le jayigi jiu Balochan di dhar."*

i.e. do not look at beautiful woman. Even though being extremely beautiful like a paper doll, they will kill you like the marauding forces of Baloch tribesmen (Balochistan is a province of Pakistan now).

Guru ji said, "His path is meant for family holders. Therefore, they have to discriminate between their own and other's women. Those who have renounced the world have to keep away from all women but the family men have only to keep away from other's women."

Then Bhai Pilo said,

*"Pilo asan nalon se bhale jamdian jo mue.
Onhan chikar pao na dobia alood bhae."*

i.e. O Pilo, those who died at the time of birth itself were better than you because they did not come into this unclean world and dirtied their feet. They escaped clean.

Guru ji told him that the birth and death was the Creator's Will. All pleasure and pain was also as He willed. The saints destroyed their ego by living in this world (i.e. they utilize their human form for overcoming ego and attaining liberation).

Then saint Shah Hussain said,

"Bolan di nahin jai we aria. Chup we chup we."

i.e. addressing Guru ji he said that, since he knew everything, it was best if he kept quiet. Guru ji told him that what he said was absolutely correct. Thus, he should practice silence.

The Lord's Name is the Highest Yoga

6.54 Bhai Mehta Saktoo and Nihaloo Chadda

Bhai Mehta Saktoo and Nihaloo Chadda were residents of Agra. They came to Guru Arjun Dev, prostrated before him and prayed that the followers of ritual worship say that unless one did virtuous acts, gave oblations to Gayatri and offered 'pind daan' etc in the name of departed ancestors, one would not be liberated. On the other hand, the followers of 'Gyan Yoga' or the path of knowledge say that only 'Gyan' can lead one to liberation. Just like the human body, the actions or 'karmas' were also temporary or perishable. Therefore, one should seek liberation through the path of knowledge only. These devotees requested Guru ji to kindly clarify this confusion.

Guru ji explained that in a ship, there are many traders speaking different languages and the interpreter facilitates the bargain. Similarly, the Lord's Name is the interpreter. The Lord helps the ritual worshippers as well as those following the path of knowledge to attain liberation. The Lord's Name makes the Knowledge of those following the path of knowledge firm and makes the ritual worshippers to undertake virtuous actions without attachment. During early stages of practice, unattached virtuous actions purify the intellect. Guru ji advised the devotees to meditate on the Lord's Name i.e. 'Waheguru'.

Desireless Service of Devotees Leads to Liberation

6.55 Bhai Gharial and Mathura Dass

Bhai Gharial and Mathura Dass were family men and were earning their living by carrying loads on their head. They told their wives and sons to serve the Guru's disciples the same way as they served them. When news of their service reached Guru ji, he was very pleased. They were thus liberated.

Serve Your Guru Rather Than the Alien Masters

6.56 Bhai Ganga Sehgal

Bhai Ganga Sehgal was a great warrior. He came to visit Guru Arjun Dev ji. Guru ji told him that he was in the service of alien masters. Instead, he should serve his son Har Govindji. He would not only look after his worldly needs but, after his death, his future would be assured in the Lord's court.

Thus, he joined the army of Guru Har Govind Sahib and gave up his life in the battle. He was thus liberated from the cycle of birth and death.

Compositions of Bhai Gurdas are the Explanations of Gurbani

6.57 Bhai Harwans Tapa

Bhai Harwans Tapa used to serve in a *Dharamshala* (place of worship of Guru's devotees). He would feed the hungry disciples, wash the feet of tired disciples with warm water, massage their bodies, supply woollen blankets at night and provide hot water for bath early in the morning. In the morning he would recite *Gurbani*, and in the evening, the compositions of Bhai Gurdas.

Some of the disciples raised the issue that Guru ji had forbidden recitation of compositions other than *Gurbani*. So he requested Guru ji for clarification whether he should recite compositions of Bhai Gurdas or not? Guru ji said that some ignorant persons, out of jealousy had written some compositions against the principles of *Gurbani*. This was why their compositions were forbidden. But the compositions of Bhai Gurdas were the explanation of *Gurbani*. These compositions motivated one towards discipleship. The Lord's heart is Divine Knowledge and the Guru's heart is *Gurbani*. Thus, they can read the compositions of the disciples whose hearts are one with *Gurbani* (self-realized saints).

Only Practice will make One Firm in Gurbani

6.58 Bhai Murari Anand

Bhai Murari Anand was a self-realized saint and Bhai Kaliyana, Nano, Alam Chand Handa and Sansarao Talwar were aspirants for Divine Knowledge. They all came to Guru Arjun Dev, prostrated before him and prayed for their liberation. Guru ji advised them to practice meditation on *Gurbani* and serve the disciples. They said that as long as they were hearing Guru's words, their minds were in harmony with *Gurbani* but as soon as they engaged themselves in worldly business, they would forget about His Name.

Guru ji explained that this was happening because their practice of *Gurbani* was not yet perfected and firm. Their practice of worldly business and other imperfections had been going on for several lives, but they had started practice on *Gurbani* only in this life. Their body consciousness was also firm because of their daily hearing that they were the bodies. The practice of body consciousness was also taking place unconsciously without even their knowing it. The practice of the knowledge of 'Atma' would become firm only after daily hearing of *Gurbani*. When this true knowledge became firm in their minds, the other practices like body consciousness and wickedness etc. would automatically be forgotten. It was like a river, which could be diverted by making a dam across the flow and lowering the land in the desired direction. Thus, when one made his mind humble (by practicing the knowledge of Atma) and stopped the body consciousness and wickedness (by Divine Knowledge), the Lord's Name would start flowing without effort.

Thus, Guru ji advised them to continue the practice of *Gurbani*. They were liberated accordingly by following this precept.

Practice Mind Control, Desirelessness and

True Knowledge

6.59 Bhai Jagna, Nanda and Bhana

Bhai Jagna, Nanda and Bhana Sohar came to Guru ji. They said that they were meditating by controlling their mind and desires but as soon as they saw temptations, their minds were attracted towards them. Guru ji advised to practice simultaneously on mind control, desire control and True Knowledge. Their minds would then not waver.

They then requested to be enlightened on this subject of mind control. Guru ji explained:

- Control of mind is achieved by the control of breath. Breath is the horse of the mind. If one practiced breath control (*Pranayama*) while concentrating at the middle of the eyebrows (third eye chakra), one's mind would come under control.
- Control of desires is achieved by treating the world as false. All the things in the world are an illusion or a mirage.
- True Knowledge is obtained by the practice of *Vedanta*. The gist of *Vedanta* is in the *Gurbani*. If they practiced meditation on *Gurbani*, they would acquire the True Knowledge.

