

Sau Suwal

में मद्दाल

ONE HUNDRED QUESTIONS



Principal Satbir Singh

Translation & Commentary

By

Dr. Hakam Singh

Foreward

Some time back when Dr. (Bhai) Harbans Lal was visiting us, one day we were talking about the problems that Sikh youth in the Western countries were facing. Being in Judeo-Christian milieu and with their distinct physical appearance they were subjected to innumerable questions regarding their form and beliefs from their peers. Due to lack of any formal education in their religion and relatively limited help from their parents these young Sikhs were unable to give any satisfactory answers to such rather penetrating questions. It was therefore felt necessary to provide them with a suitable body of information so that they could gain sufficient background in teachings of Sikhism and to be able to satisfy their questioners and thus relieve themselves of frustration resulting from the feeling of inadequacy.

Bhai Harbans Lal suggested that the book, "Sau Suwal", by Principal Satbir Singh contained the necessary material for this purpose. It should therefore be translated (in English); and requested that I should take upon myself the responsibility to do so. He promised to help me in this task by providing some starting material.

Those days I was giving a class in Sikh Philosophy at a local university and had independently reached a similar conclusion after talking to my (Sikh) students. A word of encouragement (from Bhai Harbans Lal) acted as a catalyst and I readily agreed to start the work immediately.

A major portion of my translation of the book resulting from my first effort was published in the Sikh Internet Daily Newspaper, "Sikhe.com". I received many encouraging comments

for this effort. I then examined the whole work and revised it. Where necessary, I added commentary and explanatory notes in order to make it more readily comprehensible to the Sikh youth in the West who have very little or no formal background in Sikh history and/teachings.

Principal Satbir Singh wrote the book with the presumption that his young readers would have a certain level of familiarity with the Sikh history and philosophy. He was correct in assuming this because in India most young Sikhs (regularly) go to Gurdwara where they listen to Kirtan and sermons on different aspects of Sikh teachings. Also the book was in Punjabi (Gurmukhi Script) and therefore would be read by only those who had learnt the language and thus had probably some knowledge of Sikh Scriptures. Unfortunately, the Sikh youth in the Western countries do not have such advantage. Therefore, I have taken upon myself to add appropriate comments wherever I felt that a particular point needed further elaboration and/or explanation.

Thus the present book, in addition to being the translation of the original text by Principal Satbir Singh, also contains comments and explanations of terms, ideas and statements wherever necessary.

HAKAM SINGH.

Some Important Questions in Sikhism

Q. 1. What is the definition of a Sikh?

Ans. One who is embarked upon the search for truth, is a Sikh.

The fifth Master, Guru Arjan says:

ਮੇ ਬਧੀ ਸਚੁ ਧਰਮ ਸਾਲ ਹੈ ॥ ਗੁਰਸਿਖਾ ਲਹਦਾ ਭਾਲਿ ਕੈ ॥ (SGGS, P. 74)

"I have established the temple of truth. I search and assemble therein God's devotees".

In this hymn (shabad) Guru Arjan Dev has defined the term 'Sikh' as the seeker of truth. Those who consider the term 'Sikh' to be based on the Sanskrit term 'Shishya', meaning student or disciple, seem to have altogether missed the real point. To be a disciple one needs a teacher. Thus begins the race of every disciple to adopt a teacher or a guru.

Only he/she is a Sikh who believes in and is committed to one Supreme Being (Akaal Purakh), ten Divine Masters (Guru Nanak through Guru Gobind Singh), Guru Granth Sahib (the Shabad Guru) and their collective teachings and does not believe in any other religion or doctrine. A Gursikh is free from devotion to any god/goddess.

According to Mahan Kosh (Bh. Kahan Singh) a Sikh is one who follows the path delineated by Guru Nanak; who accepts Guru Granth Sahib as his/her scripture and considers the ten Gurus as one. The third Master, Guru Amar Das says:

ਆਪੁ ਛਡਿ ਸਦਾ ਰਹੈ ਪਰਣੈ ਗੁਰ ਬਿਨੁ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਜਾਣੈ ਕੋਏ ॥
ਕਹੈ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਸੁਣਹੁ ਸੰਤਹੁ ਸੋ ਸਿਖੁ ਸਨਮੁਖੁ ਹੋਏ ॥

(SGGS, P. 919)

“Listen God’s devotees! Only that seeker abides in the Master’s presence, who discards his/her ego, leans on the preceptor and puts his/her trust in none else”.

Thus Sikh is not one who claims to have adopted someone as his/her Guru. Rather a Sikh is one who has accepted truth and truthful living as the foremost principle of life (as taught by our great Gurus)*.

Q. 2. What is our Mool Mantra (the basic Credal Formula)?

Ans. Our Mool Mantra is:

ੴ ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ
ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

(SGGS, P. 1)

The Meaning:

One Sole Supreme Being, Eternal Truth, Creator, Without Fear, Without Rancour, Timeless Form, Un-incarnated, Self-existent, Realized by the Grace of holy Preceptor.

This is the first statement in The Holy Sikh Scripture, Guru Granth Sahib, given by Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism.

Within this Mool Mantra, lies the seed of complete ethics and theology of Sikhism.

IK OANKAAR (One Sole Supreme Being): Is our philosophy. The numeral (1) and not the word (one) is used to

* A person who believes in ten Gurus and Guru Granth Sahib, has automatically dedicated himself to be the disciple of the ten Gurus and vowed to learn at their feet (through their utterances given in Guru Granth Sahib). Thus as a special case the origin of the word Sikh as the Sanskrit word “Shishya” becomes valid.

express the oneness of the Creator. This means, it cannot be divided into parts. The symbol used for Oankaar means He is constant and forever, and this universe is His creation.

SATT NAAM (Eternal Truth): Is our religion. Its pursuit through chanting and meditation on it is our religious practice.

KARTA PURAKH (The Creator): Is our way of life. Every thing, within as well as without our perception is His creation.

NIRBHAU (Without fear), NIRVAIR (Without rancour): Is our civic code. A follower of such a creator should not have any fear, nor should he/she have enmity towards anyone.

AKAAL MOORAT (Timeless form): Is our culture. Like Him our aesthetics should not be time dependent.

AJOONI, SAIBHAN(G) (Un-incarnated, self-existent): Is our fiscal policy. We should not depend upon any other entity than one Akaal Purakh.

GUR PRASAAD (Through the Grace of Holy Preceptor): All this can be achieved through the Shabad or Grace of the Guru. Our own efforts will not lead us anywhere. By humble supplication can one achieve all these attributes in ones lifetime.

This Credal formula (*Mool Mantra*) in this form comes thirty three times in Guru Granth Sahib.

Q. 3. What is Dharma?

(Note: The usual English translation of 'Dharma' is 'Religion'. Though close, it is not the correct meaning of Dharma. However, because of lack of any other suitable word, 'Religion' will be used here.)

Ans. According to Gurmat (Sikh teachings) there is only one religion, which is "the emphasis on Truth that is ever constant and unchanged by the ravages of time".

ਏਕੋ ਧਰਮੁ ਦਿੜੈ ਸਚੁ ਕੋਈ॥

(SGGS, P. 1188)

When the Sidhas, during their discussions* with Guru Nanak, asked if he (Guru Nanak) had come in this world to have his own name glorified so people would recite it like a 'Mantra'. Guru Nanak answered in negative. He said, "I have come to show the path of righteousness and give to the world the Name of the Supreme Truth":

ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ॥ ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ॥ (SGGS, P. 1)

"The one who was true in the primal time, has been true throughout ages, is true now and will ever be true".

He further said that he himself got emancipated by meditating on this Naam. (Bhai Gurdas, Vaar 1, pauri 28)

According to Bhai Nand Lal, the poet laureate of Guru Gobind Singh, *Akaal Purakh*, the Supreme Being, enjoined Guru Nanak to show the path of meditation (on His Name) and to steer the thoughts of the world towards absorption in Lord's Name such that it should be considered the only friend and benefactor.

So the true religion, according to Guru Nanak's teachings is to focus on God Almighty and meditate on Him. This way one would reach the abode of Truth and stay there.

According to Oxford Dictionary the meaning of the word 'religion' is: "that science or metaphysical knowledge that illustrates the relationship (or harmony) between Nature and attributes of God with man's world and society. To us the meaning of religion is to get in tune with the Lord.

Guru Nanak, in his acrostic composition, "*Patti Likhi*" (in which each letter of Gurmukhi script has been explained on a

* These discussions are described by Guru Nanak himself in one of his long composition, '*Sidh Goshi*', in *Guru Granth Sahib* (pp. 938-46).

spiritual level), expounds similar idea for the letter 'sassa'. According to Guru Nanak, first we have to firmly believe that God does exist. Then study His creation and consider all creatures to be various forms of His own. Thus respect them accordingly. Then shun ego and focus only on Him. One who follows this way will make his/her life a success. Such a person can be called a religious person.

ਸਸੈ ਸੋਇ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਜਿਨਿ ਸਾਜੀ ਸਭਨਾ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਏਕੁ ਭਇਆ ॥

ਸੇਵਤ ਰਹੇ ਚਿਤੁ ਜਿਨੁ ਕਾ ਲਾਗਾ ਆਇਆ ਤਿਨੁ ਕਾ ਸਫਲੁ ਭਇਆ ॥

(SGGS, P. 432)

"He, who created the whole universe, is the Sole Lord of all. Those who were attuned to Him served Him well; blessed is their birth".

Q. 4. What are the basic postulates of Gurmat (Sikh teachings)?

Ans. Broadly speaking, there are three basic postulates of Gurmat or Sikh teachings, viz., righteousness (dharma), poise and God's Name (*Naam*).

ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਧਰਮੁ ਧੀਰਜੁ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਇ ॥

(SGGS, P. 225)

To sing the praises of the Lord through His Word and thus attain to His *Naam*, to absorb oneself, with single-mindedness in the Supreme Being, and to adhere to the teachings of the Guru is the Sikh Religion. Howsoever great a person may be, he/she must not be considered a Guru and thus should not be followed or meditated upon. Those *Gurmukhs* (Guru-ward Sikhs) who interpret and preach the *Guru's Shabad* based on Guru's own philosophy and thus explain the latent meanings of the Sikh way of life, should be respected. One should keep their company but not give ones soul to them.

ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਸਦ੍ਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸਦ੍ਰਿ ਲਾਇ ਚਿਤ੍ਰ ॥ (SGGS, P. 1421)
“Develop friendship with a Guru-oriented person, but give yourself only to the true Guru”. This is the edict given to us by the third Master, Guru Amar Das.

Thus Sikh Religion is a way to raise the consciousness of the whole humanity through disciplined conduct in life.

Bhai Nand Lal, in his work, *“Bandgi Naama”*, says: Religion is to keep the company of holy people (because that is where one learns disciplined conduct of life). One should live ones life according to the code of conduct delineated in the *Rehit Naama*, which says:

- i) Believe only in one Supreme Being (*Akaal Purakh*).
- ii) Consider only the Guru’s word as the key to liberation
- iii) Consider the ten Gurus as one spirit (in ten bodies)
- iv) Do not believe in caste discrimination, untouchability, sorcery, astrological predictions, meaningless rituals during the lifetime and after the death of an older member of your family, tonsure ceremony, sacred thread ceremony, worship of dead, building monuments for dead, frontal mark and idol worship.
- v) Do not consider any place sacred other than Gurdwaras and places associated with the lives of the Gurus.
- vi) Do not follow Brahmins or Muslim Pirs. Do not ask them for any boons before embarking on any project of significance. Do not give any promises in return for their blessings for the success of a chore.
- vii) Do not believe in the Hindu or Muslim scriptures.

Those who believe the Guru’s word to be true and follow it, attain high pedestal in life, as if they have become gold from burnt iron (a simile given by Bhai Gurdas). An ignorant person on following Guru’s word with faith and devotion attains **divine**

knowledge and equipoise.

ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਮਿਲੀਐ ਬੀਸ ਇਕੀਸ ॥

(SGGS, P 933)

By following Guru's word one achieves perfection and reaches the Supreme Being.

Q. 5. Do we have ten Gurus?

Ans. There is but one Guru. The ten that we know, indicate completeness just as the number 10 is considered a complete numeral. All accounting chores can be accomplished through this number.

Guru Nanak took different (physical) forms. Mathura Bhatt in his Sawaiyya in praise of the fifth Nanak, Guru Arjan Dev, explicitly points out:

ਜੋਤਿ ਰੂਪਿ ਹਰਿ ਆਪਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਬਹਾਯਉ ॥

ਤਾ ਤੇ ਅੰਗਦੁ ਭਯਉ ਤਤ ਸਿਉ ਤਤੁ ਮਿਲਾਯਉ ॥

(SGGS, P 1408)

Which means: *The Divine light of the Lord Himself assumed Guru Nanak's form; from him (Guru Nanak) was manifested Angad by merger of quintessence.*

The Gurus came (to this world) to prepare us to take the responsibility of "Shabad" or the Divine Word. When the nation became ready to take this responsibility they withdrew themselves. Those who talk of transformation or evolution in Sikhism, are attempting to damage its basic tenets.

Mohsin Fani, who was a contemporary of the sixth Master, Guru Har Gobind, writes, "Sikhs consider all their Gurus as one (spirit)".

Q.6. Give the names of the ten Divine Masters and give briefly the attributes of their personalities.

Ans. The names of the ten Divine Masters and the attributes

of their personalities are as follows:

First Divine Master	Guru Nanak Dev	Humility
Second Divine Master	Guru Angad Dev	Obedience
Third Divine Master	Guru Amar Das	Equality
Fourth Divine Master	Guru Ram Das	Service
Fifth Divine Master	Guru Arjan Dev	Self Sacrifice
Sixth Divine Master	Guru Har Gobind	Justice
Seventh Divine Master	Guru Hari Rae	Mercy
Eighth Divine Master	Guru Hari Krishan	Purity
Ninth Divine Master	Guru Tegh Bahadur	Poise
Tenth Divine Master	Guru Gobind Singh	Courage

Bhai Nand Lal, in his book, "*Jang Naama*", has taken the name of each of the ten Gurus and based on the letters of their names in Persian script, has described in one line their attributes and sung their praises:

The First Divine Master: He brightens the Divine light of the timeless Supreme Being (*Akaal Purakh*) and enlightens (the world) with His knowledge and belief in Him. His detachment (from worldly comforts) is a matter of pride for even a perfect ascetic. At the same time his generosity is fathomless.

The Second Divine Master: In the beginning he was a selfless, dedicated disciple and in the end, because of his unquestioned adherence to the will of his Master (Guru Nanak), he became Guru. He carried on the torch, of unbending belief and commitment to the truth, of Guru Nanak and even enhanced its brightness. Guru Angad is loved by everyone. He removes anxieties and alleviates problems of everyone with his embraces of affection. He is a medicine for all maladies.

The Third Divine Master: He does not keep rancour in his mind. His personality glows like truth and his behaviour is full of spirited gaiety. Those who are lost find solace and those with no refuge find refuge with him. In essence he is a reflection of God Himself.

The Fourth Divine Master: Extremely noble who infuses (spiritual) life in everyone. Always remains in communion with God.

The Fifth Divine Master: God abides in Guru Arjan and he abides in God. He emanates Lord's fragrance and the devotees receive spiritual refreshment from the martyrdom of Guru Arjan.

The Sixth Divine Master: Guru Har Gobind's sword conquers the enemies (of justice). His arrows shatter even the rock-like arrogance and ruthlessness (of enemies).

The Seventh Divine Master: He is support and refuge of weak and shelter-less. He straightens the focus of those whose minds are bent towards (focused on) falsehood.

The Eighth Divine Master: He is a crown (at the head of) those devotees who are accepted by and are close to God. The light of his immaculate personality gives lustre to truth.

The Ninth Divine Master: By sacrificing himself for other's rights, Guru Tegh Bahadur has laid the foundation of a new tradition. The truth owes its sheen to his sacred personality.

The Tenth Divine Master: He crushed the ruthless hand of even the emperor of India, who called himself Alamgeer, (the conqueror of the world). Divine victory is emblazoned on his saffron-colour banner. His heart is pure, free from

animosity and his personality is like a blemish-less mirror of truth.

Q. 7. State the dates, places of birth and dates of merger into Infinite Reality, of the ten Divine Masters.

Ans.

The Divine Master	Place and Date of Birth	Place and Date of Merger
Guru Nanak Dev Ji	Nankana Sahib (Pakistan) April 15, 1469	Kartarpur, Ravi (Pakistan) September 5, 1539
Guru Angad Dev Ji	Matte-Di-Sarai (Punjab) March 31, 1504	Khadoor Sahib (Punjab) March 29 1552
Guru Amar Das Ji	Baasarke (near Amritsar) April 29, 1479	Goindwal Sahib September 24, 1574
Guru Ram Das Ji	Lahore (Pakistan) October 25, 1534	Goindwal Sahib September 12, 1581
Guru Arjan Dev Ji	Goindwal Sahib April 15, 1563	Martyrdom at Lahore May 30, 1606
Guru Har Gobind Ji	Chheharta Sahib (Amritsar) June 29, 1595	Kiratpur Sahib March 21, 1644
Guru Hari Rae Ji	Kiratpur Sahib June 30, 1630	Kiratpur Sahib October 6, 1664
Guru Hari Krishan Ji	Kiratpur Sahib July 7, 1656	Delhi March 30, 1664
Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji	Amritsar April 1, 1621	Martyrdom at Delhi November 11, 1675
Guru Gobind Singh Ji	Patna Sahib December 22, 1666	Nander Sahib October 7, 1708

Q. 8. When did Guru Granth Sahib become our Guru?

Ans. All our Divine Masters respected and revered, more than themselves, the Shabad (Divine Word), and the *Adi Granth*, because it is the embodiment of the Divine Word. They enjoined

others also to do the same, e.g.,

ਏਕੋ ਸਬਦੁ ਏਕੋ ਪੁਰੁ ਵਰਤੈ ਸਭ ਏਕਸੁ ਤੇ ਉਤਪਤਿ ਚਲੈ ॥ (SGGS, P. 1334)
 "There is one Divine Word, one Lord who pervades the universe".

However, the word "Guru" began to be prefixed to the *Adi Granth* from October 8, 1708, when Guru Gobind Singh gave the pontificate to this embodiment of Sikh philosophy at Abchal Nagar (Nander). The directive of the tenth Master was:

"Consider the *Adi Granth* as my virtual form (body). Anyone who would like to converse with me, should read *Guru Granth* with devotion. He will be talking with me". The tenth Master further added, "Upon the commandment of *Akaal Purakh* (God) this Panth (the Sikh way of life) was started. All Sikhs are directed to accept the *Adi Granth* as the Guru and consider it as the embodiment of all the Gurus. Whoever wishes to meet God can find Him in the Divine Word (in *Guru Granth Sahib*).

(The Sikh code of conduct by Bhai Prehlaad Singh).

Another witness account on the same issue is Bhai Kesar Singh Chhibber. In his "Bansavali Naama" he quotes as follows:

"Then the Guru gave the directive, "the end of corporal Guru has arrived. Guru Nanak, the divine Master had ordained that there will be ten corporal Gurus. Now the tenth Master has bestowed the pontificate to *Guru Granth Sahib*. Today our Guru is embodied in the *Granth Sahib*. Anyone who goes astray from the *Granth* is lost".

In "*Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin*", written by Kavi Sohan Singh, nearly eight years after the demise of the tenth Master, the following passage is given:

"In the age of Kali *Guru Granth* is the Guru. Consider it

the embodiment of the ten Gurus. Anyone who wants to see the Guru should see Guru Granth Sahib and anyone who wants to converse with the Guru, should read it with devotion”.

Sohan Lal Suri writes in his book, *“Umdat-ul-tawarikh”*, that when the Sikhs asked the tenth Master, upon whom was he going to bestow the Guruship, his reply was, “Adi Granth is the Guru. There is no difference between God and the Granth. Seeing Guru Granth Sahib will be equivalent to the joyous vision of all the Gurus”.

Long time prior to this, Guru Arjan Dev, who compiled the Adi Granth, had clearly stated the reason for its compilation. “Early one morning it occurred to him that a new Panth (Divine way) of Guru Nanak had come into being. However, in order that its tenets be established for all times, and for the whole world, it was necessary that the Adi Granth be compiled. Thus the Adi Granth came into being”. These are the words according to *“Mehma Prakash”*.

Q. 9. The compositions of how many Divine Personalities are included in Guru Granth Sahib? Give their names.

Ans. Guru Granth Sahib is like a platter full of spiritual food in which (like 36 types of dishes, recognized in the Indian culinary art) the compositions of 36 Divine personalities are included. These are:

SIX GURUS:

Guru Nanak Dev Ji

Guru Angad Dev Ji

Guru Amar Das Ji

Guru Ram Das Ji

Guru Arjan Dev Ji

Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji

FIFTEEN BHAGATS:

Bhagat Kabir Ji	Bhagat Sur Das Ji
Bhagat Nam Dev Ji	Baba Farid Ji
Bhagat Ravi Das Ji	Bhagat Parmanand Ji
Bhagat Trilochan Ji	Bhagat Sadhna Ji
Bhagat Dhanna Ji	Bhagat Beni Ji
Bhagat Sain Ji	Bhagat Rama Nand Ji
Bhagat Jai Dev Ji	Bhagat Bheekhan Ji
Bhagat Peepa Ji	

ELEVEN BARDS:

Kalsahar Ji	Nall Ji
Jaalap Ji	Gayand Ji
Keerat Ji	Mathura Ji
Bhikha Ji	Bal Ji
Sall Ji	Haribans Ji
Bhall Ji	

FOUR SIKHS:

Baba Sunder Ji	Bhai Satta Rababi
Bhai Mardana Rababi	Bhai Balwand Rababi

It is believed that Baba Sunder collected the last commandments of the third Master, Guru Amar Das, and described them in his poetic composition, which is placed in Raag Ramkali and is known as "Sadd" (The Call).

Bhai Mardana, the life long companion of Guru Nanak, used to play the musical instrument called '*Rabaab*' in accompaniment to Guru Nanak's singing. He was therefore given the title of "Rababi". The same title passed on to his descendents. Bhai Satta and Bhai Balwand, who did Kirtan in Guru Arjan Dev's court, were descendents of Bhai Mardana.

Q.10. How many Raags (musical measures) and Shabads (hymns) are there in Guru Granth Sahib? What is its collective subject matter? Why is Guru Granth Sahib accorded so much respect and importance?

Ans. There are a total of thirty one Raags in Guru Granth Sahib. The first Raag is Sri and the last one is Jai Jai Vanti. In addition, there are nine folk-tunes (also in Raags), which are prescribed for the singing of *Vaars*.

