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Preface

In the first stage, we hear and believe. What we are told, we believe to be true. As a matter of fact, we have greater faith in the bonafide of the man who tells us than in what we are told?" Ask a school boy: "How much is two and two?" He will readily reply, "Four". If you tell him "Two and two makes five and not four," he will say, "You are wrong. Two and two makes four and not five, for my teacher says so." He has full faith in his teacher, though he may be unaware of the underlying basic truth of what his teacher has taught him.

If a child were to ask the teacher on the very first day of his schooling, "Why and how do two and two makes four?" The teacher would probably say, "I can't explain the reason to you just now, but when you go to higher classes, you will be able to know the reason."

In the New Year calendar, these are forecasts of solar and lunar eclipse through astronomical calculations. We accept all this information unquestioningly, and make our programmes accordingly. Even though we are ignorant of astronomy, yet we believe the astronomer. Should there be no such faith; the affair of the world would

come to a standstill.

Similarly the devotee in the initial stage must have full faith in the preceptors. This is the only adequate and useful course for him to adopt.

At the same time, spiritual stages can be truly understood only through personal experience. And when we have faith in our preceptor's guidance, we would do well to go ahead with his instructions. This does not imply that the learner must blindly follow a preceptor. Blind faith leads nowhere; we stumble and flounder at every step. Though the learner should have faith in his preceptor, he must also have the courage and eagerness to test what the preceptor teaches.

Romin Rolland writes: "Faith does not mean a blind acceptance; it has degenerated among downtrodden races, but rather a living and seeing intuition".

Unshakable faith in a truth is born only when we have actually tried and tested it. When we have tested the teachings of our spiritual preceptor, and found them true, there arises in us a strange and overpowering sense of reverence for our teacher. Our faith is then as unshakable as the Himalayas, and abides through life.

The development of real faith is not a question of weeks and months. It requires patience, perseverance, and time for its maturity. Many riddles remain unsolved even after years of spiritual striving and research. With all my faith in the teaching of the ten Gurus and the *Guru Granth Sahib*, there were things which I grasped readily and there were things which I took long to understand. There are still certain problems that I do not claim to understand fully. But my faith in the Guru's Word has ever been unshaken.

Jau na dekho apni naini

Tau na patijau Guru ki bani

"Full faith in the Guru's word grew not in me, till I had tested it myself."

This sacred verse describes the signs of a true spiritual seeker, or a religious scientist. Some erring misleading religious preachers have described God as fearsome and something entirely impossible to realize. This has created a sense of despair among seekers of God, thereby creating an atheistical trend.

I believe I am not yet ripe to understand many things. By Guru's grace I shall understand them all in proper time. I have found that when I was actually

qualified to understand certain truths, understanding dawned upon me effortlessly. Haste and impatience are as much out of place in spiritual research as sloth and indifference. For the gift of faith, we need patience perseverance and sustained efforts.

*Haumai diragh rog hai, daru bhi is mahi
Kirpa kare ie apni ta Gur ka sabad kamae.*

Guru Angad Dev—Asa-Di-Var

To put self foremost is a chronic malady,
But its cure lies within;
By His grace, if you meditate on the
Divine Name.

And are in union with Him.
You shed the malady.

As the Guru says, the gravest malady from which mankind suffers is egoism. “The malady of egoism is ingrained.” It separates man from man and sets up walls between ourselves and the rest of mankind. This vice impels us to spend our whole life, and to use all our resources and all our intelligence to acquire wealth and property, honour and fame. Lust, anger, avarice, infatuation and pride are all creations of selfishness. When we are frustrated and thwarted in the acquisition of something that we have set our heart upon, we feel pained and humiliated. To gain

our ends, we devise ways and means. We resort to oppression, deceit and injustice to achieve our ends.

Egoism separates man from God. Through this vice man goes astray and suffers for it, and earns death as the wages of sin. But for it man would be supremely happy. The veil of self-importance hangs between man and God.

*Dhan pir ka ik hi sang vasa
vich haumai bhit karari
Gur purai haumai bhit tori
Jan Nanak mile Banvari*

Guru Ramdas—Raag Malar

The Bridegroom (God) and the Bride (Soul)
dwell together,
And between them, rises the high partition of
egoism
The Perfect Master demolished the wall of
egoism
Then alone, saith Nanak,
The Soul uniteth with God.

Through egoism we lose our divine vision and we create a cabined, cribbed world of our own, on account of our limited human vision. Each one of us creates a world of our own, in accordance with our own limited human vision. The world appears to us

according to our own viewpoint. Egoism debars us from the divine vision. There is the Divine Spark in man, and consequently, even the vast worlds woven by him cannot satisfy his desires.

Trisna virle hi ki bujhi hai

Guru Arjan Dev—Raag Gaudi

Few are content with the realization of their desires.

And how can desires be satisfied? The erring man seeks infinite bliss and perfect peace, in the achievement of his objectives in this finite world of matter! This he cannot have, nor does his quest for peace and joy end. His self-interest grows and thereby intensified his mental torture.

Sakat Hari ras sad na jania

Tin antar haumai kanda he

Jio jio chaleh chubhai dukh pavahi

Jam kal sahahi sir danda he

Guru Ramdas—Raag Gaudi

The sinner knows not the bliss of testing nectar,

There is the thorn of self within,

As he walks, it pricks and he suffers.

The myrmidons of Death strike him on the head.

In the Guru Granth Sahib the Gurus equate ego with pain, disease, agony fretful fever, thirst, poison, illusion, veil, mist, etc. However, they affirm that the cure for this malady lies within us.

What is this cure within? Careful reflection reveals the truth of this victim. Fever is a symptom of toxins, or poisons in the system. Thus, it is a disease, but at the same time, a natural means of burning up this poison. Thus viewed, it is a remedy, a cure. Similarly, on the one side, egoism is indicative of our wrong angle of vision, but, on the other due to this malady, we suffer terribly and have to pass through a multitude of entanglements, trails and tribulation till our eyes open, the scales fall from them, and we turn to the path of devotion and seek salvation in life.

Self-importance embitters our life. Now and then, we begin to reflect, “Oh what have I done?” This is followed by repentance, a sense of self-surrender and renunciation, or *Tyag*. Finally, when we are again in harmony with our original self, we find that whereas, on the one hand, self-awareness is a source of terrible pain, it is, on the other, a saviour, instrumental in saving us from those pains.

The penalty of suffering which directs our steps on the right path cannot possibly be bad. Thus,

awareness, of self is both the malady and the cure. It is a mirror, wherein the soul sees its sad, grief-stricken, despondent visage. As it watches itself, there is bred in it contempt for its painful, pitiable plight, and it has a glimpse of its original, lustrous, bright self. Then the reflection dawns. “Oh, I was a heavenly essence, but through error and delusion, I am full of fear, pain and destitution.”

Egoism has been called a chronic ailment. It cannot be shed easily or quickly. The Guru’s Word tells us of several remedies for it.

Simran is to this vice the antidote. It brings the soul nearer God, and, in consequence divine attributed begin to flow into us and the human weaknesses are gradually shed. Or we may put it like this: the human viewpoint changes—and develops into the Divine angle of vision, which is the end and aim of religion. By this change of viewpoint, we are turned into angels.

Through selfless, service, egoism is not entirely stamped out, but it is very much enfeebled and attenuated. To work for the good of humanity and not for self, to spend one’s self for the service of mankind, to keep in view the welfare of others, instead of one’s own gains, to see God in all and to

look upon the service of mankind as the service of God—this works as an antidote to it “egoism has its cure latent itself,” would seem to imply that when we make the service of man the ideal of life, instead of seeking pleasure in selfish gains, the egoism which pulled us down instead of doing harm it becomes a useful weapon.

The worldly-wise cannot fully understand this truth. If unlike the western outlook of life, we see God pervading the family, the nation, the whole of humanity, and we dedicate all our service to Him who dwells in all, we would be rendering Him true service.

If we live up to the ideal of a dedicated life of service, our primary, elementary needs of life would be automatically met by providence. If a businessman is intent on doing selfless service to his fellowman, he would earn profits effortlessly, as it were. Wealth grows by alms-giving. It is so hard to give credence to this truth, but if we actually try it, we find cent per cent an axiom, sound truth. I have found in the homes of virtuous people the blessing of happiness, contentment, peace and charity.

In the measure in which self-interest decreases in us, in the same measure, providence assumes our

burdens:

*Jab lag meri meri karai
tab lag kaj ek nahi sarai
jab meri meri miti jai
tab Prabh kaj sawarahiai.*

Kabir—Raag Bhairon

When of ‘me’ and ‘mine’ alone we think,
Not a single thing we get done!
When ‘me’ and ‘mine’ to the background
shrink,
We progress, for God takes the burden on.

We create impediment in our own way be our
shrewdness, our cunning, and our anxious striving.
Thereby, we hamper and impede natural forces in
their operation. The truth of this maxim is eternal.
The man of God discovers for himself that, with
these shortcomings, he is like a man rowing a boat-up
stream, against the current. He therefore, surrenders
and resigns himself to the Will of God:

*Kita lorhiai kam so Hari pahi akhiai
Karaj de sawari Satgur sach sakhiai*

—Guru Ramdas—Sri Rag Var

If you would have a thing done, pray to
heaven.
He will do it, if you have full faith in Him.

Though the torments created by egoism lose
their force through selfless service, yet *Simran* is
essential for eradicating it. Selfless service purifies
us, but *Simran* alone brings harmony and union
with God. It is possible for a devotee to attain to
higher stage of spiritual progress, thereby getting rid
of ego even without the aid of social service, but
it is impossible to reach higher planes of spiritual
development and attain unity with God through the
sole agency of service, without the aid of *Simran*. For
spiritual oneness with God, seclusion, and sustained
meditation, *Simran* is indispensable.

Some people imagine that elimination of ego
would reduce the personality to a mere cipher, and
they argue that where personality ends, life ends too,
as it were. The Soul then, they say, would be devoid
of feeling and lose its vim and vigour thereby. Some
ignorant and ill-informed people take salvation also
to mean something like that.

I myself laboured under this delusion for a
number of years and imagined that I was a mere
zero, with the result that I lost all vigour, all strength
of will, mind and body. I felt I was neither here nor
there, a man of straw, of no consequence whatsoever.
I was thus going down, down, down. My health

declined; I was a victim of fear and fantasy. Then I prayed earnestly to know the correct meaning of the elimination of ego and saw a number of *mahatmas*, and read English and Punjabi literature of the subject.

S. Man Singh, then a friend introduced me to Bhai Sahib Bhai Vir Singh. His counsel did me a world of good. It revolutionized my concept of ego, and I regained my normal health and strength and buoyancy of spirits. I grasped the full significance of egoism and realized that its death implied the transformation of a man into angel, of a weakling into a potent force, the merging of our souls into the infinite Soul.

Devotion to God or *Simran* kills the ego, and God is installed in its place. The devotee's nature undergoes a revolutionary change, with a change in his angle of vision. Instead of self which creates the cycle of birth and death, he finds the Deathless God in operation in all things.

The small child's world is a world of toys. He cries when a toy breaks, but when he gets a prettier and more costly toy, he forgets all about the broken one and takes a fancy to the new prize. Similarly, when we realize that our egoism has gained for us

mere toys, which are subject to breakage and have even made us miserable, and then if we find that elimination of self would bring us unfading, undying and invaluable gifts, our old egoism dies.

We forget the loss of an inferior thing on getting something better—this is human nature. Similarly, when we find that our ego is detrimental to us, we discover a way of life that has in its fold perfection and freedom from care and want, a life of infinite joy; radiant health, perfect peace, poise and contentment, with eternal life, we are certainly only too glad to shed our self and frantically cling to the new way of life. In fact, the life of egoism can die only if we really hate it and love a life purged of ego.

There is no quicker or easier way to conquer this spirit of egoism than *Simran*. The seeker sees in *Simran*, the world as it is. The veil of illusion is rent, and he sees into the heart of things and distinguishes between true and false values, between ephermal, transitory objects, and things that are eternal. He is reborn in spirit and revels and exalts in his newly-won, precious prize and finally merges into Truth.

This third way to eliminate self is to control the craving of our lower self. If we do not control our

mind, we get into terrible straits and are constantly slaves of passions. If we yield once to the lower self, we are likely to do so fifty times more thereafter. These cravings cease not without communion with God. To seek to satisfy our cravings is to sharpen and intensify them still more. Desires thus grow from more to more.