All the three practices were mutually beneficial. Control of mind helps control of desires and control of desires helps control of mind. With the True Knowledge, both the mind and the desires are controlled.

Guru ji then gave an example to illustrate this fact. Suppose the Governors of Sirhind, Lahore and Kabul visit the ruler in Delhi. The ruler gives them orders to first conquer all the enemies at Sirhind, and strengthen the forces there. Then, go to Lahore and Kabul and do the likewise. The enemies who were very powerful and could not be controlled by one Governor's strength could now be controlled by the combined strength of the three.

Similarly, ignorance is the enemy. Ignorance can only be

destroyed by the combined action of mind control, desire control and True Knowledge. Therefore, they should remember '*Waheguru*' with every breath, treat the world as an illusion and meditate on *Gurbani* simultaneously.

Control of the Mind is the Best Alchemy

6.60 Bhai Sigaru and Jaita

Bhai Sigaru and Jaita were great warriors and benevolent men. Guru ji entrusted them in the care of Guru Har Gobind. He said that he would wield weapons in the form of Guru Har Gobind. Then being the dark age or '*kaliyug*', he would in that form take away the rule of the rulers by training in weapons and by love of *Gurbani*, acquire the spiritual leadership. Therefore, they should remain in the service of the sixth Guru (Guru Har Gobind).

When a warrior tastes the salt of a ruler, he entrusts his body to that ruler. Here they would not only be paid wages to maintain themselves, they would also be liberated and become '*jiwan muktas*'.

These two men told Guru ji that one yogi had given them a specially prepared ash of mercury. One '*rati*' (equivalent of 111 milligram of weight) of it mixed with one *maund* (37 kilograms) of copper would turn the whole copper into gold. If a person took equivalent to one grain of rice, it was equal to fifty kilogram of food and that person would acquire the strength of an elephant. Guru Arjun Dev advised them to take it to Guru Har Gobind.

Guru Har Gobind Sahib told that this ash of mercury was of no value to those who had controlled their minds. It could change copper into gold but a controlled mind would lead one to Supreme Being.

Because of the devotion and faith of the disciples, he took equivalent of one grain of rice on a betel leaf. The remaining ash was thrown in the holy tank of Amritsar wrapped in a *bel* fruit skin. The two disciples were retained by him in his service.

Remember His Name with Every Breath. It is Most Purifying

6.61 Bhai Jaita, Nanda and Piraga

Bhai Jaita, Nanda and Piraga came to Guru Arjun Dev, prostrated and prayed that Guru ji may kindly give them precept that would lead them to liberation. Guru ji told them to control their senses and remember '*'Waheguru'*' with every breath. If their mind fluctuates, then meditate on the magical formula of '*'Gurbani'*'. They started practicing on this precept.

The Brahmins told them that since they had abandoned the practice of ritual worship, they were defiled. The Pundits further told them that if a birth or a death took place in a house, that house was polluted and rituals were necessary for purifying it. Unless this was done, all the good and virtuous actions of the occupants went waste.

The Guru's disciples replied that from the day they had met Guru ji, their ignorance, which was like a father to them had died and spiritual knowledge like a son was born. This was why they were not performing any ritual or purifying worship. Moreover, this pollution was temporary and lasted only for a short period. They further told the Pundits that their *Satguru* had advised them that the breath is born in the navel and dies in the nostrils. He had instructed them to remember the Supreme Being with every breath. Thus, no time was left with them for any rituals because all the time they were breathing and remembering '*'Waheguru'*'.

The Lord's Name is Cooling in this Burning World

6.62 Bhai Tiloka Parka and Tota Mehta

Bhai Tiloka Parka and Tota Mehta came to Guru Arjun Dev, prostrated before him and said that Guru ji had advised them that if they recite Ram's Name, they would be saved from going to hell. But the Brahmins said that when they

conducted worship, they saved the whole world from going to hell. Why were the hell and heaven created by God?

Guru ji told them that although everyone remembered God, without a true teacher and His Grace the mind does not become one pointed and firm and thus faith in God is not established. In absence of it, meditation is not effective.

Guru ji illustrated this with the story of **Kauda rakshash (demon)** and Guru Nanak Dev. When Guru Nanak Dev was travelling in the forests of Madhya Pradesh, he came across a cannibal named Kauda rakshash who took away Guru ji's attendant, Bhai Mardana. The demon heated a cauldron of oil and was ready to put Bhai Mardana into it when Guru ji appeared on the scene. Bhai Mardana was terrified and asked Guru ji, "Have you brought me with you to be fried in oil?" Guru ji told him to say '*'Waheguru'*' and then put his finger in the oil. When Bhai Mardana said '*'Waheguru'*' and put his finger into the oil, the oil became cold. The demon fell on Guru ji's feet and apologized.

Then the disciples asked Guru Arjun Dev whether they could also try and put their hands in boiling oil after saying '*'Waheguru'*'?

Guru ji explained that this world is itself a boiling cauldron of desires.

"Tapat karaha bujh gaia Gur sital Naam dio."

i.e. when the Guru blessed one with the soothing Name of the Lord, the boiling cauldron (of the desires in the world) becomes cool. So they should meditate on the Name in the company of saints.

Human Mind is an Obdurate Horse. Practice is Needed for its Control

6.63 Bhai Sain Dass Jaria

The whole family of Bhai Sain Dass Jaria used to serve the disciples with great devotion. He came to Guru Arjun Dev

and prayed that while hearing *Gurbani*, his mind gets distracted but as per Guru ji's instructions, one must listen to *Gurbani* with one pointed mind.

Guru ji told him that previously he was not witnessing his mind and thus did not know whether his mind was one-pointed or not. Now that he had started keeping company with the saints, he had become aware of his mind's behaviour. Now whenever his mind is diverted from *Gurbani*, he should advise his mind that the object of distraction was temporary and perishable and bring back the attention to the eternal '*Gurbani*'. It was just like training an obdurate horse. Only after practice the horse learns that it has to go where its master wants to go.

