THE GOSPEL OF THE SIKH GURUS

Dr. G. S. Chauhan
The Gospel of
The Sikh Gurus

FREE GIFT NOT FOR SALE

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The Gospel of The Sikh Gurus
by:
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Title Photo:
Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji giving dictation of DAMDAMI BIR to
Bhai Mani Singh Ji.
Dedication

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The subjects dealt with in this book are as varied as the number of stories. It has innermost secrets of meditation,
Vedanta, karam Yoga, bhakti Yoga, Gyan Yoga, renunciation, control of senses, mind, charity, achieving of single minded concentration, austerities etc. A number of stories help correct understanding of certain historical facts.

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

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

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Preface to the Original Book
"Sikhan di Bhagat Mala"

By
Shahid Bhai Mani Singh

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

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

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

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

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

On the eve of Baisakhi, Shri Kala Ram visited Anandpur, which was at that time the headquarters of the 9th Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur alongwith his 7 years old son then Mani Ram. Mani Ram and Gobind Rai happened to be of almost same age group. Therefore, during his stay at
Anandpur, Mani Ram was emotionally mesmerized by Gobind Rai. Both became play mates. This relation lasted for life. For the next 33 years of a concentrated historic era, both sustained an unbreakable bond.

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

Some time before the creation of khalsa, Guru Gobind Singh appointed Bhai Mani Singh as his adviser-in-chief and Dewan in view of his credibility and qualities of head and heart. He was baptized as “Singh” on the historic
day of Baisakhi April 13, 1699 A.D. along with his family by the Panj Pyaras in the first batch of Amritdharis when Guru Gobind Singh also received baptism. Bhai Mani Ram thus became Bhai Mani Singh.

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

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

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

With the excruciating martyrdom of Banda Singh Bahadur in 1716 A.D., the Sikhs by and large felt themselves in terrible straits and rudderless. There was serious rivalry between the Bandei i.e. followers of Banda Singh Bahadur and Tat Khalsa the followers of original traditions of Guru Gobind Singh. Bhai Mani Singh who
had headquartered himself at Amritsar as Jathedar of Akal Takhat, as a father figure, played a key role in uniting the community. He even, resorted to force as and when needed. Mehnat Singh, the representative of Bandeis lost his life and supremacy of Tat Khalsa was restored. The union ceremony was performed under the leadership of Bhai Mani Singh as Jathedar of Akal Takhat. Bhai Mani Singh's efforts filled the vacuum in the leadership and the supremacy of the "Akal Takhat" was accepted by one and all in the community. There was a positive metamorphosis. The hiding "Singhs" started their swoops on the Mughal armies. In the following years even the terrible foreign invaders, like Nadir Shah Durrani and Ahmed Shah Abdali had to confess the reckonable force and perceptible feel of the Sikhs. It can be said that the foundation of Sikh empire of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was laid by Bhai Mani Singh.

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

Bhai Mani Singh not only performed preaching and discourses at Amritsar but also toured country side to kindle the flame of Guru's teachings and conversion of peasantry into "Singhs". These neo Sikhs provided the enforcement to the hiding groups keeping the Mughal armies at bay. Maintaining gorilla warfare for a long time needs lots of money, rations, armaments and manpower. As an intense observer and Jathedar Of Akal Takhat, Bhai Mani Singh realized the difficult situation and decided to bring all the sikh armies on a common platform for demarcating their goal and action plan. He therefore decided to organize a huge congregation of sikhs at Amritsar to serve as "Sarbat Khalsa" or general body meeting to pass common resolutions acceptable to all
groups. Bhai Mani Singh was not a persona-non-grata with the Mughal rulers. They took him as a harmless pious saint-academician Head Priest. So Bhai mani Singh obtained administrative approval from Lahore Durbar on the condition of paying Rs 1000/- as fees after the function.

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

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

Bhai Mani Singh’s life account undoubtedly shows that he was paradigm of greatness, self surrender, self sacrifice, scholarship and swordmanship. He served as an anchor for the sikh community in the most delicate times. He can rightly be called “Sani-Sipahi” or a saint soldier and a Martyr.
Chapter 1

Characteristics of a Perfect Disciple

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

This chapter contains the gist of the first twelve stanzas.

STANZA ONE

Guru Has Unlimited Treasures of Name & Divine Knowledge

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

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

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

STANZA TWO

Guru’s Disciples are Egoless and Above Worldly Enjoyments

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

In Urdu, a confidant is called ‘mehram’ but with addition of a dot in Urdu script, it becomes ‘mujrim’ i.e. a criminal. Bhai Gurdas with this example has explained the disastrous effect of personal ego (the dot), which changes a person from a confidant of the Lord into a criminal. This person is like a woman who is unfaithful while professing loyalty to her husband.
Nobody blames a blind man who falls into a well but everyone will condemn a man with a lamp in his hand and good sight if he falls into a well. Thus, if an ignorant person indulges in sinful activity, nobody blames him but nobody forgives a learned person who commits a sin. Such a person is unfit to enter the Lord’s court.