In a way, our habit of discontentment is also a blessing. The very defect of our dissatisfactions becomes a virtue and a means to deliverance from sin and suffering. But for such discontentment, we would never attain the stage of communion with God. But for it, we would not advance and like the proverbial lotus-eaters we would rest on our laurels. Contentment may halt our pace indefinitely or, in other words, our spiritual advancement may come to a dead-stop. But we are never satisfied with any achievement for long. Illusions there are for us but soon the veil of Illusion vanishes, the scales fall from our eyes, and our angle of vision, our view of happiness keeps changing. Thus our spiritual progress continues and ends only when we reach the fountain-head of perfect peace and bliss, and are one with it.

For the elimination of ego must control our selves. We must resist undesirable impulses and

should resort to *Simran*. At bed time, a certain Mahatma would exhort his disciples, “Brothers, the night is upon us, and we have to wrestle with our mind.” We must not be helpless slaves of impulses in eating, drinking, laughing, sporting, and in dress. We must not let ourselves remain unbridled. Not that we should cease to attend to our elementary, essential needs. We must gradually wean ourselves from excessive worldliness and turn to the spiritual way of life. This creates a taste for spiritual nectar, over-powering the illusory pleasures of the flesh.

As self begins to recede, we feel thrills of joy, and of freedom from care and want. We feel the heavenly bliss and we begin to mold ourselves to a Godly life till, at last, only that much of self is left as is essential to maintain life in us. Our soul is in communion with God. We experience spiritual inebriation. We begin to be carefree. We receive an infinitely precious, abiding in God, where only that much of self is left as is essential to experience Beatitude. This is the crown and climax of spiritual union, when the lover and the beloved, the soul and God are one. “The two units, growing into one”.

(Excerpted from “Bandgi-Nama”.)

Late S. Raghbir Singh Bir

Reproduced from book Simran An Antidot to Tension

Simran: The Path of Love and Liberation!

Tejinder Singh Madan

‘Naam’ can be defined as an infinite, unique and wholesome consciousness of the Supreme Being (Ek-Onkar), an eternal wisdom of truth (Sat-nam). The divine creating being (Karta Purakh) dominates all existence and its creation with vast, powerful, amazing intelligence, without fear and prejudice (Nirbhao Nirvair). Naam is neither bounded by time nor limited to any space, it harbors’ the absolute power and ineffable presence (Akaal Moorat), the Power that never diminishes nor obliterated (Ajoonee), containing or calling the truths, hidden into the light of the Supreme conscious that has to be manifested (Swaibhaang). Thus the omnipotent divine grace of the supreme, Naam the benevolent, is a source of infinite divine knowledge, has power to perform and to transmit (Gurprasad).

Gurbani in Shri Guru Granth Sahib, step by step advises us to adore Naam, an ocean of precious gems, an eternal and infinite force of Divine Knowledge and virtues of the Supreme. The more deep you dive, the more you get attached and involved, higher you experience ecstasy and exultation of your spirit.

Naam, the object of the Shabad Guru, to connect the human beings with the divine Supreme Being, exhibits in the form and body related in the universe as light, energy and wisdom of absolute truth.

Naam, immortal incomprehensible imperishable, alone has the consent of the supreme to liberate our soul from the bondage of life-death and duality, by igniting our conscious to higher spirituality and to infinite truth.

There are three ways of being of Naam, of which you can become aware, when you enter into touch of oneness with the conscious force that upholds us and the entire universe.

The Naam transects between the individual and the universe, the Universe and the transcendent, the transcendent and the individual.

Transcendent, the primordial supreme power of the eternal truth, Naam links the creation to the ever un-manifest mystery of the supreme, to the power of infinite consciousness. The supreme having created his ownself, manifest Himself in Naam, then He establish the cosmic force as nature, enter into the creations that he has made, sit fondly on throne, to watch His play of divine Spirit of conscious and Truth.

The presence of Naam fills, support and commands all the activities of the Nature, with the divine all sustaining force and the divine delight spirit, without which they could not exist and perform their respective duty in perfect harmony.

Universal, the supreme power of eternal love, is the most outward aspect, Naam marshals and arranges the harmony of different forces and processes, impels the operations of nature, moves among them secret or manifest in all that can be seen, felt or experienced or put into motion of life.

The divine Naam puts on an appearance of humanity, express himself through virtues, assumes the outward human nature, in order to trace the path and show it to the human beings. In the universal activities, it is a manifestation that takes place, a manifestation of growing divine consciousness, not human being turning into divine.

In all the universal actions, Naam acts according to the law of things, but does not cease to be divine.

Individual, the supreme power of eternal BLISS, is the most inward aspect, Naam in its infinite divine conscious, already present in the body, is identified with virtues, truth and all other aspects of divinity. Naam in the form of Simran,

fundamentally means, continuous and repetitively remembering divine message of the Guru, abiding by it, as a fundamental guide to the art of creative living.

Naam penetrates into the body, for spiritual transformation, of the dead physical conscious to an awakened divine conscious and at the same time the greedy material mind to the contended spiritual mind.

Naam acts further on mercurious mind and convert it into equipotent mind and at the same time the worldly selfish intelligence into an enlightened discriminating wisdom.

This manifestations of Naam are possible only when we willed do live with Shabad Guru, domain of Naam, with determination and full faith, then only we taste its nectar, experience and realize the power of Naam, that manifest the hidden treasures of eternal truth.

Naam, being an immaculate force of divinity, acts in the individual, in the universe and also beyond the individual and the universe. Naam is the supreme power of sublime felicity, happens to those who always remain in the constant company of Naam, to harmonize the functioning of the body, mind and intellect, through the willed force of introspection

and meditation on Sabad.

Naam, in its embodied physical action as well as in mystical action, is the opportunity of a constant grace; it is for that the embodiment takes place. The power of the Naam, happening of true happiness and understanding the message of the Shabad Guru, something of its ways can be felt, experienced and seen through its embodiments, by actions and thinking of divine virtues with resolved mind.

The mission of the Supreme Being, complete transformation to happen, Naam turns human beings into divine loving persons and angels.

Individual who meditates and introspect on Naam, preferably in the ambrosial hours of day, remains connected with Truth at all times, in all circumstances and at all situations.

Meditation and adoption of the spiritual qualities, the invaluable gems of Divine Virtues of the Supreme, to serve and to live in the domain of Naam, are essential aspects, for the flow of divine grace, to receive love and liberation.

Those who toil with love and dedication, in complete obedience to Naam, lead glorious life, liberate ownself and many others, by the divine grace of the spirit.

Naam Japhu Naamo Aaradho

(ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਹੁ ਨਾਮੋ ਆਰਾਧਹੁ)

*Dr. Dalbhanjan Bir Singh Ajmani, M.Sc. Ph.d
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Whenever The Subject Of Naam is raised, a number of questions rush through mind, for example: *What is Naam? Where do we get Naam from and how? Why chant or contemplate on Naam? What are the benefits? How to contemplate, recite, meditate or worship Naam?*

The answer to the first two questions is given in a very simple manner by Guru Nanak as follow:

ਏਕੋ ਨਾਮੁ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਹੈ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਦੀਆ ਬੁਝਾਇ ਜੀਉ ॥

(SGGS, p 72)

*The name of one Lord is his Command;
O Nanak, the True Guru has given me this understanding.*

The command of the Lord is universal and the entire creation obeys it. Guru Nanak, in Japuji, states:

ਹੁਕਮੈ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਹੁਕਮ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥

(SGGS, p1)

Everyone and everything is subject to His Command; nothing is beyond His

Command.

In Sukhmani, Guru Arjan Dev enunciates that the entire creation in the universe is supported by Naam (Lord's will or his universal law). It is through Naam humble servants of God attain salvation.

ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਸਗਲੇ ਜੰਤ ॥
ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰ ਖੰਡ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡ॥
ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਬੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਨ॥
ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਸੁਨਨ ਗਿਆਨ ਧਿਆਨ॥
ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਆਗਾਸ ਪਾਤਾਲ॥
ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਸਗਲ ਆਕਾਰ॥
ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਪੁਰੀਆ ਸਭ ਭਵਨ॥
ਨਾਮ ਕੈ ਸੰਗਿ ਉਧਰੇ ਸੁਨਿ ਸ੍ਰਵਨ ॥
ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਜਿਸੁ ਆਪਨੈ ਨਾਮਿ ਲਾਏ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਚਉਥੇ ਪਦ ਮਹਿ ਸੋ ਜਨੁ ਗਤਿ ਪਾਏ ॥੫॥

(SGGS, p 284)

The Naam is the Support of all creatures, earth and solar systems. The Naam is the Support of the Simritees, the Vedas and the Puraans. The Naam is the Support by which we hear of spiritual wisdom and meditation. The Naam is the Support of the upper and lower regions. The Naam is the Support of all bodies. The Naam is the Support of all worlds and realms. Associating with the Naam, listening to it with the ears, one is saved. Those whom the Lord

mercifully attaches to His Naam, O Nanak, in the fourth state, the humble servant attains salvation. (Translation of the above shabadhas been taken from Sant Singh Khalsa.

And further in Sukhmani, the Guru guides us to find Naam within.

ਨਉ ਨਿਧਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕਾ ਨਾਮੁ॥
ਦੇਹੀ ਮਹਿ ਇਸ ਕਾ ਬਿਸ੍ਰਾਮੁ ॥

(SGGS, P 293)

The Ambrosial Name of God is all the, so called, nine treasures, and it rests within our body and mind. A seeker finds it within in the company of the saint guru.

Humans are totally unaware of the presence of Naam within and try to obtain Naam from outside. What is the reason of our unawareness? The answer lies in the fact that most humans live life on just the physical plane and try to find pleasure by indulging in worldly pursuits. Guru Nanak explains in Sri Raag as follows:

ਰਸੁ ਸੁਇਨਾ ਰਸੁ ਰੁਪਾ ਕਾਮਣਿ ਰਸੁ ਪਰਮਲ ਕੀ ਵਾਸ॥
ਰਸੁ ਘੋੜੇ ਰਸੁ ਸੇਜਾ ਮੰਦਰ ਰਸੁ ਮੀਠਾ ਰਸੁ ਮਾਸੁ॥ ਏਤੇ ਰਸ ਸਰੀਰ ਕੇ
ਕੈ ਘਟਿ ਨਾਮ ਨਿਵਾਸੁ ॥ (SGGS, p 15)

At physical level, pleasure is sought in wealth, sex, fragrance and perfumes, expensive rides like

horses (now cars) etc., living in luxurious places, and consumption of variety of cuisines. With so many tempting things for indulgences, it is rather difficult for human beings to think about Naam.

Having not found permanent happiness in the worldly pleasures, human beings started to look for something different that could bring lasting peace and pleasure to their existence. The next thing was to try out various religious acts, e.g. giving alms, pilgrimage and bathing in holy rivers, fasting and worshipping deities etc. But soon it was realized that these were of no avail. Guru Amar Das makes us aware of this mistakes follows.

ਅਧਿਆਤਮ ਕਰਮ ਜੇ ਕਰੇ ਨਾਮੁ ਨ ਕਬ ਹੀ ਪਾਇ॥
ਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਸਬਦਿ ਜੀਵਤੁ ਮਰੈ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਸੈ ਮਨਿ ਆਇ ॥

(SGGS, p 33)

The self-willed (manmukh) performs religious rituals and does not recognize the Naam and he loses his self-respect and confidence.

A Gurmukh (god oriented person) recognizes and finds Naam through the Guru.

ਨਾਮੁ ਅਮੋਲਕੁ ਰਤਨੁ ਹੈ ਪੂਰੇ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪਾਸਿ ॥
ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸੇਵੈ ਲਗਿਆ ਕਢਿ ਰਤਨੁ ਦੇਵੈ ਪਰਗਾਸਿ ॥
ਧੰਨੁ ਵਡਭਾਗੀ ਵਡਭਾਗੀਆ ਜੋ ਆਇ ਮਿਲੇ ਗੁਰ ਪਾਸਿ ॥

(SGGS, p 40)

The Naam is a Priceless Jewel. When one is enjoined to serve the perfect True Guru, the Guru brings out this Jewel and bestows this enlightenment. Blessed and fortunate among the very fortunate are those who come to meet the Guru.

Naam is the divine command or law, which supports the creation. Only blessed ones discover this precious jewels of Naam within. And it happens through the grace of the true Guru who enlightens them.

Why humans should contemplate on Naam? Guru Nanak and the other Gurus have given answers in a large number of shabads in AGGS. A few examples are given below to satisfy the initial curiosity of the reader.