The total number of all Shabads (hymns), Saloks (couplets) and Sawaiyyas (panegyrics) is 5,763. The first volume of Guru Granth Sahib was compiled on August 15, 1604 and installed in the Golden Temple (Hari Mandir) on August 30, 1604. Bhai Gurdas was the scribe.

The primary subjects included in Guru Granth Sahib are: Laudation of God, recitation of His *Naam*, undivided devotion, control of mind, service of humanity and the way to live a clean life. The Gurbani (utterances of the Gurus) emphasizes not on the salvation after death but liberation from worldly entanglements even while living an active life. It tells us to consider happiness and sorrows or affluence and poverty alike (staying in a state of equipoise under all circumstances, or staying within God's will under all conditions).

The collective subject matter is:

How to attain to the ultimate Truth (God Himself). A description of those who have attained to the Truth and also those who have failed to attain to it.

The great significance of Guru Granth Sahib lies in the fact that:

If Pythagoras wrote some principles, they did not reach us

in their original form. We know of Socrates only through the writings of Plato. Budha did not leave his teachings in any written form; Confucious did not leave behind any written records of the social and ethical principles attributed to him. The founder of Christianity, Jesus Christ, also did not present his philosophy in a written form. We have to depend upon the writings of his disciples, Mathew, Luke, John etc. for that. Mohammed, the prophet of Islam, did not write the text of *Quraan* himself, rather it was written by his successor Caliphs and disciples. But the Sikh Gurus wrote their own teachings and philosophy in the form of their compositions, brought in the compositions of Bhagats, safeguarded them and the fifth Guru compiled all this collection into the anthology of *Adi Granth*. He then authenticated it with his own signature.

Greenlees, in his book, "Gospel of Guru Granth Sahib" has beautifully written, " In terms of purity and spiritual level it commands a high status among the religious books of the world. It is not an imitation or evolution of any other religion. The status of Guru Granth Sahib is of the highest level. It can be certainly said that the 'Bani' (hymns) was revealed from the inner core of the soul and no element of hearsay or transfer from a different source". World famous historian, Arnold Toyenbee has declared Guru Granth Sahib as "Mankind's common spiritual treasure".

Q. 11. What were the last words of Guru Nanak Dev?

Ans. According to the "*Puraatan Janam Saakhi*", when Guru Nanak merged into the Supreme Being, it was early in the morning. The Master was, at that time, reciting the "*Baarah*

Maah” of *Tukhaari Raag**. His last words were:

ਤੂੰ ਸੁਣਿ ਕਿਰਤ ਕਰੰਮਾ ਪੁਰਬਿ ਕਮਾਇਆ ॥

ਸਿਰਿ ਸਿਰਿ ਸੁਖ ਸਹੰਮਾ ਦੇਹਿ ਸੁ ਤੂੰ ਭਲਾ ॥

(SGGS, p. 1107)

“Listen O’ Lord, Your created beings may get happiness or sorrow according to their past deeds, but whatever You do is in the best interest of everyone”.

After this he was repeating the word “*bhala*” for a long time. The meaning of this word is, whatever You do O’ Lord, is for our good.

Then he urged, all those present, to sing the hymns of ‘Sohila’ (the song of laudation). This included “*Sohila Raag Gauri Deep ki*”.

ਜੈ ਘਰਿ ਕੀਰਤਿ ਆਖੀਐ ਕਰਤੇ ਕਾ ਹੋਇ ਬੀਚਾਰੋ ॥

ਤਿਤੁ ਘਰਿ ਗਾਵਹੁ ਸੋਹਿਲਾ ਸਿਵਰਿਹੁ ਸਿਰਜਣਹਾਰੋ ॥

(SGGS, p. 12.)

“The home where the Divine laudation of the Creator is sung and His greatness contemplated, let us sing this poem of laudation”.

Following this Hymn the ‘*Aarti*’ of *Raag Dhanaasari* was sung, which is:

ਗਗਨ ਮੈ ਬਾਲੁ ਰਵਿ ਚੰਦੁ ਦੀਪਕ ਬਨੇ ਤਾਰਿਕਾ ਮੰਡਲ ਜਨਕ ਮੋਤੀ ॥

(SGGS, P. 13)

“Placed on the salver of heaven, are the lamps, sun and moon, with pearls of constellations —————”.

Then the closing ‘*salok*’ of *Japu Ji* was recited:

* There are two songs about the months of the year, called *Baarah Maah* (twelve months). One is in *Raag Tukhaari* which is the composition of *Guru Nanak*; the second one is in *Raag Maajh* which was composed by the fifth Master, *Guru Arjan Dev*.

ਸਲੋਕੁ ॥ ਪਵਣੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਪਾਣੀ ਪਿਤਾ ਮਾਤਾ ਧਰਤਿ ਮਹਤੁ ॥
 ਦਿਵਸੁ ਰਾਤਿ ਦੁਇ ਦਾਈ ਦਾਇਆ ਖੇਲੈ ਸਗਲ ਜਗਤੁ ॥
 ਚੰਗਿਆਈਆ ਭੁਰਿਆਈਆ ਵਾਚੈ ਧਰਮੁ ਹਦੂਰਿ ॥
 ਕਰਮੀ ਆਪੋ ਆਪਣੀ ਕੇ ਨੇੜੈ ਕੇ ਦੂਰਿ ॥
 ਜਿਨੀ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਇਆ ਗਏ ਮਸਕਤਿ ਘਾਲਿ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਤੇ ਮੁਖ ਉਜਲੇ ਕੇਤੀ ਛੁਟੀ ਨਾਲਿ ॥ (SGGS, P. 8)

“Air is the Guru (Master), water the progenitor, the vast earth the mother and day and night the nurses, in whose bosom all creation frolics. His judgement will be made upon good as well as bad deeds. Depending on the actions, some will become close to God while others will become far away. Those who have meditated upon the holy Naam and have departed after their task consummated, their faces shine and with them many more shall be emancipated”.

As the last line of this Salok was recited, the Guru covered himself with a sheet, said *“Waheguru”*, bowed his head and passed his spiritual power and the *Shabad* (the Divine word) to Guru Angad.

Mohsin Fani (a historian, contemporary of Guru Har Gobind) writes: “It is the belief of Sikhs that Guru Nanak was just spiritual radiation. He exhibited only his spiritual attributes to the people”.

Sikhs also believe that when he discarded his physical form he infused his spiritual light into his close companion and disciple, Guru Angad. Thus Guru Angad is just another name of Guru Nanak.

Q. 12. What were the last words of Guru Angad Dev?

Ans. Guru Angad, just before merging into the Infinite, looked towards Guru Amar Das and said, “There is not the slightest difference between you and me. The (human) body is like a pitcher of water in an ocean (insignificant compared to the whole

creation). The Gurus take human form only for the betterment of humanity. The body is mortal and has to perish. One achieves the status of a Guru as a result of humility, love and (selfless) service. After I am gone, you have to emphasize meditation upon Lord's Name (*Naam*) and its recitation. Fill every heart with devotion to God. Now you have the keys to sustenance in your hands; all Divine powers are also under your control. Bestow the gift of *Naam* (to the world)".

Then he addressed the whole congregation and said, "There is no distinction between Guru Amar Das and me. Attachment to (human) body is false. The real peace lies in detachment from ones body".

The "*Gurmat*" (Sikh code) procedure regarding the final rites (after death) was then explained and emphasized. He enjoined not to perform the usual rituals prevalent in the (Hindu) society and stressed that (after him) they should recite God's Name, sing His praises and pay thanks to Him.

"Cremate the body and stay contented in Lord's will".

For Guru Amar Das, his last words were, "Guru Nanak Dev had charged me with the duty to continue on the Divine path that he had started. You should also steadfastly tread upon the same path. Guru Nanak's was the first commandment to me and now mine is the second one to you. In this task I will always be present spiritually with you; within as well as without. There is not going to be any separation. I am neither coming nor going but merging in the Infinite Lord".

Q. 13. Describe the last words spoken by Guru Amar Das.

Ans. It is our good fortune that the last words of Guru Amar Das were inscribed by his own grandson, Baba Sunder (son of Baba Mohri). Later on Guru Arjan Dev included these words in

the Adi Granth in Raag (the musical measure) Raamkali under the heading of “*Sadd*” means ‘Call’ SGGs, p. 923.

Guru Amar Das said, “All that is happening is a play according to God’s will. When He beckons, no one can decline the call. In fact, anyone who accepts Lord’s Will as sweet, has the right to be called a complete person, a true devotee and a preceptor. Within him strikes the Divine melody and he is in the state of equipoise. Lord Himself takes him into His embrace”.

**ਭਗਤੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਸੋਈ ਜਿਸੁ ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਭਾਣਾ ਭਾਵਏ ॥
ਆਨੰਦ ਅਨਹਦ ਵਜਹਿ ਵਾਜੇ ਹਰਿ ਆਪਿ ਗਲਿ ਮੇਲਾਵਏ ॥**

The Guru further said, “the one thing I do not like is the crying of anyone after I am gone because I am actually being given the robe of honour by the Lord. For this you should all be overjoyed rather than sad”.

**ਮਤ ਮੈ ਪਿਛੈ ਕੋਈ ਰੋਵਸੀ ਸੇ ਮੈ ਮੂਲਿ ਨ ਭਾਇਆ ॥
ਮਿਤੁ ਪੈਛੈ ਮਿਤੁ ਬਿਗਸੈ ਜਿਸੁ ਮਿਤ ਕੀ ਪੈਜ ਭਾਵਏ ॥
ਤੁਸੀ ਵੀਚਾਰਿ ਦੇਖਹੁ ਪੁਤ ਭਾਈ ਹਰਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਪੈਨਾਵਏ ॥**

“My second desire is that only Divine laudations of God be sung (after I have departed). No meaning-less rituals like embalming of body, floating of leaves and lighting of lamps etc. be performed”.

The Sikhs accepted these instructions with pleasure and bowed their heads.

ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਜਿ ਬੋਲਿਆ ਗੁਰਸਿਖਾ ਮੰਨਿ ਲਈ ਰਜਾਇ ਜੀਉ ॥

When the Guru left for *Sach Khand* (the realm of Truth), people were amazed to see that the brightness of the sun had decreased and a different kind of brightness had covered Goindwal. There was fragrance in the whole environment and a sweet melody seemed to be striking.

Q. 14. What was the environment in Goindwal at the time of merger of the fourth Master, Guru Ram Das, into Infinite?

Ans. In the last moments before merger into the Infinite, Guru Ram Das bowed to Guru Arjan Dev from a distance. All the Sikhs present were looking at the Divine face of the fourth Master. The end looked like the mingling of water into water, fire into fire or air diffusing effortlessly into air.

As the Guru's light was merging with the light of the Infinite Lord, the atmosphere in Goindwal was becoming fragrant. The sky was assuming the colour of rose and the gentle movement of the breeze was producing the mysterious melody of "hail to the Guru".

The extent of fragrance spread in the atmosphere was such as if flowers were being showered from the sky.

Cremation of the body was done on the bank of nearby river 'Beas'.

Q. 15. At the last moment of his martyrdom, which stanza from the Adi Granth was at the lips of Guru Arjan Dev?

Ans. On an order from the emperor Jahangir, Guru Arjan Dev had been summoned to Lahore. Before leaving for Lahore, Guru Arjan Dev had made the prescient statement:

"I shall be put to death, such is the directive (of God) for sure. I am going among Mughals; they will torture me, there is no doubt in this. My body will be left behind (after my soul departs). This is the writ of my Master (God)".

According to the history, this is exactly what happened. Guru Arjan Dev was subjected to the most inhuman tortures (made to sit on a hot plate, put in boiling water, hot sand was

poured on his head and body). Finally, he was going to be cast away into the nearby river, Raavi. At that time he knew that the end was near. The following verse of Gurbani was on his lips at that time:

ਸੁਣੀ ਅਰਦਾਸਿ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਮੇਰੇ ਸਰਬ ਕਲਾ ਬਣਿ ਆਈ॥
ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਡਈ ਸਗਲੇ ਜੁਗ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਕੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ॥

SGGS, P. 611.

“The Lord has listened to my prayer and all my tasks are accomplished.

The glory of Guru Nanak has become manifested and rung through the whole age (of Kali)”.

The same verse was later on inscribed on the face of the building when Gurdwara Dehra Sahib was constructed (the site of martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev).

Through this verse Guru Arjan Dev was conveying that through his martyrdom the significance of Guru Nanak's principles had been made clear to the whole world.

Q. 16. What ‘Rubaaee’ (a poetical composition of four sentences) did Mohsin Fani, a contemporary of the sixth Master, Guru Har Gobind, write on the occasion of demise of the Guru? Also what stanza from Gurubani was on the lips of Guru Har Gobind at the last moment?

Ans. To emphasize the greatness of Guru Har Gobind, Mohsin Fani* wrote a ‘Rubaaee’ composed by one of the then famous poet, Daulat Khan Kaksal. The theme of this poem was that the

* Mohsin Fani was originally from Persia (Iran). He stayed in Kashmir for some time when he maintained correspondence with Guru Har Gobind. Later on he attended the court of the Guru and wrote a history book entitled, “Dabistan-I-Mazahib”.

Guru was dear to everyone irrespective of caste, creed, race and colour. The devotees loved to sacrifice their lives for him.

The meanings of the 'Rubaaee', originally written in Persian, are as follows:

I remember one word uttered by my preceptor.

As long as there is life in the 'bar' (the meeting place of friends) the word will stay alive.

If one could attain love (of the preceptor) by sacrificing ones life one would do it.

But giving life and gaining love are in God's hand.

The last words of Guru Har Gobind before merging into the Infinite were from one of Guru Arjan Dev's hymns (Asht Padi) in the musical measure *Maaru* in Guru Granth Sahib:

"Of all lights, let God's moon illuminate the compound of your heart. Contemplate only on the Lord, for only His contemplation is blessed. If you have to give up any thing then give up lust, anger and greed. If you are to ask the Guru for a boon, ask that God's laudations be your routine. Of all vigils the foremost one is to stay alert while singing God's praises. If there is one point of focus of your mind, it should be the Guru's feet.

He alone can attain such a state on whose forehead great fortune is writ. Nanak says, blessed is he who comes to Lord's refuge".

ਚਾਦਨਾ ਚਾਦਨੁ ਆਗਨਿ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਜੀਉ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਚਾਦਨਾ ॥ ੧ ॥

ਆਰਾਧਨਾ ਅਰਾਧਨੁ ਨੀਕਾ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਅਰਾਧਨਾ ॥ ੨ ॥

ਤਿਆਗਨਾ ਤਿਆਗਨੁ ਨੀਕਾ ਕਾਮੁ ਕੋਧੁ ਲੋਭੁ ਤਿਆਗਨਾ ॥ ੩ ॥

ਮਾਗਨਾ ਮਾਗਨੁ ਨੀਕਾ ਹਰਿ ਜਸੁ ਗੁਰ ਤੇ ਮਾਗਨਾ ॥ ੪ ॥

ਜਾਗਨਾ ਜਾਗਨੁ ਨੀਕਾ ਹਰਿ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਮਹਿ ਜਾਗਨਾ ॥ ੫ ॥

ਲਾਗਨਾ ਲਾਗਨੁ ਨੀਕਾ ਗੁਰ ਚਰਣੀ ਮਨੁ ਲਾਗਨਾ ॥ ੬ ॥

ਇਹ ਬਿਧਿ ਤਿਸਹਿ ਪਰਾਪਤੇ ਜਾ ਕੈ ਮਸਤਕਿ ਭਾਗਨਾ ॥ ੭ ॥

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਤਿਸੁ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਨੀਕਾ ਜੋ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਵੀ ਸਰਨਾਰਨਾ ॥ ੮ ॥

(SGGS, P. 1018)

Q. 17. Describe the essentials of Guru Hari Rai's sermon to the congregation on his assumption of Guru Nanak's throne.

Ans. On becoming the seventh Nanak, Guru Hari Rae exhorted, "maintain an unshakable faith in God and always remember His Name. He further directed, "Stay away from lust and anger, for they corrode the body. Avoid bad deeds and do not shirk good deeds. Never steal, earn your living with honest work. Do not enter into discrepancies over frivolous issues. Do not speak ill of anyone. Hurting someone's feelings is a taboo".

"Service to ones parents is true devotion to God (Bhakti). God can be attained to within ones home. Human form is hard to come by, do not waste it by indulging in sinful acts. Discard selfishness, live a life devoted to the well being of others. Acquire spiritual education. Search and get into the company of saintly persons. Keep your consciousness and ideals at a high level. God is eternally true and in a state of bliss. Holy company is the only mean to go across this ocean (of Maaya). Concentrate and focus within self. Recitation of Lord's Name is the supreme task".

"To achieve (spiritual) knowledge is the meditation. Donate tithe out of your honest earnings to charity. To lead a life free from desires is a great boon. Have firm faith (in God) and stay detached (from Maaya)".

After these directions Guru Hari Rae recited fifteenth stanza of twenty-eighth Vaar of Bhai Gurdas:

"A Gursikh wakes up in the pre-dawn hour and meditating upon Naam, he becomes alert for ablution and charity. He speaks politely and gets pleasure in helping others. He

sleeps and eats in moderation and also speaks less according to the Guru's teachings. He works hard to earn (his living), performs good deeds and even though may be superior, would never get his superiority noticed. Day and night he goes to where Gurbani is being sung in the congregation. He keeps his conscience merged in (Guru's) word and maintains love for the true Guru in his mind. (Living) Among hopes and desires, he remains detached".

Q. 18. What were the last words of Guru Hari Krishan addressed to his mother and the congregation at the time of his merger into Infinite?

Ans. To his mother Guru Hari Krishan said, "My time to depart from this world has arrived". The mother then said to him, "You were distributing spiritual mirth, sitting on the throne of Guru Nanak. Why have you decided to depart so soon? Whoever comes under your merciful gaze, is rid of all calamities. The way you are spreading the light of Guru Nanak's spiritual torch, everyone is full of your praises. Please do not think of departure. You know quite well that the Sodhi clan is full of quarrelsome people. They could create many problems after you are gone".

Guru Hari Krishan consoled his mother and said, "Dear mother, all this is happening according to Divine writ. No one can harm Guru Nanak's throne. This high and sacred throne will always distribute spiritual comforts (to the world). What has been founded by Guru Nanak will stay till eternity and continue to distribute pleasures and comforts. (*Gur Partap Suraj*)".

Then he said, "You are my mother, you should not think like others. You should recognize God's will and teach others also to abide by it. This illusory world is like a play that looks real for a short time. One cannot get happiness by attaching

oneself to this transient world like the shade of a cloud. What we see is just an illusion, like the one created by a magician. Whosoever will consider it real and try to hold on to it, will ultimately repent. Life is like the flow of a river (it does not stop). This is how God has made His play. Creation and destruction is a perpetual game, everyone has to endure this game*”.

Then the congregation requested the Guru, “after you who shall we bow our head to, and who will preach us the divine teachings”?

Guru Hari Krishan said, “The Adi Granth has exhorted the praise of Satt Naam (the true Name) as the chore of the foremost importance”.

Q. 19. What did the Brahmins from Kashmir, under the leadership of Kirpa Ram, request of Guru Tegh Bahadur; and what was his reply?

Ans. The Brahmins from Kashmir, under the stewardship of pandit Kirpa Ram, came to Anand Pur and put the following request before Guru Tegh Bahadur:

“Please help us, O’ son of Guru Har Gobind”. They further said, “ Master! All our physical and spiritual strength has failed us and we are helpless. It is you who saved the elephant from the tentacles of the giant octopus** . You

* The famous last words of Guru Hari Krishan, according to the Sikh tradition, are “Baba Bakaalay”. However, Prof. Satbir Singh has probably presumed that every Sikh reader of his book would know it and has therefore not mentioned them. Instead, he has given the gist of philosophical discourse between the Guru and his mother, as described in the “Gur Partap Suraj”

** According to this Hindu mythological story an elephant on entering a sea for a bath was caught by a giant octopus. When the elephant realized that its force could not free it from the tentacles it prayed to God who came to help and freed the elephant.

also protected the honour of Dropadi (a story from the Hindu epic, *Maha Bharat*, wherein Lord Krishna saved Dropadi when her clothes were being forcibly removed by an order from the king Duryodhan) and improved the life of Sudama (another story from *Maha Bharat* wherein Lord Krishna helped his childhood friend Sudama who was very poor). You are the (ninth) Guru Nanak and in this age of Kali you are Lord Krishna for us. We have come to your refuge; we have nowhere else to turn to". (*Shaheed bilaas*)

In reply to the request of the Brahmins, Guru Tegh Bahadur said the following, as documented by Bhatt Chaand:

"One should focus ones mind on the lotus feet of the Lord because He is the ultimate protector. The mind tends to drift towards evil thoughts. One should prevent it to do so by the help of Guru's word. Once you decide to help someone, do so even at the cost of your head. Says Guru Tegh Bahadur, lay down your life rather than forsaking your Dharma".

Q. 20. What were the last commandments of Guru Gobind Singh before merging into the Infinite?

Ans. According to "*Amar Naama*", when Guru Gobind Singh decided to leave this world, the first statement he made was that the Sikhs had been instilled with so much (spiritual) power that they would remain steadfast in their faith. By listening to the ballads from the '*Dhaadhis*' they would stay enthusiastic for battles over righteous causes.

In a Sanskrit book entitled, "*Nanak Chandra Uday Mahakaviyang*", the author, Pundit Dev Raj Sharma, has written that Bhai Nand Lal then asked the Guru, "who shall be our Guru from now on and who should we bow before; whose divine rights

should we admit and with whom should we converse and get our doubts cleared?"

Then Guru Gobind Singh replied, "from now on the spirit of the Guru is in Guru Granth Sahib and the body in the Panth. Search the Shabad for your spiritual satisfaction and if you want to see the Guru, look at the Khalsa. Seek the protection of God Almighty".

Q. 21. When did Guru Gobind Singh pass the Guruship to the Adi Granth? What was the first hymn that came on opening the Granth at random?