Obedient Devotees Follow the Instructions of the Guru, Not Omens

6.64 Bhai Paira Kohli

Bhai Paira Kohli was staying with Guru Arjun Dev. He was very obedient. Once a Pundit was called from Kashi who used to give discourses on *Vedanta* and *Upnishadas*. Guru Arjun Dev asked him for more information on *Vedanta*. The Pundit said that he could get the books from Kashi by sending his son. The Pundit was claiming to be a very obedient devotee of Guru ji. Guru ji told the Pundit that there were very few obedient people like his disciples.

The Pundit got five hundred rupees as expenses from Guru ji, checked up the almanac, conducted the worship and sent his son on the journey. But the son returned soon as a short distance away he had come across a donkey. It was considered to be bad omen.

Guru ji told the Pundit, "You call yourself an obedient devotee, but returned on seeing a donkey. Now you see the obedience of my disciples." Then Guru ji said that when Guru Nanak Dev went to Sangla Dweep(modern Sri Lanka), the country of king Shivnabh, he had left a book named

'*Pran Sangli*' there and asked if any disciple could go and bring it back?

Bhai Paira Kohli stood up with folded hands. Guru ji explained him the details of the journey, the route, distances and the dangers on the way and wrote it all down on a paper for him. One devotee had offered five paise to Guru ji. Guru ji handed over them to Bhai Paira for the expenses. After taking the money and Guru ji's blessings he started on the journey. Guru ji then told the Pundit that this was an example of the obedient devotee who does not consult any almanac, position of the planets, day of the week or any other omen. They simply pray and start on the journey.

Bhai Paira went to Sangla Dweep and returned with the book along with a large number of gifts. Guru ji blessed Bhai Paira, "O Bhai Paira, you are liberated. You have achieved obedient discipleship."

When Guru ji studied '*Pran Sangli*', it contained secrets of *yoga*. After the study of the book, Guru ji said, "this is the dark age or '*kaliyug*'. Who has the inclination for practicing *yoga*?" So the book was torn and cast away in the river.

Guru ji then composed verses in praise of obedient devotees and included it in Guru Granth Sahib. He said whosoever will listen to it with one pointed attention shall be liberated.

Chapter 7

Disciples of Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib

Fruitful and Fruitless Discussions

7.1 Bhai Dargah Bhandari

Bhai Dargah Bhandari came to Guru Har Gobind, prostrated and prayed that during spiritual discourses some disciples start a discussion. Was it correct of them?

Guru ji said that discussion was of four types. The devotees should follow the first two types of discussion and avoid the other two types. Guru ji explained the types as under:

- Eliciting Knowledge.** If someone does not know a subject, one should humbly request the person who knows about it and keep the knowledge in his mind.
- Friendly Discussion.** This is friendly exchange of knowledge between two persons. One should explain what one knows and listen attentively to what the other has to say about the subject. Then one should apply one's discrimination and keep the useful information in his mind.

To understand the utility of this practice, take the case of a lamp. It can light another lamp. But behind the lamp there is darkness. If there is another lamp behind it, both the rear and the front are illuminated.

- Unfriendly Discussion.** In this discussion, one gives many arguments in favour of his side and tries to disprove the other side by counter arguments. This type of discussion feeds one's ego and is to be avoided

by the devotees

- Fruitless Discussion.** In this discussion, one goes on arguing without knowing anything on the subject. If some other person who knows about the subject tries to explain, he does not pay heed to it. This kind of discussion is also to be avoided by the devotees.

Guru ji advised that the devotees should only indulge in discussions with humility, not hurt anyone's feelings but shower praise on everybody.

Atma is Beyond Being Gross and Subtle

7.2 Mian Jamal

Mian Jamal came to Guru Har Gobind, prostrated and prayed for being made Guru's disciple. Guru ji advised him to recite Gurbani with full faith and said that all beings are made up of five elements (earth, water, fire, air and ether) but there is only one consciousness or 'Atma' in them. Those who recognize the Atma are the Guru's disciples.

Mian Jamal asked Guru ji,

- If one consciousness is in all, why does everyone not get satiated when one person eats food?
- By one person being blessed with Divine Knowledge, how is it that everybody's ignorance is not dispelled?

Guru ji explained that all pots contain ether but the pot in which some material is put, only from that can it be retrieved. Darkness is dispelled only from that pot in which a lamp is lighted. Eating food is the function of 'prana' or vital airs in the body. **Understanding knowledge is the function of the mind. 'Atma' is the witness of all i.e. body,mind,prana and intellect.** Atma is beyond the three types, i.e.

- Similar type of things but separate.
- Different type of things.
- Part of the same thing.

These three types can be explained as under:

- Similar type like 'Atma' and consciousness i.e. same

but separate. Take an example of two persons. They are similar but separate.

- b) Different type is like *Atma* is consciousness and the human body is gross. Take the example of a man and a tree that are entirely different classes.
- c) Part of the same thing is like parts of a human body. But the '*Atma*' is formless. A formless thing does not have different parts.

Guru ji explained that *Atma* is like "Sabh te madh sabhu te niaro. Jiu jal bhitar disat taro." i.e. *Atma* is in everybody yet separated from everybody. Our body is like a pitcher and *Atma* is like moon. Moon is seen in the water filled pitcher and also is seen outside it. Whoever has understood it is his disciple.

Make Your Character and Actions Pure

7.3 Bhai Ananta and Kuko Wadhwan

Bhai Ananta and Kuko Wadhwan came to Guru ji and said that Guru Nanak Dev had decided on offering '*karah prasad*' (pudding made of wheat flour, sugar and clarified butter). What is its importance? Why not some other sweet?

Guru ji explained that there is nothing in '*karah prasad*' which is not edible i.e. disposable. Similarly, no part or story of *Gurbani* is disposable. So the disciples should make their actions and character in such a manner that nothing out of these be disposable. Such disciples will attain liberation. The Lord's Name is such that one gets absorbed in the Eternal Being.

Recitation is Virtuous but only Meditation on *Gurbani* Results in Divine Knowledge

7.4 Bhai Nivala and Nihalu

Bhai Nivala and Nihalu came to Guru ji and prayed for their liberation. Guru ji told them that there is fire in the wood but it cannot be ignited without rubbing. The wood

is not even warm. But when somebody rubs two wooden pieces together, the wood starts burning.

There is *ghee* in the milk. But effort and technique is required to extract it from the milk. One has to churn the milk, extract the butter and then heat it to make *ghee*.

