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

These persons were thus liberated accordingly.

The Lord’s Name is the Bridge for Liberation

6.13 Bhai Dalla, Bhagirath, Japu and Niwala

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

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

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

He created Himself (Saibhang) and He worships Himself.”

(Sukhmani, Ashtpadi 21)

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

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

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

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

The devotees then asked Guru ji that Lord Rama had built a bridge but Hanuman jumped over the ocean. How could he do that? Guru ji replied that Hanuman was a worshipper of His Name and His Name being supreme had given him the power to jump over the ocean. In spiritual science, there is another interpretation of this incident. Worship of the Lord’s Name gives one the knowledge and the power to jump over the ignorance of the manifest world.
But only a few can possess this power. Whereas, even the feeble and the weak can walk over the bridge. There are very few who possess dispassion to the world, pain and pleasure and follow the path of knowledge. But those who worship His Name are numerous. By worship of His Name, many sinners and the virtuous have attained liberation.

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

Fruit of Karma

6.14 Bhai Moola, Sooja, Chandu Etc.

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

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

(1) Those who perform virtuous acts with specific desire to be fulfilled in return for the virtuous act.

(2) Those who perform virtuous acts without any desire

(3) Those who are the true worshippers or 'bhakats'

(4) Those who are blessed with the Divine Knowledge or the 'gyanis'.

Guru ji enquired about the category of the disciples
they wanted their question to be answered.

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

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

1) The lowest classes of subjects are the share croppers. They cultivate the land and share the produce with the king. As soon as the crop is ready, king’s officials arrive and collect their share. They punish the croppers for any dishonest deal. These people are always in fear of the officials.

2) There are some subjects who are given land on lease. They pay the amount fixed in the deed at regular intervals and a collector comes to take the money without any hassles.

3) There are some subjects, particularly on the kingdom’s borders, who offer only gifts like horses, hawks etc to the king. They also join the king in his battles. They do not pay any taxes but collect revenue from their tenants.

4) The fourth category of subjects is the freeholders. They collect revenues from their tenants and maintain armies on behalf of the king. For maintenance of their private armies, the king pays them. In their own territories they exercise full control.

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

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

2) Those humans who have mastered their desires are always doing virtuous acts. However, sometimes they may commit a sin unintentionally. In their case, their account of virtues and sins is combined. If their virtues exceed the sins, they enjoy the fruit of the balance virtues after subtracting the sins. In case their sins exceed their virtues, they enjoy the fruit of the sins after subtracting the virtues. Normally, their virtues always exceed their sins.

3) Those who are the true worshippers of the Supreme Being always perform virtuous acts with full faith in the Lord. Any sin they commit is just incidental, but the virtues are always performed with full intention. Whatever minor sins are there, are exempted and they are always close to the Lord. If they incarnate again in the world, they indulge in devotion and are thus liberated from the cycle of birth and death. If they have not overcome their desires, they first enjoy heaven. After their tenure in the heaven is over, they take birth in a rich man’s house and attain their liberation. If they have overcome their desires, they incarnate directly in the house of a saint, undertake devotional activities and are liberated. This is the fruit of true worship. It is similar to the case of the king’s subjects who offer gifts of horses and hawks to the king and enjoy all benefits. The true worshippers are always happy doing devotion and meditation.

4) The fourth category is the ‘gyanis’ or those who are blessed with Divine Wisdom. They consider their bodies as an illusion or all actions or karma as perishable. They are beyond karmas. The karmas cannot affect them like darkness cannot exist near the sun. They are always ‘jiwan muktas’ or liberated while in the body.

The disciples then enquired as to what happens to their
karma if they are not to enjoy the fruit? How the 'gyanis' in this world act while in this body?

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

Service of the Saints also Results in Liberation

6.15 Bhai Bishnu Bihra and Sunder

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

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

Seek the Remedy for Your Liberation with the Saints

6.16 Bhai Jattu, Bhanu Etc.

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

"Mare rakhe eko aap. Manukh kai kichhu nahin haath"
i.e. it is the Lord who punishes or exonerates a being.
The humans have no say in the matter.

But it is also said

"Jaisa bije so lune karam eh khait. Akirt ghana Hari visriya joni bharmet"
i.e. you reap as you sow, it is your karma that your
body enjoys. The ungrateful people have forgotten Hari (God), so they incarnate again and again.

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

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

1) For the persons who are entitled for the fruit of the karmas, the instruction is “Jaisa bije so lune karam eh khet” i.e. you reap as you sow.

2) Those who are treated differently for the Lord’s worship, the instruction is “Mare rakhe Eko Aap” i.e. He Himself may punish or exonerate.

3) Those who are entitled for the Divine Knowledge or “Gyan”, for them the instruction is “Tu ghat ghat antar sarab niranter, Hari Eko Purakh samana” i.e. the Lord is prevailing everywhere continuously and always Hari, The Lord is only One, as Atma of all beings is present in all beings.