Ans. Bhatt Narbad Singh, son of Bhai Kesho Singh, who was present at Nanderh at the time of transfer of pontificate, gives the following witness-account:

"Guru Gobind, the tenth Master, son of Guru Tegh Bahadur, at Nanderh, in Deccan (South India), Sammat 1765, on fourth day of the month of Kartik (Bikrami Calendar), in ascending cycle of moon, Wednesday, asked Bhai Daya Singh to bring the Sri Granth Sahib. Bhai Daya Singh brought the Granth. Guru Gobind Singh, as the tradition demanded, placed five paisa and a coconut before the Granth and bowed. Then he addressed the congregation and said, "It is my directive that hereafter recognize the Granth as the Guru in my place. All Sikhs, who do so, will have their toils accepted and approved and the Guru will shower them with his grace. Accept this as truth". Then Guru Granth Sahib was opened at random and according to the tradition, the top hymn on the left page was read. The hymn was:

"Maaru Mahalla 5.

ਖੁਲਿਆ ਕਰਮੁ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਭਈ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਗਾਈ ॥
ਸ੍ਰਮੁ ਬਾਕਾ ਪਾਏ ਬਿਸੁਆ ਮਿਟਿ ਗਈ ਸਗਲੀ ਧਾਈ ॥ ੧ ॥

ਅਬ ਮੋਹਿ ਜੀਵਨ ਪਦਵੀ ਪਾਈ ॥
 ਚੀਤਿ ਆਇਓ ਮਨਿ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਬਿਧਾਤਾ ਸੰਤਨ ਕੀ ਸਰਣਾਈ ॥ ੧ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
 ਕਾਮੁ ਕ੍ਰੋਧੁ ਲੋਭੁ ਮੋਹੁ ਨਿਵਾਰੇ ਨਿਵਾਰੇ ਸਗਲ ਬੈਰਾਈ ॥
 ਸਦ ਹਜੁਰਿ ਹਾਜਰੁ ਹੈ ਨਾਜਰੁ ਕਤਹਿ ਨ ਭਇਓ ਦੁਰਾਈ ॥ ੨ ॥
 ਸੁਖ ਸੀਤਲ ਸਰਧਾ ਸਭ ਪੂਰੀ ਹੋਏ ਸੰਤ ਸਹਾਈ ॥
 ਪਾਵਨ ਪਤਿਤ ਕੀਏ ਖਿਨ ਡੀਤਰਿ ਮਹਿਮਾ ਕਥਨੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ ॥ ੩ ॥
 ਨਿਰਭਉ ਭਏ ਸਗਲ ਭੈ ਖੋਏ ਗੋਬਿਦ ਚਰਣ ਓਟਾਈ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕੁ ਜਸੁ ਗਾਵੈ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਕਾ ਰੈਣਿ ਦਿਨਸੁ ਨਿਵ ਲਾਈ ॥ ੪ ॥ ੬ ॥

(SGGS, P. 1000)

“Good fortune dawned on me and by Lord’s grace I sing His praises.

My efforts have come to an end and I have attained a restful spot, all running about has ceased.

Now I have achieved the state of true (spiritual) life.

Sheltered in the refuge of holy persons the immanent Creator has abided in my mind. Pause.

The lust, anger, avarice and attachment, I have cast off and all enemies have been repulsed.

Now the Lord is always present by me, watching over me. He is never far away.

All desires are fulfilled and cool joy has come because God’s devotees have come to my aid.

In an instant the fallen ones are purified, the Lord’s praise is beyond description.

All fears have vanished and now we are fearless as we are under the shelter of Divine feet.

Nanak sings Divine laudations day and night and is absorbed in them”.

Q.22. When was the Hari Mandir (Golden Temple) constructed, and what is its importance?

Ans. The foundation stone of Hari Mandir, also known as

Darbar Sahib, or Golden Temple, was laid by Hazrat Mian Mir (a Sufi Faqir), on a request from Guru Arjan Dev, on January 3, 1588 in Amritsar. The Amrit Sarovar (sacred lake) is 500 ft. long, 490 ft. wide and 17 ft. deep.

The only bridge that connects Hari Mandir with the outer walkway (parikarma) is 240 ft. long and 21 ft. wide. Maharaja Ranjit Singh got the building of Hari Mandir adorned with gold leaf in 1830, that is why the name Golden Temple.

Reply has beautifully written in his "Believe it or not", that the Hari Mandir was constructed in order to install Guru Granth Sahib there". According to this view, this building should be the most expensive cover for a book in the world.

The installation of Guru Granth Sahib, then known as Pothi Sahib, was done in the Hari Mandir by Guru Arjan Dev, on August 30, 1604.

Describing the uniqueness of Hari Mandir, Professor Puran Singh has written: " It is said that it took nine years for 22,000 labourers to construct the Taj Mahal; but for Hari Mandir's construction innumerable devotees voluntarily came and worked to complete it".

Reaching here, a Sikh considers that he/she has reached his/her own hometown. The foundation of Hari Mandir is standing on love, devotion and contentment. According to witness accounts, the earth dug from Santokh Sar (another lake in Amritsar constructed by Guru Arjan Dev), meaning the lake of contentment, was used for the foundation of Hari Mandir.

Hari Mandir has four doors, which signify the one-ness of humanity (open to all four castes) irrespective of colour, creed or geographical origin. Actually the geographical directions are aligned towards the four corners of the building. Thus each door is in the middle of two corners representing two geographical directions.

The door at “Har ki Pauri” opens towards South-East, the door towards Shaheed Bunga (where the Sikh reference Library used to be prior to the 1984 Holocaust, opens towards South West; The door towards “Darshani Deorhi” faces North West and the door towards the clock tower (Sikh Museum) faces North East. Thus even the discrepancy regarding East or West have been eliminated (Some religions consider East more sacred while the others consider West more sacred). The building of Hari Mandir sits at the level of the lake water. To an observer it looks as if a lotus flower is in blossom and floating on water. Every heart blossoms on entering Hari Mandir.

The lower level of Hari Mandir’s compared to its surroundings and its relatively flat domes symbolize humility. The dome of Akaal Takhat is upright and is symbolic of integrity and valour.

There is an inverted lotus flower on the dome of Hari Mandir which depicts the continuous flow of Amrit and the Maaya (the wealth and the comforts of this world) follows those who possess the Name of the Lord.

Hari Mandir depicts scenes of life (carved in its marble walls with semi-precious stones). There are pictures of elephants, galloping horses, flying birds, bird-laden branches and meditating sadhus. On the contrary, in Taj Mahal, not a single wall carving depicts life. On observing this and tourist exclaimed, “Hari Mandir is full of life while Taj Mahal is full of death”.

The construction of Hari Mandir is such that one does not sweat in summer or shiver in winter. The bridge from Darshani Deorhi to the door of Hari Mandir is 84 steps long which signifies that there is only one “Dharma” (duty of all humanity). Whoever comes here with humility and devotion to Gurus’ word, he/she will not have to go through the transmigration of 84 lakh (8.4 million) births.

Q. 23. How many “Takhats” do we have? Where are they located? When did the construction of *Akaal Takhat* begin and what kind of care was taken during its construction?

Ans. According to the decision of the “Panth” (collective Sikh nation) there are five *Takhats* (seats of temporal power)* :

1. *Sri Akaal Takhat Sahib*, at Amritsar, Punjab;
2. *Sri Kesgarh Sahib*, at Anand Pur Sahib, Punjab;
3. *Sri Patna Sahib*, at Patna Sahib, Bihar;
4. *Sri Hazoor Sahib*, at Nanderh, Maharashtra;
5. *Sri Damdama Sahib*, at Guru ki Kashi, Bathinda, Punjab.

The construction of *Akaal Takhat* was started on July 9, 1609. Gur Bilas Patshahi Chhevin gives the following description:

In the month of Asarh (Bikrami calendar), on Panchmi (fifth Lunar day) Guru Har Gobind started a great project. Along with Bhai Gurdas and Baba Buddha Ji, he began the construction of the *takhat*. After Ardaas (supplication) and distribution of Prasaad (blessed sacramental pudding) the foundation stone was laid by the Guru himself, making it (Amritsar) an eternal city.

Special care was taken that during its construction no paid mason, carpenter or labour was allowed to help in this project. Construction of the entire building was carried out by the Guru himself with the help of Bhai Gurdas and Baba Buddha (and devoted Sikhs).

* Historically there were four *Takhats*, the *Akaal Takhat*, *Takhat Sri Patna Sahib*, *Sri Kes Garh Sahib* (Anandpur) and *Takhat Sri Hazoor Sahib* (Nanderh). The fifth *Takhat*, *Damdama Sahib* was established in the sixties.

The dome of Akaal Takhat is upright while that of the Golden temple is relatively flat. The former is symbolic of valour while the latter signifies humility.

According to *Sikh Rehit Maryada* (the Sikh code of conduct) the highest office for appeals for Sikh affairs is *Akaal Takhat*. Every entity needs a goad to control it and keep discipline (e.g. an elephant is kept under control by a goad). Similarly, *Akaal Takhat's* respect and fear acts as a goad over all the Sikh Nation. One must remember that the tighter the discipline and control over the Panth, the stronger will it be to stand firmly on its feet.

To question as to who is the person issuing commandments from *Akaal Takhat* is self-directedness and egoistic*. The worldly rulers have their courts of justice to administer law and order and it does not matter who the judge is. Because it is the ruler in whose name the justice is administered. Similarly, the Jathedar of *Akaal Takhat* administers justice in the name of the Guru. On the stamp of *Akaal Takhat* the words embossed are: "Akaal Sahaae Khalsa Ji" (may God help the Khalsa).

It is written in "*Prachin Panth Prakash*" that when the Sikhs used to come to Amritsar on Diwali and /or Baisakhi, they would sit first in the Hari Mandir, absorbed in the Divine knowledge, concentrate on Guru's word. Then they would sit at *Akaal Takhat* and pass the Gurmattas. They would decide on punishment to the enemies and help to the needy. The following used to be the Ardaas (supplication) at *Akaal Takhat* twice a day (morning and evening): May God bless the whole world and may the Panth

* *The appointment of the Jathedar of Akaal Takhat by the president of Shromini Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), which is an organization under the control of the Government of India, has resulted in objections by many Sikh organizations. This has recently happened because of indiscriminate appointments and dismissals of several Jathedars whose appointments were because of political reasons rather than their qualifications.*

stay ever in God's favour.

Q. 24. Name the sacred towns founded by our Gurus.

Ans. If the Mughal emperors are known for their passion for founding new cities and constructing famous buildings, then our Gurus' contribution in building new cities is in no way less than that of the Mughal emperors. The following towns/cities were founded by our Gurus:

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| 1. Kartar Pur (Raavi-now in Pakistan) | Guru Nanak Dev Ji |
| 2. Khadoor Sahib (District Amritsar) | Guru Angad Dev Ji |
| 3. Goindwal Sahib (District Amritsar) | Guru Amar Das Ji |
| 4. Amritsar | Guru Ram Das Ji |
| 5. Taran Taaran, Chheharta and
Kartar Pur (District Jalandhar) | Guru Arjan Dev Ji |
| 6. Har Gobind Pur, Mehraj and Kirat Pur | Guru Har Gobind Ji |
| 7. Kirat Pur Sahib Garden and Zoo | Guru Hari Rae Ji |
| 8. Anand Pur Sahib | Guru Tegh Bahadur |
| 9. Anandpur Sahib's Forts, Paonta Sahib and
Damdama Sahib (Guru ki Kashi) | Guru Gobind Singh Ji |

Generally, the life in cities is considered full of hazards. Everything is impure. Even air and water are polluted. Jealousy and envy in every walk of life run rampant. A trader wants to get better of the shopkeeper who, in turn, wants to beguile the customer. The tax collector of the state is after everyone. There is a spiritual chaos. In such poisonous atmosphere the significance of the ambrosial hour of the morning is non-existent.

Our Gurus built cities with a protective fence of truthful and honest living; where thievery and cutthroat business of normal cities would not exist. The environment would be clean, where no one would spread the poison of deception and where lender and borrower would be treated equally. No tax would be

levied for difference in religious beliefs.

ਸਾਂਤਿ ਸਹਜ ਸੁਖ ਕੇ ਸਭਿ ਹਾਟ ॥ ਸਾਹ ਵਾਪਾਰੀ ਏਕੈ ਬਾਟ ॥ ੪ ॥

ਜੇਜੀਆ ਭੰਨੁ ਕੋ ਲਏ ਨ ਜਗਾਤਿ ॥ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਦੀਨੀ ਧੁਰ ਕੀ ਛਾਪ ॥ ੫ ॥

SGGS, P. 430.

"All the shops ooze of peace and tranquillity, borrowers and lenders are treated equally.

There is no religious tax, the true Guru has put his divine stamp (on these rules)".*

They founded cities on the banks of rivers, surrounded by sparkling pools and gardens. No landowner was forcibly ejected or routed in building of these cities.

Q. 25. Name the five sacred lakes (pools) in Amritsar and describe their significance.

Ans. The five sacred pools in the city of Amritsar are:

1. Amritsar (Amrit Sarovar)
2. Kaulsar
3. Santokhsar
4. Bibeksar
5. Ramsar.

According to the old tradition among Sikhs it was essential to take a bath at Kaulsar before taking a dip at Amritsar; though some devotees took a bath at all the other sacred pools before coming to the Amrit sarovar.

The spiritual significance of these pools is:

Ramsar: Keep the Name of God (always) in your mind.

Kaulsar: Stay in a state of happiness while living in this world, full of worries, like a lotus flower that blossoms even while

** All this was true during the time of Gurus. With time moral degradation has set in and these towns/cities are no different from any other city.*

located in muddy water.

Santokhsar: Stay contented in whatever God has given to you. Forsake avarice.

Bibeksar: Lead a disciplined life.

Amritsar: Those who take a dip in Amritsar (the pool of Ambrosia) discard their problems and maladies.

Q. 26. Name the forts at Anand Pur (constructed by the tenth Master) and give their significance.

Ans. The forts constructed by Guru Gobind Singh in and around Anand Pur are as follows:

1. Nirmoh Garh
2. Loh Garh
3. Hol Garh (the literal meaning of 'hola' is invasion)
4. Fateh Garh
5. Kes Garh (signifies unity)
6. Anand Garh.

The tenth Master got these forts constructed in order to maintain peace and tranquillity in the city, so no one could disturb this peace.

To attain the state of peace and tranquillity one must first forsake worldly attachments. (*Nirmoh Garh*)

Secondly, one must stay under the protection of all steel (*Loh Garh*) (be prepared to defend oneself if needed).

Then, one should develop wisdom to judge when and from where the enemy is going to attack (*Hol Garh*).

Also, one must have firm belief that he/she is going to be victorious (*Fateh Garh*) in all battles (physical, psychological and spiritual).

One must not let any cracks appear in unity (*Kes Garh*).

Last and most importantly, the fort of bliss (*Anand Garh*) must be kept strong.

Metaphorically, these six stages lead one to the realm of bliss or mental peace and tranquillity. In other words one should take the refuge of God, lead a life of peace, remain in high spirits, be sweet and sensitive and always take the guidance of Guru's Shabad.

Q. 27. Describe the daily routine of Guru Hari Rae (the seventh Master).

Ans. Guru Hari Rae made the daily routine of his life such that by following it (like a beacon) a Sikh could make his life's journey easy and comfortable.

He would get up by the end of the third quarter of night. Then he would take a bath with generous supply of water (one hundred buckets, according to Mehma Prakash, story 2).

By nature he was always alert. After putting on his clothes he would sit for meditation on "Shabad". This would continue until dawn when he would put on new attire and come to the congregation. He would always wear light (comfortable) clothes. Reaching the congregation, first he would read from Guru Granth Sahib and recite it to the congregation. After this the bards were asked to sing "*Aasa di Vaar*". At the conclusion the congregation was urged to form two groups and sing the hymns in turns. Then the hymn of Guru Nanak, "*Gagan meh thaal Ravi Chand Deepak banay*" was sung. The services were concluded by saying a supplication (Ardaas), in which he himself would lead. He started the tradition of supplication while standing. He would then proceed to "Langar" (the community kitchen) along with the congregation. With great humility and respect he would first serve the food to the congregation (he said they were the holy people) and then eat himself. Serving of meat was stopped during his

time. He would then retire to his living quarters to take rest for a while. Then he would go for a ride and hunt*. However, his hunting did not involve killing but only to capture. Many wounded and sick animals were thus captured and after proper treatment, were kept in the sanctuary where they moved freely.

In the evening he would lead discourses on history and Gurbani. Many highly learned people would come to listen to him and raise their souls to higher spiritual levels through his elixir words of divine knowledge. Then he would go to the garden for a walk while Kirtan by renowned hymn-singers continued in the congregational hall. On returning from walk he would go to the hospital and dispensary, then for horse riding and some time watch wrestling and riding. He would gather young children and teach them Gurbani as well as martial arts like archery in which he himself would participate. He was a superb archer who could pierce a hard plate made of an alloy of eight metals. Thereafter he would go to the sanctuary to nurse the sick and wounded animals and birds. In the evening, at the time of the prayer of "sodar" he would go again to the congregation hall. The evening prayer session continued towards the end of first quarter of night. After this he would go to the "langar" for dinner. Following the dinner the recitation of "sohila"*** took place and then he would go to bed.

Such was the daily routine of the seventh Master whenever he was at Kiratpur.

* The word "shikar" meaning hunt used by Prof. Satbir Singh is rather misleading. Guru Hari Rae's one most important principle in life was not to hurt any being – not even a flower by plucking it from its branch. He would ride daily in the forest in search of any sick or wounded animal. Finding one he would bring it to his sanctuary, treat and nurse it and as soon as it was fit, would let it loose back in the forest.

** Also popularly known as Kirtan Sohila.

Q. 28. What do you know about the children of the Gurus?

Ans. The first Master, Guru Nanak Dev had two sons, Baba Siri Chand and Baba Lakhmi Chand.

Guru Angad Dev had two sons, Baba Dasu and Baba Datu. Also he had two daughters, Bibi Amro and Bibi Anokhi.

Guru Amar Das had two sons, Baba Mohan and Baba Mohri. Also he had two daughters, Bibi Dani and Bibi Bhani.

Guru Ram Das had three sons, Baba Prithi Chand, Baba Maha Dev and Guru Arjan Dev.

Guru Arjan Dev had one son, Guru Har Gobind.

Guru Har Gobind had five sons, Baba Gurditta, Baba Sooraj Mal, Baba Ani Rae, Baba Atal Rae and Guru Tegh Bahadur. He also had one daughter, Bibi Veero.

Guru Hari Rae had two sons, Baba Ram Rae and Guru Hari Krishan. He also had an adopted daughter, Bibi Anoop Kaur.

Guru Hari Krishan was only eight years old when he left this world.

Guru Tegh Bahadur had one son, Guru Gobind Singh.

Guru Gobind Singh had four sons (Sahibzadas), Baba Ajit Singh, Baba Jujhar Singh, Baba Zoravar Singh and Baba Fateh Singh.

Q. 29. Whom do we call a Singh* ?

Ans. For those, who have taken “Khande di Pahul” (undergone

* The literal meaning of the word ‘Singh’ is lion. A lion is considered to be the king of the jungle – is fearless. Guru Gobind Singh enjoined that every Sikh should use ‘Singh’ at the end of his name. The purpose was to remove the caste prejudices and also to give a boost to the psyche of the Sikhs that now they were fearless like a lion.

the 'Amrit' ceremony of the double-edged dagger), are called Khalsa, and the followers of Guru Nanak. In order to understand the difference between a Sikh and a Singh, it will be advantageous to read the dialogue that took place between Lord Budha and his disciple, Ananda.

Question (by Ananda): Who is the one that keeps walking difficult and thorny paths successfully, thus completing his journey?

Answer (by Lord Budha): That is a Sikh (a disciple).

Question: Who is a Singh?

Answer: A Singh, like a lion, coming out of his den, first stretches, then shakes his body (to cast off laziness), looks around, raising its ears to listen any sounds. It then roars (to announce itself) and at the first opportunity jumps into the arena of battle.

Similarly, a Sikh covers his journey (of life), subdues lust and anger. Thus reaching the abode of truth he becomes a Singh. A Singh ignores the love, fear and worry of his/her body (physical existence) and rises above it (to the realm of spirit). He snaps the ties of worldly achievements, heeds the call of oppressed and needy and is always ready to struggle for their uplift.

A Singh is one who has completely forsaken his ego. Such a person has no unique name any more (he has merged in truth or God). The tenth Master used to say that Singh is the name of the spiritual Divine Knowledge. To associate the name "Singh" with only physical bravery is deficient thinking.

Bhai Gurdas Singh (a contemporary of Guru Gobind Singh) has beautifully said the following about "Singh":

A Singh is one who believes in the sanctity of the hair. One who does not know the sanctity of hair is incomplete. He fights with sword and dagger and with spear he wrecks

havoc among his enemies. He does not believe in differences of colour and creed and shatters the rituals and meaningless traditions into bits and pieces. He does not bow to the authority of Turks or Pathans. Such a Singh is symbolically, God's own brilliant light.

Q. 30. Who do we call a Khalsa?

Ans. In the "*Lughat-I-kashori*" (Arabic dictionary) the term "Khalsa" has been defined as: that royal land which is not the property of any one else. The tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh, made the Sikhs the Khalsa, which means that they belong only to *Akaal Purakh* (God Almighty). In other words there is no intermediary between Khalsa and God.

Guru Gobind Singh himself, while praising Khalsa, has said:

"When the light of Akaal Purakh lights up within, only then Khalsa is considered a real Khalsa".

Bhai Santokh Singh (the author of 'Gur Partap Sooraj') has taken the letters (of Persian Alphabet) that spell the word 'Khalsa' and elicited the meaning: Khalsa is one in whom the worldly life discipline and spiritual life discipline have merged together. Such a complete person is called Khalsa.

When one takes the spelling of Khalsa in Persian alphabet, the meanings that come out are: Waheguru is in constant contact with His Singh; both can communicate with each other whenever they wish to, as if a hot line is established between them. A contact is made whenever thoughts are raised to a higher plane.

Khalsa always stays within the Will of Waheguru. In turn, Waheguru bestows upon Khalsa independence and full capacity and ability to work for the welfare for all. In other words when Waheguru wants to reveal Himself, He sends a Khalsa there (as

His personification).

This is why in his book, "Sikh Religion", Pincott has written, " In the Punjab such proud and fearless persons were born to protect democracy, who feared only God and who destroyed the age old inhuman shackles of casteism and racism. Who swore before God that for them all human beings were equal (the commonwealth of the whole humanity is same). Such adorned Khalsa did not care for man-made divisions of society. They only know that all human beings have equal standing in the brotherhood of humanity. All this is the essence of Guru Nanak's teachings".

David Ross wrote that he had never seen a more handsome personality than that of Khalsa.