ਸਰਬ ਰੋਗ ਕਾ ਅਉਖਦੁ ਨਾਮੁ ॥

(SGGS, p 274)

The Naam is the remedy to cure all ills.

ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਤ ਕੋਟਿ ਸੂਰ ਉਜਾਰਾ ਬਿਨਸੈ ਭਰਮੁ ਅੰਧੇਰਾ ॥੧॥

(SGGS, P 700)

Contemplating the Naam, dispels the darkness of doubt and the soul is illuminated and it feels like millions of suns shine forth.

ਨਾਮੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਮਨੁ ਤ੍ਰਿਪਤੀਐ ਬਿਨੁ ਨਾਮੈ ਪ੍ਰਿਗੁ ਜੀਵਾਸੁ ॥

(SGGS, p 40)

Receiving the Naam, the mind is satiated, but

without it the life is cursed.

ਆਖਾ ਜੀਵਾ ਵਿਸਰੈ ਮਰਿ ਜਾਉ॥ ਆਖਣਿ ਅਉਖਾ ਸਾਚਾ ਨਾਉ॥

(SGGS, p 9)

If I say it, I live; forgetting it, I die. It is so difficult to chant the True Name.

The full account of the consequences of attaining Naam has been elaborated by Guru Nanak in the following shabad.

ਪ੍ਰਭਾਤੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧॥

ਗੁਰ ਪਰਸਾਦੀ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਵੀਚਾਰੈ ਪੜਿ ਪੜਿ ਪਾਵੈ ਮਾਨੁ॥

ਆਪਾ ਮਧੇ ਆਪੁ ਪਰਗਾਸਿਆ ਪਾਇਆ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਨਾਮੁ ॥੧॥

ਕਰਤਾ ਤੂ ਮੇਰਾ ਜਜਮਾਨੁ॥

ਇਕ ਦਖਿਣਾ ਹਉ ਤੈ ਪਹਿ ਮਾਗਉ ਦੇਹਿ ਆਪਣਾ ਨਾਮੁ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

ਪੰਚ ਤਸਕਰ ਧਾਵਤ ਰਾਖੇ ਚੂਕਾ ਮਨਿ ਅਭਿਮਾਨੁ॥

ਦਿਸਟਿ ਬਿਕਾਰੀ ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਭਾਗੀ ਐਸਾ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗਿਆਨੁ ॥੨॥

ਜਤੁ ਸਤੁ ਚਾਵਲ ਦਇਆ ਕਣਕ ਕਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤਿ ਪਾਤੀ ਧਾਨੁ ॥

ਦੂਧੁ ਕਰਮੁ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਘੀਉ ਕਰਿ ਐਸਾ ਮਾਂਗਉ ਦਾਨੁ ॥

ਖਿਮਾ ਧੀਰਜੁ ਕਰਿ ਗਉ ਲਵੇਰੀ ਸਹਜੇ ਬਛਰਾ ਖੀਰੁ ਪੀਐ ॥

ਸਿਫਤਿ ਸਰਮ ਕਾ ਕਪੜਾ ਮਾਂਗਉ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਣ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਵਤੁ ਰਹੈ॥੪॥੨॥

(ਅੰਗ ੧੩੨੯)

When one obtains Naam, he develops divine virtues that transform life and his ills are eradicated. Naam means self-realization, control over five vices and disappearance of ego. Life is blessed with

compassion, forgiveness, contentment and patience. Virtuous life makes one humble and modest and the devotee now fully enjoys the chants of the glorious praise of the Lord. Hence attaining Naam is a state where fully enlightened life becomes truthful and pious. Guru Amar Das further clarifies that abstinence, truthfulness and self-discipline is Naam that purifies human life.

ਜਤੁ ਸਤੁ ਸੰਜਮੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਹੈ ਵਿਣੁ ਨਾਵੈ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥

ਪੂਰੈ ਭਾਗਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਮਨਿ ਵਸੈ ਸਬਦਿ ਮਿਲਾਵਾ ਹੋਇ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਹਜੇ ਹੀ ਰੰਗਿ ਵਰਤਦਾ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਣ ਪਾਵੈ ਸੋਇ ॥

(SGGS, p 33)

The Naam, the Name of the Lord, is abstinence, truthfulness, and self-restraint. Without the Name, no one becomes pure. Through perfect good fortune, the Naam comes to abide within the mind. Through the Shabad, one merges into Him (God). O Nanak, one who lives in intuitive peace and poise and imbued with the Lord's Love obtains and enjoys the Glorious Praises of the Lord.

And without Naam, all human activity is regarded as animalistic conduct, Guru Arjan Dev points out:

ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ॥
 ਮਿਲੁ ਮੇਰੇ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਅਪਨਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਦੇਹੁ ॥
 ਨਾਮ ਬਿਨਾ ਧ੍ਰਿਗੁ ਧ੍ਰਿਗੁ ਅਸਨੇਹੁ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
 ਨਾਮ ਬਿਨਾ ਜੋ ਪਹਿਰੈ ਖਾਇ ॥
 ਜਿਉ ਕੂਕਰੁ ਜੁਠਨ ਮਹਿ ਪਾਇ ॥੧॥ (ਅੰਗ 240)

In the above shabad, Guru Arjan Dev expresses desperate longing of a devout for the Naam, which is only obtained from the true Guru. Without the Naam, good food and expensive clothing is like a dog licking the left-over dirty plates. This life is cursed, diseased and hell. Without the Naam, physical makeover is like embalming a dead body, and this is truly worthless and pointless.

Hence Naam, makes one virtuous, fearless, and transforms a pauper to a king. Naam quenches the thirst and hunger for material wealth. It destroys ill thinking, purifies mind and body, gives eternal happiness and illuminates human existence.

Naam Japna (contemplating name):

In Gurbani there are various suggestions that have been proposed for Naam Japna. For the beginners,

ਅੰਤਰਿ ਗੁਰੁ ਆਰਾਧਨਾ ਜਿਹਵਾ ਜਪੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਨਾਉ ॥
 (SGGS, p 517)

First, have devotion and faith on your Guru in

your mind, and chant the Naam (such as Waheguru or Satinaam waheguru etc.) and Listen (ਸੁਣਨੀ ਸੁਣਨਾ ਗੁਰੁ ਨਾਉ) to it through your ears to take in these vibrations of purity. It is clear in Gurbani (guru's word) that our tongue plays its part in the process of naam japna, viz:

ਰਸਨਾ ਜਪੈ ਨ ਨਾਮੁ ਤਿਲੁ ਤਿਲੁ ਕਰਿ ਕਟੀਐ ॥

The tongue that does not recite God's name should be chopped into small pieces.

ਹਰਿ ਕਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਤ ਦੁਖੁ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਬੋਲੈ ਸਗਜੁ ਸੁਭਾਇ ॥

(SGGS, p 266)

Indeed, initial chanting eventually becomes spontaneous (ਸਗਜੁ ਸੁਭਾਇ) recitation within, without physically saying the Naam.

ਧੁਨਿ ਮਹਿ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਮਹਿ ਜਾਨਿਆ SGGS, p 879), chanting is a process to establish harmony between the sound and the mental concentration.

The final state achieved through Naam simran is called Ajapajaap (spontaneous and silence recitation without sound), and has been very well expressed in the following shabad by Bhagat Nam Dev, (SGGS, p 972).

ਬਾਣੀ ਨਾਮਦੇਉ ਜੀਉ ਕੀ ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਘਰੁ ਮਹਲਾ ੧
 ਆਨੀਲੇ ਕਾਗਦੁ ਕਾਟੀਲੇ ਗੂਡੀ ਆਕਾਸ ਮਧੇ ਭਰਮੀਅਲੇ ॥
 ਪੰਚ ਜਨਾ ਸਿਉ ਬਾਤ ਬਤਉਆ ਚੀਤੁ ਸੁ ਡੋਰੀ ਰਾਖੀਅਲੇ ॥੧॥

ਮਨੁ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮਾ ਬੋਧੀਅਲੇ ॥
 ਜੈਸੇ ਕਨਿਕ ਕਲਾ ਚਿਤੁ ਮਾਂਡੀਅਲੇ ॥੧॥੧ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
 ਆਨੀਲੇ ਕੁੰਭੁ ਭਰਾਈਲੇ ਉਦਕ ਰਾਜ ਕੁਆਰਿ ਪੁਰੰਦਰੀਏ ॥
 ਹਸਤ ਬਿਨੋਦ ਬੀਚਾਰ ਕਰਤੀ ਹੈ ਚੀਤੁ ਸੁ ਗਾਗਰਿ ਰਾਖੀਅਲੇ ॥੨॥
 ਮੰਦਰ ਏਕੁ ਦੁਆਰ ਦਸ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਗਊ ਚਰਾਵਨ ਛਾਡੀਅਲੇ ॥
 ਪਾਂਚ ਕੋਸ ਪਰ ਗਊ ਚਰਾਵਤ ਚੀਤੁ ਸੁ ਬਛਰਾ ਰਾਖੀਅਲੇ ॥੩॥
 ਕਹਤ ਨਾਮਦੇਉ ਸੁਨਹੁ ਤਿਲੋਚਨ ਬਾਲਕੁ ਪਾਲਨ ਪਉਢੀਅਲੇ ॥
 ਅੰਤਹਿ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਕਾਜ ਬਿਰੂਧੀ ਚੀਤੁ ਸੁ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਰਾਖੀਅਲੇ ॥੪॥
 (ਅੰਗ ੯੭੨)

In this shabad, Bhagat Naamdev Ji explains spontaneous Naam japna and compares it with some familiar activities around us to his friend Bhagat Trilochan as follows:

- a) A boy has total concentration in the string and his flying kite whilst conversing with his friends.
 - b) A goldsmith's focus remains in his work with gold while talking to his customers,
 - c) The young village maidens walking home with pitchers full of water on their head. They don't even hold them, and yet laughing and giggling with each other and come home safely.
 - d) Attention of a mother in her baby, resting in a cot, while continuing with her household chores.
- This is how a person remembers God in the midst

of his daily life and work. He does not forget God even for a moment in the same way as a young lover constantly thinks about his beautiful beloved.

While doing normal everyday activity one's heart can remain absorbed in god's name;

ਹਾਥ ਪਾਉ ਕਰਿ ਕਾਮ ਸਭੁ ਚੀਤੁ ਨਿਰੰਜਨ ਨਾਲਿ)

(ਅੰਗ ੧੩੭੬)

A large number of shabads in SGGGS deal with the *benefits of Naam Japna*. Here we have only summarized them without giving actual quotations which keen readers may research themselves.

All diseases, sorrows, sufferings and sins are wiped out by Naam. All wishes are granted, obstacles are removed, bad desires are eliminated and mind becomes focussed with abundant energy flow through your mind and body. You get dreamless sound sleep and your intellect sharpens. You become more tolerant, helpful, accommodating and polite.

Stopping the Mind's Restless Chatter

Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev

The nature of the mind is to accumulate. When the mind is gross, wants to accumulate things, when it becomes a little more evolved, it wants to accumulate knowledge. When emotion becomes dominant, it wants to accumulate people.

The mind's basic nature is to accumulate. The mind is a gatherer—always wanting to gather something. The mind of a person on the spiritual path starts accumulating 'spiritual' wisdom. Maybe it starts gathering the Guru's words but until one goes beyond the need to accumulate—whether it is food, or things, or people, or knowledge, or wisdom—it does not matter what you accumulate.

The need to accumulate indicates a feeling of insufficiency, because somewhere your unbounded being got identified with limited things that you are not.

If you bring awareness and sadhana into your life, slowly, the vessel becomes empty. Awareness empties the vessel. Sadhana cleanses the vessel. When these two—awareness and sadhana—are sustained for a long period, then your vessel becomes empty. Only then, grace descends upon you.

Without grace nobody really gets anywhere. If you need to experience the grace, your vessel

has to become totally empty. If you are living with a guru just to gather his words, your life has been wasteful.

If you do not experience the grace, if you do not make yourself receptive for the grace, if you do not empty yourself to bear the grace then the spiritual path needs to be pursued for many lifetimes to come.

But if you become empty enough for the grace to descend, then, the ultimate to nature is not far away. It is here to be experienced, to be realized, going beyond all dimensions of existence, into the exalted state. It becomes a living reality.

The attitude that wherever you go, you must gather as much as you can, has become a part of you. Your education has always taught you how to gather more and more things in order to make a living. With this gathering, maybe you can enhance the physical quality of life around you to some extent.