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

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

Surrender and Contentment

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

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

STANZA FOUR

Accept the Will of the Lord

The Guru’s disciples, while sitting in the assembly of devotees absorb the ‘Gurbani’ through all their senses. Their mind becomes one with Gurbani and accept the Will of the Lord, thereby, gradually reducing their ego. They realize that they are the lowest of the lowly and that all the glory belongs to the Satguru and they should use this transient body of theirs to do as much good as possible. Then only will their life be worthwhile. The Guru’s word is the cup of nectar that enables the devotees to endure austerities, control anger and desires, practice yoga and dispassion. It makes them sweet natured, humble, honest and generous.
As they see the Guru’s form in everybody, they make no enemies, don’t plot against anybody and are not vindictive. They are especially devoted to persons who follow the Guru’s precepts. They are confident that the Lord will fulfil all their needs and therefore they request only Him and do not extend their hands towards anybody else for help.

STANZA FIVE

Humility and Discrimination

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

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

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

Once they take Gurbani to heart, they merge with the Lord. From then on they are filled with Divine Fervour and
are like a dumb person who is not able to describe the taste of sweets. Having been thus blessed with the Divine Knowledge they are fully satiated.

STANZA SIX

Deep Love of Guru’s Lotus Feet

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

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

STANZA SEVEN

Guru’s Teachings – A Great Uniting Force

With his mercy on humankind the Guru has made all the four social classes as one. Once a person becomes a devotee he automatically becomes pure irrespective of his class. Bhai Saheb has explained this with the example of
the betel leaf (*paan*), which contains white lime paste, grey catechu, yellowish areca pieces and the green betel leaf. When one chews such a prepared betel leaf it produces a uniform red color. Similarly, the four social classes of the Hindus i.e. *Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishas and Shudras*, all become *Khalsa* (pure).

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

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

**STANZA EIGHT**

The Extent of Devotion of the Gurmukhs

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

Just like we cannot predict the movements of the fish in
the ocean, the mental and spiritual state of the Gurmukhs is beyond assessment. The Gurmukhs know what is beyond the scope of human knowledge and assessment and thus can put up with that what is beyond the capacity of ordinary human beings.

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

STANZA NINE

Dedication to the Master (Guru)

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

1. The tortoise lays and buries its eggs on the sandy bank but itself lives in the water. The eggs hatch due to its continuous thought towards its eggs and when hatched, the babies are drawn towards the mother in the water.

2. When the Siberian cranes lay their eggs, they are hatched due to the continuous thought towards the eggs. When hatched, they take the babies and fly away.

3. The duck lays its eggs near a hen who hatches its eggs. When the eggs are hatched, the duck comes and leads the chicks to the water. The ducklings wade into the water with the duck and the chickens start foraging for food in the litter with the hen.

This explains the state of high souls who are born and brought up as ordinary people but suddenly change into highly Self-realized souls on meeting their Mentor. (For example, Swami Vivekanand became a great Swami from an ordinary worldly boy called Narayan on meeting Paramahansa Sri Ramakrishna.)
4. The Indian cuckoo lays its eggs in the crow's nest, but as soon as they are hatched, the cuckoo comes and takes the babies away.

5. The babies of the royal swan do not find their food in the ordinary pool and have to finally go to the Mansarover lake (in Tibet) where they find the pearls. Similarly, the potential saints gravitate to their destinations, as they are not satisfied with the worldly surroundings.

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

STANZA TEN

What is so Special About the Guru's Sikhs?

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

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

Even if the herons go to Mansarover lake, they cannot change into royal swans. Similar is the case with the world-
oriented people because they are still absorbed in the world and the three qualities of Maya. This is true for the imposters who pretend to be Gurmukhs.

STANZA ELEVEN

The Guru can Elevate the Devotee to be the Guru

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

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

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

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

STANZA TWELVE

The Final Ascent of the Saints to Heights of Spirituality

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

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

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

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

The following chapters deal with thus mentioned saints individually. Their stories were told by Sri Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru, to Bhai Mani Singh, who recorded them in his book “Sikhan Di Bhagat Mala”. I have made an humble effort to translate them into English for the benefit of the English-speaking devotees.
Chapter 2

The Disciples of Sri Guru Nanak Dev

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

2.1 Bhai Taru Popat

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

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

Then Guru Nanak Dev gave the following illustration:

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