Cunningham wrote: " Khalsa possesses high thinking, has oneness with God, a chivalrous personality full of ambrosia of life".

How impressive was Khalsa could be estimated from the story that when the Afghans saw Sardar Sham Singh Attariwala, they exclaimed, "It seems as if Allah Himself has also taken Amrit (and become Khalsa)".

Q. 31. What is the correct meaning of the term "Panth"?

Ans. No word synonymous to "Panth" exists either in a Hindu dictionary or a Muslim Encyclopedia or in any other dictionary.

The Hindu thought has been confined to sects and denominations while Muslims have not been able to go beyond their restricted and exclusionary brotherhood (Millat). The white men, on the other hand cannot think anything beyond their (superior) race.

Panth includes those who have moulded their life according to the directions of the Gurús and are always ready to sacrifice self for these ideals. They have neither prejudices of sects and

denominations nor fundamentalist fanaticism of Islam nor arrogance of race. Only through forsaking the arrogance of profession, lofty claims of superior actions, race, religion, communal afflictions that one can become a part of the "Panth".

When Balwand and Satta wrote in their Vaar in the Raag Raamkali (SGGS, P. 967)

ਦਰੁ ਸੇਵੇ ਉਮਤਿ ਖੜੀ

which means, the followers are waiting at the door of the Guru for service, they meant that the Sikhs came to the door of the Guru with no thought other than that of the service. The second part of this sentence,

ਮਸਕਲੈ ਹੋਇ ਜੰਗਾਲੀ ॥

further clarifies the idea, as the meaning of this part is 'cleansed mind', i.e., free from any thought that may render the mind dirty.

Cunningham writes, "When the divine light of the ten Gurus shines in a Sikh, he is Panth".

Guru Nanak in Japu Ji says,

ਮੰਨੈ ਮਗੁ ਨ ਚਲੈ ਪੰਥੁ ॥

(SGGS, P. 3)

Which also means that a Sikh forsaking the fear of death, freely walks on the divine (imperial) highway". In other words he/she does not follow the paths of doubt, illusions and misconceptions but follows the path of truth.

ਧਰਮ ਰਾਇ ਤਿਨ ਕਾ ਮਿਤ੍ਰੁ ਹੈ ਜਮ ਮਗਿ ਨ ਪਾਵੈ ॥

(SGGS, P. 1091)

Which means: Dharam Raja is their friend; they do not go on the path of Yama.

Guru Nanak Dev had revealed this Panth and all subsequent Gurus prepared the Sikhs to follow this royal path. We should remember the following words of Guru Arjan Dev

quoted in “Mehma Prakash”:

Having realized that the Panth was revealed (to Guru Nanak) in this world, Guru Arjan Dev compiled the *Adi Granth* (to show the true way).

When on going through the Amrit ceremony (Sikh baptismal ceremony) the Sikhs accept Guru Gobind Singh as their father, Mata Sahib Kaur as their mother and Anand Pur as their abode, they become members of a family, rather than a race, sect, tribe or clan.

Panth is not the subject of a worldly king or emperor. It is sovereign and shall keep on the struggle for sovereignty. It has been, right from the beginning, struggling against the unjust and ruthless rulers (Prachin Panth Prakash).

Q. 32. What is a “Rehit Naama” (the Sikh Code of Conduct), and which one is accepted by the Panth?

Ans. Observing the discipline of principles of Sikhism and leading ones life according to these principles is called “the Rehit Maryada”. It can also be called the collective personality of the Panth. No individual has the right to attempt to corrupt (or desecrate) this personality of the Panth.

The accepted Rehit Maryada today is the one issued by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), the elected representative body of the Panth, with its head office in Amritsar. The title of this booklet is, “Sikh Rehit Maryada”. All Rehit Naamas available today, were written, from time to time, by devoted Sikh individuals, according to their knowledge, their capacity and ability to rationalize the historical directives of the Guru, and their devotion and beliefs. Such Rehit Naamas are said to be 37 in number.

It was feared that because of so many Rehit Naamas, Sikhs

might get divided into splinter groups and follow individual paths according to these Rehit Naamas. Therefore a single Rehit Maryada was prepared (with the consent of various Sikh intellectuals belonging to different groups).

This *Rehit Maryada* is divided into two parts. One part concerns individual Rehit (code of conduct) and the second part concerns the *Panthic* (community) *Rehit*. The individual code of conduct is further divided into three sections:

1. Practice of Lord's Name and Gurbani (utterances from Guru Granth Sahib).
2. Ethical behaviour according to Guru's directions.
3. Self-less service.

The Panthic Rehit has five sections:

1. Guru Panth (Community as embodiment of the Guru).
2. Amrit ceremony (Khalsa baptism)
3. Procedures for punishment to those who violate the Sikh tenets.
4. Procedures for taking collective Panthic decisions (*Gurmattas*).
5. Appeal against the decisions taken by local Sikh bodies.

The practice of Lord's Name (recitation of *Naam*) has the following sub-sections:

- A) Ambrosial morning time (for meditation).
- B) Daily prayers (the five Sikh prayers – Nit Nem).
- C) Supplication before Akaal Purakh (Ardaas).
- D) Holy Congregation (*Saadh Sangat*).
- E) Discourses on Hymns from Guru Granth Sahib.
- F) Sermons.
- G) Programs of Congregation.

Each section has its prescribed rules; one for the ambrosial

early morning hour; one for daily prayers and three for supplication (in this section the procedures for Ardaas are described).

The sub-section of holy congregation (*Saadh Sangat*) has rules under the following titles:

Gurdwara has nineteen rules.

Kirtan has four rules.

Vaak (random reading of a hymn from Guru Granth Sahib) has five rules.

Simple reading of complete Guru Granth Sahib (*sehj paath*) has one rule.

How to begin and conclude *Akhand Paath* (non-stop reading of Guru Granth Sahib) has two rules.

How to prepare and distribute *Karhah Prasaad* (sacramental pudding) has four rules.

Gurbaani discourses have three rules.

Sermon has one rule.

Agenda and program in the Gurdwara has one rule.

There are five sub-sections under 'ethical behaviour according to Guru's directions':

- a) *Gurmatt* (Guru's advice).
- b) Rites of birth and naming the baby.
- c) Rites of marriage (*Anand Kaaraj*).
- d) Rites of death.
- e) Any other rites.

Guru's advice has twenty rules.

Rites of birth and naming the baby, has three rules.

Rites of marriage, has seventeen rules.

Rites of death, has seven rules.

Other rites, has one rule.

The selfless service has three sub-sections:

- a) Management of Gurdwara.
- b) Community Kitchen.
- c) Rules of how to sit in the “Langar hall” (common refractory).

In the community ethical behaviour section, the section of *Guru Panth* has two rules.

Amrit (baptismal) ceremony has twenty rules.

Punishment for violating the Sikh tenets has three rules.

Collective decision-making (*Gurmata*) has two rules.

Appeal against local decisions has one rule.

Q. 33. What is the meaning of “Rehit” and “Kuraihit”?

Ans. *Rehit*, as described in the previous section (32), is to lead ones life according to the Guru’s prescribed code of conduct. To ignore or violate any of its tenets is *Kuraihit*. In addition, there are some specific taboos that may be called major *Kuraihits*.

There are four *Kuraihits* or taboos and five *Rehits*.

***KURAIHITS* (TABOOS):**

1. Violating the sanctity of hair.
2. Eating meat prepared by slow killing of an animal.
3. Infidelity to ones spouse.
4. Usage of tobacco.

In case any one of these (*Kuraihits*) has been committed, one will have to undergo the *Amrit* (baptismal) ceremony again. Committing inadvertently any one of these acts does not carry a punishment, but to go through the *Amrit* ceremony is a must.

REHITS:

1. To maintain the sanctity of hair or ‘*kesh*’.

2. To keep a kirpan or ceremonial sword (no specification on length).
3. To keep a *kangha* (comb).
4. To wear a *kachhehra* (knee-high breeches), made of any fabric.
5. To wear a *karha* (steel bracelet).

In his '*hukam naama*', sent to the congregation of Kabul on May 25, 1699 (almost two months after the birth of Khalsa on the Baisakhi day that year), Guru Gobind Singh enjoined, "Take the Amrit of Khanda (the double-edged sword) from five (baptized) Amritdhaari Sikhs. Keep your hair uncut; it is my stamp. Do not put aside Kirpan (sword) and Kachhehra (breeches). Always wear steel bracelet on your arm. Comb your hair twice a day (with a *Kangha*). Do not eat '*kutha*' (meat prepared by slow-killing of an animal, as Muslims do). Never use tobacco. Do not indulge in sex with any one other than your spouse.

Do not have relations with those who commit infanticide of their daughters. Have no dealings with sacrilegious sects like Meenas, Masands, Ram Raias, Dheer Maleeas* etc. Read Granth Sahib, recite Waheguru and abide by the directions of the Guru.

These commandments were framed to give the Sikhs a complete personality (of saint soldier) and give the Panth a distinct entity.

Hair is considered to be the ultimate essence of beauty and spirituality. Research carried out at California's university at San Jose concludes that a person who keeps the sanctity of hair is generous, mature, handsome, masculine, courageous, self-confident, liberal, non-conformist and industrious.

Eating of '*kutha*' flesh was described by Guru Nanak, in Aasa-di-Vaar, as a sign of slavery (to the Muslim rulers).

* *These are schismatic sects.*

ਅਭਾਖਿਆ ਕਾ ਕੁਠਾ ਬਕਰਾ ਖਾਣਾ ॥

(SGGS, P. 472)

By enjoining the Sikh congregation not to eat this type of flesh, Guru Gobind Singh got us freedom from this slavery. In Amar Naama, the tenth Master explicitly commands not to kill an animal by slow or gradual bleeding process.

The third commandment of fidelity to ones spouse was to elevate the ethical level of the Panth. It was commonly said that everything was fair in war. However, Guru Gobind Singh made the Sikh a model of high moral character. In case a woman was captured in a battle, she was to be treated with the same respect that one would give to ones mother or sister.

The use of tobacco was strictly prohibited because it attacks both the body as well as the soul. The world health organization has declared it a 'Hydra Headed Monster' whose head must be crushed. Gandhi (Mohan Das, K.) declared it as the most unclean, unhygienic, socially as well as morally indefensible substance.

Recent studies are indicating that nicotine in cigarette smoke may cause a deficiency in a person's ability to learn and remember. It is the enemy of tolerance. Continued smoking may cause subtle changes in the neurological functions that may play part in the reduction of ones capacity to tolerate.

Thus, the hair symbolizes devotion, self-sacrifice and benevolence. Hair is the visible symbol of a Sikh's commitment to life.

Kangha signifies orderliness and cleanliness.

Kirpan symbolizes power with honour.

Karha signifies resolve with a purpose.

Kachhehra symbolizes decency, morality and purity.

Q. 34. Describe the great significance of “Amrit*” and describe how it is administered.

Ans. For ages, the gods, human beings and sages had been in search of the Amrit, says Guru Amar Das:

“ਸੁਰਿ ਨਰ ਮੁਨਿ ਜਨ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਖੋਜਦੇ”

(SGGS, P 918)

The Sikh is fortunate that the Guru not only administered the Amrit to him but also told him the procedure to prepare it. Furthermore, the Guru not only enjoined (the Sikh) to take the Amrit from five beloved ones but he himself took it from them, thus emphasizing its necessity.

Guru Gobind Singh was a perfect divine being, master of all faculties. But when he himself, kneeling on one knee (in the posture of a warrior), took Amrit (from the five beloved ones), that should have put an end to today’s discussion regarding the need or importance of (taking) Amrit. The Amrit for which the divine emperor Guru Gobind Singh himself expressed such keen desire, leaves very little for insignificant mortals like us to question its importance?

In Gur Bilas Patshahi 10 of Bhai Koer Singh it is stated that Guru Gobind Singh got down from his throne and with folded hands requested the five beloved ones to bestow the divine gift of Amrit upon him and thereby include him also in the Khalsa brotherhood. From that moment on there was to be no difference between Jat and non-Jat, high and low (in social status), and teacher and disciple. On hearing these words of the tenth Master all became quiet but one of the beloved ones asked, “O true king, how could we do that?” The Guru replied, “Be alert and administer the Amrit to me just as you have been administered

* Various authors have translated the term ‘Amrit’ as nectar, elixer, ambrosia etc. However, none of these terms is an exact equivalent to what this term is used for in Guru Granth Sahib.

by your Guru”.

Never say, “Amrit was administered by such and such group or such and such person”. Waheguru (God) Himself resides in the five beloved ones. The directive to the Sikh is:

The true Guru has administered the Amrit. I do not know anyone else.

ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਪੀਆ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਦੀਆ॥ ਅਵਗੁ ਨ ਜਾਣਾ ਦੁਆ ਤੀਆ॥

(SGGS, P. 1033)

The procedure for administering Amrit is as follows:

A relatively quiet place should be selected where everyone cannot walk by. In the presence of (at least) six Amritdhaari Sikhs (those who have been initiated to Khalsa brotherhood by going through Amrit ceremony), Guru Granth Sahib should be installed. One of these six Sikhs should sit behind Guru Granth Sahib. The remaining five are to administer the Amrit. These may include female members of Khalsa brotherhood also. All should have washed their hair. None of them should be handicapped or be inflicted with any disease. None of them should have undergone any punishment for violating the Khalsa code. Every male or female, irrespective of caste, race, colour or creed has a right to administration of Amrit. It is, however, necessary that he/she is capable of making such a conscious decision.

All the recipients of Amrit should also have washed their hair and be wearing the five K's (*kesh*, *kangha*, *karha*, *kachhehra* and *kirpan* with sash). They should not have upon them any symbol of any other religion. It is necessary that those who had once taken Amrit but violated by committing any cardinal sins and want to take it again be separated from the group that is taking Amrit for the first time. The beloved ones (officiants)

should pronounce the punishments (*tankhaah*) levied on them in the congregation (if present).

Those aspiring to take Amrit should first be told the principles and tenets of Sikhism. Then they should be asked if they are accepting Sikhism of their own free will. Upon receiving the answer in affirmative one of the five beloved ones should lead in a supplication for preparation of Amrit. At the conclusion of the supplication the commandment from Guru Granth Sahib should be read. Now the five should approach the vessel (*bata*) to be used for preparation of Amrit. This vessel should be made of steel and be placed on a stool or a clean seat. Clean water and sugar drops (*patashas*) should be added to the vessel and the five should sit around it in a warrior posture (with right knee on the ground while the weight of the whole body on the upper portion of right foot and left knee pointing upwards).

The following five prayers should then be recited at the same time stirring the sugar solution in the vessel with a double-edged sword (*khanda*):

1. Japu Ji.
2. Jaap Sahib.
3. Ten (*sudha*) sawaiyye.
4. Bainti Chaupai (*hamri karo haath de rachha*——).
5. Anand Sahib (six stanzas—the first five and the last one).

The person reciting the prayer should have his/her left hand on the vessel and stir the Amrit with the double-edged sword with the right hand. All the remaining beloved ones should have both their hands on the vessel. While reciting the prayer the minds should be focused on the prayer and eyes on Amrit.

Upon completion of the prayers another supplication (*Ardaas*) should be offered. Care should be taken that no one joins

the group of original aspirants of Amrit in the middle of the ceremony. Following the supplication every aspirant be made to sit in the warrior posture, placing right hand on his/her left hand. One of the five beloved ones should then give five palm-full of Amrit to drink to each aspirant. On administering each palm-full the beloved one utters (loudly), "Waheguru Ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji ki Fateh", the Amrit receiver then repeats (loudly), "Waheguru Ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji ki Fateh".

Then Amrit is sprinkled five times in the recipient's hair and each time the same routine of "Waheguru Ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji ki Fateh" is to be repeated.

Whatever Amrit is left is to be consumed by the recipients from the same vessel. Now the five beloved ones together pronounce, "Waheguru Ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji ki Fateh" and then recite the "Mool Mantra" (*Ik Oankaar, Satt Naam, Karta Purakh, Nirbhau, Nirvair, Akaal Moorat, Ajooni, Saibhang, Gur Prasaad*) and have it memorized by the recipients. One of the five then narrates the Sikh Rehit (Code of ethics) and pronounces:

"The recipients are now reborn and have joined the Khalsa brotherhood. Their spiritual father is Guru Gobind Singh and mother Mata Sahib Kaur. Their (spiritual) birthplace is Keshgarh Sahib and they are natives of Anand Pur Sahib. Thus, being the sons/daughters of the same (spiritual) parents they are all siblings. They have now become pure persons having renounced their prior race, caste, religion, tribe etc. They are not supposed to worship any god, goddess, prophet or avtaar except Almighty God and not to consider anyone except the ten Gurus and their divine word (Guru Granth Sahib) as the emancipator. It is necessary to learn Gurmukhi (if they already do not know) and recite the prescribed prayers daily".

“In the morning recite *Japu Ji*, *Jaap Sahib* and *Sawaiyye*; in the evening recite *Rehraas* and before going to bed recite *Sohila*. Either read yourself or listen when someone else is reading from Guru Granth Sahib. Stay away from the company of apostates and those who smoke. Always stay ready for the service of Gurdwaras and the Panth. Give tithe (one tenth of your honest earnings) in charities and carry out all chores according to the directions of the Guru (Sikh code of conduct). Stay united as a member of the Khalsa brotherhood. If any of the Sikh tenets has been (advertently or inadvertently) violated, present yourself to the Khalsa congregation, request for and accept the punishment and be careful in future.

The following deserve punishment:

Those who keep company of schismatic sects like Meenas, Masands, Dhirmalyas, Ram Raiyas and other enemies of the Panth; who smoke tobacco, commit infanticide (of daughters), eat out of the same plate as a non-Khalsa, dye their hair, accept or give dowry in the marriage of their sons and daughters, do any intoxicants (marijuana, opium, cocaine, heroin, alcohol etc.), perform any rites that are contradictory to the Guru's directions, violate any Khalsa code.

After this sermon a supplication is said and commandment (*vaak*) from Guru Granth Sahib is read. If any one of the recipients had his/her name chosen in a way other than the Sikh procedure, he/she should now have the new name picked. Karhah Prasaad (blessed sweet pudding) is then served and all recipients eat it from the same utensil.

Q. 35. What were the principles followed by the Gurus in transferring of Guruship? Describe the

relationships between successive Gurus.

Ans. Explaining the responsibilities and principles associated with the Guruship, Guru Nanak Dev said:

“This is a demand note from God which has to be paid off by the devotee; and such a devotee, as I can see, is Bhai Lehna”.

Guruship is not an instrument of luxury or worldly pleasures. It is a great responsibility that could be fulfilled only by those who did not have the slightest ego in their mind. Passing of Guruship by Guru Nanak to Bhai Lehna was a revolution the like of which has never happened in the history of the world.

In 1688 a glorious revolution took place in England when the royal throne changed hands without spilling a drop of blood. But still the crown remained within blood relatives. William and Mary ascended the throne; Mary was the daughter of the previous king, James I.

Bhai Lehna was not even a distant relative of Guru Nanak. Bhai Gurdas has written that no matter from what angle one looked, the passing of Guruship to Bhai Lehna was a unique and unusual event. It was a novel idea, a glorious revolution and an earth-shaking deed.

First of all, the worldly kings do not give away their kingdoms to anyone while alive; and if at all such an event occurs, it is done only when the king is on the deathbed. But Lehna was installed on the spiritual throne when Guru Nanak himself was still alive.

In the case of worldly kingdoms, as soon as the son would ascend the throne, he would have the army take an oath of allegiance in his name and similarly would have all his subjects declare (under oath) that hereafter they would obey him as their king. All money in circulation (with his father's name on), would

be replaced gradually by that bearing his name. He would establish his control on the treasury and use his seal and proclaim himself the master of all fortune.

But the house of Nanak started a different tradition, a wonderful play. Here neither the path changed nor the goal; neither the rites nor the tradition changed. The one Supreme Being's Name was lauded. The same mint of holy congregation, the same recitation of Bani (utterances of Guru) from the Pothi, the same one name – that of Nanak in all the sacred hymns, the same one spiritual throne of Guruship and the same seal of Truth and true Name which is accepted in God's court.

The other (false) empires are fraught with innumerable problems, internecine fights, thousands of anxieties and millions of enmities. But whosoever came under the refuge of this (spiritual) empire, beheld the sight of and bowed before the Guru, received bliss and equipoise. The closer one looks the more fascinating it seems.

Guru Nanak gave the (selfless) service of responsibility of Guruship to Bhai Lehna even when he had two sons who considered themselves eligible for this responsibility. Guru Angad Dev passed on this responsibility (and service) to Bhai Amar Das even when his sons were there. Guru Amar Das gave the Guruship to his son-in-law, Bhai Jetha, by-passing his sons. Guru Ram Das by-passed his elder sons and gave the Guru's throne to his youngest son, Baba Arjan Dev. Guru Arjan Dev passed this responsibility on to his (only) son, Baba Har Gobind. Guru Har Gobind gave the Guruship to his grandson, Baba Hari Rae while his sons were there. Guru Hari Rae gave the Guruship to his youngest son, Baba Hari Krishan although his elder son, Ram Rae, was there. Guru Hari Krishan gave the responsibility of Guruship to his granduncle, Baba Tegh Bahadur. This clearly indicates that in Sikhism the rule of blood relation, lineage (eldest

son as king), or nepotism was not observed.

The national poet, Maithali Sharan Gupta, in the chapter "*Akaal Purakh Ans*" of his book, "*Bharat Bharati*", has written: "Even though he had his own sons, Guru Nanak presented a model of benevolence/ liberal thinking. The heir to his (spiritual) throne was selected, Bhai Lehna, on the basis of his devotion to the Guru and not on the basis of lineage.

The spiritual emperor, Guru Nanak, was sculpting a pure new social order.

Q. 36. State the names, places of birth and death of the five beloved ones (Piaare).

Ans. The names of the five beloved ones are:

Bhai Daya Singh.

Bhai Dharam Singh.

Bhai Himmat Singh.

Bhai Mohkam Singh.

Bhai Sahib Singh.

Bhai Daya Singh was born in 1669 at Lahore (now in Pakistan), to mother, Dayali and father, Bhai Sudhay. He was 30 years old when at the Baisakhi day of 1699 he came out and offered his head to Guru Gobind Singh. He passed away on the shore of river Godavari at Abchal Nagar (Nanderh). He was the leader of the five beloved ones. He stayed with Guru Gobind Singh all through the time of difficulty after leaving Anand Pur.