But all this gathering is incapable of liberating you. It cannot take you even an inch closer to the ultimate nature. Only sadhana or inner work can bring the awareness necessary to constantly cleanse your vessel. Innocence, too, enables absolute surrender. But surrendering is not something that you do, it happens when you are not. When you lose all will, when you have become absolutely willing. When

there is nothing in you that you call as yourself, then also, grace descends upon you. But I would insist stick to the path of awareness and sadhana.

The web of bondage is constantly being created only by the way we think and feel. Whatever we are calling as awareness is just to start creating a distance between all that you think and feel, and yourself.

What we are referring to as sadhana is an opportunity to raise your energies so that you can tide over these limitations or these mechanisms through which you have got your-self entangled to your thought and emotion.

When I look back, it surprises me that I have spoken so much; it is not like me to talk so much. I have spoken so much because I did not find enough people who could simply sit with me. So I had to talk and talk—that is the only way they would sit with me.

At least those of you are in here should learn that you can simply sit with me—not gathering simply sitting.

Being a guru means bearing the burden of the thoughts and emotions of the thousands of people all around please lessen my burden a little bit. Stop your mind's chatter and just be with me.

(Times of India, 1 October 2002)

Sense Perception, This and That

K.S. Ram

“All that belongs to the realm of senses, including thought constitutes This. What is beyond the reach of our senses and mind is That,” said the Guru. The young, no-nonsense pupil shook his head, unwilling to accept an abstract point. “But, Sir,” he queried. “Why should we at all confuse our minds with what is not real?” The Guru smiled “Can you show me here something that you consider real?” he asked the pupil, “Of course!” replied the pupil and pointing to a bell that was dangling from the ceiling, said: “This bell, for instance. I say this is real. But if you want me to believe in a second bell which is not here, well, I find it hard to take that.”

The Guru smiled again. He asked: “What makes you call this bell real?”

Pupil “Why, I see it clearly before me with my eyes!”

Guru “Suppose you are blind, will not this bell become unreal?”

Pupil “Not at all. Because even though blind. I can hear the bell ringing which is evidence of its reality.”

Guru “Suppose you are deaf?”

Pupil : “Well, I can still feel the bell with my

hands. The bell remains real.”

Guru! “Suppose your sense of touch is benumbed...what if you neither feels nor see nor hear nor taste? What happens to the bell?”

The pupil began to see a point. “And now,” said the Guru, “let’s reverse the situation. You are like a corpse which can perceive nothing. I invest you with just one sense, the sense of touch. You feel the bell; it becomes real for you. I give you back another sense: you can now hear the sound of the bell. Does it therefore become ‘more’ real? I give you back your eyes. Does the bell become still more real? I give back to you all the five senses: the bell for you is ‘totally real! Do you agree?”

The pupil tentatively nodded ‘yes’.

“How absurd and vain!” exclaimed the Guru. “How can you assume that there are only five senses of perception? Suppose I give you a sixth sense, does it not add an entirely new dimension of reality to the bell? Suppose I give you a seventh...a tenth...a thousandth sense of perception? What does the bell transform into? Equipped with a thousand different senses of perception, will you be able to recognize what you presently recognize as this bell? Even then, your perception of the reality of the bell cannot be called total.”

The pupil surrendered in silent understanding. “My boy,” said the Guru, “What belongs to the realm of senses, including thought, is ‘This’ (idam). What is beyond the reach of senses is ‘That’ (adah). Vedanta is all about This and That...The prelude to the Upanishads says: This is a Whole. That is a Whole. This Whole has issued from That Whole. When This Whole issued from That, That Whole remained a Whole.”

The Guru proceeded to instruct the pupil in the basics of faith in God. You should not reject God because you cannot perceive him with your limited senses. God is that. He is also this. Intellectual humility is born of understanding the limitations of your understanding. Faith is founded on this wisdom born of humility. What we perceive with our limited sensory equipment is a minute fraction of what is real. The that is beyond the reach of even your imagination, because your imagination is rooted in what you perceive. To imagine how imagination fails in the realm of that. God cannot be defined because all definitions belong to the realm of this, and god is that. Little wonder then, ‘that’ our sages described god (Brahman) negatively as neti, neti—not this, not this. Every devotee can feel god, but only to a worthy devotee does he reveal himself completely.

(The Times of India, 3 November 2003)

The Unfolding of Mind's Mystery

In the celebrated discourse **Siddha Goshth** Guru Nanak is asked by the Siddhas-holy hermits who had renounced home and hearths-

ਜਾ ਇਹੁ ਹਿਰਦਾ ਦੇਹ ਨ ਹੋਤੀ ਤਉ ਮਨੁ ਕੈਠੈ ਰਹਤਾ ॥

(SGGS:945)

When our physical self-did not exist where did our conscious mind dwell? The all-knowing Guru Nanak's cryptic answer was:

ਹਿਰਦਾ ਦੇਹ ਨ ਹੋਤੀ ਅਉਧੂ ਤਉ ਮਨੁ ਸੁੰਨਿ ਰਹੈ ਬੈਰਾਗੀ ॥

(SGGS: 945)

O Seeker of Truth, when there is no physical self, with the vital heart, the mind resides peacefully submerged in the Creator in a state of shuniya is at once enlightening and baffling.

Most of us do not want to be bothered with the mystery of the mind. We find it convenient to take it for granted, content to live on a purely physical plane even though we have feelings and desires, suffer pain and heartaches. We may experience flashes of happiness or intimations of mortality, but refuse to acknowledge our vital connection with the Creator who is the repository of the power of mind. For most people the mind therefore remains an unexplored 'territory'. Yet Guru Granth Sahib

is replete with exhortations asking every man and woman to be aware of the mind's essential nature and power, perchance to control it in order to attain happiness beyond description.

The *Japuji* tells us: To conquer the mind is to conquer the world. All intelligent men and women have the duty and capacity to comprehend the mind's working in order to exercise a certain restraint on oneself. The Sikh Scripture compares this inner self to light, or a flame (Jyoti):

ਮਨ ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰੂਪੁ ਹੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੂਲੁ ਪਛਾਣੁ ॥

ਮਨ ਹਰਿ ਜੀ ਤੇਰੈ ਨਾਲਿ ਹੈ ਗੁਰਮਤੀ ਰੰਗੁ ਮਾਣੁ ॥

(SGGS: 441)

Discover your true roots. O mind. You are inseparable from your Creator and, therefore, following Guru's path, destined to achieve bliss.

If such is our goal, surely the question arises: What is *mind*? In other words: Who am I ? Am I the physical self? What happens to the mind when the body dies? These questions have troubled philosophers throughout the ages. In common parlance, it is assumed that the heart is the seat of emotion and the head is the seat of intelligence. When excited, our heart beats faster. On the other hand, elementary physiology tells us that it is the brain that "feels" by means of the nervous system

and triggers every reaction.

Even this may be an oversimplification if we bear in mind that the brain, which registers pleasure or pain is itself without feelings! Consequently, brain surgery can be carried out without anesthesia! Scientists concede that this couple of kilograms of grey matter is by far the most complex mechanism in existence. *What makes us think, feel, remember, laugh, trigger motor reflexes, articulate thought store information and retrieve it on demand, or see vision and dreams –all belong to the realm of mystery.*

Guru-bani-the revealed Scripture—focuses intensely on this mystery. Its emphasis in religious music (kirtan), meditation, and concentration, via *Naamsimran* a steady remembrance of Holy Name—is meant to serve simply as a methodology for self-realisation, leading to a glimpse of the *Reality* behind the mind. The daily practice of rising at amrit vela, the ambrosial predawn hour, and a gentle retreat into our inner self, are the recipes for self-realization, and for experiencing our true consciousness-*Surat* in Gurbani. Regular practice of the technique of Simran has been compared to the taming of a wild horse, or a ‘mast’ elephant, with a whip and a spike-which are commonplace metaphors for the

human mind:

ਮਨੁ ਕੁੰਚਰੁ ਕਾਇਆ ਉਦਿਆਨੈ ॥
ਗੁਰੁ ਅੰਕਸੁ ਸਚੁ ਸਬਦੁ ਨੀਸਾਨੈ ॥ (SGGS: 221)

The great stress laid by Gurbani on mind control has also a deeper significance. It is not only the key to the unraveling of the mind’s mystery but essential to the role of man as a social being. The first teaches one how to become a *Jivan-mukta*—dying of self in order to live in God,-as a Gurmukh or Khalsa, as the God accepted pure Being.

The second helps us to curb and overcome the common vices that vitiate and pollute society, viz. violence, greed, hate, anger, lust and pride. The first function is spiritual in nature, the second a sociological imperative. The Guru’s follower thus has the twin duty to work for common weal and to endeavor to rise in spirit. Either way the mind’s power can best be harnessed through *Naam Simran*.

The mind has no location in the physical sense; it has, arguably a mental and astral existence. No scientific formula can be assigned to it since material science must reduce everything to electrons and protons. Indeed modern scientists insist that it is possible to put together silicon chips or genetical cells to create artificial intelligence or a thinking machine. In that event, can such a machine exercise

a free will of its own? Could it choose between good and evil, or freely exercise functions of our five senses?

Does this argument not make confusion worse confounded? Intellectually, yes: but for people of faith, no. We are only too familiar with the fact that life at the physical plane-eating, sleeping and procreating-reduces man to the animal level, adrift in a sea of sensual desires and exposed to the dangers of predatory violence.

The road to happiness runs through an enlightened mind that is capable of warding off the vices on a day-to-day basis: a mind that is endowed with discrimination (Vivek buddhi), capable of love and compassion, in an unselfish and spontaneous exercise of free will, and is prepared to make sacrifice for achieving the truth.

In sum, the human mind is God's own territory, astral in nature, invisible yet vital. Those who realize the art of retreat into their inner Self will be overcome by a sense of reverence and humility, aware of the Supreme Power that gives life and takes it away, a Power that is the source of infinite love and harmony.

Mental Pollution and Its Antidote in Gurbani

Dr. Amrit Raina (Retd. Principal)

All of you know about environment pollution, air pollution, water pollution and noise pollution. But in the modern materialistic world, mental pollution is also increasing day by day. Thought waves roam about in the environment which influences our mind and shape our character. Love, selfless service of mankind, kindness towards one and all, contentment, forgiveness are positive values and qualities which not only strengthen and purify but send thought waves in the environment which purify the environment and help in the welfare of humanity at large.

According to Gurbani Prayer for the welfare of humanity at large gives birth to peace and happiness and in this way the thought waves of service of mankind purify the environment and remove mental pollution. That is why in olden times our rishis and saints while performing yajnas used to chant this mantra of peace for the welfare of humanity at large.

*“Peace may prevail in the whole environment,
Space, water, earth and air, Plants and animals may*

get peace.

Peace may prevail in the whole universe, Let this peace be ours also.

(Yajurveda 36/17)

On the contrary negative values of hatred, enmity, greed, terror, ego give birth to mental pollution. Negative values are the chains round our neck which can be torn asunder by positive values only.

ਨਾਨਕ ਅਉਗੁਣ ਜੇਤੜੇ ਤੇਤੇ ਗਲੀ ਜੰਜੀਰ ॥
ਜੇ ਗੁਣ ਹੋਨਿ ਤ ਕਟੀਅਨਿ ਸੇ ਭਾਈ ਸੇ ਵੀਰ ॥

(SGGS: 595)

*Nanak, as many are the vices,
So many are the chains round our neck.
Yea, one removeth vice with virtue.
As virtue is our only friend.*

Dominated by evil impulses, negative thoughts, man becomes 'Manmukh', self-willed, egoist, away from God. The Manmukh is attached to worldly allurements and sensual enjoyments. He is bound by the whirlpool of desires. He amasses wealth by unfair means. Being worshipper of manmukh, he becomes mentally polluted. It is a vicious circle. This mental pollution leads him to amass wealth by hook or crook. He makes use of

pesticides to yield more wealth from his fields. And we see the result everywhere. After spending lot of money one is not sure one will get pure eatables. Every food article is adulterated. Due to adulterated unhygienic food various deadly diseases like cancer are on the increase. Abundance of ill-gotten money through bribery and exploitation pollutes the mind. Man gathers money by making others miserable. It is like sucking the blood of poor people. And how can one become pure hearted by sucking the blood of others.