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

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

Guru ji told the four devotees that they were entitled to
devotion. Thus, they should engage themselves in meditation and serve the disciples. They were thus liberated after performing the service and devotion.

Criteria for Adopting the Mode for Personal Evolution

6.17 Bhai Nau, Bhulu Etc.

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

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

1) If you listen to spiritual discourses and are able to discriminate between sins and virtues, and you desire to perform virtuous acts and stop committing sins, but due to the effects of past bad karmas, you do not succeed, then you should follow 'Seva Yoga' i.e. serve the disciples, listen to 'Gurbani' with full attention, let it soak in your mind and expel evil tendencies.

2) If by listening to Gurbani, your evil tendencies are expelled or hardly a few are left, you are then eligible for 'Bhakti Yoga'. You should then recite and meditate on Gurbani all the 24 hours and expel the remaining evil tendencies.

3) When you understand that by dint of meditation on 'Gurbani', you do not differentiate between good and bad or sin and virtue, all good and bad tendencies are stopped and you have achieved dispassion from the worldly affairs, you are eligible for 'Gyan Yoga'.

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

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

They understood and followed the instructions and were thus liberated.

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

6.18 *Bhai Chattar Dass and Moola Etc.*

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

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

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

2) Secondly, it is said that the grace is not given to the waking ones, yet the sleeping ones are woken up and offered the Grace. This also has two interpretations. It can be understood by this example.
   a) Once there were two merchants. They came to know that a ship would depart the next day. So they travelled a long distance and reached the port. One of them boarded the ship and the other one waited on the shore. He thought that when the ship will depart there would be a drum beat. He can then board the ship. But he failed to hear the drum beat and the ship left without him. The passengers on the ship were tired after having travelled a long distance and soon fell asleep. But the merchants on board woke them up purchased their wares and they made good profits. Those who failed to board the ship, though they were awake, lost the opportunity to do business. On the way back home they were looted by robbers.

   Similarly, those who come to the gathering of devotees will receive the Lord’s Grace even if they fall asleep. They would also be made to listen to the Guru’s words. Those who are in their houses, though awake, will not receive the Grace or be able to listen to the Gurbani.

   b) The second interpretation is that the Lord’s Grace is received by the humble minds. There are some people who read some spiritual text or delve in yogic practices, become proud of their attainments and think that they are awake and alert and are acting fearlessly on their own strength. They never receive the Lord’s Grace. But those who are ignorant and have a keen desire to expel their ignorance go to the assembly of devotees regularly.
The saints and the Guru dispel their sleep or ignorance. They evolve just like a businessman who makes little profits daily but in the end becomes rich. Similarly, a person who is humble and is regular in attending the assembly of devotees (‘sadhu sangat’) is blessed with Divine Knowledge.

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

Significance of the Word ‘Waheguru’

6.19 Bhai Phirna, Jetha and Changa

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

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

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

Thus, those who will meditate on the Name ‘Waheguru’
will terminate their cycle of life and death.

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

The Manifest and the Unmanifest form of the Incarnations

6.20 Bhai Vesa and Gopi Etc.

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

1. “Pande, tumra Ram Chand, so bhi awat dekhia tha. Ravan seti sarbar hoi, ghar ki joi gawai thi” i.e. O Pandit! I saw your Ram Chandra’s advent into this world. He had a fight with Ravana and lost his wife.

2. Again Namdev has said: “Jasrath Rai nand Raja mera Ram Chand parnavir Nama tut rus Amrit pije” i.e. O Raja Ram Chand, son of king Dashrath, I worship you and drink the immortality giving nectar of your name.

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

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

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

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

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

**Adopt Virtuous State for Peace of Mind**

6.21 *Bhai Charu, Bami Etc.*

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

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

Guru ji explained that those who indulge in violence
and anger were ‘tamsik’. Those who were greedy and proud were ‘rajsik’. Those who talked politely and were humble were the ‘satwik’.

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

The test for the qualities of minds were as under:
1) When one listens to Guru’s words with one pointed attention and is able to understand without any wavering of the mind then one is of ‘satwik’ bent of mind.
2) If the mind wavers and stabilizes alternately, then it is ‘rajsik’ bent of mind.
3) If the mind was all the time wavering and not able to understand anything of the spiritual discourses, it was of ‘tamsik’ bent of mind.

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

A ‘sadhu’ or a saint is one who has won over his senses. A devotee or ‘bhakta’ is one whose no breath goes waste without remembering the Lord’s Name. Guru ji thus advised the devotees to always remain in the ‘satwik’ guna or state of mind. They will then be able to attain their peace of
mind. Early morning is the time when the illusive powers of ‘Maya’ or the Lord’s creative and sustaining power throws its net over the human beings. This is the time when the devotees of “Waheguru” or the Supreme Being are awake and alert in meditation. They are thus saved from being entrapped in Maya’s net.