Bhai Dharam Singh was born at Hastina Pur (near Delhi) to mother, Sahbo, and father, Bhai Sant Ram, in 1666. He joined Bhai Vishnu Dev who was the disciple of Bhai Gahria, at Nanak Piao. He was 33 years old when he offered his head to the tenth Master. He also stayed with the Guru all through the travels from Anand Pur to Abchal Nagar where he passed away.

Bhai Himmat Singh was born at Jagan Nath Puri (Orissa) to mother, Dhanno, and father, Bhai Gulzari in 1661. He was 38 years old when he offered his head. He attained martyrdom in 1704 in the battle of Chamkaur.

Bhai Mohkam Singh was born at Dwarka (Saurashtra, Gujrat) to mother, Devan Bai, and father, Bhai Tirath Chand in 1663. He was 36 years old when he offered his head. His martyrdom also occurred at the battle of Chamkaur in 1704.

Bhai Sahib Singh was born at Bidar (Andhara Pradesh) to mother, Sona Bai, and father, Bhai Chamna in 1662. He offered his head when he was 37 years old. He was also martyred in the battle at Chamkaur in 1704.

Emphasizing the significance of the five beloved ones the tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh said:

“God Himself is present (and speaks) where the five are present”.

“Do not forget that where ‘Daya’ (compassion), Dharam (religious duty), Himmat (courage), Mohkam (steadfastness) exist, there Sahib (God, the Master) Himself pervades.

From these five beloved ones Guru Gobind Singh himself took Amrit.

Q. 37. State the names and dates of birth of the four sons (Sahibzadas) of Guru Gobind Singh. What were the words of the tenth Master before sending his two elder sons for martyrdom in the battle of Chamkaur? What did the two younger sons say to holy mother Gujari (their grand mother) before leaving for their martyrdom?

Ans. The names of the four Sahibzadas (sons) of Guru Gobind Singh are:

Baba Ajit Singh, Baba Jujhar Singh, Baba Zoravar Singh and Baba Fateh Singh.

Baba Ajit Singh was born on April 16, 1685, at Paonta Sahib and was martyred in the battle at Chamkaur on December 22, 1704.

Baba Jujhar Singh was born at Anand Pur Sahib in 1690 and was also martyred in the battle at Chamkaur on December 22, 1704.

Before sending them to the battle-field Guru Gobind Singh (the father) said: "My dear sons, you came to this world to destroy the tyrant (Mughals); to fight in the battle with the intention to sacrifice your head, so that these invaders would run in defeat. So there is no better time than this for both of you to go and fight in the battle. (*Gur Sobha*)"

Upon hearing this, Baba Ajit Singh said an Ardaas (supplication) and said: "Father, now behold the spectacle of the battle. (*Gur Bilas Patshahi 10*)". When the younger son, Jujhar Singh, also requested for permission to go and fight unto death in the battle along with his elder brother, Guru Gobind Singh asked him to wait a bit. He kissed his son, sprinkled saffron and said: "Go, achieve fame in this world and bliss in the next world.

When the companion Singhs asked the tenth Master, after the martyrdom of his two older sons, as to how he felt? His answer was: "Today the Khalsa has become special in the court of the Lord" (Sainapati).

Baba Zoravar Singh was born on July 27, 1694, at Anand Pur Sahib and was martyred by having been entombed alive at Sirhind on December 27, 1704.

Baba Fateh Singh was born on April 30, 1699, at Anand Pur Sahib and was martyred along with his elder brother at Sirhind on December 27, 1704.

Before their martyrdom, while they were being taken to the court of the governor of Sirhind, they said to their grandmother, holy Mata Gujari: "O mother, it will be our good fortune if our bodies are sacrificed for the sake of our Dharma".

On being presented in the court, they had proclaimed: "In our family the tradition is to sacrifice ones life rather that to forsake ones Dharma".

On being told to bow before the governor, the young braves said, "We bow only to the true emperor (God) and no one else".

On hearing the verdict of death by getting entombed alive, they said, "We will never renounce our religion and become Muslim. We will sacrifice our head just as our forefathers have done in the past".

When the tenth Master heard of the martyrdom of his younger sons, he said, "now this (Mughal) empire has been uprooted; the ruthless sinners have started killing innocent children".

In Zafar Naama, the tenth Master also wrote to Aurangzeb that his younger sons were killed needlessly.

Q. 38. Who were the forty "Muktas" (the emancipated ones)? What were their names and what blessings were they bestowed upon (by the tenth Master)?

Ans. The forty emancipated ones were those brave Sikh warriors who attained to martyrdom at Mukatsar (earlier known as Dhab of Khidrana) and thus restored their faith* to the Guru.

* *These forty Sikhs belonged to the Majha area of Punjab. When the Mughal army sieged Anand Pur and the besieged Sikhs started starving because of non-*

After having placed all their dead bodies on a funeral pyre, Guru Gobind Singh himself lit it. As long as the pyre kept on burning the Guru stayed there and the singing of hymns (from Guru Granth Sahib) continued.

At that time the tenth Master proclaimed:

“The forty have attained liberation; they are now free from the cycle of death and birth and have achieved the exalted status (of martyrs), a status which cannot be achieved by seers, rulers and yogis”.

The names and the detail of boons that the tenth Master bestowed upon the forty emancipated ones are as follows:

1. First of all Bhai Bhag Singh was given the rank of ‘Panj Hazari’ (commander of five thousand soldiers).

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existence of rations, these Sikhs asked the tenth Master to leave the fort as demanded by the Mughal general who had promised a safe passage to those who left the fort. Guru Gobind Singh told them that the promises of the Mughal general were false and none of us would be safe if we leave the fort. When the forty insisted on leaving, the Guru asked them to give him a letter signed by all declaring, “neither you are our Guru, nor we are your Sikhs”. They all signed such a letter and left for their homes. On reaching home their mothers and wives castigated them for their cowardice and renunciation of their Guru. All of them immediately returned to join the Guru and to beg his pardon. However, by then the Guru had vacated the fort and as he had anticipated the Mughal general had broken his promise and chased the Guru to capture him. When the forty Sikhs heard this they placed themselves between the Mughal army and the Guru in order to give the Guru enough time to escape. A fierce battle ensued in which all forty were martyred. The only Sikh who was mortally wounded but still alive, requested Guru Gobind Singh, who had watched the battle at a distance and came when the Mughal army had retreated, to tear that letter of renunciation. The Guru immediately took the letter out of his pocket and tore it. The Sikh, Bhai Mahan Singh, breathed his last in satisfaction.

2. Bhai Dilbagh Singh, whose dead body was lying nearby, was also given the rank of 'Panj Hazari'.
3. Bhai Maan Singh was declared the Raja of Kashmir.
4. Sardar Nidhan Singh was declared as "Bis Hazari" (commander of twenty thousand troops).
- 5-9. Bhai Gharbara Singh, Bhai Darbara Singh, Bhai Dayal Singh, Bhai Nihal Singh and Khushal Singh were each given the rank of "Tees Hazari" (commander of thirty thousand troops). Bhai Gharbara Singh and Bhai Darbara Singh were the descendents of Baba Mohri, the younger son of Guru Amar Das.
- 10-13. Bhai Ganda Singh, Bhai Sumer Singh, Bhai Singha Singh and Bhai Suchet Singh were each given the title of "Chalees Hazari" (commander of forty thousand forces).
- 14-15. Bhai Chamba Singh was declared the ruler of Lahore and Bhai Ganga Singh, the raja of the port of Soorat.
- 16-17. Bhai Sameer Singh and Bhai Sultan Singh were both given the state of Farukhabad.
- 18-40. Bhai Baiya Singh, "Panjah Hazari" (commander of fifty thousand forces).
 Bhai Massa Singh, ruler of Qandhar.
 Bhai Sarja Singh, Panjah Hazari.
 Bhai Sadhu Singh, ruler of Multan.
 Bhai Gulab Singh and Bhai Harsa Singh, Sava Lakhi (commanders of 1,25,000 troops).
 Bhai Sangat Singh, ruler of Delhi.
 Bhai Hari Singh and Bhai Dhanna Singh, rulers of Mein Doab.
 Bhai Kahan Singh, chief of Sirhind.
 Bhai Kirat Singh got the gift of discriminative wisdom.
 Bhai Lachhman Singh and Bhai Budha Singh, rajas of

the hills.

Bhai Keso Singh and Bhai Jado Singh, rulers of Peshawar.

Bhai Sobha Singh, king of Kabul.

Bhai Joga Singh, ruler of Rome and Syria.

Bhai Bhanga Singh, emperor of Iran.

Bhai Janga Singh, ruler of Kashi.

Bhai Dharam Singh, ruler of Balakh and Bokhara.

Bhai Karam Singh, king of Mecca and Medina.

Bhai Kala Singh, throne of Mughal empire.

Bhai Mahan Singh was declared the greatest Sikh of the Guru.

This is how the tenth Master expressed his intense love for his Sikhs.

Q. 39. Describe our Ardaas (supplication) and its meanings.

Ans. The word 'Ardaas' is derived from the Persian word, Arz-I-Dasht, which means petition. The meaning of Ardaas is much broader and higher than 'prayer'.

Our Ardaas is our whole history, encapsulated in a microcapsule of five minutes, from which space and time have been removed. In Ardaas there is no mention, by name, of any specific person (except the ten Gurus and Guru Granth Sahib), no matter how great he/she might have been; nor is any grand period named. The words used in Ardaas are as follows:

Those who recited the Naam, or those who wielded their swords valiantly, or those who got their bodies cut piece by piece.

Even those who, at the present time, dedicating their bodies, minds and wealth for the success of Dharma and are

steadfast in their faith and are keeping the sanctity of their hair, are mentioned in the daily *Ardaas*.

The first five and one half lines of the *Ardaas*, which the tenth Master composed, cannot and should not be changed. The unique and noteworthy point in these lines is that the word 'Guru' is used only for Guru Nanak Dev and no other Master. Even when in the second line, the word 'Gur' appears (phir Angad Gur te Amar Das), it comes after the name 'Angad'. This signifies that Guru Nanak is also Guru Angad. Thus there is only one Guru, not ten.

Second: The five beloved ones (Piaare) and the four Sahibzadas (the sons of Guru Gobind Singh) are not to be described by their names in the *Ardaas*.

Third: Only "Sri Amritsar Ji de Ishnaan", a dip in the pool of Amritsar (Golden Temple) is to be narrated. Bathing at a pool of any other Gurdwara is not to be mentioned. The dip in Amritsar indicates that we are one nation and we have the desire to live together. The words uttered in the *Ardaas* are our common valuable heritage.

Fourth: When the lines, "*Sikhaan da mann neewaan, matt uchi, matt da raakha aap Waheguru*" (may the Sikhs have humble mind and high intellect, and may Waheguru Himself be the protector of their intellect) are uttered; the word 'Patt' (honour) should not be added with 'Matt'.

Fifth: During *Ardaas*, it is imperative that every one stands with folded hands and pays attention to each and every word.

Sixth: It has been observed that when the person leading the *Ardaas* says, "*Karhah prasaad di deg haazar hai, dar parvaan hove*" (the Karhah prasaad or blessed sweet pudding has been brought, may it be accepted by You O Waheguru), then some person lacking the knowledge of Sikh traditions, immediately introduces Kirpan (sword) in it. This should never be done. A

directive (Hukam Naama) to this effect has been issued several times from Akaal Takhat. The Kirpan has to touch the Karhah Prasaad only after the 'Vaak' (reading from Guru Granth Sahib) is concluded.

Seventh: In the last sentence of the Ardaas (Nanak Naam Charhdi Kala————) "Blessed by Nanak, may our spirits be ever on ascendance. O God, may the whole world be blessed in Your will". To this never add the name of Guru Gobind Singh with the name of Guru Nanak. The word "Nanak" is the seal as in most hymns of the Gurus, e.g., Nanak Naam mile ta jeevaan.

Eighth: At the end of *Ardaas* a couplet is recited by the entire congregation, which is, "*Aagiaa Bhaee Akaal kee tabhee chalaao Panth*————— *khwaar hoe sabh milen ge, bache sharan jo hoe*". Some times additional couplets like "*Waheguru Naam Jahaaj hai* —————
————— *Gur paar utaran haar*", or "*Khanda ja ke haath men kalghi sohe sees* ————— *Kalghi Dhar Jagdish*", are also recited. These should not be recited. Only the first couplet, "*Aagiaa Bhaee Akaal kee* —————", should be recited and after this the "Jaikaara", Bolay so nihai, Sat Sri Akaal, makes the service complete.

The English version of Ardaas would be:

Having first involved the dynamic power of God, call on Guru Nanak. Then on Angad Guru, Amar Das and Ram Das, may they ever protect us all. Then call on Arjan, and Har Gobind, holy Hari Rae and on Hari Krishan, whose sight dispels all sorrows. Then remember Tegh Bahadur by whose remembrance the nine treasures come hurrying to ones home. Be ever with us O Masters. May the tenth king, Guru Gobind Singh ever be on our side. Let us now turn our thoughts to the teachings of Guru Granth Sahib, the visible embodiment of the ten Gurus and utter,

O Khalsa Ji, Waheguru (glory be to God).

The five beloved ones, the four sahibzadas (sons of the tenth Master), the forty emancipated ones, the martyrs, the true disciples, the contemplators of God, and those who remained steadfast on the path of Dharma, remember their glorious deeds and utter O Khalsa Ji, Waheguru.

Those who dwelled on God's Name, shared their honest earnings with others, wielded sword in battlefield, distributed food in companionship, offered their heads at the altar of Dharma, were cut up limb by limb, skinned alive, boiled or sawn alive, but did not utter a sigh nor faltered in their faith, kept the sanctity of their hair until their last breath, sacrificed their lives for the sanctity of Gurdwaras; remember their glorious deeds and utter O Khalsa Ji, Waheguru.

Turn your thoughts to the five *Takhats* (seats of Sikh authority) and all the Gurdwaras and utter O Khalsa, Waheguru.

First, there is supplication for all the Khalsa Panth. May the Lord bestow upon His Khalsa the gift of His remembrance, Waheguru, Waheguru, Waheguru, and; may the merit of this remembrance be happiness of all kinds. O God, wherever there are members of the Khalsa, extend Your protection and mercy on them; let the Panth be ever victorious, let the sword be ever our protector; May the order of the Khalsa achieve ever expanding progress and supremacy. Utter O Khalsa, Waheguru.

May God grant to the Sikhs, the gift of faith, the gift of uncut hair, the Keshas, the gift of discipline, the gift of spiritual discrimination, the gift of mutual trust, the gift of self confidence and the supreme gift of all the gifts, the communion with God, the Name and the gift of dip in the holy lake of Amritsar.

May the administrative centers, banners, the cantonments of Khalsa ever remain inviolate. May the cause of truth and justice prevail everywhere at all times; utter O Khalsa, Waheguru.

God Almighty! Our helper and protector ever, restore to us the right and privilege of unhindered and free service and access to Nankana Sahib and other centers of Sikh religion from which we have been separated.

God, the helper of the helpless, the Strength of the weak, the Supporter of the fallen, the true father of all, (here the specific purpose and the occasion for the supplication is to be stated by the person leading in the supplication and the blessings and aid of God are beseeched).

Forgive us O Lord, all our faults, extend Your helping hand to everyone. Grant us the company of those who may help keep Your Name fresh in our hearts.

May Your Name, the religion preached by Nanak, prevail and prosper forever and ever more. The Khalsa belongs to God and to Him the victory, always and forever. (at this point the whole congregation bow to Guru Granth Sahib by touching the ground with their foreheads and then the congregation stand and chant in unison the couplet: *"Aagias bhaee Akaal kee ————— khawaar hoe sabh milen ge bache sharn jo hoe"*). The leader then loudly chants: "Bolay So Nihal" and the congregation then shout "Sat Sri Akaal".

Q. 40. How many poetical compositions are there in Dasam Granth? Give their names and detail.

Ans. There are, in all, fourteen poetical compositions in the 'Dasam Granth'. Their names and the count of the stanzas (chhants) in each one of them is as follows:

1. Jaap Sahib	199 stanzas
2. Akaal Ustat	171 ½ stanzas
3. Bachittar Naatak	471 stanzas
4. Chandi Charittar I	233 stanzas
5. Chandi Charittar II	212 stanzas
6. Vaar Bhagauti Ji ki	55 stanzas
7. Giaan Prabodh	336 stanzas
8. Chaubees Avtaar:	
a) The first twenty four incarnations of Vishnu are described:	
i) Machh (fish)	54 stanzas
ii) Kachh (turtle)	5 stanzas
iii) Chauda Ratan (fourteen pearls)	14 stanzas
iv) Nar Naraain	6 stanzas
v) Maha Mohini	8 stanzas
vi) Bairaah	14 stanzas
vii) Narsingh	42 stanzas
viii) Baavan	27 stanzas
ix) Paras Raam	35 stanzas
x) Brahm	7 stanzas
xi) Rudra I	39 stanzas
xii) Rudra II	50 stanzas
xiii) Rudra III	28 stanzas
xiv) Bishan	7 stanzas
xv) Ashant Dev	20 stanzas
xvi) Maan Raja	8 stanzas
xvii) Dhanantar	6 stanzas
xviii) Chandra	15 stanzas
xix) Sooraj	27 stanzas
xx) Raam	864 stanzas
xxi) Krishan	2492 stanzas
xxii) Nar	7 stanzas
xxiii) Baudh	3 stanzas

xiv) Nehkalank 588 stanzas

The following additional sections are also devoted to other Avtaaras.:

b) Mir Mehdi 11 stanzas

c) Brahmavtaar 343 stanzas, devoted to 7 Avtaaras.

d) Rudravtaars:

i) Datt 498 stanzas

ii) Paaras 357 stanzas

9. Sawaiyye 33 stanzas

10. Shabad Hazaare 10 shabads

11. Sadd 1 shabad

12. Khalsa Mehma 4 stanzas

13. Shastra Naam Mala 1318 stanzas

14. Charittaro Pakh:iaan 7555 stanzas¹

The “Dasam Granth” was all composed by Guru Gobind Singh. No doubt is to be raised about it². For internal and external alertness this Granth was written while at the same time a commandment was issued that Guru Granth Sahib is the only (eternal) Guru, “this is my own play”.

Q. 41. When are we supposed to say, “*Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh*”, and why?

Ans. The tenth Master started the tradition that whenever one ‘Singh’ meets another ‘Singh’, he/she should say, “*Waheguru Ji*

¹ There are also *Hikayat* and the *Zafar Naama*, which Prof. Satbir Singh seems to have included in the *Pakhian Charittar*. However, the *Zafar Naama* cannot be lumped up with the *Pakhian Charittar*.

² Ever since the appearance of this Granth (*Dasam Granth*) there has been a lot of controversy regarding the authorship of the compositions contained in it. Some researchers think there are only about 70 pages (out of a total of 1428 pages) that could be considered the *bani* (compositions) of the tenth Master. Some other writers think not even one composition belongs to Guru Gobind Singh.

ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji ki Fateh". Saying "Sat Sri Akaal" instead of "*Waheguru Ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji ki Fateh*" is inappropriate and against the tradition. When two Sikhs meet and utter this greeting, they utter the word "Waheguru" four times.

The proclamation of the tenth Master, regarding this way of greeting, has been described by Bhai Mani Singh in his book, "*Bhagat Ratanaawali*" as follows:

"My face is towards those who pronounce "Waheguru Ji ki Fateh" to the Sikhs; my right shoulder is towards those who respond in like manner (with equal enthusiasm). To those who respond in a subdued manner is my left shoulder and those who do not reply at all, towards them is my back. I like those who loudly proclaim this greeting".

Zakria Khan, the governor of Lahore (at the time of invasion of Nadir Shah of Iran), explained to Nadir Shah, "they do not greet by saying 'Ram' like Hindus, nor they greet by saying 'Salaam' like Muslims; they loudly proclaim the triumph of God".

Once Swami Viveka Nand (a Hindu saint) said, "Waheguru Ji ki Fateh, is the roaring slogan of the new society".

Q. 42. What is our national slogan?

Ans. Our (national) slogan is, "*Bole So Nihaal, Sat Sri Akaal*". This means, only those who keep saying throughout their life that Timeless God is the only truth, shall be happy, successful and spiritually enriched. The vigour and enthusiasm with which the Sikhs used to utter this slogan at the conclusion of religious ceremonies, like celebration of Diwali festival, gave birth to the following folklore:

"The whole earth started trembling, people left their homes;

The kings and emperors got in great distress;

No one except the true Guru could help ride over the fear;
 When Guru Gobind Singh rose with the war drum of
 Dharma;

He dislodged the assembly of impersonators;
 Chased away the doubters and opportunists;
 Annihilated the cheats, anti-social and wicked elements;
 Then he composed the slogan;
Bole so Nihaal, Sat Sri Akaal.

Q. 43. Where is the sentence, “Raj karega Khalsa, aakee rahe na koe” written?

Ans. This sentence comes from that “Tankhaah Naama” (code of discipline) whose beginning lines are: “Questions by Bhai Nand Lal, with answers by Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji”. It contains the following (poetical) proclamation:

“Listen Nand Lal, this truth
 Which I shall make happen during my (spiritual) reign
 All (four) castes will become one
 All will meditate on and recite the name of one God
 (Waheguru)
 Each one will ride horses and fly falcons*
 The Mughals will run away at the sight of these warriors
 So brave will be these saint soldiers that
 A single one will not hesitate to face an army of 1,25,000
 Those who lose their lives will be liberated
 They will become rulers and therefore
 Will have elephants and royal paraphernalia
 War drums will beat at their doors
 When they fire hundreds of thousands of guns

* These sports prohibited for any one other than the Muslims (rulers). Some exceptions were there for Rajputs.

Then they will be victorious”.

COUPLET

“RAJ KAREGA KHALSA, AAKEE RAHE NA KOE,
KHUWAAR HOE SABH MILAINGE, BACHE SHARAN JO HOE”
*“Only the pure ones shall rule, none shall remain defiant; those
who have drifted away, shall repent and come back; the remaining
shall seek protection”.*

This couplet is recited by the congregation at the end of all religious services.

Note: After this couplet, to recite any other couplet like “Waheguru Naam Jahaaz Hai —, Or “Khanda ja ke haath meh ———Kalgidhar Jagdish”, is not necessary.

Q. 44. What is the meaning of “*Nanak Naam charhdi kala, tere bhaane sarbat ka bhala*”?

Ans. The meaning of this sentence, which is recited towards the conclusion of *Ardaas* (Sikh supplication), is that Guru Nanak says, whoever keeps the name of God as his/her guiding beacon in life shall always be in ascending spirits — every ones well being lies in staying within God’s will.