ਜੇ ਰਤੁ ਲਗੈ ਕਪੜੈ ਜਾਮਾ ਹੋਇ ਪਲੀਤੁ ॥
ਜੇ ਰਤੁ ਪੀਵਹਿ ਮਾਣਸਾ ਤਿਨ ਕਿਉ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਚੀਤੁ ॥

(SGGS: 140)

*Blood stained clothes become impure,
How can minds of such people be pure Who
suck the blood of mankind?*

The example of Malik Bhago is before us. The Guru refused to eat his delicious preparations and showed blood pouring out of it. Such ill-gotten earned money pollutes the mind and gives pain to the body. Guru Nanak says:

ਬਾਬਾ ਹੋਰ ਖਾਣਾ ਖੁਸੀ ਖੁਆਰੁ ॥
ਜਿਤੁ ਖਾਧੈ ਤਨੁ ਪੀੜੀਐ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਚਲਹਿ ਵਿਕਾਰ ॥

(SGGS: 16)

Avoid such food which causes pain to the body and arouses passion in the mind.

On the other hand honest earned simple food of Bhai Lalo strengthens the body and gives satisfaction to the mind. That is why the Guru admonishes:

ਘਾਲਿ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਬਹੁ ਦੇਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹੁ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ ਸੋਇ ॥੧॥
(SGGS: 1245)

He alone knows the right path of life Who earns his livelihood with the sweat of his brow, And shares it with his fellow human beings.

Like Gurbani, in Gita Lord Krishna depicts two types of men, the one possessing divine nature, godly qualities, Sattvic disposition, a manmukh. The Sattvic qualities are all divine attributes of God. They constitute man's spiritual wealth. The fruit of sattvic actions is harmony and purity. They Purify man's mind. They purify the environment also.

ਜਿਹਿ ਪ੍ਰਾਨੀ ਹਉਮੈ ਤਜੀ ਕਰਤਾ ਰਾਮੁ ਪਛਾਨਿ ॥
ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਵਹੁ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨਹੁ ਇਹ ਮਨ ਸਾਚੀ ਮਾਨੁ ॥
(SGGS: 1427)

One who renounces possessive-ness, attachment and egoism. Shall be liberated himself and liberated others.

Says the Ninth Master: Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji:

The Gurmukh is the ideal man of the Gurus.

He cleans his mind with jewel of wisdom and it is soiled not again. He is a fully developed personality spiritually, emotionally, morally, physically, cleansed of ego (Haumai). Purged of evil passions, purified and disciplined by meditation and Nam Simran, he is kind and benevolent and works for the welfare of humanity. He sheds fragrance all around and purifies the environment.

Hypocrisy, arrogance, pride conceit, anger, ignorance of mind is the marks of a manmukh, a man with demonic disposition (Gita 16/4). Such a man is given to lust, anger and greed which constitute the threefold gate to hell (Gita 16/31). Evil impulses are to be controlled and sublimated otherwise delusion and destruction are the result, "Attachment leads to desires. Desire if not fulfilled leads to anger, anger to delusion, delusion confused memory and confused memory to destruction of reason. (Gita 2/62-63). Lust and wrath burn the body says Guru Nanak (P.932). An educated person is a fool if he indulges in ego, greed and lust (P.140). We see the horrifying result of this uncontrolled lust in our country. Rapes are being committed at the ratio of one rape in every

hour. Every day the newspapers are full of news of cases of rape. The situation is alarming. Even little girls of two, three years are not spared. Daminis are crying in every nook and corner. Even the legal laws have failed to curb these heinous crimes. This all is the result of uncontrolled of lust. Man has become a demon piercing the hearts of many innocent girls. In this situation of mental pollution, mental derangement, mental madness, the sane advice of the Gurus can help. Do not step in to the bed of another woman even in dreams, says the tenth Master. The company of another woman is venomous like a snake says the fifth Guru. (P.403). Do not falter on seeing the riches and beauty of another woman admonishes Guru Nanak. The beautiful wife of another person should be treated like mother, sister and daughter according to Bhai Gurdas. The Present alarming situation is the outcome of moral crisis which can be overcome by the inculcation of moral values in life. The more we run after sensory pleasures the less bright becomes the flame in our hearts. Control your senses and the flame will be stronger and stronger. When godly virtues dominate the heart becomes pure and man hears the gentle voice of his conscience, the inner self and treads on the right path.

In the modern world man is fast heading towards materialism. He has become a worshiper of mammon. Caught in the web of greed and lust he has lost peace and balance of mind. For amassing more and more wealth he can stoop to anything like bribery, exploitation, theft, deception, adulteration of food. The number of Malik Bhagos is on the increase. The negative thoughts of terrorism, hatred, enmity are flourishing. Modern world is in the grip of narrow sectarianism, regionalism, and fanaticism. Narrow loyalties have created disunity. Conflicts and wars entangle the world. Powerful nations threaten the weak ones. Man has walked on the surface of the moon but he has not learnt to live peacefully on the earth. Nations of the world are spending crores of rupees on armaments. There is crisis of moral values. Due to this social, political, mental, moral, mental pollution of ill will, hatred, envy, jealousy, even the neighbouring countries do not live peacefully with one another. We can take our own example. Pakistan has been on logger heads with India since partition. Every day there are riots between Hindus and Muslims. There are acts of violence where thousands of innocent people are killed and butchered. This sorry state of affairs is the

outcome of mental pollution of will and hatred, wars are born in the minds of men. It is in the minds of men that seeds of peace are to be sown.

The same environment of political, social, crisis prevailed when God sent the Gurus to usher in an era of peace and happiness in the woe begotten humanity at large. The kings were butchers. They had the knives of oppression, cruelty, exploitation of the Iron Age in their hands. Bribery, exploitation, ill-will, were the order of the day. Rigid caste system prevailed. Religious fanaticism was the order of the day. The down trodden people were treated worse than animals. Dharma had taken wings. Darkness of falsehood prevailed. Babar invaded India with a marriage party of sin and violence. Such was the terrible slaughter and atrocities committed on the people by him and his troops that Guru Nanak cried in anguish. Seeing such a sorry state of affairs moral, mental, political-social pollutions, the Gurus took upon themselves the hard task of rejuvenating India.

The Gurus worked for centuries to purify the society from the mental pollution of all kinds. For Spiritual development they advocated the inculcation of virtues of love, devotion, concentration

and meditation of God's name. Their ideal man is Gurmukh, Brahmgyani, Khalsa, whom they tried to carve in their own image. He is the gem of purest of the pure rays serene. He lives like a lotus-flower amidst the impurities of the world. He is benevolent and kind, his ambrosial eyes pouring nectar on all. He gives spiritual and ethical basis to his worldly life. He is an embodiment of Bhagti and Shakti.

Guru Arjan's advice to him is:

ਉਦਮੁ ਕਰੇਦਿਆ ਜੀਉ ਤੂੰ ਕਮਾਵਦਿਆ ਸੁਖੁ ਭੁੰਚੁ ॥
ਧਿਆਇਦਿਆ ਤੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਮਿਲੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਉਤਰੀ ਚਿੰਤ ॥੧॥

(SGGS: 522)

*You live your life making earnest efforts,
And make your life happy through rightful
earnings,*

*Meet the Lord through concentration And
your anxieties will be dispelled.*

Musical singing of Gurbani gives emotional food with emotionally balanced and stable mind one marches ahead on the path of life. 'May God thy sweet will be done.' Difficulties and tribulations of life do not deter him from the right path. He may be tortured, put to death cut limb by limb but he fights the battle of life valiantly and heroically to save his own honor and the honour of his countrymen with

this Sweet Song on his lips-

Give me this power O Almighty,

From righteous deeds I may never refrain,

Fearlessly may I fight all the battle of life,

With confident courage claiming the victory,

When this mortal life reaches its end,

May I die fighting with limitless courage In
the battle of life. (Dasam Granth P.97)

Singing the hymns of Gurbani soothes our
agitated nerves and pacifies our greed for power. It
teaches us that contentment is our greatest wealth
and meditation is panacea for all our ills.

ਮੇਰੇ ਮਨ ਗੁਰੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਸਦ ਕਰੀਐ ॥

ਰਤਨ ਜਨਮੁ ਸਫਲੁ ਗੁਰਿ ਕੀਆ ਦਰਸਨ ਕਉ ਬਲਿਹਰੀਐ ॥੧॥

(SGGS: 213)

*Musical singing of Gurbani is a precious
jewel.*

*It produces unfathomable joy and all the
sorrows depart.*

The Vibrations of Musical singing of
Gurbani roam about in the atmosphere and purify
it. The devotional hymns of prayer to God produce
a soothing effect on our agitated nerves. The mind
becomes clam. The serenity and calmness of mind
can be experienced personally at a holy Gurdwara

of Sadhsangat where devotional songs are being
chanted.

ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਮਿਲਾਇ ਅਵਗਣ ਵਿਕਣਾ ਗੁਣ ਰਵਾ ਬਲਿ ਰਾਮ ਜੀਉ ॥

ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਨਿਤ ਨਿਤ ਚਵਾ ਬਲਿ ਰਾਮ ਜੀਉ ॥

ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਸਦ ਮੀਠੀ ਲਾਗੀ ਪਾਪ ਵਿਕਾਰ ਗਵਾਇਆ ॥

ਹਉਮੈ ਰੋਗੁ ਗਇਆ ਭਉ ਭਾਗਾ ਸਹਜੇ ਸਹਜਿ ਮਿਲਾਇਆ ॥

ਕਾਇਆ ਸੇਜ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦਿ ਸੁਖਾਲੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਤਤਿ ਕਰਿ ਭੋਗੋ ॥

ਅਨਦਿਨੁ ਸੁਖਿ ਮਾਣੇ ਨਿਤ ਰਲੀਆ ਨਾਨਕ ਧੁਰਿ ਸੰਜੋਗੋ ॥੧॥

(SGGS: 773)

*By singing the sweet divine word supreme bliss is
attained.*

Warth vanishes, dispelling sin and evil-doing.

*With agony of egoism gone, supreme bliss is attained
And the body is cured of maladies.*

Various examples can be taken from the
Guru's lives when chanting of hymns changed
the polluted minds of the confirmed sinners. The
examples of Koda Rakshas, Sajjan Thug, Noorsahab
bear the testimony. The singing of shabads of
Gurbani purified the agitated nerves of Sajjan Thug.
The Guru depicted the sins committed by him for
amassing more and more wealth. The rays of divine
spark emitting from his divine personality moulded
his hard dying feelings of greed for wealth. Koda

Rakshash and Noor Shab were changed by his divine touch, love, compassion and divine songs of Gurbani. He admonished them to utilize their extra money for the service of mankind as true service of man is the service of God. Those who are devoted to the welfare of all attain me and endear themselves to me says Lord Krishna in Gita. (12/4).

To remove the barriers of caste and creed, the Gurus started the tradition of Sangat and Pangat. Katha and Kirtan were made the integral part of Sadh Sangat. God dwells in the company of saints.

As already stated Sajjan Thug, Koda Rakshas and Noor Shab came in the company of Guru Nanak and were transformed.

ਨਾ ਕੋ ਬੈਰੀ ਨਹੀ ਬਿਗਾਨਾ ਸਗਲ ਸੰਗਿ ਹਮ ਕਉ ਬਨਿ ਆਈ ॥੧॥

(SGGS: 1299)

I have forgotten to speak ill or think I'll of any one.
Ever since I learnt to live in the company of good and holy saints.

No one is my enemy or any one is stranger to me
I get on well with one and all.

If we listen to this simple advice of the Guru's "No Hindu, No Muslim". Recognize all mankind as one Temple and mosque are the same. Hindu way of meditation and Namaz is the same. One may call

Him by the name of Rama or Rahim, it is one and the same thing. Baba Farid, Bulleshah, Waris Shahare our beloved saints and poets much of the apple of discord existing among the neighboring countries can easily be removed.

Strengthened by these spiritual virtues of body, mind and soul, man attains such spiritual heights that his own inner self, his conscience—Atma awakens. He recognizes himself and his own inner self, becomes the Guru, the guiding star of his life. This divine consciousness gives him mental balance and keeps him on the right track. It prevents him from becoming acquisitive, over ambitious or greedy. It inspires him to be kind and helpful to less fortunate ones. When this God consciousness becomes a part of conscience, a monitor a deep and all pervasive sentiment in man's everyday life influencing and guiding his behaviour as second nature, man undergoes a wonderful change. The Gurus attach great importance to the role of the Guru in spiritual development of the person. One cannot think of any spiritual, moral, mental or social development without the kindly help of the Guru. The ennobling touch of the enlightened divine personality transforms the life of the disciple. It is

with the help of the true Guru that the mind of the disciple is cleansed and emancipated. The veil of ego is torn asunder and he sees God everywhere. His mental pollution vanishes.