Similarly, by reciting *Gurbani* one earns virtue but not the Divine Knowledge. Divine Knowledge is attained only by meditation and discrimination (*vivek*).

Bhai Nivala and Nihalu used to give discourses on Guru Granth Sahib. The audience would listen attentively and their hearts would fill with devotion. They absorbed Guru's instructions.

The two disciples were also liberated and those who heard them also became '*Jivan Muktas*'.

Ideal Preacher and Listener

7.5 Bhai Takhtu Dhir Etc.

Bhai Takhtu Dhir, Dargah Tuli, Mansa Dhar and Tirath Uppal came to Guru Har Gobind, prostrated and prayed, "O True Emperor, when we listen to other preachers, we do not feel at peace. But when we hear Bhai Nivala and Nihalu (of previous story), we feel at peace and our evil tendencies are dispelled."

Guru ji said that *Gurbani* is like nectar. A good preacher and listener should have fourteen qualities. Only then are the listeners most benefited. If there were less of good qualities in the speaker and the listener, there was less benefit. But if the speaker had all the qualities, the listeners were automatically blessed with good qualities.

Then the disciples asked as to what were the good qualities to be had in the speaker and the listener. Guru ji explained as under:

Qualities in the speaker

1. Full understanding. The speaker should have full

understanding of paraphrasing of the text of *Gurbani*, control his voice to reach the whole audience and read as per the concept and notion of the verse.(The original Guru Granth Sahib is written in continuous type with out separation of letters, words and paraphrasing)

2. The speaker should take the interest and feelings of the listeners into consideration. When the listeners are deeply interested, he should explain in detail.
3. When the audience is bored, he should be brief.
4. The speaker should use a pleasant tone so that the audience loves the discourse. He should explain the meanings of the words as per context.
5. If some listener has a doubt or asks a question, it should be fully explained. A story or parable should be relevant in the discourse.
6. The examples given in the discourse should suit the level of the audience.
7. The speaker should be fully conversant with all scriptures. The discourse should be close to the subject under discussion and there should be no dispersion or diffusion of the subject.
8. He should not talk or narrate a story out of context.
9. The speaker should be erect in posture and simple in mind.
10. The audience should be so moved during the discourse that their hearts fill with the love of 'Waheguru'.
11. The audience should be won over in such a manner that their eyes and ears are directed and tuned towards the speaker.
12. The speaker should remain humble.
13. He should first practice his teachings and the teachings should be engraved on his heart.
14. He should be contented. He should not be desirous of many objects. Whatever he receives without asking, he should accept happily.

Guru ji said that they should listen to only such preachers

who had all these fourteen qualities. He further explained the qualities in a listener.

Qualities in a listener

1. The listener should have faith in the speaker in his mind, speech and actions.
2. He should not be proud of his own knowledge or his service to the speaker.
3. He should listen to the discourse with full reverence.
4. He should not try to show any cleverness in speech or body actions.
5. He should be sharp in understanding.
6. He should be capable of formulating and asking questions.
7. He should have heard and studied many scriptures.
8. He should not show laziness.
9. He should not speak during the discourse.
10. He should engrave on his heart whatever is said during the discourse.
11. He should share his wealth and food with others.
12. Whatever contrary to the Guru's teachings is said in the discourse should be rejected.
13. He should be clean and alert in body.
14. He should not be a hypocrite and should listen with full devotion.

If the listener had all the fourteen qualities, he can acquire Divine Knowledge very quickly. Bhai Nihalu had all these qualities. The disciples should therefore remain in his company. His company would bless them with all the good qualities.

Board the Ship of the Lord's Name

7.6 Bhai Kishna Jhanjhi and Pammu Puri

Bhai Kishna Jhanjhi and Pammu Puri came to Guru Har Gobind, prostrated and prayed for their liberation. Guru ji told them that 'Waheguru Naam' is a big ship in *kaliyug* and

advised them to come aboard it and practice recitation of '*Gurbani*'. They said, "O Lord and True Emperor, many disciples listen to and recite *Gurbani* and renounce their evil actions. But some disciples, on the contrary, have an increased tendency towards hostility and enmity. What station do they achieve?"

Guru ji said that *Gurbani* liberated all, though some took a longer time. The ones who were murderers of knowledge were not benefited at all. When an ignorant person heard '*Gurbani*', his sins were erased and his thirst for knowledge is increased. The seeker of knowledge was blessed with more knowledge. For those who were already in the know of the things, their knowledge was enhanced. But those who were the murderers of knowledge listened to *Gurbani* only to exhibit their ego. They pretended to know the Truth. Although they were not yet firm in knowledge, they declared themselves as such only to get a good name in public. They also did not keep company with the saints. Such persons never gained True Knowledge.

To illustrate this, suppose a man is to go to Amritsar but does not know the way. He can inquire from others and reach his destination. Some can accompany other travellers going to Amritsar. One who knows the way i.e. a person blessed with Knowledge or a '*gyani*' also reaches there. But one who does not know, does not ask anybody and instead goes in the opposite direction can never reach Amritsar. Similarly, one who considers himself in the know and does not seek knowledge from the saints cannot be liberated and become '*Jiwan Mukta*'.

Selfless Service Leads to Mukti

7.7 Bhai Dhingar and Maddu

Bhai Dhingar and Maddu, two carpenters, were very gifted persons. They came to serve Guru Har Gobind. They would cut wood for the kitchen, prepare cots and seats or any

other thing required for the disciples. They were very punctual to attend *kirtan* and spiritual discourses. Early in the morning, they would bring water for the disciples, take bath themselves and recite '*Gurbani*'.

When their last hour arrived, they prostrated before Guru ji, had bath, distributed their belongings to the poor and needy and breathed their last while reciting '*Gurbani*'. Guru ji went to their funeral pyre and blessed them with liberation.

Importance of the Company of the Saints

7.8 Bhai Banwali and Parasram

Bhai Banwali and Parasram were *Ayurvedic* practitioners or '*vaids*' (doctors). They would dispense medicines to the sick disciples and even make house calls when needed. They would also sing '*Gurbani*' and perform *kirtan*.

One day they prayed to Guru ji, "O Lord and True Emperor, '*Gurbani*' benefits everybody, then why is so much importance given to the company of saints?"

Guru ji said that although they had medicines for all the diseases, but before prescribing any particular medicine they check the pulse to identify the malady i.e. whether it was a case of disturbed balance of wind, heat or liquid flow (*vata, pitta or kapha*). They also prescribed usual self-control to be followed. Then only was the patient cured. But if the patients were there and the medicines were also available but there was no doctor, no patient would be cured.