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

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

One Lamp Lights More Lamps and the Darkness is Dispelled

6.22 Bhai Deepa Kasra

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

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

Effort for a Holy Cause Brings High Dividends
6.23 Bhai Lala and Langah Chaudhary

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

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

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

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

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

This means, those who will make an endeavor to come to Amritsar and participate in the construction of the holy tank and the Harimandir will purify their minds and intellect. Those who will make an endeavor to follow the Guru's precepts will dispel all their doubts. The Name of 'Waheguru' is the treasure house of wealth. All other kinds of wealth
remain behind in this world (after death) but the Lord’s Name goes with one even after the death. One gets the God’s Name from ‘Satguru’ (the true master). This God’s Name dispels the darkness of ignorance, all diseases and sorrows.

If the Lord Wills, He can Sustain One without Breath

6.24 Bhai Ajah, Ajaib and Umar Shah

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

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

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

The second interpretation is that only those breaths are
fruitful which are spent in the praise of the Lord. Otherwise, these are like the skin bellows of the blacksmith. So, do not waste your breaths, but remember the Lord.

Amritsar is the Highest Place for Pilgrimage

6.25 Bhai Paira Chajjal and Kandu Sanghar

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

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

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

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

Guru ji constructed another tank near Amritsar known as Santokhsar and said that whosoever takes bath in this tank will dispel his sins and shall attain santokh (contentment).
Human Being is not the Body

6.26 Bhai Kapur Dev

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

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

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

Bhai Samman replied that since the human body was false or perishable, there was no surprise that it had died. Those who expressed sorrow on death of the body were
fools. If one had to ask for something from Guru ji, one should request for the Lord’s Name, which would be helpful even after death. No body was a father or a son. It is a game for a few days. The Lord had created the body by combining five contradictory elements i.e. earth, water, fire, air and ether. After death they separate again. Nobody is born and nobody dies. Human beings suffer because they have forgotten their true form i.e. ‘Atma’. If one fully understood, accepted and acted on Guru’s words i.e. ‘Gurbani’, he would be liberated from the cycle of birth and death.

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

Mere Glimpse of Amritsar Destroys All Sins

6.27 Bhai Jodha and Jallo Etc.

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

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

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

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

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

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

One is a Brahmin by Deeds not by Birth

6.28 Bhai Dhesi and Jodh

Bhai Dhesi and Jodh were Sanghar Brahmins. They came to Guru Arjun Dev, prostrated before him and said that although they were Brahmins, the other Brahmins did not allow them to sit with them in formal functions because they had adopted a Kshatriya as a Guru (Sikh Gurus were Kshatriyas). They had stopped worshipping Ganges and Kashi, which are the places of Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu. Instead they were visiting Amritsar. They had deserted Sanskrit, which was the language of the Vedas and were reading and singing Gurbani in local Punjabi language. They were not observing fasts on Shivratri, Janamashatami and
Ekadashi (11th day of moon) and were eating the food offered by the disciples of Guru ji. They had left the customary ritual ceremonies for birth and death as followed by the other Brahmans. Instead they were performing prayer (ardas) and took ‘karah prasad’ (pudding made of wheat flour, sugar and clarified butter). Therefore, they had come to seek shelter with Guru ji who had destroyed their pride in being Brahmans. They were blessed with the sweet blessings of 'Gurbani. They therefore prayed to be enlightened as to what answer they should give to other Brahmans.

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

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

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

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

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

Guru ji explained that dirty clothes are washed away with an alkaline mineral (unpurified carbonate of sodium known as ‘sajji’ in Punjab and used by washer men). This sajji was also a kind of dirt but it cleans the clothes. Similarly, the dirt of the saints’ feet can wash away the sins of the sinners. The sound of Guru’s words (Gurbani) was also a type of subtle dust which generated love and devotion. All other pilgrimage centers were located at water bodies whereas at Amritsar, there was a water tank as well as the source
of the holy Name of the Supreme Being (in Harminder Sahib kirtan is continuous from early morning till late night). Thus, Amritsar was a pilgrimage center of water as well as the holy Name.

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

"Tirath nawan jau, tirath Naam hai.
Tirad Sabad vichar anter Gyan hai.”

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

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

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

It was because of ignorance that the Brahmins were proud of themselves. But Guru’s disciples were blessed with knowledge of ‘Atma’ or Divine Knowledge. They did not consider themselves as a body. Those who were proud of being born in high caste were the ones who were really the lowborn or the ‘chandalas’. The real Brahmin was a person who knew that the Lord is prevailing everywhere and in
everyone. Such persons did not have any enmity with anybody (when everyone is the form of the Lord, how can one have enmity with Him in any form?). The physical body of the Brahmin and the 'chandala' is made up of the same type of bones, skin, flesh etc.

Saint Kabir has said:

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

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

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

Remember Death

6.29 Bhai Goind, Gola and Mohan

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

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

How to Make the Mind One Pointed