ਫੂਟੋ ਆਂਡਾ ਭਰਮ ਕਾ ਮਨਹਿ ਭਇਓ ਪਰਗਾਸੁ ॥
ਕਾਟੀ ਬੇਰੀ ਪਗਹ ਤੇ ਗੁਰਿ ਕੀਨੀ ਬੰਦਿ ਖਲਾਸੁ ॥੧॥

(SGGS: 1002)

The egg of superstition hath burst

The Mind is illumined.

The Guru hath cut the fetters of the feet.

And freed the captive.

THE GURU & THE GRANTH **A View Through World's Gurdwaras**

Patwant Singh

The significance of the Gurdwara in the minds of the Sikhs is best understood in the context of the humane and moral ideas which established Sikhism as a major presence on India's religious and social landscape.

These ideas and philosophic concepts were contained in the Guru Granth Sahib, the sacred scripture of the Sikhs, and because the Gurdwara was built to house them, it came to represent the inspiring ideals enshrined in them.

In the Gurdwara, and around it, a new rhythm of life began to revolve for people of the Sikh faith. For people of all faiths—since none were excluded from this house of God.

People were inspired by the concept of the sangat: a congregation assembled to celebrate the philosophy of togetherness of universality.

People came to the Gurdwara in search of clarity as well, to find convincing answers to contradictions and chaos around them. They found these in the verses of the scriptures which wanted life to be celebrated in all its manifestations. Which

stressed the logic and beauty of a collective conscious free of caste, creed and other distinction. Which sought to elevate—and not diminish—all creations in the cosmos, and acknowledge the meaning and purpose of the different strands of life that exist around us.

As was inevitable, the Guru Granth Sahib—a perennial source of wisdom, balanced thought and humane beliefs—became the magnetic centre of each Gurdwara. The *raison d'être* for its unique position in the hearts and minds of the Sikhs.

As calligraphy gave way to new print technologies, which enabled standardized editions of the Granth Sahib to be produced and acquired easily. Sikhs started setting aside a special place for it in their homes. If too was called the Gurdwara, a room hallowed by the holy book and used for communion with God.

The earliest of the Gurdwara's social functions, which in a sense predates even its own advent in its present form, is the Langer; the community kitchen attached to every Gurdwara in which all are welcome to eat. The Langar—like so many other practices of the Sikh faith—was a far-sighted move aimed at eradicating the pernicious custom of preventing the

higher and lower castes from eating together. The tradition of the free kitchen continues to this day. Most Gurdwaras also have places for pilgrims and travellers to stay in. In time, schools, colleges and clinics were also added—each addition an extension of the tradition of *sewa*, the practice of voluntary service, established by the Gurus.

Much remains to be written about the old traditions and others now in the making. My aim was to trace the Gurdwara's evolution; to narrate the circumstances which have made it the redoubtable standard-bearer of the Sikh faith. Only a historical approach can explain how the Gurdwara-going tradition developed in the lives of the Sikh people and how past associations and events have influenced the intensity of the present relationship between the Sikhs and their Gurdwara.

Despite the resoluteness with which Sikhs have risen to every challenge throughout history, they have still to face up to the challenge of conserving their own heritage. Many of the original structures of beautiful old Gurdwaras, whose bricks, walls and columns were witnesses of the most moving epochs in Sikh history, have been demolished through sheer insensitivity and lack of concern. Paintings, frescos,

murals and arabesques have been obliterated. Rare manuscripts are virtually disintegrating.

No authentic inventory of the incredible range of evocative symbols from the earliest times exists, which could be a source of invaluable research for scholars and historians, and provide an incentive to those who want to see what is left—and where—of our priceless heritage.

It is necessary to give urgent thought to this neglected aspect of our many-splendoured heritage by establishing a Conservation Fund, along with a purposeful programme for conserving the remaining artifacts of our history before they too are destroyed or disappear without trace. While it is good to build new Gurdwaras, the destruction of the old is ill-advised. The new is another link in the continuum of history and the two have to coexist with each other. It cannot replace it. As people around the world become increasingly conscious of the need to conserve their heritage, and are perfecting new techniques and skills for the preservation restoration of history's artifacts, it will be tragic if we continue to neglect the relics of our rich past.

The images which come to mind are of lime washed buildings. Dazzling white. The austere

aesthetics of their walls unrelieved by "religious art": there domes and cupolas silhouetted against the cobalt blue of the Indian skies. And fluttering high on the highest of flag masts, the Nishan Sahib (flag). An inspiring symbol for the Sikhs. A beacon to the house of God. To their Gurdwara.

The images, in turn, stir many emotions. Sharp, intense, indefinable. A yearning for the comforting sense of peace in its sacred precincts. A longing for the fragrance of garlands. Of marigolds and rose petals, and the many other flowers laid with reverence before the sacred scriptures of the Sikhs, The Guru Granth Sahib. Or showered on it to honour the sages, savants and scholars whose insights illuminate it.

With these images surfaces the ever abiding longing to listen to the shabads. The passages from the Guru Granth Sahib set to the ragas and rendered in the robust, resonant voices of the ragis. An experience so elevating as to bring tears to many eyes.

Then there is the urge to savour again the karah parsad—the sacramental food blessed by the Lord and given to all who visit a Gurdwara.

The images and emotions are unending. Each

sustained by the inner well-spring of inspiration, belief, hope, commitment, pride, passion and ecstasy, that rich mix of feelings which imbues people with love and confidence in their faith.

Sikhism evolved during the stormiest period of Indian history and the amazing affinity of the Sikhs with their Gurdwara is best understood in the perspective of time. From the time Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith, began his philosophic and spiritual quest to synthesize the subcontinent's two warring religions—Hinduism and Islam—to when Sikhism itself took to the sword after its fifth, guru Arjan Dev, was savagely put to death by the Mughal Emperor Jahangir. The entire quality and complexion of Hindustan's social, political and religious configurations would change in the aftermath of that event. What the journey back into time would reveal is how the Gurdwara emerged out of these changes. A new edifice on India's religious landscape. An indestructible symbol of the Sikh faith.

While the story of Sikhism commences with Nanak's birth in 1469: that of the Gurdwara—as Sikhism house of prayer, piety and probity—begins with Hargobind, the sixth guru who took over the stewardship of the faith in 1606 The concept of the

Gurdwara, in this context, is generally attributed to him, though the word is at times used in the Gurbani (the Guru's scriptures) in another sense. There very broadly it is used to convey "by god's grace", or, "because of god's will", or even, "god willing".

Though Sikhism and the Gurdwara were not synchronous at their inception, they would gradually become indistinguishable from each other following the violence visited on the fifth Guru. In the four centuries since, the Gurdwara has provided the Sikhs with the most intense and elevating moments of their lives. In turn, they have responded to the Gurdwara with their love, loyalty, wealth and devotion. But this relationship was still in the future.

Nanak's efforts during the bloodiest period of Indian history were directed at a search for an alternative to the uncompromising and endless religious wars of the time. The welter of bloodshed had, in fact, gone beyond religious hostility, as different Mohammedan invaders of India fought even bloodier battles with each other in their drive to acquire the limitless wealth of Hindustan. Given the prevailing culture of intolerance, Nanak applied his inquiring mind to a search for more humans and just ways to overcome the prejudices, passions and

hatred which were destroying the land. To that end he travelled extensively to seek out men of reason and national thought of different religious persuasions, including mystics, philosophers and poet-saints.

While it was natural that the environment in the orthodox family into which he was born had led him to study the Vedas and the Brahminical shastras, Nanak's own search for knowledge drew him to the works of Vaishnavite philosopher Namdev, the Sufi mystic Sheikh Farid, the Muslim poet-saint Kabir and many others. He made no distinction between them. He was inspired by their vision and wisdom. To achieve his goal of unifying and synthesizing two seemingly irreconcilable religions, Nanak was not about to distance himself from one or the other on the basis of preference or prejudice. Thus his close study of the Koran.

In time his studies, exchanges and travels led him to write a great deal on subjects that ranged from the spiritual and devotional to the social and philosophic. As was inevitable, his impeccable secular credentials and scholarship drew an increasing number of people of different faiths to Kartarpur, on the Ravi to join the new community which had begun to settle around him in this setting of rural Punjab. It

is here that he lived the last eighteen years or so of his life. What appealed to his followers was not only his wisdom but also the social concerns to which he gave clear and courageous expression. He rejected rituals, superstition and widespread idolatry; the role of an entrenched priesthood and the pernicious caste system. They were incompatible, in his view, with the compassion of Hinduism, just as the destruction of idols in Hindu places of worship was not in consonance with the Islamic concept of the essential brotherhood of Man.

Nanak's thoughts on the religious bigotry prevailing then—along with his other perceptions—were expressed in over 900 hymns which his successor, Angad, compiled in a book that also included some of his own writings. All of these would find a place of honour in the Guru Granth Sahib.

Since Nanak neither aimed at establishing a new religion, nor aspired to a divine status for himself, an edifice to enshrine his ideals was not on his agenda. The Gurdwara would fulfill that role much later, as Sikhism evolved into a distinct religion in its own right. Even then, godship would not be conferred on an individual, but on the Guru

Granth Sahib.

And the Gurdwara, built to enshrine it, would become a house of God because of the sanctity accorded to it by the Guru Granth Sahib, after its compilation by the fifth Guru Arjan Dev.

The use of the word “guru”, in the vocabulary of the Sikhs, was not meant to elevate or exalt a human being to the level of divinity. It was simply a way of addressing a teacher, and since Nanak had planted and fostered the seeds of Sikhism at Kartarpur, his followers looked on him as the Guru to the new movement. It’s teacher. The word Sikh was itself derived from sikhya, which in turn is a variation of the Sanskrit word shishya, meaning a disciple devoted follower.

There would be ten successive Guru before the tenth and the last, Guru Gobind Singh ended the office of Guru for all time. He told his followers before his death that after him the supreme Guru of the Sikhs would be the Granth Sahib. The Guru Granth Sahib, whose uniqueness lies in its authenticity. Neither based on interpretation—tradition non reconstruction, it is rendered in the very words the Gurus used in their teachings and writings and which form the major portion of the

Guru Granth Sahib. While the message of Christ was made possible through the works of Mark, Matthew, Luke and John, and of the Buddha and Confucius through several rungs of their disciples and scholars, the compositions of the Sikh Gurus were handed down unchanged to their followers. The only other scripture which has remained unchanged though it was revealed to rather than written by the Prophet is the authenticated version of the Koran which was finalized in the time of the third Caliph, Uthman.

The idea of elevating a book of scriptures to the highest level of leadership, and investing it with the authority usually vested in individuals, was to prove amazingly successful in providing the Sikhs with inspiration, spiritual direction and self-renewal. They have turned to it for counsel ever since, all through their lives, finding reassurance and comfort in the writings of the towering figures of the faith whose observations still retain their relevance. Especially as society’s social and human predicaments have not lessened with time.

Nanak’s successors were equally committed in their zeal for reform. The third Guru, Amar Das, also rejected abstract conceptions which sought legitimacy in myth and fantasy—in favour of direct

practical action. Through the langar, or community kitchen, Sikhs were encouraged to eat together whenever they congregated, ending the invidious social practice which prevented the higher and lower castes from doing so. He forbade sati—by which widows immolated themselves on their husband’s pyres, allowed widows to remarry; stopped the veiling of women, and reversed the existing practice of excluding women from preaching by appointing women preachers. Equality between men and women in the Sikh culture owes a great deal to his foresight.

Alongside these profound social and philosophic changes the Gurus were adding a new devotional perspective and intensity to Sikh beliefs. Its aim was to discourage the deification of human gurus by emphasizing the supreme ideal of Sat Guru (God) as the personification of virtues like purity, piety, wisdom and truth. This also helped to prevent the places in which the first three Gurus had lived (Kartarpur, Khadur and Goindwal), and where so many people had experienced the uplifting vision of new moral and spiritual possibilities, from becoming houses of God, or places of worship. Since the concept of the Gurdwara was still to be

conceived, its precursors were called dharammandir, dharamsala and such. This, in the broadest sense, means places, founded by those with shared beliefs, and a commitment to truth, duty and community service.