Similarly, the saints or the Guru-oriented disciples examine the seekers and prescribe the teachings in *Gurbani* as per their requirement. Then only can the seeker attain Divine Knowledge.

(*Gurbani* has all the instructions from nursery to the highest level. The saints are needed to diagnose the mental level of the seeker and guide him properly).

Test for a Royal Swan

7.9 *Bhai Tirtha*

Bhai Tirtha was employed in the king's army. He came to Guru ji, prostrated and prayed that he was engaged in worldly chores and all his time was spent in these. How could he seek his liberation? Guru ji advised him to serve the saints. Those who fed grass to the cows enjoyed the milk. Similarly, those who served the saints were blessed with knowledge and devotion.

Guru ji then told a story about a king who wanted to see the royal swans, which according to a legend lived in the Mansarover Lake and fed on milk and pearls. They are supposed to be gifted with the art of separating milk from water. His Minister said that it was difficult for the king to find such swans as the royal duties could not be neglected for finding the swans. He suggested that the king fill a pond with water and spread grains for birds around it.

This was done and slowly birds started coming from far and wide. They returned to their countries and sang the praise of the kind king. Soon the royal swans of Mansarover heard the fame and glory of the king. A pair of them decided to fly and see for themselves and reward the king for his kind deed. Soon they reached the pond with the other birds. The guards immediately reported to the king that a pair of beautiful, shining white royal swans had arrived who would not touch the bird feed spread around the pond. The king came and brought milk and pearls for the swans. They separated the milk from water and fed on it. They then threw up white shining precious pearls and flew away. When the king showed the pearls to the jewellers they said that each pearl was more precious than his kingdom. The king was highly pleased.

So Guru ji advised Bhai Tirath to serve all the disciples. Some Guru oriented saint will deliver him from the bondage of life and death with his invaluable teachings.

Mischief by Chandu

7.10 *Bhai Haridas Soni*

Bhai Haridas Soni was a resident of Gwalior and used to serve all the disciples and saints with mind, speech and actions. He was very keen to see Guru ji.

Chandu shah was a highly depraved person. He maliciously reported to the king that the son of Guru Arjun Dev, Guru Har Gobind calls himself the 'True Emperor'. Earlier he had sent a proposal for his daughter's marriage with Har Gobind ji but Guru Arjun Dev had not accepted it. Chandu had then maliciously reported to the king and Guru ji was called, tortured and he gave up his body.

Now Chandu made a complaint to the king against Guru Har Gobind. The king's men came to take Guru ji to Delhi. The disciples cautioned Guru ji against the barbarous Muslim rulers. Guru ji told them that he would tackle them like a teacher and Chandu would also reap the fruits of his actions.

Guru Har Gobind went to Delhi and met the king. The king was very pleased and ordered that Guru ji should be made comfortable and his camp be put up in the garden. After seeing all this Chandu was very disturbed. He incited the astrologers to tell the king that the planetary position for him was very unfavourable. If Guru Har Gobind would meditate in Gwalior fort for forty days, it would be good for the king. The king thus came to Guru ji's camp and requested him to go to Gwalior and meditate there for forty days. After this period, he would call him back.

Guru ji thus went to Gwalior where Bhai Haridas came to meet him. Guru ji told him that his love and devotion had pulled him to Gwalior.

Chandu then bribed the officers of the fort to keep Guru ji under difficult conditions. But the king had written that Guru ji should be made as comfortable as possible. So Guru ji was kept comfortably and he used to go for hunting

daily. Bhai Haridas would send twenty *maunds* of wheat flour, five *maunds* of *ghee* and five *maunds* of sugar and other types of food etc for all the residents in the fort. (One *maund* is equal to 37 kilogram or 40 *seers* in weight). All the prisoners in the fort were very happy.

At the end of forty days Bhai Jetha appeared as tiger in the king's dream and frightened him. The king asked the astrologers about the nightmare. Bhai Jetha dressed as an astrologer told the king that unless he sends for Guru Har Gobind from Gwalior fort, his nightmares would continue. The king therefore requested Guru ji to come back to Delhi. But Guru ji said that there were 52 innocent Hindu rulers imprisoned in the fort. Unless all of them were released he would not leave. So the king ordered the release of all the 52 rulers and they left the fort with Guru ji, holding on to his garment. Guru ji also brought Bhai Haridas along with him.

In Delhi, Guru ji gave a very precious pearl to the king. The king took it to his palace and gave it to his queen. The queen asked for another pearl like it. When the king requested for another pearl, Guru ji told him that when Guru Arjun Dev had left his body in the house of Chandu, he had a rosary of 108 such pearls with him. The king should question Chandu about the pearl rosary. When the king inquired, Chandu denied about having any such pearl rosary. Then Guru ji asked for the custody of Chandu since he was the murderer of his father and also promised to recover the pearl rosary.

Chandu was then brought to Guru ji's camp where he was beaten with shoes and he died. He was cut up in pieces and thrown in the dirty drain. The precious pearls were also recovered and were handed over to the king.

At night a lion came in the king's camp. After killing the guards, the lion reached the king's tent. Guru ji killed the lion with his arrow. The king was highly pleased and requested Guru ji to ask for anything. Guru ji asked for leave to go back to Amritsar.

Guru ji sent back Bhai Haridas to Gwalior with instructions to serve the Guru's disciples.

Characteristics of a Saint

7.11 Bhai Dhiro Ujaini

Bhai Dhiro was a resident of Ujain (in Madhya Pradesh). During the day he would hear the spiritual discourses. In the evenings, after the meals, he would perform *kirtan* for three hours. He would get up three hours before sunrise, take bath and recite *Gurbani*. Every six months he would visit Guru ji to pay his respects.

One day he requested Guru ji to enlighten him about the characteristics of a saint. Guru ji said that there are six essential characteristics of a saint. They are:

1. The secret of being a saint was total devotion to the Lord's Name. The saints considered the Lord to be present in all the beings, big or small, as '*Atma*'.
2. Pain, pleasure and knowledge were the same for them. They were never angry or overcome by sorrow. All good and bad happenings were considered to be ordained by the Lord as a result of their past actions.
3. They preached the Lord's Name to their friends and foes alike. Their mind was full of devotion to the Lord and they desired that the same should be acquired by everybody.
4. They were kind to all beings. They were always absorbed in recitation of the Holy Name, *kirtan* or holy discourses.
5. In the matter of wealth they were totally detached. They considered wealth as transient or perishable. They had renounced the five evil qualities like anger, lust, pride, jealousy and greed etc.
6. They neither criticized nor heard criticism of others. Those who had these qualities were the saints. If one had these qualities, it was very good. If not, one should

keep company with a person who had these qualities. One would then be an ideal disciple and all these qualities would be acquired by him.