Also, in Guru Granth Sahib it is said that *anyone who follows the path dictated by his/her own ego shall go astray (from the path of truth) and suffer.*

ਆਪਣੈ ਭਾਣੈ ਜੋ ਚਲੈ ਭਾਈ ਬਿਛੁੜਿ ਚੋਟਾ ਖਾਵੈ ॥

(SGGS, P. 601)

Those who practice Naam always remain within the will of God; such persons always consider the well being of everyone as their foremost priority. In other words their wish is everyone to understand that their well being lies in staying within the will of God.

A Khalsa is votary of positivism. He believes in (spiritual)

progress, day in and day out. This progress is like a whirlwind before which the dirt of sins, bigotry and barbarism cannot stand and fly away. It gives him ability to stand up to dark and wicked forces and conquer them.

Thus the essence of this edict is to always remain in a state of positive thinking and keep ones spirits high and ever ascending.

Q. 45. Name the prayers prescribed for daily recitation and describe their significance.

Ans. Just before dawn the following prayers are to be recited:

Japu Ji, Jaap Sahib, and Sawaiyye (beginning with '*Saravag sudh samooh sidhan* — and ending with *Sri Bhagwan ko bhed na payo*').

In the evening Rehraas Sahib should be recited and at night, before going to bed, Kirtan Sohila, which consists of five hymns, is to be recited. The significance of these prayers is given below:

Japu Ji: This prayer is the premier segment of our scripture. Consider it the central theme of Guru Granth Sahib. "Japu" is essential to forsake ones ego. Kavi Santokh Singh, in his "Garab Ganjan Teeka" has emphasized the significance of Japu Ji by saying that its basic message is the oneness of human beings and the Supreme Being.

A person who calls himself/herself a Sikh of the Guru but has not memorized Japu Ji is useless like chaff that is without grain in it and has wasted his/her gift of life.

Jaap Sahib: This prayer is necessary for developing the concentration of mind and to perceive the majestic vision of Almighty. With concentration on the rhythm of its stanzas (chhants) one can subside the conflicts of the straying mind.

Sudha Sawaiyye: By showing the transitory nature of the world this prayer prepares one to forsake the illusion of worldly power.

Rahraas Sahib (Sodar): This prayer instigates us to refrain from accumulation of worldly riches only. It tells us that we should also accumulate spiritual (divine) wealth. After spending all day in egoistical pursuits, it is necessary to focus in the evening on God's portal and sing "You are", "You are" O God for a short time. In just one single hymn, 'Sodar' of this prayer God has been addressed as 'You' or 'Yours' about thirty seven times. Reaching 'sodar' or that portal, enjoy the vision of "So Purakh" (God) and request Him to keep helping you in every facet of life. Divine bliss could be attained by abandoning all other doors and holding tightly to only one (His) door or "sodar". The prescription for everlasting peace and happiness (Mundhavani) is to have in the platter of ones mind truth, contentment and contemplation, and through these three let the God's elixir Name be generated. Never forsake humility, always keep saying, "I am full of vices and without any virtue". The word "Rahraas" is also said to be a Punjabi version of the Persian word "Raahe raast" which means the path of truth. Thus we may always walk on the correct and true path.

Sohila: This prayer has been bestowed upon us so that we may overcome the fear of death, become broad-minded and perceive His greatness, see His light in every being. This will help us find our place in this vast and limitless universe and thus remove the thorn of egoism and achieve our seat in God's abode.

Sohila* is supposed to be recited at bedtime at night and

* *Sohila literally means a song of laudation (of God). Kirtan also signifies singing of Divine praises. Therefore this prayer is also known as "Kirtan Sohila".*

also at the time of death when the funeral pyre is lit. Death is a long sleep and nightly sleep is a short death. For a good sleep it is necessary that one is not very tired. Also one is neither very sad nor very happy and one does not have any worry regarding excessive lending or borrowing. Those who live a day of normal peace and contentment, sleep well. Similarly, those who have lived a life of peace and contentment, go happily in the lap of death.

Q. 46. What is the status of women in Sikhism?

Ans. It is said that in order to determine the level of progress of any society, one should consider the place it gives to its women—whether it is running away from or running after (lusting) them. The sign of an unhealthy society is the suppression of its women, to consider them inferior to men or a vehicle for pleasure and reproduction.

Women are an equal half of any society, yet the Western thinkers have often abhorred and avoided them by saying that they are an agreeable blunder of nature. Even a philosopher and thinker like Aristotle called them “an erroneous and incomplete development”. In Indian literature a famous and highly regarded poet like Tulsi Das has called them “half poison and half nectar”. Islam considers the testimony of two women equal to that of one man. Lord Budha declared that a woman had no soul.

Contrary to these views, Guru Nanak declared women to be not only an ornament (to be worn with pride) but as the symbol of restraint, discipline and stability in the society:

ਭੀਡ ਹੋਵੈ ਬੰਧਨੁ ॥

(SGGS, P. 473)

contd. from previous page...

The title ‘Sohila’ obviously comes from the word sohila that comes three times in the first hymn of this prayer (Bani). The word ‘Kirat’ also comes in the very first sentence of the first hymn. That may be the reason for the popular name “Kirtan” used for this prayer.

Guru Arjan Dev said, "*Aurat yakina*", or a woman is man's belief.

In an answer to a question Guru Har Gobind, the sixth Master said, "A woman is embodiment of faith" (*Aurat eemaan*). Guru Nanak refuted those who propounded such unsavoury ideas as 'a woman did not have a soul', by declaring that it was a strange logic that the mother who gives birth to kings and sages is considered blemished while those born out of her are considered unblemished.

ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ ॥

(SGGS, P. 473)

A woman has many qualities. The Gurus honoured the woman by calling her "*batteesulakhani*", or the one who possesses thirty-two (many) virtues.

A woman was traditionally supposed to stay hidden from men other than the members of her family, by keeping herself fully covered. But Guru Amar Das, the third Master, directed that she should wear clean clothes and not hesitate to come to the congregation, unhesitatingly and without covering her face with a veil.

The Guru also gave permission for remarriage of a widow and condemned the practice of "*Satee*", the (forcible) burning of a widow on the funeral pyre of her dead husband.

When Mata Jeeto Ji (the consort of Guru Gobind Singh) added sugar drops to the Amrit that was being prepared for the five beloved ones (*panj piaare*) on that epoch making Baisakhi day, Guru Gobind Singh remarked:

"It is fortunate that you have come and added sweetness to the water".

The declaring of Mata Sahib Kaur, by Guru Gobind Singh, as the 'mother of the Khalsa', was tantamount to giving the

women equal status in Sikhism. Giving the right of administering of Amrit (Khalsa baptismal ceremony) to women was a revolutionary step in the history of Sikhism.

In battles, the Sikh women fought shoulder to shoulder with the Sikh men. The reciting of the sentence in our daily prayer (*Ardaas*), "*jihna Singhaan, Singhniaan ne Dharam het sees ditte*" (those Sikh men and women who gave their heads for the preservation of Dharma), indicates the declaration of equal bravery and mettle of women. Mata Sundari, consort of the tenth Master, when in Delhi, gave able guidance to the Panth for many years after the death of the tenth Master. When Banda Singh Bahadur deviated towards self-aggrandizement, she admonished him immediately through a letter saying, "Banda was given the service of Panth, not the emperor-ship, which was given to the Khalsa by the true emperor (Guru Gobind Singh).

It is appropriate to narrate here an example of valour and deeds of bravery of Sikh women.

When the Niranjania mahant of Jandiala complained against Bhai Taroo Singh to Zakaria Khan, the governor of Lahore, he also said, "Taroo Singh has a sister and a mother who keep the kitchen warm and ready, day and night, for fugitive Sikhs. These women are so firm and steadfast in their resolve that they carry out these chores for the love for their Guru. They are so committed to their faith that even the threat of death would not deter them from their work. They would not even go close to the practice of Hinduism".

William Franklin has written that there are innumerable examples where Sikh women took to arms and forced the enemy to retreat. Prince Bedaar Bakht ran away from the battlefield due to ferocious valour of Bibi Rajinder Kaur (Patiala). The Jhatka, (the Sikh way of slaughtering the animal with one blow), was maintained by Mai Raj Devi in Gujrat. Mata Kishan Kaur and

other Sikh women withstood the baton blows of the British police.

L. Griffin has written that Sikh women are in no way behind Sikh men in the management and strategic planning issues. Some other examples are those of the wives of S. Charat Singh, Rani Sada Kaur, daughter of Bhai Tara Singh Gheba, Mai Phatto, daughter of Baba Ala Singh. A British author has written that if there was a single man in Punjab, it was Rani Jindaan (wife of Maharaja Ranjit Singh).

Q. 47. Is there a place for caste system and racism in Sikhism?

Ans. Discrimination based on caste or race has absolutely no place in Sikhism. According to Bhai Gurdas, the creation of four castes (in the Hindu society) resulted in discrimination in the world. From this discrimination grew hatred to such an extent that now the whole humanity is a victim of bigotry. The (Sikh) Gurus broke the grip of this hatred and bigotry.

The third Master, Guru Amar Das, has said, "A person, who is proud of his caste, is a fool and a boor". He has further cautioned that many problems/ills grow out of such pride. Guru Nanak considered writing of ones caste along with ones name, as the abuse of the worst kind:

ਭਵਲ ਜਾਤੀ ਭਵਲ ਨਾਉ ॥

(SGGS, P. 83)

Frederick Pincott has beautifully explained how Guru Nanak brought the message home to every one that all (human beings) are children of the same mother and father (God). No one is born superior or inferior, good or evil, higher or lower, special or ordinary, and no one is untouchable. He gave the concept of fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man to the world.

The Sikhs also guarded this idea of the Guru faithfully and

shunned the demeaning bindings of caste and race. They resolved that for them the whole human race was one and the same. The concept of otherness was completely rescinded.

The Gurus shattered the fetters of discrimination on caste basis by first starting the institutions of Sangat (congregation), Pangat (common kitchen), and common places of ablution. Then they gave missionary responsibilities on the basis of devotion and piety of the person, irrespective of their caste, gender and/or financial standing.

The tenth Master declared, "*Ranghreta Guru ka Beta*" (the low caste Ranghreta was also Guru's son) and finally started the Amrit ceremony (Khalsa initiation) in which every recipient was supposed to drink from the same bowl.

To write ones caste after the word 'Singh' or 'Kaur', which is the common last name of all Sikhs, is equivalent to throwing insult upon the Guru. Writing ones race or caste is to destroy the fundamental principle of equality of Sikhism.

Bhai Gurdas has strongly admonished and reiterated that the Sikhs have no "Gote" (caste or lineage, or race) other than one caste or lineage of humanity.

Q. 48. What are the meanings of the terms, *Naam, Daan, Ishnaan, kirat karo* and *vand chhako*?

Ans. Guru Nanak Dev always enjoined his disciples for *Naam, Daan* and *Ishnaan*, and asserted that all Sikhs should practice honest work and sharing their earnings with less fortunate fellow human beings. According to him the life of those observing *Naam, Daan* and *Ishnaan* always stayed in perfect balance or equipoise.

Bhai Gurdas in the first stanza of his first 'Vaar' writes, "while Guru Nanak Dev has removed the fear of cycle of death and birth and brought us close to 'Waheguru', he has also made it clear to the Sikhs that the Guru will bestow the gifts of *Naam,*

Daan and *Ishnaan* on those Sikhs who feel elated in celebrating the Gurpurabs with love and devotion for the Guru:

“BHAO BHAGAT GURPURAB KAR,
NAAM DAAN ISHNAAN DRIRAAIAA”

The meaning of *Naam* is to always keep ones face towards God (Waheguru), or to always remember Him.

Daan means to lead a life of which welfare of others is the main purpose, i.e., always facing society.

Ishnaan means continuous self-introspection, soul searching and thus keeping ones conduct clean and pure.

Anyone who keeps his/her face towards God (always remembers Him); spends time for the welfare of others and does not let ego get better of him/her, is a complete person in the eyes of Guru Nanak.

According to ‘*Puraatan Janam Saakhi*’, whenever Guru Nanak preached any one, he exhorted him to:

“*Naam Japo, Kirat karo and Vand chhako* (meditate on Lord’s Name, earn your living by honest work and share the proceeds with less fortunate fellow human beings”. There is no better way to summarize the teachings of Sikhism.

Kirat (honest work) is an essential and foremost part of our religion. It does not tolerate laziness or usurpation of others rights. Guru Nanak said: “Honest work for ones livelihood keeps ones body pure”. Today if the Sikh is not dependent on anyone, it is not because of pity or favours of others, but only because he has embraced the doctrine of honest labour of Guru Nanak. While doing honest work he/she does not forget God and recites His Name.

While describing about the Sikhs, Zakaria Khan, the governor of Punjab, told Nadar Shah (the Iranian invader of

India) that they (the Sikhs) uttered their Guru's name at all times. This recitation of God's Name they had learnt along with honest work and sharing with others. To feel happy by giving to others was an essential part of their principles of life.

Bhai Gurdas has said of a Sikh: "*Hathon de ke bhala manaave*". He feels happy by giving to others (needy ones).

Guru Har Gobind, the sixth Master, used to give a few crumbs to birds before taking his meals. Guru Hari Rae, the seventh Master, had enjoined that every Sikh must contribute his/her share in the *Langar* (community kitchen) howsoever small it may be (a pinch of flour or a few grains). The Guru also directed: "A Sikh should give help to any other Sikh who is in a difficult situation and needs help. He should feed this Sikh if he/she is hungry and do it with a happy heart, without fretting". He then added, "It is my promise that he will be accepted (in God's court)".

Bhai Nand Lal says in praise of honest work and sharing with others:

"He who earns his living by honest work and out of his earnings gives tith for the Guru (to needy people), earns fame in the world".

Q. 49. What is Bhakti (Bhagti); and why Sikhism is not a part of the so called Bhakti movement?

Ans. To worship any one of the twenty-four Avtaaras (of Hindu mythology) as ones spiritual preceptor is Bhakti according to Hindu belief. The idea that God is merciful and from time to time He takes birth for the emancipation of human beings has been prevalent in the Hindu society. The twenty-four Avtaaras, which include Lord Rama and Lord Krishna, are considered the incarnations of God and thus symbolize His compassion for human beings.

All those whose utterances are included in Guru Granth Sahib in general and all the Sikh Gurus in particular, have dispelled this belief (of God's incarnation) by saying:

ਏਕੋ ਜਪਿ ਏਕੋ ਸਾਲਾਹਿ ॥ (SGGS, P. 289)
"Meditate on only One (God) and sing the praises of One also".

They do not believe that God comes into womb (takes birth) and this have been said so in very clear and strong words:

ਸੋ ਮੁਖੁ ਜਲਉ ਜਿਤੁ ਬਹਿ ਠਾਬੁਰ ਜੋਨੀ ॥ (SGGS, P. 1136)
"Burnt be that tongue that says God comes into womb".

Guru Amar Das the third Master says:

ਭਗਤਿ ਨਿਰਾਲੀ ਅਲਾਹ ਦੀ ਜਾਪੈ ਗੁਰ ਵੀਚਾਰਿ ॥ (SGGS, P. 430)
"To contemplate on the word of Guru is the supreme bhakti of one God and it is realized through contemplation of Guru's word".

The purpose of giving this principle is that our *bhakti* (in Sikhism) is not emotional worship of an *Avtaara* as carried out by Chandi Das or Meera Bai (the *Hindu Bhaktas*).

God is the source of eternal bliss and everlasting joy. Those who always remember Him also stay always happy and in a state of positive thinking and enthusiasm. Such a state is attained through God's grace only. In Guru Granth Sahib it is said:

ਸਬਦੈ ਹੀ ਭਗਤ ਜਾਪਦੇ ॥ (SGGS, P. 429)
"Recitation of the sabad (word) is indicative of bhakti".

Or:

ਆਪਿ ਬਸੰਤੁ ਜਗਤੁ ਸਭੁ ਵਾੜੀ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਪੂਰੈ ਭਾਗਿ ਭਗਤਿ ਨਿਰਾਲੀ ॥ (SGGS, P. 1177.)

"God Himself is Spring (season) and the world is the garden. With great fortune (the Spring comes to the garden). O Nanak! This fantastic bhakti is the manifestation of the great fortune".

According to the original concept of Bhakti, it was a one to one relation between the devotee and the *Avtaara*. In Sikhism, however, “*Saadh smooch le udhaario Nanak*”, or redemption is through meditation on God’s Name in congregation (in the company of saintly people).

Q. 50. What do we understand by “Naam”?

Ans. While meditating, when mind attains the awareness of existence of God through His light, that state is called the revelation of *Naam*. *Naam* is also the sudden awareness (like lightening) regarding collective virtues of God. According to the third Master, Guru Amar Das:

ਅੰਤਰਿ ਖੁਹਟਾ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਭਰਿਆ ਸਬਦੇ ਕਾਢਿ ਪੀਐ ਪਨਿਹਾਰੀ ॥

(SGGS, P. 570)

(Within lies a well overflowing with ambrosia (of God’s Name), the water carrier (Gurmukh) draws out and drinks).

Naam is neither an inanimate object nor a word made up of letters. Rather it is the revelation of eternal light within. This is why Gurbani says:

ਨਾਮੁ ਹਮਾਰੈ ਅੰਤਰਜਾਮੀ ॥ ਨਾਮੁ ਹਮਾਰੈ ਆਵੈ ਕਾਮੀ ॥ (SGGS, P. 1144)

“The Name or divine Reality is the controller of inner self; it always comes to our help”.

Naam is a force that generates movement within. *Naam* comes to ones help just as a drowning person would find a boat. It lights up our lives just as an extinguishing lamp may get fresh oil:

ਬੁਭਤ ਕਉ ਜੈਸੇ ਬੇੜੀ ਮਿਲਤ ॥ ਬੁਭਤ ਦੀਪਕ ਮਿਲਤ ਤਿਲਤ ॥

(SGGS, P. 986)

ਜੈਸੇ ਰਣ ਮਹਿ ਸਖਾ ਭ੍ਰਾਤ ॥

(SGGS, P. 987)

“Naam is helpful just as brothers and friends come to help in a battle”.

ਜੈਸੇ ਪਾਲਨ ਸਰਨਿ ਸੇਖ ॥

(SGGS, P. 987)

“Naam protects just as a lion would to any creature that it wants to protect”.

Naam is true wealth; one has to earn it. It cannot be attained by a whisper in ones ear (these days many self-styled gurus stealthily give their mantras in ears of their ignorant disciples). Just as any wealth attained through theft or smuggling leads to punishment; similarly anyone claiming to have attained *Naam* without proper spiritual toil is a smuggler in Guru's eyes and will be punished by 'Yama'. If someone says that he/she is a moralist and therefore does not need *Naam*, for such a person the Guru enjoins:

ਨਾਮ ਬਿਨਾ ਕੈਸੇ ਆਚਾਰ ॥

(SGGS, P. 1316)

“What is morality without Naam”? If one has not even laid the foundation, how he/she could erect a palace (of life)?

The easy way to attain *Naam* is the recitation of Gurbani. When during recitation of Gurbani one feels certain calmness; that is the moment of revelation of *Naam*. If at any time one feels this state of nearness to God slipping away by wandering of mind towards lowly thoughts, one should immediately seek the shelter of Gurbani.

Guru Amar Das, the third Master, has prescribed a simple and easy path for the manifestation of *Naam* in one of his *saloks* (*salok vaaran te vadheek*) in Guru Granth Sahib:

ਜਿਉ ਪੁਰਖੇ ਘਰਿ ਭਗਤੀ ਨਾਰਿ ਹੈ ਅਤਿ ਲੋਚੈ ਭਗਤੀ ਭਾਇ ॥

ਬਹੁ ਰਸ ਸਾਲਣੇ ਸਵਾਰਦੀ ਖਟ ਰਸ ਮੀਠੇ ਪਾਇ ॥

ਤਿਉ ਬਾਣੀ ਭਗਤ ਸਲਾਹਦੇ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੈ ਚਿਤੁ ਲਾਇ ॥ (SGGS, P. 1413.)

“Just as in a man's home is the devoted wife who gives him love and devotion. She lovingly prepares delicious meals (of six flavours). Similarly, the devotees (of God) sing the praises of God

by their utterances with devoted hearts full of Naam”.

Following this procedure ones mind will be tuned to the Lord and realize Him. Such is the great power of Gurbani:

ਪੁਨਿ ਮਹਿ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਧਿਆਨ ਮਹਿ ਜਾਨਿਆ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਅਕਥ ਕਹਾਨੀ ॥

(SGGS, P. 879)

“Through recitation comes meditation, through meditation comes realization; such is the inexplicable secret of divinely enlightened ones”.

To meditate and remember are the toil and labour according to Guru’s advice. The fruit of such work is *Naam*. The main sign of manifestation of *Naam* is everlasting bright face (with divine bliss) and an urge to live to serve others. The person with *Naam* will lead a life of compassion and ampathy.

ਹੋਰ ਕੇਤੀ ਛੁਟੀ ਨਾਲਿ ॥

(SGGS, P. 146)

“With him/her many more will be liberated”.

The most striking feature of *Naam* is that those who forsake idleness, adorn strength and thus meditate upon *Naam*, become free from the confinement of physical body. Even when the body is perished, *Naam* will continue to give them immortality:

ਸਾਸਨਿ ਸਾਸਿ ਸਾਸਿ ਬਲੁ ਪਾਈ ਹੈ ਨਿਹਸਾਸਨਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਵੈਗੋ ॥

(SGGS, P. 1309)

“Through the Masters instructions repeating the Name with every breath have we obtained such strength that even when the breath is not there we still repeat His Name”.

Q. 51. Why is so much emphasis placed on “*Naam Simran*” (meditation on God’s Name) in Sikhism?

Ans. In Guru Granth Sahib the praises of *Naam Simran* have been certainly given many times, but its definition has purposely

been left untold. This means that every one of us is presumed to possess *Simran* (within), only it needs to be firmly entrenched by remembering it always – never to forget it.

The very meaning of *Simran* is the sweet memory of the loved one. Singing the laudations of the loved one (God) with unison of mind and body is called *Simran*. Gurbani says:

ਮੇਘ ਬਿਨਾ ਜਿਉ ਖੇਤੀ ਜਾਇ॥ (SGGS, P. 269)

“Just as the crops will wither without rain”.

Similarly, the human soul will wither without *Simran*. Consider the day and night spent uselessly if God is forgotten. A person without *Simran* hits his head aimlessly like a ram or will keep griping and fretting:

ਬਿਨੁ ਸਿਮਰਨੁ ਜੈਸੇ ਸੀਠ ਛਤਾਰਾ॥ (SGGS, P. 239)

“Without *Simran* a person is useless like the horns of a ram”.