A giant step towards building a permanent fountainhead of the Sikh faith was taken by the fifth Guru, Arjan Dev. Even though the site of what would become the future city of Amritsar was selected by the third Guru, who built a modest mud house for himself at the edge of a serene stretch of water in a wooded setting, and work on the holy township was started by the fourth Guru, the contribution of Arjan Dev of great significance. With intuitive foresight he had understood the need to develop a place which would become the core of the Sikh faith. To which all Sikhs would feel connected in the umbilical sense; a source from which they could draw spiritual sustenance, no matter how distant they were from it physically.

Clearly, the first step was to build a structure which was more than a mere symbol. But how? What would make it an embodiment, of the emotions, sentiments, self –esteem, spiritual goals and compassion of the Sikhs? A repository of those very elements of the faith which were drawing an

increasing number of people to it?

Guru Arjan Dev began by concentrating his energies on developing a concept for the physical design of the hallowed shrine. It had to be simple yet powerful in its symbolism, with each of its design elements conveying a message. Set in the centre of the pool which many believed had miraculous powers of healing, he wanted it built at a level lower than the land around it. And it must have four entrances. The location of the structure in the pool would represent nirgun and sargun, the spiritual and temporal realms of human existence. The aim of reversing the prevailing practice of building high temple plinths was to drive home the point that it was Sikhism's inner strength—not the scale of its place of worship—which must impress its adherents. And the four entrances, one on each side of this holiest of all Sikh shrines, would highlight the fact all four castes were welcome to the Sikh faith. In Guru Arjan Dev's words "the four castes of Kshatriyas, Brahmins, Sudras and Vaisyas are equal partners in divine instruction".

Arjan Dev wanted this place of worship in the sarovar (pool) to be called the Harmandir.

The challenge now was to make the Harmandir the very heart of Sikhism.

The Sikhs who left their homeland to make new lives for themselves in distant parts of the world, have built many beautiful Gurdwaras in the cities they live in. These provide eloquent proof of their pride in their faith, and their undying resolve to raise noble edifices in its honour.

What is equally praiseworthy is how many of them have continued the practice of seva or voluntary service, which runs like a continuous thread through Sikh history. Though they have still to start colleges and hospitals on an appreciable scale, the tradition on the free kitchen continues to flourish.

With their distinctive appearance, adventurous spirit, sense of service and exemplary work ethic, Sikhs have created a powerful impact in all those countries which have opened up for people of their faith to settle in. And wherever they have put their roots down, there stands the abiding symbol of their pride and devotion—their Gurdwara.

The Concept of Shabad Guru
“Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji”
A Universal Scripture

Manjit Singh

Guru Granth Sahib stands distinguished from all other scriptures as the holy Granth and is Guru Eternal for the Sikhs. The ten manifestation of Guru Nanak e.g the ten Sikh Guru in spirit are incarnate in the Shabad Guru Granth Sahib. Arnold Toynbee, the famous philosopher, historian of the 20th century observes, “the Granth mean more to Sikhs than even the Koran to Muslims and the Bible to the Christians, Guru Granth Sahib is not a deity or image but the Sikh reverence for the divine Word that is Gurbani as it comes to the Guru from the Supreme.”

Gurbani or the Holy Word is neither mystic nor speculative but is revealed signifying that it is not a man-made creation but is imparted through a chosen blessed individual through direct command from God. The revelation comes to Guru at the highest level of consciousness, a divine experience, which cannot be explained in words.

“ਜੈਸੀ ਮੈ ਆਵੈ ਖਸਮ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ, ਤੈਸੜਾ ਕਰੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੋ ॥”

(SGGS: 422)

(As the word of the master comes to me, so I

make it known, O Lalo)

“ਹਉ ਆਪਹੁ ਬੋਲਿ ਨ ਜਾਣਦਾ ਮੈ ਕਹਿਆ ਸਭ ਹੁਕਮਾਉ ਜੀਉ॥”

(SGGS: 765)

(I do not speak of my own and it is as commanded by God)

The Sikh Guru preserved the contents of the holy Granth in its original and authentic form which makes it stand distinct from other scriptures. The Vedas, Ramayan and Gita were scripted not by Vedic Rishis, Lord Ram or Krishna. The Bible and Quran was not penned by Christ or Prophet Mohammad. To emphasize this distinction, the famous, English writer Maculiffe states “Many of the great Teachers, the world has known, have not a line of their composition, we only know what they taught through tradition or second hand information. But the compositions of the Sikh Gurus are preserved.”

Another remarkable fact is the selection and inclusion of composition of known Hindu Saints (Bhagats) and Muslim Sufi Faquirs along with the devotee bards (Bhatts) totaling thirty in the holy Granth. But the selection was neither random nor first came basis but in accordance with the criterion set by the compiler Guru Arjan Dev ji. The compositions of Bhagats which were included were of those who

were one with a spirit in unison with Almighty & which directly came from God. As Gurbani had firm belief in uncompromised monotheism as one infinite reality i.e. Akal, Anadi and Anant.

“ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ ॥ ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥”

(The Supreme existed before the beginning of universe, is present & would remain their without an end and is omnipresent everywhere.)

At the time of compilation of Granth Sahib in 1604 A.D., the composition of five Gurus-Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amardas and Guru Ramdas and the fifth Guru Arjan Dev ji whose own compositions formed the largest corpus were incorporated, it was later that the tenth Guru Gobind Singh ji added the works of Ninth Guru Tegh Bahadur thus totaling the composition of Six Gurus. The divine Word (Shabad/Gurbani) was accorded the status of Guru in spirit by the founder of the Sikh religion, Guru Nanak and it was repeated again & again by all the Gurus in their life time. Though the formal Guruship was invested on the Guru Granth Sahib by the tenth Guru Gobind Singh before finally leaving for his heavenly abode.

Guru Granth Sahib is a universal scripture and pluralist in nature. At a time when the priests and

qazis were disputing endlessly on the name of God, the Granth Sahib recognized all Hindu & Muslim names of the Almighty, viz Prameshwar, Parbrham, Thakur, Ram etc and Allah, Khuda, they find mention in the holy Granth. The Gurbani gives equal treatment to Pooja and Namaz, Temple (Mandir) and Mosque (Masjid). It is because of his equality & respect that Sikhism is mistakenly considered a synchronisation or amalgam of the beliefs of other religious creeds. But it is neither a sect of Hindus nor Muslim nor inspired by any Avtar or Prophet. It is a unique, independent, autonomous Universal Scripture.

Guru Granth Sahib is neither history nor mythology, neither a philosophical treatise nor narration of rituals or rites. There is no denunciation of any religion or their scripture but the holy Granth severely criticizes the empty rituals and priestly class who exploit the ignorant people and divide them into castes, creeds and classes by misleading them for achieving the so called utopia of heaven or hell after death. The famous Urdu poet Ghalib says in a couplet that he knows the truth about the so called heaven but it is a good idea to please one self.

“ਹਮੇ ਮਾਲੂਮ ਹੈ ਜਨਤ ਕੀ ਹਕੀਕਤ, ਲੇਕਿਨ ਦਿਲ ਕੇ ਬਹਿਲਾਨੇ ਕਾ ਗਾਲਿਬ ਖਿਆਲ ਅੱਛਾ ਹੈ”

Gurbani sets the ideal of liberation (Mukti) from the cycle of birth and death within the span of a human's life & not after death. Bhagat Kabir ji states in Granth Sahib that the liberation after death has no meaning as one is not aware of what happens after death.

“ਮੂਏ ਹੁਏ ਜੋ ਮੁਕਤ ਦਿਉਗੇ ਮੁਕਤ ਨ ਜਾਨੇ ਕੋਇਲਾ”

The true ideal is not merely re absorption of a soul with the primal soul but to make the human being God conscious. It emphasizes that for spiritual attainment one has not to leave his hearth & home & wander in Jungles, deserts, mountains to become a recluse or ascetic. Gurbani repudiates the notion of world negation, abdicating the responsibility towards human society, to live a life of pure escapism. Gurbani emphasizes integration of spiritual and temporal, not negation but life affirmation. The Sikh formulae suggest meditation on Thy Name to achieve self-purity and moral strength, honest work for livelihood, sharing earnings for social upliftment and help to the hapless. The Gurus prohibit Sikhs not to fall at the feet of such mendicants/hermits who have left their household duties, wear religious robes & come for alms to the households.

“ਗੁਰ ਪੀਰ ਸਦਾਏ ਮੰਗਨ ਜਾਇ ਤਾਕਿ ਮੂਲ ਨ ਲਗੀਆ ਪਾਇ ॥
ਘਾਲ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥਹੁ ਦੇਹਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹੁ ਪਛਾਨਿਹ ਸੋਇ ॥”

It is because of this strict injunction that no Sikh can be found begging & every country, they have gone to, have contributed to that country's economic growth & wealth.

There is complete harmony in modern science and the holy Granth. Though the composers whose hymns are in Granth Sahib belong to a time period of five centuries from eleventh to seventeenth, a period of religious fanaticism, persecutions, intolerance, but the Sikh Holy Granth record not the partisan or the belief of ruling class but the Universal truth without any fear, favour or hatred. Modern and advance Europe saw the worst bloody conflict between their religion (Christianity) and science and saw the persecution of those scientists who differed from the Biblical view of Creation. Even before the dawn of modern science, the revealed holistic truth of Guru Granth were found not in contradiction but in consonance and harmony with the scientific discoveries of a later time.

The fifteenth century which believed that the world is static, the first Guru Nanak revealed that there exist not only one earth but numberless universes, the suns and moons which all are on the move;

“ਭੈ ਵਿਚਿ ਸੂਰਜੁ ਭੈ ਵਿਚਿ ਚੰਦੁ ॥ ਕੋਹ ਕਰੋੜੀ ਚਲਤ ਨਾ ਅੰਤੁ ॥”
(SGGS: 464)

They are walking miles and miles in orbit ceaselessly in accordance with the Divine Will. The supreme's creation is limitless.)

“ਅਰਬਦ ਨਰਬਦ ਧੁੰਧੁਕਾਰਾ ॥ ਧਰਣਿ ਨ ਗਗਨਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਅਪਾਰਾ ॥”
(SGGS: 1035)

(There was pitch darkness for countless ages before the creation came into existence.)

“ਕੀਤਾ ਪਸਾਉ ਏਕੋ ਕਵਾਉ ॥ ਤਿਸ ਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਲਖ ਦਰੀਆਉ ॥”
(SGGS: 3)

(It was a loud thunderous voice of the Supreme (the Big Bang) that the universe came into existence and lacs of rivers started flowing and its expansion started thereafter.)

“ਥਿਤਿ ਵਾਰੁ ਨਾ ਜੋਗੀ ਜਾਣੈ ਰੁਤਿ ਮਾਹੁ ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ॥
ਜਾ ਕਰਤਾ ਸਿਰਠੀ ਕਉ ਸਾਜੇ ਆਖੇ ਜਾਣੈ ਸੋਈ ॥”
(SGGS: 4)

(But the exact time of the creation cannot be counted or measured because there existed no sun or moon, and there is no count of time. It is a grave error that the universe came into existence so many billions of year ago and similarly its end cannot be predicted by any finite being as the universe lived and is living at the Supreme's will and end when He

so wills.

It was believed at that time that there is one earth and one sky, and some believed in the existence of fourteen galaxies but Gurbani stated that there are countless.

“ਧੌਲ ਧਰਮੁ ਦਇਆ ਦਾ ਪੂਤ ॥ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਥਾਪਿ ਰਖਿਆ ਜਿਨਿ ਸੂਤਿ ॥

(It was also believed that there is bull under the earth which sustains it. But Gurbani stated of countless galaxies and that these are being sustained by the Dharma (son of Grace) and is enjoyed by a thread of contentment)

The Sun, Moon and Planets are countless. The supreme cannot be understood by intellect or reasoning, only the one who is as high can understand Him. We are under his gaze but we cannot see Him. It is the wonder of wonders.

The religion faced many serious allegations by Karl Marx and many other thinkers of the nineteenth and twentieth century terming it as an opium given to the poor and have-nots, that it serves the vested interest of the mighty to suppress the working class and is subservient to the rulers and kings. It might be true that the priestly class have been in hand in glove with the exploiters, looters and rulers, but the Sikh holy scripture has not merely raised its voice

but unsparingly attacked against all prejudices and divisions which divides rich and poor and exposes the despots and tyrants for their exploitation and injustice. The Holy Granth terms the acquisition of excessive wealth can only be through unfair and immoral means. Control of material resources and concentration of wealth in few hands is neither good for society nor for self who then would be prompted to live not a moral but a hedonistic lifestyle which can only cause mental worries and cannot provide contentment. The ideal way of life suggested by Gurbani is the middle path neither very poor nor excessively rich.