Renounce Your Ego Before Spiritual Journey

7.12 Bhai Bhagwan Das, Kataru Etc.

Residents of Burhanpur, Bhai Bhagwan Das, Bodla Mallik, Kataru, Prithimal, Jarandi etc were disciples of Guru ji. Bhai Bhagat Chhura, Dallu Rahan, Sundar Das Wadhwan alongwith earlier named disciples came to see Guru Har Gobind, prostrated and prayed for their salvation.

Guruji advised them to build a *Dharamshala* in their town where they should have discourses on *Gurbani*. They should close the prayer service with '*Arati*' and '*Waak*' from *Granth Sahib*. In the evenings, they should recite '*Rahras*' and perform *kirtan* for three hours. They should recite '*Kirtan Sohila*' before sleep. In the morning, three hours before sunrise, they should take bath and recite *Gurbani* from memory. They should also help the disciples in need of food, clothing etc. On special occasions like first day of the month, new moon, *Deepawali*, *Baisakhi* and other Guru's days, they should collect money, Prepare '*karah prasad*' and have spiritual discourses etc. All this should be done very humbly.

Then Guru ji gave an example. He said that a man had a well in his house. A cat once fell into it and drowned. The water in the well was polluted. The man went to the Pundit for advice. The Pundit told him to take out the dead cat and then draw one thousand buckets of water. The water in the well would be purified. The man forgot to take out the dead cat out first and drew a thousand buckets of water. Since the water was not yet purified, he went to the Pundit who told him to remove one lakh (one hundred thousand) buckets of water. The man drew one lakh buckets of water but the dead cat was still visible. The Pundit then told him that unless the cat was removed, the water in the well would never be clean.

Similarly, as long as the ego was not removed from the mind, no virtuous act was beneficial. Thus, they should first renounce their ego and then only would they be liberated.

Learn to Live as Per the Will of the Lord

7.13 Bhai Bhikari Bhabra

Bhai Bhikari Bhabra was a resident of Gujarat city (now in Pakistan). He used to serve the Guru's disciples and other saints, discuss spiritual matters and recite *Gurbani*. One day a disciple prayed to Guru Har Gobind to meet a perfect disciple. Guru ji asked him to go to Gujarat.

The disciple went there and met Bhai Bhikari who took him to his residence and looked after him with great hospitality. The disciple found that Bhai Bhikari's son's marriage was to take place the next day. There was a lot of festivities and music in the house. New ornaments were being made and costly clothes were being stitched. Then the disciple found a bier made of sandalwood (a frame to carry the dead body) and other necessary items needed in cremation ceremony. The disciple inquired about the things needed in a cremation ceremony when the preparations of his son's marriage were in progress. Bhai Bhikari said that he would answer the question the next day.

At night the marriage ceremony of Bhai Bhikari's son was performed. A lot of charity was given and the bride was brought home. After the marriage Bhai Bhikari's son suffered an acute pain in his abdomen and died. All the people who were singing auspicious songs started mourning. Bhai Bhikari was very calm. He took out the sandalwood bier and performed the cremation of his son.

After all this, the disciple inquired that if Bhai Bhikari was aware of his son's death, why did he perform the marriage? Bhai Bhikari said that his son was a sage in his last birth and the daughter-in-law was a prostitute. One day she brought offerings for the sage. They were both attracted towards each other. After some time both died.

The sage took birth as his son. Bhai Bhikari knew all this because he was blessed with Divine Knowledge. He said that the daughter-in-law would serve the saints in his house, listen to *Gurbani* and thus be liberated in this life.

Then the disciple asked Bhai Bhikari that if he had this much of knowledge, **why did he not request Guru ji to extend the life of his son?** He said that there was no use in asking for false objects from Guru ji. The foremost duty of a disciple was to remain happy in the will of Guru ji.

Desireless Worship Leads to Liberation

7.14 Bhai Maia Lumb

Bhai Maia Lumb was a resident of Sohinda and used to serve the disciples with great devotion. He used to attend the assembly of devotees both in the morning and evening and perform *kirtan*. One day he asked Guru Har Gobind that there were some disciples who attended Guru's assembly to fulfil their desires of worldly objects. There were some other disciples who made an honest living and shared their earnings with the needy disciples and performed *kirtan* in the assembly of saints simply to please Guru ji. What was the fruit of these two types of devotion? What was the fruit to those who were absolutely detached from the worldly desires?

Guru ji explained the fruit of various types of devotion as under:

1. Those who performed *kirtan* with worldly desires; they after leaving the body go to the land of celestial musicians. (*Gandharab loke*)
2. Those who had Divine Knowledge were aware that all pleasures and objects were perishable. They performed *kirtan* without any desire. They accepted all offerings as a gift of the Lord and shared it with others. (They were *Jiwan Muktas*).
3. Those who performed *kirtan* to attain their liberation and were satisfied with whatever little they got also

attained the state of detachment as above.

4. Those who performed *kirtan* without any desires and greed would go to the land of the celestial musicians after leaving their human body. Having passed a pleasurable time there, they would again be born as human beings and get the worldly objects.

Therefore, Guru ji advised Bhai Lumb to perform *kirtan* without any desire and thus he would be liberated.

Essentials of Discipleship

7.15 Bhai Chuhar Chaujhar

Bhai Chuhar Chaujhar was a resident of Lucknow. All the 24 hours, he was busy in reciting the Name of 'Waheguru'. He likened the qualities of a disciple to a tree and asked Guru Har Gobind Sahib, "O True Emperor, kindly enlighten me to what is the root of discipleship?" Guru ji replied, "Humility and service to the disciples and the saints." Then he asked, "What are the leaves of discipleship?" Guru ji replied, "Attending the assembly of saints." Then he asked, "What is the fruit of discipleship?" Guru ji replied that understanding of *Gurbani* is the fruit of discipleship. One who has understood the world as false and perishable and 'Atma' as permanent was a true disciple or a Sikh.