It would be proper here to give an example to illustrate how important it is to practice *Simran*. Imagine a traveller reaching another town after travelling a long distance. If on reaching there he forgets the purpose for which he came to this town. Now if he starts asking others why he came to this town, or what was his destination, then people will consider this person crazy and mentally unbalanced.

Now look at the situation of a human being, if on getting this life he forgets the purpose for which he came to this world, wouldn't he get a similar reaction from others? Gurbani says: “*Nao pave baajaari*”. (Such a person is called aimless loiterer in a bazar, or a person without a principle).

One must so firmly entrench God's memory in ones mind that He is not forgotten even for the fraction of a second. One should love God so intensely that one becomes one with Him. That will be called *Simran*.

To firmly grasp *Simran* in ones memory the Gurus have given us Bani. To sing and listen to it with devotion and love is the technique to remember God:

ਏਕ ਨਿਮਖ ਜੋ ਸਿਮਰਨ ਮਹਿ ਜੀਆ ॥ ਕੋਟਿ ਦਿਨਸ ਲਾਖ ਸਦਾ ਬਿਰੁ ਬੀਆ ॥

(SGGS, P. 239)

“Whoever lives in contemplation even for an instant, is made immutable for millions of days – for eternity”.

This wonderful instant (*nimakh*) which is mentioned many times in Guru Granth Sahib, is obtained by those who stand at the steps of the fearless God steadfastly:

ਨਿਰਾਲੰਬੁ ਨਿਰਹਾਰੁ ਨਿਰਕੇਵਲੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਤਾੜੀ ਲਾਵੈ ॥ (SGGS, P. 1332)

“One should get absorbed only in the fearless God who is beyond the need of prop and sustenance”.

Knowledge by itself is dry and tasteless. With *Simran* it attains fragrance and flavour. It is important to note that *Simran* can be practiced any time. Even more importantly, the concentration and focus of the practitioner of *Simran* never breaks. He/she remains in the state of equipoise even while performing his/her worldly duties:

ਹਰਿ ਸਿਮਰਨ ਕੀ ਸਗਲੀ ਬੇਲਾ ॥ ਹਰਿ ਸਿਮਰਨੁ ਬਹੁ ਮਾਹਿ ਇਕੇਲਾ ॥

(SGGS, P. 1150)

“To contemplate God every time is auspicious, there are rare ones who (always) contemplate on God”.

Q. 52. Why is ‘Sangat’ (congregation) given so much importance in Sikhism?

Ans. Before Guru Nanak the expression, “*sadhu na chale jamaat*”, or a saintly person could not perform his religious activities in congregation, was often heard in the Hindu society. The Western

(Judeo-Christian) religions emphasized on, “flight of alone to the alone”. But Guru Nanak started the institution of “*Saadh Sangat*” (holy congregation).

On a question from Sidhas (yogis) to Guru Nanak as to why he had left his home and turned away from the world, he answered, “*it was to search the God-oriented people*”:

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਖੋਜਤ ਡਏ ਉਦਾਸੀ॥

(SGGS, P. 939.)

Wherever Guru Nanak went he established a congregation. In history the names like temporary *sangat*, permanent *sangat*, big *sangat*, *kartari sangat* or *hazoori sangat* are mentioned. Later on small *sangat* was also established. According to Guru Nanak a gathering of people for fun or worldly discussion is not *sangat*. Only a gathering where belief in *Naam* (God’s Name) is affirmed is *sangat*. According to Gurbani:

ਲਖ ਸਿਆਣਪ ਜੇ ਭਰੀ ਲਖ ਸਿਉ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਮਿਲਾਪੁ॥

ਬਿਨੁ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਸਾਧ ਨ ਧ੍ਰਾਪੀਆ ਬਿਨੁ ਨਾਵੈ ਦੂਖ ਸੰਤਾਪੁ॥ (SGGS, P. 20)

“*One may indulge in a million feats of cleverness and may make alliances with millions of people, but without holy company (Sangat) fulfilment is not achieved and without Lord’s Name torment of sufferings does not go away*”

In Guru Granth Sahib wherever the word ‘*sangat*’ (in Gurmukhi script) comes it is always with the diacritical sign of ‘*sihari*’ before the last letter (tatta). According to Punjabi grammar it implies that it is the company of those (saintly) people, which generates activity towards emancipation (*gati*), elevates ones consciousness and reveals the light of God’s Name.

ਸਤਸੰਗਤਿ ਕੈਸੀ ਜਾਣੀਐ॥ ਜਿਥੇ ਏਕੋ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਖਾਣੀਐ॥

(SGGS, P. 72)

(*By what qualities can one recognize holy congregation? Wherein only the Name of the Lord is expounded*).

This very holy congregation later on became 'Khalsa'. When the Sikhs stopped following their own mind and started following unquestioningly the Guru's directions, they became *Khalsa*.

"GUR SANGAT KINI KHALSA, MANMUKHI DUHELA".

(Bhai Gurdas Singh II, Vaar 41)

"The Guru transformed the congregation into Khalsa, thus removing the self-oriented ones from it".

The Gurus did not like or condone self-interest. To satisfy ones own hunger is selfishness. Inception of idea that, "as long as others are hungry, I am not satisfied", is the birth of feeling of congregation. It is due to such people that many more get satiated.

ਗੁਰਸਿਖਾ ਕੀ ਭੁਖ ਸਭ ਗਈ ਤਿਨ ਪਿਛੈ ਹੋਰ ਖਾਇ ਘਨੇਰੀ ॥ (SGGS, P. 451)

This is a necessary condition for a Sikh.

The palace of Sikhism has been created on the wide foundation of congregation and Gurbani (Guru's utterances). Furthermore, it is easy to walk alone and when one takes along another person the journey may become easier, but one has to become more cautious and careful because of increased responsibility.

Even our liberation is through holy congregation: "*Parvaare saadhaar*". (Interrelated ones are liberated).

The emphasis on the superiority of a householder's life in our religion is for this very reason. A lone Sikh is one but a householder has the potential to establish a congregation and a "*Dharamsaal*".

Wherever five Sikhs get together to pray that is equivalent to a Gurdwara. Bhai Gurdas emphasizes the importance of holy congregation as follows:

Holy congregation is the seat of God.
In holy congregation resides the Lord.

Those who faithfully get up early in the morning, go to holy congregation, focus single-mindedly on the Guru's shabad (word) and make it the food for their soul, to them God reveals Himself. According to Bhai Gurdas:

“GUR MOORAT GUR SHABAD SUN,
SAADH SANGAT AASAN NIRANKAAREE;
AAD PURAKH AADES KAR, AMRIT VELA SHABAD
AHAAREE.

**Q. 53. What are the meanings of *Langar* and *Pangat*?
Why is it mandatory to partake the (blessed) food
in *Pangat*?**

Ans. *Langar* is the free (community) kitchen, which is an integral part of Sikh way of life. The term *Langar* is of Persian origin. It means anchor, a pronged weighty device made of steel, which is cast into the sea in order to hold the ships/boats in a particular place. That is why we use the term “*langar pauna*” (to cast *langar*) rather than to eat *langar**

Our Gurus used this term because, as a ship is stopped by casting the anchor and after loading, it again moves on. Similarly, in the world, our body, the ship, while traversing this world ocean has to stop periodically by casting anchor (*langar*) to load before moving on towards its final goal. In other words, unlike the way some people think - eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die, eating is a necessary part of life. In other words we eat to live

* The use of the word “*langar*” does not seem to be the way it is described by Prof. Satbir Singh, i.e. “*langar pauna*”. Eating *langar* (*langar khana*) has been in use even at the time of Guru Gobind Singh. For example, “*khaavat langar devat gacree*”. (In *Dasam Granth – Krishan Avatar*).

and not live to eat. Moreover, since the anchor (*langar*) is associated with steel, we call "*loh langar*", meaning steel anchor.

Pangat means to sit in a row* * (at the same level) in order to partake food. In terms of Sikh culture it is to forget the difference between high and low, rich and poor, black and white and caste the *langar*.

In India, the superstitions about purity and impurity were at its extreme at the time of the Gurus. So much so that each member of the same family, while starting to eat a meal, would sprinkle water around him/her and draw a '*chakra*' (line). Sometimes different members of the same family had separate cooking stoves. Among some sects the superstition prevailed that their food would get defiled if a person of a low caste simply looked at it.

Thus when Guru Nanak visited Bhai Lalo, who belonged to a low caste, the latter made a separate place for Guru Nanak to eat his meals. But the Guru said, "Lalo! The whole world is a sanctified place for me. Any one who has recognized the reality is pure".

At the time of the third Master, Guru Amar Das, no one could go to the congregation unless he/she had partaken the *langar* with everyone else sitting in the same line. He himself would also sit at the same level as everyone else.

Some Brahmins complained to emperor Akbar that Guru Amar Das, by creating the tradition of everyone sitting together and eating, was degrading the Hindu traditions. Hearing this the emperor became curious to see such a person who could boldly go against the Brahminical traditions. He visited the Guru at

*** Recently there has been a controversy regarding the meaning of Pangat. Whether it is to sit on the floor at the same level or on benches or chairs at the same level. Unfortunately, this controversy resulted in some violent fights in some Gurdwaras.*

Goindwal and partook the *langar* sitting with common people. He was so impressed by the personality of Guru Amar Das that he offered a large chunk of land (estate) to the Guru. When the Guru declined, Akbar insisted and finally gave the land to the Guru's daughter.

At Anand Pur, the tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh, had directed that no one should cook his/her food. Everyone was supposed to partake food in *Pangat*. No one was to be deprived of food. He further enjoined, "Do not be superstitious regarding impurity and '*chauka*', prevalent in the Hindu society. When the food is ready, request the Almighty with humble and earnest heart to send someone in need to share with you. Keep a separate plate full of food and if any needy person, may he be a Hindu, a Muslim or a Sikh, give it to him".

These days when we are celebrating historical days (Gurpurabs etc.), all we do is, sit ourselves in a large *Pangat* and cast the *Langar*. This is good too, but it would be much better if we invite the followers of other religions also to come, sit with us and partake the food. The tradition of beating the drum at the time of *Langar* signifies that even if the enemy comes at that time, he is also to be offered food like a friend. The tradition goes to the extent that one should eat only if some food is left after serving to others.

Q. 54. What do we understand by the term 'Gurdwara'?

Ans. Gurdwara is one of the most important institutions of Sikhs. During his travels (*udaasis*), wherever Guru Nanak went and established his congregation, he founded a "*Dharamsaal*". Over time *Dharamsaal* evolved into what is now known as Gurdwara. The meaning of the term 'Gurdwara' is, through Guru or Guru's door, e.g.,

(One can attain enlightenment through Guru), or

ਗੁਰ ਦੁਆਰੇ ਹਰਿ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਸੁਣੀਐ ॥

(SGGS, P. 1075)

“At Guru’s door one should listen to Kirtan (Lord’s laudations)”.

Our Gurdwara is a school for students, a spiritual teacher for seekers, a hospital for patients, a refractory for hungry, a resting place for travellers and above all, an impenetrable fort for the *Panth* (the Sikh nation).

The sentence recited in our daily supplication, “those who gave sacrifices for the service of Gurdwaras _____, remember their deeds and utter O Khalsa, Waheguru (glory to God)”, clearly indicates the great regard and respect the Sikhs hold for the sanctity of Gurdwaras. This high regard for the Gurdwaras is further indicated by the following stanza that has been added in our daily Ardaas (supplication), after the partition of India, when many historic Gurdwaras went into the newly formed country now known as Pakistan: O ever kind and benevolent Father, please grant the boon to your Khalsa for unrestricted pilgrimage and care of Sri Nankana Sahib and other Gurdwaras that have been separated from the *Panth* (due to the partition of the country).

Gurdwara is an essential part of the life of a Sikh. According to Guru Amar Das, the third Master:

ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਨਾਇ ਭਾਵਨੀ ਇਕਨਾ ਦਸਵਾ ਦੁਆਰੁ ਦਿਖਾਇਆ ॥

(SGGS, P. 922)

(The tenth door is revealed to those who have devotion to the Master’s guidance).

According to *Rehit Naamas* (Sikh code of conduct), whenever one is feeling melancholy and is in low spirits, one should go to the Gurdwara. In a Gurdwara, Sri Guru Granth Sahib must be opened everyday and stay open as long as devotees are

coming. At night the Guru Granth Sahib should be closed and placed in its resting room. Only in the case of an 'Akhand Paath' (the non-stop recitation), should it remain open for 48-50 hours.

To clasp the legs of bed of Guru Granth Sahib, to rub nose against the walls or pillars of the Gurdwara, to keep water under the resting throne, to keep idols in the Gurdwara, to bow before the pictures of the Gurus or any other Saint are considered self-directed practices and are prohibited according to the Sikh code of conduct.

There is no restriction for any one to enter a Gurdwara, irrespective of his/her caste, colour, creed, race or country. But he/she should not possess tobacco or any other intoxicants, they must cover the head and take off shoes. To sit on a raised cushion, chair, cot, pedestal, throne etc. in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib is prohibited*. Sitting bare-headed or a veil on ones face is contrary to the teachings of Sikhism.

Every Gurdwara should have the Sikh banner (unfurled triangular Kesri Nishaan Sahib) and a drum, which should be beaten at appropriate times**.

One should remember that during Kirtan (hymn singing) using poetical compositions other than Gurbani are improper***. Only the hymns from the scriptures should be used as the basis of the Kirtan. At a time only one activity should be followed. For example, if a non-stop recitation of Guru Granth Sahib is in progress, then the Kirtan should not be sung.

Rehit Naama of Bhai Chaupa Singh describes the attributes of a Granthi (the priest and care taker of the Gurdwara).

* *In most Gurdwaras in the Western countries, some chairs are now placed for old and handicapped people to sit.*

** *The beating of drum is no longer observed in most Gurdwaras.*

*** *The 'Dhadhi Jathas' do not recite Gurbani. They recite only outside poetry.*

According to him, a Granthi should be humble, free from greed, generous, truthful, compassionate, loving, patient, hospitable, clean, fond of doing service to Guru and Sikhs, strict observer of Sikh code of conduct, alert, observer of fidelity to his/her spouse and should take care of travellers who come to the Gurdwara.

According to Bhai Desa Singh, a Sikh who wishes to be a Granthi, should not crave for excessive offerings. He/she should use whatever is necessary for living and should distribute the remaining (to the needy).

Q. 55. What do we understand by the term “Golak”?

Ans. The literal meaning of the term ‘Golak’ is “coming and going”, not staying put at one place. It also means the holes in the body, e.g., ears, eyes, nostrils etc.

The money offered to Gurdwaras or donated for Gurus’ causes is supposed to come and go (spent for charitable purposes as it comes). That is why this money is called, “keeping Golak”. In other words, the money coming to Gurdwaras is not for keeping permanently (in a bank account or buried in the ground) but is to be spent.

In the *Rehit Naama* (Sikh code of conduct) by Bhai Daya Singh, it is written that a Sikh must consider a poor man’s mouth as the Golak of the Guru. It means that if a poor man asks for something, a Sikh should provide it.

Guru Angad Dev, the second Master, had decreed that no one should tell him how much money came and how it was spent. He did not even want to know the accounts of the offerings.

Guru Amar Das would go to bed only after all the utensils in the *Langar* had been emptied (all food prepared that day had been consumed), cleaned and kept upside down.

Guru Ram Das says:

ਗੁਰਸਿਖਾਂ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਵਰਤੈ ਜੋ ਸਿਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਲੋਚੈ ਸੇ ਗੁਰ ਖੁਸੀ ਆਵੈ ॥

(SGGS, P. 317)

(The true Guru is pervasive among Sikhs. Whoever likes the Sikhs, the Guru is pleased with him).

Guru Har Gobind, the sixth Master expressed his displeasure on a Sikh who had refused to give honey to Bhai Kattu, saying that it was to be served only to the Guru. It is also written that Guru Har Gobind would not keep any money with him. Whatever came, he would spend on charitable causes.

The directive of Guru Gobind Singh is that spending for the welfare (of Sikhs) is the best charity. Any other charitable donation is not as good. He also had said, "those who indulged in shady businesses should not keep the money of Golak. They will go to hell if they do so".

Q. 56. How and when did the practice of "Daswandh" (tithe) start in Sikhism?

Ans. It was Guru Nanak who honoured us the principle of:

ਘਾਲਿ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥੁ ਦੇਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹੁ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ ਸੇਇ ॥

(SGGS, P. 1245)

(Those who share their honest earnings with needy, truly recognize the way (to God)).

When Guru Nanak started farming at Kartar Pur, towards the last few years of his life, he used to divide the proceeds of his farm into three portions. One portion would go to the "Dharamsaal" (religious institution), one for use by his family and the third for the needy, hungry and holy people. Whoever came to his door would go satisfied.

The fourth Master, Guru Ram Das, had appointed "Masands" (his representatives) who would collect offerings from devotees and bring to the Guru who would spend them for the

food and lodging of the visiting *Sangats* (devotees). However, it was Guru Arjan Dev who enjoined that one tenth of ones income should be donated in the name of the Guru.

The following stanza in Sukhmani Sahib points towards this idea:

ਦਸ ਬਸਤ੍ਰ ਲੇ ਪਾਏ ਪਾਏ ॥ ਏਕ ਬਸਤ੍ਰ ਕਾਰਨਿ ਬਿਧੇਟਿ ਗਵਾਏ ॥

(SGGS, P. 268)

(Man forgets the ten blessings he receives, and for lack of one loses faith (in God).

The contemporary historians of the Gurus have written that the governments might be having difficulty in collecting the revenue taxes but the Sikhs brought the *tithe* to the Guru with pleasure and enthusiasm.

Guru Arjan Dev also seems to have said “ those Sikhs who give the *tithe* shall not have sloth in their homes”.

Bhai Nand Lal, in his “*Tankhaah Naama*” (Sikh code of conduct), attribute somewhat similar words to Guru Gobind Singh, “Any Sikh who gives *tithe* out of his/her honest earnings will earn good name in the world”.

Bhai Daya Singh writes in his “*Rehit Naama*” (Sikh code), “(A Sikh) should share his earnings with others, help fulfil the needs of others and give *tithe* for the Guru; by doing so he will succeed in all his efforts in life”.

When the first Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee was founded, only those Sikhs who proved that they donated *tithe* were taken as its members. Thus it is very important to give *tithe*.

In “*Prem Sumaarag*” it is written: “The essentials of ethical code (for Sikhs) are – do not inflict pain on anyone; do not give personal secrets to each and every one except your Guru and close friend; always work honestly and whatever you earn by Guru’s

grace, keep tithes out of it for God (spend this amount on charitable projects).

Q. 57. What do we understand by the term, “Degh Tegh Fateh”?

Ans. When the tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh, asked from Akaal Purakh (God) the boon, “*Panth chale tab jagat meh jab tum karo sahaae*”, (The Panth could succeed in the world only with your blessings O Lord), he requested at the same time (to Akaal Purakh):

“DEGH TEGH JAGG MEH DOU CHALE,
RAAKH AAP MOHE AVAR NA DALE”.

(Bestow upon us, O Lord, the boon that Degh and Tegh reign supreme in the world; and keep us under Your protection so that no one could harm us).

Later on Banda Singh Bahadur got the words, “Degh Tegh Fateh” inscribed on his seal after his victory in the battle at Sirhind. The complete phrase on the official seal (in Persian) were:

“DEGH TEGH FATEH NUSRAT BAIDRANG,
YAFT AZ NANAK GURU GOBIND SINGH”.

Which means, the blessings of success of deg and tegh were obtained by Guru Gobind Singh from Guru Nanak.

The meaning of ‘deg’ is a large vessel with a wide mouth, or non-deficient, generous, a trait of sharing, magnanimity, forgiveness. In the first *ashtpadi* of *Basant Raag*, in Guru Granth Sahib, the word ‘deg’ has been used in a similar context:

ਘਰਿ ਘਰਿ ਲਸਕਰੁ ਪਾਵਲੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਧਰਮੁ ਕਰੇ ਸਿਕਦਾਰੀ ॥

ਧਰਤੀ ਦੇਗ ਮਿਲੈ ਇਕ ਵੇਰਾ ਭਾਰੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਭਮਭਾਰੀ ॥ (SGGS, P. 1190.)

Which means, God has made His earth like a huge deg and it

does not tire giving all living beings. Everyone receives according to his/her destiny and God's will.

The meaning of 'tegh' is to continuously keep fighting (with falsehood) and never give up the struggle. Those who are blessed with the gifts of *deg* and *tegh*, can never be defeated by anyone. The author of "Asraar Samdi" has written, "it is very difficult to defeat the Sikhs because they have *deg* and *tegh*."

Whenever Guru Gobind Singh wanted to praise any Raja (for his just rule), or a warrior (for his bravery), he would say:

"JA SUMM SUNDER SUNA NA SOORA,
DEGH TEGH SACHE BHARPOORA".

Which means, a true warrior, the like of you, has not been heard of, who is filled to brim with the concept of *deg* and *tegh*. To express someone's power, the Guru would say: "*Degh tegh ko jaahe bharosa*", which means, he is so powerful because he believes in the concept of *deg* and *tegh*.

According to 'Gur Bilas Patshahi 10', when the tenth Master initiated the five beloved ones (*panj piare*), to the Amrit ceremony, in addition to explaining to them the code of conduct, he also enjoined:

"Always consider the *Adi Granth* (Guru Granth Sahib) close to you (as companion). Always go to the Gurdwara because you will attain extreme peace on the vision (*darshan*) of the Granth. Always recite the Name, "*Waheguru*" and meditate on this name also. Sing the laudations of God and the Guru and maintain *deg* and *tegh*. You shall always be victorious.

In 'Prachin Panth Prakash' also it is written that the greatness of Khalsa lies in that they do not take away their hand from *deg* and *tegh* and never shirk sharing (their earnings with needy).

Q. 58. What do we understand by the term “*chaukian*”?

Ans. The meaning of the term ‘*chauki*’ is a ‘guard of sentries’. When in the presence of the Guru any task is performed, keeping oneself alert, cautious and careful, it is known as “*chauki bharna*” (Performing of *chauki*). Guru Arjan Dev in one of his hymns, in *Raag Sorath*, has clearly illustrated the meaning of the term ‘*chauki*’:

ਗੁਰ ਬਾ ਸਬਦੁ ਰਖਵਾਰੇ ॥ ਚੜ੍ਹਿਕੀ ਚੜ੍ਹਿਗਿਰਦ ਹਮਾਰੇ ॥ (SGGS, P. 626)

“The word of the Guru is our guardian, mounting guard on all four sides of us”.