The Guru Granth rejects all divisions of human being on the pretext of caste, creed, colour and gender. Gurbani reject and uproots the caste system of Manu's varn ashram, root and branch. The Gurbani championed the cause of respectful human equality as we all owe our existence of one God. In the medieval goes, the Indian society was torn apart in castes-the upper and privileged and the lowly. The Brahmans were regarded as gurus and the so called shudras or the lowly were not allowed to hear or read any religious sermons and were prohibited from entering into temples. The fifth Sikh Guru

Arjan Dev Ji who canonized, compiled and edited Gurbani into Granth sahib and its first prakash was held at the then newly built sanctum-sanctorum i.e The Harmander Sahib (now famously known as the Golden Temple) in 1604 A.D. which was opened for entry for all human being irrespective of their caste, creed, color and status and the message of Gurbani was for one and all.

ਖੜੀ, ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ, ਸੂਦ, ਵੈਸ, ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ਚਹੁ ਵਰਨਾ ਕਰੁ ਸਾਂਝਾ ॥

(The spiritual message of Holy Granth is common to all the four castes.)

ਸੋ ਮੁਖੁ ਜਲਉ ਜਿਤੁ ਕਹਹਿ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਜੋਨੀ॥

(SGGS: 1136)

(Burn be the mouth that terms that God has taken birth out of mother's womb. The Holy Granth did not approve any incarnation of God (avtarvaad) or worship of deities or images.)

The Guru in Sikh parlance is not considered an incarnation of God or a prophet. The Gurus in their spirit are one with Divine Essence. The Gurbani does not divide human life into compartments spiritual or temporal, spirit or matter and considers it as a whole. It condemns the tyranny and injustice, religious bigotry and subjugation of people. At a time when even Europe was ruled by the 'divine right theory'

of political science with the dictum, ‘the king can do no wrong’; ‘the king is the viceroy of the Lord’; ‘the king is dead-long live the king’; and then in India the king was termed as a god (ਦਿਲੀਸ਼ੇਵਰੋ, ਪ੍ਰਮੋਸ਼ਵਰੋ). The composer of Ramayana, Bhagat Tulsidas also observed.

ਕੋਊ ਨ੍ਰਿਪ ਹੋਇ ਭਗਤਨ ਕਤੁ ਹਾਨੀ

(The bhagatas do not lose anything who so ever be the king.)

But Gurbani voiced vehement protest and declared that the kings have turned into butchers and the kings are not fulfilling their dharma and have abdicated the moral right to rule.

“ਰਾਜੇ ਸੀਹ ਮੁਕਦਮ ਕੁਤੇ॥ ਜਾਇ ਜਗਾਇਨਿ ਬੈਠੇ ਸੁਤੇ ॥”

“ਕਲਿ ਕਾਤੀ ਰਾਜੇ ਕਾਸਾਈ ਧਰਮੁ ਪੰਖ ਕਰਿ ਉਡਰਿਆ ॥”

“ਤਖਤਿ ਰਾਜਾ ਸੋ ਬਹੈ ਜਿ ਤਖਤੈ ਲਾਇਕ ਹੋਈ ॥”

“ਰਾਜੇ ਚੁਲੀ ਨਿਆਵ ਕੀ ਪੜਿਆ ਸਚੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ॥”

(Only he has the right to rule who is able to be the King and whose conduct is just and right.)

At first Guru Nanak resisted the foreign invasion of Babar and was put in jail. The Fifth and Ninth Guru accepted martyrdom at the hands of intolerant, fanatic tyrants and similarly four minor sons (Sahibzadas) of the Tenth Guru-two of them attained martyrdom by fighting lakhs of armed forces

and the younger two were bricked alive followed by thousands and thousands of Sikhs who sacrificed themselves at the altar of freedom thus ensuring human dignity and freedom of every individual and nation.

The divine message of Guur Granth Sahib provides an open, tolerant, moral and pluralist religion and is against political hegemony of the majority or the rulers in their design to either amalgamate or to finish the other religions by unleashing terror and state violence. The Divine revelation is not reserved for any one specific religion. The religion in essence is one.

ਜਗਤੁ ਜਲੰਦਾ ਰਖਿ ਲੈ, ਆਪਣੀ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਧਾਰਿ ॥

ਜਿਤ ਦੁਆਰੇ ਉਬਰੈ ॥ ਤਿਤੈ ਲੈਹੁ ਉਬਾਰਿ ॥

(Various religions are different pathways for salvation and welfare of the people. As such it prays to the Almighty that the world is in flames! Save it, O God, save them from whichever pathway they come by your Grace.)

Guru Granth Sahib is a modern, scientific and universal scripture which creates a congenial environment for the unity of God, equality of human being, interfaith dialogue, human dignity and freedom for one and all. It also emphasizes to upkeep

the purity and natural greenery of the mother earth. It is a highway to love, faith and truthful living.

According to Prof. J C Archer the religion of the Guru Granth is a universal and practical religion...the world needs today its message of peace and love.

The world famous Philosopher, historian of the twentieth century, Arnold Toynbee observes in his book "An Historian's Approach To Religion".

"The religion which the world would accept would not be of any god in persons, religious dogmas, rites, empty rituals or that of mythology but whose basis would be the Holy Word and service to humanity. He further writes that the concept of service (sewa) of humanity has already been adopted by Christians but the Holy Word is being experienced by the Sikhs with their full devotion to Guru Granth."

PINGALWARA DIARY

(UPTO NOVEMBER, 2017)

Services rendered by Pingalwara Institution for the service of the suffering humanity are:-

1. Homes for the Homeless

There are 1786 patients in different branches of Pingalwara now a days:—

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| (a) Head Office, Mata Mehtab Kaur Ward, Bhai Piara Singh Ward | 352 Patients |
| (b) Manawala Complex | 863 Patients |
| (c) Pandori Warrach Branch, Amritsar | 99 Patients |
| (d) Jalandhar Branch | 39 Patients |
| (e) Sangrur Branch | 226 Patients |
| (f) Chandigarh (Palsora) Branch | 115 Patients |
| (g) Goindwal Branch | 92 Patients |
| | <hr/> |
| | Total 1786 Patients |

2. Treatment facilities

(a) **Dispensary & Laboratory:-** Pingalwara has a dispensary and a laboratory for the treatment of patients. It has an annual expenditure of about Rs.90 lakhs. Medicines are also distributed free of cost to the poor and needy people.

(b) **Medical Care Staff:-** Experienced medical staff like Nurses, Pharmacists and Laboratory

Technicians are available for the care of the Pingalwara residents.

- (c) **Blood-Donation Camps:-** A Blood Donation Camp is organized on Bhagat Ji's Death Anniversary every year. The blood is used for Pingalwara residents and road accident victims.
- (d) **Ambulances:-** Ambulances with basic Medical aid are available for victims of road accidents on G.T. Road, round the clock and provide facilities for taking Pingalwara patients to the hospital.
- (e) **Artificial Limb Centre:-** There is an Artificial Limb Centre at Manawala Complex, dedicated to the memory of Bhagat Ji which provides free of cost Artificial Limbs to Polio-effected and amputee cases. 8137 needy people have benefitted till October 2016.
- (f) **Physiotherapy Centre:-** A Physiotherapy Centre equipped with State-of-to-art equipment is functioning in the Manawala Complex since June 2005. On an average 80 patients are treated everyday.
- (g) **Operation Theatres:-** There is a well equipped Operation Theatre in Bhai Piara Singh Ward Amritsar for general surgery and A Micro Surgery Operation Theatre in Manawala Complex where Cochlear Implants and major operations are carried out.

- (h) **Dental, Eye, Ear & Ultrasound Centres:-** These Centres have been set up to provide these services to Pingalwara residents, sewadars and their families.

3. Education

Pingalwara Society is running five Educational Institutions for the poor and needy children.

- (a) **Bhagat Puran Singh Adarsh School, Manawala Complex:-** This school provides free education to 728 students from the poor and deprived sections of the society. They are provided with free books and uniforms. Children being brought up by Pingalwara Society are also studying in this school.
- (b) **Bhagat Puran Singh Adarsh School, Buttar Kalan (Qadian):-** This school is dedicated to the sweet memory of Bhagatji. 452 students are getting free education under the able guidance of well qualified teachers. The school also provides financial help to students who have finished their school studies and are aspiring for higher studies.
- (c) **Bhagat Puran Singh School for Special Education, Manawala Complex:-** This school is providing Special Education to 217 Special children.
- (d) **Bhagat Puran Singh School for the Deaf:-** Bhagat Puran Singh School for Deaf Children is functional at the Manawala Complex since May 2005. The

school is equipped with state-of-the-art training aid and has 152 children on its rolls.

- (e) **Bhagat Puran Singh School for Special Education, Chandigarh (Palsora):-** This school caters to the needs of Special adults of the branch.
- (f) **Vocational Centre:-** This Centre is providing free training in embroidery, stitching, craft work, making washing powder, candle making and painting, etc. Young girls from the villages of surroundings areas are the main beneficiaries.
- (g) **Computer Training:-** Computers are available in all the schools for academic and vocational training.
- (h) **Hostel facilities:-** There are separate hostels for boys and girls in Manawala Complex. Many girls are pursuing higher studies in different colleges.

4. **Rehabilitation**

Marriages:- After being educated, boys and girls at Pingalwara are married to suitable partners. 40 girls and 4 boys have been married off till date.

5. **Environment Related Activities**

- (a) **Tree Plantation:-** Bhagat Puran Singh Ji was deeply concerned about the degradation of the environment. A vigorous campaign of tree plantation is started every year on Bhagat Ji's Death Anniver-

sary. Each year 15,000 to 22,000 trees are planted in various schools, colleges, hospitals, cremation grounds and other public places. These include Amaltas, Kachnar, Behra, Champa, Arjun, Sukhchain, Chandni, Zetropa and Kari-patta etc., These were distributed to different institutions.

- (b) **Nursery:-** Pingalwara has its own Nursery where saplings of various plants and trees are prepared. Every year, the aim of nursery is to grow more than 54 different kinds of saplings.

6. **Social Improvement Related Activities**

- (a) **Awareness:-** Pingalwara has played an important role in spreading awareness about the evils in the society. This has been done by printing literature on religious, social and environmental issues at the Puran Printing Press Amritsar and is being distributed free of cost. Annual expenditure of printing and publicity is about 1 crores 50 lakhs rupees.
- (b) **Puran Printing Press:-** The Printing Press has been updated with an Offset Press.
- (c) **Museum and Documentaries:-** A Museum, and a number of documentaries have been prepared on Pingalwara activities as well as on zero budget natural farming. The C.D.s are freely available from Pingalwara.

A feature film produced by Pingalwara Society, Amritsar EH JANAM TUMHARE LEKHE (Punjabi) on Rev. Bhagat Puran Singh Ji, founder Pingalwara and his struggle not only for selfless services of wounded humanity but for Environment Crisis also, will prove a beacon for the generations yet to come after us.

7. **Help to the victims of Natural Calamities:** Pingalwara makes an effort to provide succour to the victims of natural calamities like floods, earthquakes and famines. Aid was sent for the earth-quake victims in Iran, Tsunami disaster victims, Leh landslide and flood affected areas.

8. **Cremation of unclaimed dead-bodies:** Pingalwara cremates unclaimed dead bodies with full honour.

9. **Dairy Farm**

120 cows and buffalos at Manawala Complex provide fresh milk to the Pingalwara residents.

10. **Old Age Homes**

Old age homes at Sangrur and Manawala Complex of Pingalwara caters to the needs of elderly people.

11. **Expenditure:** The daily expenditure of Pingalwara is more than 6.5 Lakh.

Other Details:

a) All India Pingalwara Charitable Society is a Registered Society, registered by Registrar of Companies vide letter No. 130 of 1956-1957 as amended vide No. A-28/4540 dated 07-07-1998.

b) All donations to Pingalwara are exempted under Section 80G of Income Tax-II Amritsar letter No. CIT-II/ASR/ITO (Tech.) 2011-12/4730 dated 11/12 January, 2012.

c) PAN Number of the All India Pingalwara Charitable Society is AAATA 2237R

d) FCRA (Foreign Contribution Regulation Act) 1976 Registration No. of Pingalwara is 115210002

Wahe Guru Ji Ka Khalsa

Wahe Guru Ji Ki Fateh

Dr. Inderjit Kaur,

President,

All India Pingalwara Charitable Society (Regd.),

Tehsilpura, G.T. Road, Amritsar. (Punjab).