Continuous Recital of the Lord's Name Gives Freedom

7.16 Bhai Bhana

Bhai Bhana was a very devoted disciple and a resident of Allahabad. He came to Guru Har Gobind and prayed for his liberation. Guru ji advised him to recite the Name of 'Waheguru' continuously and make an honest living. Bhai Bhana said that some persons were arguing that if one calls somebody continuously, that person gets irritated. So, if he recites 'Waheguru' continuously, would the Lord not

get angry?

Guru ji advised that if someone was being troubled by his enemies and he being helpless calls for the king, most probably the enemies would let him go. Otherwise, king's men on hearing the king's name being called would help free him or take him to the king who would free him from the tormentors. Similarly, if a person troubled by the five evils like desire, anger, lust, jealousy and greed etc, recited the Lord's Name, the sins would leave him. Otherwise, such a person would be blessed with the company of saints who would instill in him faith in the Lord's Name and the five evils would release him. On account of the disciple's faith in the Name of the Lord, such a person was liberated.

The disciple should not leave recitation of the Lord's Name on advice of critics and sophists. A fruit that remains attached to the tree ripens and becomes sweet but the fruit that falls off the tree due to the wind, rots. Similarly, the disciple who recited and listened to *Gurbani* and the Lord's Name daily became firm in the Divine Knowledge and sweet in nature. The persons who left the practice under the influence of slanderers were destined to repeated births and deaths.

Virtuous Austerity and Recitation of the Lord's Name

7.17 Bhai Jatta Tapa

Bhai Jatta tapa was a resident of Sujanpur. He came to Guru Har Gobind Sahib and prayed for his liberation. Guru ji advised him to practice virtuous austerities and recite *Ram Naam*. Bhai Jatta said that some people were of the view that no one can attain liberation without following the path of knowledge. (*Gyan Marg*)

Guru ji explained that by recitation of the Lord's Name one could enter all the four gates of '*Waheguru*' like the

four doors of Hari mandir Sahib (golden temple at Amritsar). From whichever door one entered, it was beneficial to him. The main benefits were:

1. One renounced evil actions or sins.
2. One attained dispassion towards objects of the world.
3. With one pointed recitation of the Name, one attained fruits of yogic practices.
4. When one walked to the *Gurudwara*, one attained the fruit of '*Ashwamedha Yagna*' or the horse sacrifice. Hearing *Gurbani* made one humble.

These were the attainments of the recitation of the Lord's Name. One who wakes up early in the morning, practices virtuous austerity (*tapa*). One would understand that one is not the body that one had thought earlier. The body is left here in this world itself. One is the form of consciousness that witnesses creation and destruction of the body. All this knowledge is gained with blessings of '*Waheguru*'.

Types of Devotees

7.18 Bhai Navala and Nihala

Bhai Navala and Nihala were residents of Patna. They always spoke the truth and acted in truth. They served the disciples engaged in devotion and meditation. One day they prayed to Guru Har Gobind to advise them what to do to achieve liberation. Guru ji advised them to practice devotion to the Lord's Name. They said that some people believed that worship leads to duality. The followers of the path of knowledge considered themselves to be '*Braham*' or the Supreme Being. So whom should they worship?

Guru ji told them that there were four types of devotees

- 1) The devotees with desires. They worship the Lord and serve the saints with some specific desire in their minds. '*Waheguru*' fulfills their desires and also creates love for Himself in their hearts.
- 2) The distressed devotees. These were the persons who

were suffering because of some physical disease or the fear of the enemies. They recite the Lord's Name to relieve themselves from these problems. Their diseases and difficulties were also removed and their faith was enhanced.

- 3) The devoted disciples. They were known as Sikhs. They considered 'Waheguru' as the Lord, Master and Creator. They recite His Name and are blessed with Divine Knowledge.
- 4) The devotees who know the truth. They know that 'Waheguru' is everywhere and in every being like ether that is present in every thing. When they meditate on the Lord's Name with this conviction, their knowledge of the truth becomes firm. They are blessed with Divine Knowledge

Thus, Guru ji advised these disciples to recite the Lord's name, serve the saints and remain humble. They would then be liberated.

Devotion Must Accompany Knowledge

7.19 Bhai Jaita Seth

Bhai Jaita Seth was a resident of the Guru's house and would serve the disciples and saints. One day he asked Guru Har Gobind that some people say that if one has the knowledge, he need not practice devotion or '*Bhakti*'. Is only knowledge enough for one's liberation?

Guru ji replied that knowledge does not have any glory without devotion. It is handicapped or disabled. Take the example of *ghee* (clarified butter). It lubricates the body as well as the container. But if one takes *ghee* by itself, it is tasteless. If one is suffering from excess of **gall**, *ghee* may cause loose motions. If a person has a tendency for **phlegm**, it will cause cough and heaviness in the chest. Thus, *ghee* has these disadvantages. But if the *ghee* is consumed with a lump of sugar, it tastes sweet and does not cause cough

or loose motions or heaviness in the chest.

Similarly, if a strict follower of the path of knowledge says he is '*Braham*' or the Supreme Being, it is wrong. He knows that the hell and heaven are false. If such a person is used to taking intoxicants, he will indulge in sin. These actions are like suffering from loose motions.

If the knowledge of such a person is not yet firm, his ego destroys his other virtuous actions. Such a person becomes so proud that he does not consider anybody equal to him. This is like having heaviness in the chest.

But if the follower of the path of knowledge also practices devotion, it is like taking *ghee* with lump of sugar. There are then no adverse effects and there is continuous advancement in spiritual progress. Such a person is finally liberated.

Lord's Name is the Crown Jewel

7.20 Bhai Bhanu Behl

Bhai Bhanu Behl was working in the king's palace. He used to serve the Guru's disciples and recite the Lord's Name. One day he asked Guru Har Gobind, "Some scriptures were of the view that austerities and visits to holy pilgrimage centers were beneficial. Some other said that fasting and ritual worship was beneficial, and some others said that knowledge and meditation was beneficial. But Guru ji has advised that the Lord's Name is supreme. Was there any proof of this to strengthen the people's belief in it?

Guru ji explained this with an example and said, "When the Lord created all beings and objects, He asked all beings to take whatever they desired. The worldly asked for kingdoms and wealth. Those who knew the Truth asked for knowledge, the yogis asked for deep meditation stage, the ascetics asked for austerities, the residents of holy pilgrimage centers asked for holy places and the Brahmins asked for ritual worship. The Lord kept the crown jewel of 'His Name' in an old rag i.e. humility. When his humble devotees

meditated on His Name, His Name asked whether all the objects detailed above be made available to them? The devotees said that they only wanted the Lord. So the Lord's Name advised them to maintain humility to attain Him".

Humility Wins Everybody

7.21 Bhai Badli Sodhi and Seth Gopal

Bhai Badli Sodhi and Seth Gopal used to serve in the house of Guru Har Gobind. One day they prayed to Guru ji to explain as to what kind of devotion they should practice? Guru ji advised them to be humble towards everybody. The water of a fountain splashes higher if it falls deep. The earth, which was below everybody's feet covers all (after death). Rings were worn on the little finger even though it was the smallest finger. *Bawan* sandalwood tree was small but gave its fragrance to all the nearby trees. Thus, they should always remain humble towards all.

If somebody wanted to win over the Guru's disciples, he would lose and he who lost to them would win them. It is like the magical stairs. One who thinks is climbing up is in fact going down and he who is climbing down is going up.

Thus, the ones who think they are winning are in fact the losers and those who lose are the winners. So always be humble in the assembly of devotees. The devotees who lose in front of the saints win the world.

Guru Nanak Dev is the Supreme Guru

7.22 Bhai Sunder Chadda

Bhai Sunder Chadda was a resident of Agra and used to serve the devotees in all *dharamshalas* in Agra and elsewhere. Once he requested Guru ji to explain how the *Satgurus* salvage the disciples.

Guru Har Gobind said that there are four types of gurus

but Guru Nanak Dev is the supreme and glorifies all the four types.

- 1) Some gurus are like an insect. This insect brings an ant to its hole and itself sits at the entrance. With its continuous gaze at the ant, it becomes an insect. But these insects can change only one type of ants into insects.
- 2) Some gurus are like the philosopher's stone that can convert metal into gold by touch. But a philosopher's stone cannot make another philosopher's stone out of the metal.
- 3) Some gurus are like *bawan* sandalwood tree that can convert all the nearby trees into sandalwood but only in the proper season.
- 4) Some gurus are like a lamp. They can light up all the lamps but for all the lamps, oil and wick is needed.

But Guru Nanak Devji is such a guru who salvages anybody who listens to holy '*Gurbani*' daily. Such persons are blessed with Divine Knowledge and thus become the form of Unmanifested Lord Himself. Such persons can bless others with Divine Knowledge. Association with the assembly of such devotees is enough for liberation. No other austerities are thus necessary.

Path of His Name is Easier and Faster

7.23 Bhai Mohan

Bhai Mohan was a resident of Dhaka (capital of Bangladesh). He came to Guru Har Gobind, prostrated and prayed for his liberation.

Guru ji asked Bhai Mohan, "Are you your own spy?" Bhai Mohan replied that everybody was his own spy. Then Guru ji asked him, "What do you think of yourself?" Bhai Mohan said that he was Guru ji's disciple.

Guru ji then explained that the physical body of the disciple and the Guru is made up of five elements. Therefore,

the body does not become the disciple or the guru. The Supreme Being neither dies nor is born. It is all a mystery to our mind. Guru's mind is pure and the disciples mind is impure. Guru's mind is '*Gurbani*' and the Guru purifies the disciples mind with *Gurbani*. The disciple then becomes aware of his real form.

The characteristics of '*Ishwar*' and human beings is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss but their expressions are different. The expression of a human being is ignorance and that of '*Ishwar*' is knowledge. It is like the reflection of the sun in the pond. In a clean pond, the reflection is clear but in the dirty pond it appears muddy. Similarly, the reflection of the Supreme Being in '*Maya*' is *Ishwar* and in ignorance it is a human being.

'*Maya*' has six qualities and ignorance has six faults. The disciples asked Guru ji about the qualities and flaws. Guru ji explained that the six qualities are:

1. Spiritualism or righteousness
2. Glory
3. Knowledge
4. Dispassion
5. Creation
6. Equal vision for all

The six flaws are:

1. Desire
2. Thirst
3. Anger
4. Sorrow
5. Birth
6. Death

The Supreme Being is beyond all objects and knowing the Supreme Being as such is the basis for liberation

Then the disciples said that Guru ji had also said that knowledge leads to liberation and now he says that the Supreme Being's Name is most beneficial for liberation. How is it?

Guru ji explained that some people cross a river with

their physical strength by swimming. But crossing a river in a boat is easier and more comfortable. This is the difference between attaining liberation through knowledge and through the Lord's Name.

Guru ji further explained that a roasted grain does not germinate (rebirth). A roasted grain coated with sugar also does not germinate. But the sugar coated roasted grain is tastier to eat. Thus, liberation can be attained through knowledge but liberation through Name is more enjoyable.

Appeal

**Sewak kau sewa ban ayee ..
hukam boojh parm pad payee ..**

In the healthy environment of Gurdwara Dehra Sahib Lahore and in the light of the teachings of Gurbani, the work of selfless service which was started by Bhagat Puran Singh at Lahore was implemented after arriving at Amritsar. At the time of partition of the country, on reaching the refugee camp at the Khalsa College, Amritsar on 18-08-1947, Bhagat Puran Singh started the service of suffering humanity with full vigour, which had become need of the hour due to the outbreak of cholera epidemic. After this, he never looked back and for giving the present shape to the Pingalwara, its founder had to struggle very hard, round the clock.

At this time (on 31.03.2009 A.D.) Pingalwara has about 1370 inmates which are being looked after without any discrimination of religion, caste, creed or colour. They include destitutes, cripples, sick and insane men, women, children and the aged. Some of them are suffering from incurable diseases.

In addition to this, a lot of literature is printed and distributed free of cost, free education is given to the poor children, free artificial limbs are provided to the handicapped, and to save and improve the environment, free tree plantation is done in government and common lands, etc. etc.

The daily expenditure of Pingalwara is over Rs. 2,75,000/- (Rs. Two lacs seventy five thousand) which is being incurred out of the donations and help received from the donors and well-wishers.

Donors are humbly requested to send donations through money-orders, bank drafts, cheques, etc., so that the good work of selfless service is kept going.

**Dr. Inderjit Kaur
President**

All India Pingalwara Charitable Society (Regd.) Amritsar.
Ph : 0183-2584713, Tele-Fax : 0183-2584586