The tradition of taking out *chauki* (*chauki khadhana*), was first started by Baba Budha when Guru Har Gobind was imprisoned in the Gwalior fort by the order of emperor Jahangir. Groups of Sikhs with lit torches would go from one village to another in Punjab and then on to Gwalior where they would circumambulate the fort before returning to Punjab. In this way the word ‘*chauki*’ also assumed the meaning of taking out procession in order to express unhappiness and dissatisfaction. These days a *chauki* goes from Amritsar to Taran Taaran or Goindwal in the memory of the Gurus.

Guru Har Gobind is also said to have stated that when the *chauki* would reach Akaal Takhat Sahib, at that time its effect would be such as if he (the Guru) himself was present in the *chauki*.

In the Hari Mandir (Golden Temple), Gurū Har Gobind was the first to institute the “*chaukis*” of Kirtan (hymn singing). This tradition was revived by Bhai Mani Singh* when he was appointed as the ‘Granthi’ of Hari Mandir.

* After Guru Har Gobind moved to Kirat Pur the management of Golden Temple came into the hands of the Minas (the descendents of Prithi Chand), who discontinued the tradition of Kirtan *chaukis*.

Although *kirtan* is constantly sung in the Golden Temple, special *kirtan chaukis* sit there daily. For such a *chauki* it is necessary that four performers with different musical instruments should sit together and perform the *kirtan*. The following is the schedule of these *chaukis*:

1. *Asa di Var chauki* ————— completed before Sunrise.
2. *Bilawal chauki* ————— starts at 10:00 A. M.
3. *Charan Kanwal chauki* — starts at about 2:00 P. M.
4. *Sodar chauki* ————— starts at sunset, after the *Rehraas Sahib* prayer.
5. *Sohila chauki* ————— At night, before bedtime of Guru Granth Sahib (for *Sohila* prayer).

Also there is another meaning of *chauki*, like a police *chauki* (a small police post), established in remote areas for the safety of the public. However, Khalsa is always ready to help and rush to the aid of poor and needy. Thus Khalsa is always on a 'chauki'.

Q. 59. How did the Sikh “*Nishaan Sahib*” (flag) evolve?

Ans. A triangular saffron coloured, piece of silk or cotton with printed or patched Khalsa symbols in the middle, is called '*Nishaan Sahib*'.

If the '*Nishaan Sahib*' is to be installed for the first time (e.g., at a Gurdwara), then the prepared cloth flag should be brought from a historic Gurdwara. This symbolizes the everlasting continuity of unfurling of the *Nishaan Sahib* there.

According to 'Prachin Panth Prakash', Guru Nanak perceived this kind of saffron coloured banner in the abode of Akaal Purakh (*Sach Khand*) and he brought it from there.

As already mentioned, *Nishaan Sahib* is triangular in shape with the opposite edges forming 45 degree angle at their joining

point. In the center is the sign of  and 'khanda' is drawn. According to Bhai Nand Lal, the flag of Guru Gobind Singh had the words, "Waheguru Ji ki Fateh" imprinted on it.

During the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the words, "Akaal Sahaee" (God be helpful) was printed on his flag. One of the Sikh "Misl" was known as "*Nishaan Walia*", which means the flag carriers. In this Misl, selected warriors were enlisted and their task was to carry the Khalsa flags, during the battles, for all other Misl.

Bhai Alam Singh set an example of how much respect the Nishaan Sahib accorded. He was carrying the *Nishaan Sahib* in a battle against the Mughal army when he was surrounded by the enemy. The commander of the Mughal army asked Bhai Alam Singh to drop the flag otherwise his hands would be chopped off. Bhai Alam Singh replied that if his hands were chopped off he would hold the flag with his feet. The Mughal retorted, in that case his (Alam Singh's) feet would also be chopped off. Bhai Sahib replied, then he would hold it in his mouth. The Mughal angrily asked how would he guard the flag if his (Alam Singh's) head were cut off? Bhai Alam Singh calmly replied that in such an eventuality the entity whose Nishaan Sahib it was, shall guard it.

Q. 60. Why is it necessary to beat a "Nagaara" (the big war drum)?

Ans. In old days beating of a Nagaara symbolized the sovereignty of a ruler. At the time of assuming the governorship of Kaabul, prince Muazzim (later on emperor Bahadur Shah) ordered the beating of Nagaara. When his father, emperor Aurangzeb heard this news, he wrote to Muazzim, "When Allah bestows upon you the crown of an emperor, you can then beat the Nagaara; until then, however, you should be contented on beating four smaller drums".

The same emperor Aurangzeb had written to the governor of Sirhind that he should take strong (military) action against Guru Gobind Singh if he does not stop sitting on a throne in his congregation and beating the Nagaara.

The tradition of beating of Nagaara was started during the time of Guru Har Gobind. Whenever the Guru moved from one place to another, Nagaara was beaten continuously.

When Guru Har Gobind appointed Bhai Roopa to preach Sikhism in distant lands, he gave him the flag and a Nagaara. This meant that he (Bhai Roopa) should feel free (like a sovereign) and preach.

Even today when early in the morning the procession of Guru Granth Sahib starts from Akaal Takhat towards the Golden Temple for the opening ceremony, Nagaara is constantly beaten.

The seventh Master, Guru Hari Rae, had given orders to beat the Nagaara at the time of starting *Langar* (common kitchen) so that everyone should know that the serving of food has started. Outside the court of the eighth Master, Guru Hari Krishan, a Nagaara was kept and beaten at appropriate times. In Anandpur Sahib (at the time of the tenth Master) when Ranjit Nagaara was beaten and it resounded the Shivalik hills, its reverberations would instill enthusiasm and vigour in the hearts of the Sikhs while the hill Rajas would tremble in fear. This Ranjit Nagaara was made at Anand Pur in 1684.

Maharajah Ranjit Singh used to say, "do not call me Ranjit Singh, I am the Ranjit Nagaara (of Guru Gobind Singh), trying to send aloud the message of the Guru to the populace".

Within a Gurdwara a Nagaara is a must* and it should be beaten each morning at the time of opening of Guru Granth Sahib. This would openly declare to everyone that this is the

* *The tradition of keeping a Nagaara in every Gurdwara is still in vogue. Even the historic Gurdwaras still hold on to this tradition.*

royal court of the true emperor.

Q.61. What is the procedure of preparing and distribution of 'Karhah Prasaad' (sacramental sweet pudding)?

Ans. According to "Prachin Panth Prakash" the practice of serving "Karhah Prasaad, at the conclusion of congregational prayers was started by Guru Nanak who seems to have invented its recipe also.

Guru Arjan Dev once said that on returning after the cremation of a person, the relatives and friends should gather in the Gurdwara where Karhah Prasaad should be distributed (after reading of Guru Granth Sahib). This has a very profound meaning—a Sikh considers the will of Akaal Purakh (God) as sweet.

The Tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh enjoined to the extent that if someone had a problem or lack of progress in a particular project, he or she should make a supplication to Akaal Purakh after preparing Karhah Prasaad and then distributing it in the congregation. Recourse should not be taken to any vows, pledges or promises to any deity, nor should one request or flatter any human being for such a purpose.

The procedure for preparing Karhah Prasaad is as follows:

First take a shower and put on clean clothes. Take a clean utensil and to this add equal amounts (by weight) of wheat flour and *ghee* (clarified butter); mix and cook on medium fire. Separately, dissolve equal amount of sugar in 3–4 times the amount of water on slow fire. Recite Gurbani (Japu Ji, or Waheguru) all through the process of preparation. When the flour turns pink add the sugar solution to it and keep mixing on medium fire until it attains the required consistency. Now put it in a clean wide pan, cover it with a clean piece of cloth and place it on a clean stool in front of

Guru Granth Sahib.

Recite aloud six stanzas (the first five and the last one) of Anand Sahib (the composition of the third Master, Guru Amar Das, in *Raag Ram Kali*). Following this the whole congregation should join in Ardaas (supplication). At the end of the supplication a passage from Guru Granth Sahib (*Vaak*) is read (at random). Only after this the Kirpan (sacred sword) should be presented to the Karhah Prasaad.

Before serving to the congregation the share of Panj Piaare (the five beloved ones) should be taken out. Either this should be distributed among five Khalsa Sikhs or mixed in the bulk of Karhah Prasaad. A small portion should be put in a plate, covered with a piece of cloth and kept close to Guru Granth Sahib as the share of the person sitting with the *chaur* (whisk) in front of Guru Granth Sahib. After this the Karhah Prasaad should be distributed equally to everyone in the congregation. This is the directive of the Tenth Master.

According to Amar Naama, Guru Gobind Singh used to distribute Karhah Prasaad after the evening congregational prayer of Rehraas Sahib also.

Q. 62. How is the “*Vaak*” (picking of a random hymn) to be taken from Guru Granth Sahib?

Ans. A Sikh is both a saint as well as a soldier. A soldier stands daily in line and takes the order for the day from his/her commanding officer. Similarly, a Sikh joins, everyday, the holy congregation (*Sangat*) and takes commandment (*Hukam*) from the true emperor, Guru Granth Sahib. He/she then bows and takes a vow to lead his/her life according to this commandment (that particular day).

It is appropriate to recite a *salok* (couplet) portraying humility before taking of the cover (*rumala*) with great respect.

Better yet, the following saloks may be recited:

ਖੰਡ ਵਿਥਾਂਦੜੇ ਜੇ ਲਹਾਂ ਘਿੰਨਾ ਸਾਢੀ ਤੋਲਿ ॥

ਤੰਨਿ ਜੜਾਈ ਆਪਣੈ ਲਹਾਂ ਸੁ ਸਜਣੁ ਟੋਲਿ ॥

ਸਜਣੁ ਸਚਾ ਪਾਤਿਸਾਹੁ ਸਿਰਿ ਸਾਹਾਂ ਏ ਸਾਹੁ ॥

ਜਿਸੁ ਪਾਸਿ ਬਹਿਠਿਆ ਸੋਹੀਐ ਸਭਨਾ ਦਾ ਵੇਸਾਹੁ ॥

(SGGS, P. 1426)

(If there were wings for sale, I would buy them even if I had to pay my flesh in equal weight. Fixing them on my body I would seek the Divine friend. The true friend is the king of kings (Waheguru) whose company exalts one and who is prop to all).

In order to pick the hymn (commandment) the top hymn of the left hand side page be read from the beginning. If it starts from the previous page then the leaf should be turned and the hymn read. If the commandment happens to be a part of a 'vaar' then all the saloks proceeding the 'pauri' (including the pauri itself) should be read. Whether it is a 'chhant' or an 'ashtpadi' the conclusion of the hymn is where, at the end of the last stanza, the term "Nanak" comes. That is where one should stop.

No commandment is harsh or soothing. Every one of them is a Divine message. Even if you remember by heart, a hymn that is being read by the Granthi, do not recite along with him. Only listen respectfully. It is recommended that the page and the first sentence of the hymn should be announced loudly after it has been recited. This is the practice at the Golden Temple Amritsar.

To pick a number of sheets of Guru Granth Sahib from both sides and then separating them at random, in order to get the commandment hymn, is not proper. This is a practice in Islam and is known as "doing the faal".

Q. 63. What do you know about Nirmalas, Udaasis, Sehjdhaaris, Nanak Panthis, Seva Panthis and Nihangs (Buddha Dal as well Taruna Dal)?

Ans.

NIRMALAS:

Guru Gobind Singh himself started the Nirmala sect. For educational and intellectual leadership he selected some knowledgeable Sikhs and sent them to Kashi (Benaras) for higher education in Sanskrit. When they returned after successful completion of their education they were then given the title of "Nirmal Panth". It is clear that the tenth Master started "Khalsa" Panth in order to uproot injustice, cruelty and brutality. He started the Nirmalas so that the pristine missionary work of Sikhism should be carried out. Sant Gulab Singh, in his Panth Prakash, has expressed a similar idea. "Guru Gobind Singh, an embodiment of God's light created two types of Sikhs. To one he gave a sword and strength to cleanse the earth of cruel people. To the other he bestowed high intellect and education. These were believers of one 'Akaal Purakh' and were called Nirmalas (means clean, free from dirt).

All these Nirmalas were Amritdhaaris (had taken Khande di Pahul). They were always preaching to make the people aware of the high ideals of the Gurus and the great martyrdoms of innumerable Sikhs and urging them to hold on to these ideals. Thus they instigated the Sikhs to stay steadfast on the path followed by these Sikh martyrs. They always wore long white robes as if it was their uniform (like a black jacket is of lawyers). They also led the life of celibacy so that they could devote their lives to missionary work, being free from the encumbrances of the family. This does not separate them from the Panth.

(These days there are certain groups among Sikhs who do not eat if the food is not prepared in steel utensils. Also there are some groups whose women wear turbans like men. Such minor differences (in life style) do not make them belong to a separate religion. As long as a group preaches one Guru, one Bani (Word)

and contemplation on one Shabad, that group is an inseparable part of the Panth.)

The first five Sikhs whom Guru Gobind Singh sent to Kashi for higher education, were:

1. Bhai Karan Singh.
2. Bhai Veer Singh.
3. Bhai Ganda Singh.
4. Bhai Sobha Singh.
5. Bhai Ram Singh.

In his book, Nirmal Bhushan, Bhai Ganesa Singh has written that Nirmala Saints, not caring for comfortable life, go to villages where they teach Gurmukhi to children and make them remember Gurbani by heart. By doing such community service they gain the respect and reverence of the people. Also they initiate people into Khalsa brotherhood by administering Amrit.

The first Nirmala center (Akhara) was established, by Bhai Dargah Singh, in Kaithal, in September 1710. The Khalsa flag was also raised there. There are five Nirmala centers at the following places:

1. Hardwar.
2. Paryag.
3. Ujjain.
4. Triyanbak and
5. Kurukshetra.

B. UDAASIS:

The Udaasi sect was founded by Baba Siri Chand, the eldest son of Guru Nanak. Initially, he separated himself from the main stream Sikhism. Gradually, however, he realized his mistakes and became closer so that now it has become an inseparable part of the Panth. He was greatly impressed by the humility of Guru Ram Das, the service of Guru Arjan Dev to the community and the bravery of Guru Har Gobind. When he was old and ready to

retire, he came to Guru Har Gobind and asked for one of his (Guru's) sons to take care of the Udaasi group, which by then had become very close to Sikhism and had actually started working as a group of Sikh missionaries. Guru Har Gobind who had realized the transformation that the Udaasis had gone through, gladly gave his eldest son, Baba Gurditta, to become a successor to Baba Siri Chand. Baba Siri Chand was pleased and bestowed all his spiritual powers to Baba Gurditta.

Baba Gurditta was an accomplished planner. For the purpose of missionary work he established four centers (Dhuans) He picked four dedicated Sikhs from Kashmir to head these centers. Their names are: Bhai Balu Hasna, Bhai Phool, Bhai Goinda and Bhai Almast.

With the blessings of Guru Hari Rae, Guru Hari Krishan and Guru Tegh Bahadur, the Udaasis developed six groups (Bakshishs) who spread the teachings of the Sikh Gurus far and wide. These Bakshishs were:

1. Suthre Shahi.
2. Sangat Sahibee-e.
3. Bhagat Bhaagwaahee-e.
4. Miha Shaahee-e.
5. Jeet Mallee-e.
6. Bakhat Malee-e.

Udaasis wear read robes and a black 'Seli' around their neck (some also wear orange robes). They do not cut their hair or shave their beards.

C. SEHJDHAARI:

A Sehjdhaari is one who is gradually coming into the folds of Sikhism and has started leading his/her life according to the Sikh tenets (does not use tobacco, does not eat meat of an animal

slaughtered slowly) and has decided to make his children Sikhs.

Those who cut their hair after keeping them are not Sehjdhaaris. They are 'Patit' (fallen ones). A Sehjdhaari is proceeding upward towards the destination (of Sikhi) but a 'Patit' is falling downward. Guru Gobind Singh's commandment is:

"If a Sehjdhaari makes his son a Singh, his root becomes green (live). He who cuts his hair and keeps his beard trimmed, he is uprooted (from Sikhi).

D. NIHANGS:

Anyone who lives free from fear is called a Nihang. Guru Arjan Dev has described Nihang in this very manner:

ਨਿਰਭਉ ਹੋਇਓ ਭਇਆ ਨਿਹੰਗਾ ॥

(SGGS, P. 392.)

According to old Panth Prakash, a person who has forsaken the fear of death and is always ready to embrace martyrdom is called a Nihang.

Nihang Singhs are unattached to worldly materials. They wear blue clothes and tie a turban that is a foot high with a "dumala" on top of it. They always keep several weapons like *chakkar*, *khanda* etc. on them.

This group was also established on an order from Guru Gobind Singh. He was so impressed by the devotion of Bhai Maan Singh, who stayed with him from Anand Pur to Nanderh, that he praised him and his blue attire and said, "A fearless, pure, immaculate and devoted Sikh, with a distinct attire, like you should have his own group".

These Nihangs used to be famous for their generosity, strict adherence to Dharma and of such a spotless character that even in those days of turmoil, there was a saying, "Open the door, do not be afraid, a Nihang has come to your house".

They used to lead such an intrepid and unpredictable life

style that even their family did not know of their whereabouts. While riding or fighting they always uttered "Akaal". That is why they also became known as "Akaalis". They had their own typical language that indicated their positive thinking. For example:

- To die ——— Charhaae karna.
(literal meaning is to invade).
- Sickness or sleep ——— Dharam Raj di dhe.
(literal meaning is daughter of the angel of death).
- Punishment to a guilty ——— Shaheedi maar.
- Grams (garbenzo beans) ——— Badaam.
(literal meaning is almonds).
- Salt ——— Sarab rass
(literal meaning is all tastes).
- A little ——— Sawaya
(literal meaning is one and a quarter).
- To run out on food ——— Langar mast ho gia.
- Grass ——— Hara palla.
- Shanty ——— Sheesh Mahal
(literal meaning is a glass palace).
- Calamity ——— Swarag
(literal meaning is heaven)
- Worn out scarf ——— Hazar mekhi.
- Coarse grain ——— Gurmukhi Parshaad.
- Rupees ——— Chhillar
(literal meaning is bark of a tree).
- Someone loose on Sikh conduct ——— Dabarh Ghusarh.
- One ——— Sava lakh
(literal meaning is one hundred twenty five thousand).
- Oneself ——— Fauj (literal meaning is army).

E. SEVA PANTHI:

Seva Panthis are also an inseparable part of the Panth. Guru Tegh Bahadur first gave them his blessings. To this seed of ninth Master's blessings, the tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh further nurtured with the water of his grace.

Bhai Kahnaiya was the first sprout of this seed and Bhai Seva Ram the first healthy branch of this tree. To this, later on, several other healthy branches grew. Notable among them are, Bhai Adam (Adam Shaahee-e), Bhai Aya Ram, Bhai Bhala Ram, Bhai Seva Das, Bhai Dukh Bhanjan and many more.

According to Sikh history, when Guru Tegh Bahadur looked at Bhai Kahnaiya, the latter went into a state of ecstatic trance. He felt as if his physical self had separated from his spiritual self. According to another tradition, Guru Tegh Bahadur asked Bhai Kahnaiya to bring a pitcher of water from a distant well. When he brought the water, the Guru asked him to spill it and bring another pitcher. Bhai Kahnaiya brought another and this was also spilled by the Guru's order. This process went on for many times but Bhai Kahnaiya neither questioned the motive of the Guru nor indicated any drop in his enthusiasm to serve the Guru. The Guru was preparing him for tireless service without any discrimination (a kind of Red Cross) in the battles of the future. The purpose of repeatedly spilling the water was to test the devotion of the Sikh. If he (Bhai Kahnaiya) had indicated a concern on the repeated spilling of water (without any apparent reason) then how could he serve water to the (wounded) enemy soldiers? When Guru Tegh Bahadur found his great devotion and unshakeable resolve to service, he gave Bhai Kahnaiya the duty of serving water to the congregation. Later on (in Guru Gobind Singh's time) he was given the duty of serving water to the wounded soldiers in battles. This he did by carrying a large container made with a goatskin.

F. BUDDHA DAL AND TARUNA DAL:

These are the names of two groups started by Nawab Kapoor Singh in 1774. Buddha Dal was stationed at Amritsar and was given the duty of protection of the Golden Temple. Another duty of Buddha Dal was to train young men in the art of fighting, who would then become members of Taruna Dal. This group was later on divided into five sub-groups.

G. NANAK PANTHI:

Those who follow the spiritual path delineated by Guru Nanak (irrespective of their creed) – who believe in one God and meditate on Him are called ‘Nanak Panthi’. Guru Nanak had given the true Name of the creator to the world.

Q. 64. How is Sikhism an independent, sovereign religion?

Ans. The fifth Nanak, Guru Arjan Dev said:

ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਕੈ ਦੁਆਰੈ ਜਿ ਹੋਇ ਬਿਤੀਤੈ ਸੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਆਖਿ ਸੁਣਾਵੈ ॥

(SGGS, P. 373)

“Nanak tells whatever happens at the portal of God”.

One can easily infer and, consequently, firmly believe that the founding Gurus of Sikhism have not borrowed any thing, in terms of philosophy, from anywhere else. In Sukhmani Sahib, the fifth Master further affirms the basic Sikh philosophy:

ਬਹੁ ਸਾਸਤ੍ਰੁ ਬਹੁ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਪੇਖੇ ਸਰਬ ਢਚੋਲਿ ॥

ਪੂਜਸਿ ਨਾਹੀ ਹਰਿ ਹਰੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮ ਅਮੋਲ ॥

(SGGS, P. 265)

“I have studied and searched thoroughly the Hindu Scriptures (Shastras and Simrities) and reached the conclusion that all of them are nowhere near the meditation on the Divine Naam (Name of the Lord)”.

This, obviously, lays the foundation of a new, separate and independent religion. That is why it could be called “*Saibhang*” or self-dependent faith.

At Pushkar, a place of pilgrimage for Hindus, Pandit Chetan Das asked the Tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh, “Who are these people with long, uncut hair with you? From their attire they neither look like Hindus nor like Muslims”. On hearing this Guru Gobind Singh said, “They are ‘Khalsa’, a third religion, who are servants of God. They indeed are different from Hindus as well as Muslims. Except Akaal Purakh (One God) they do not consider any one as their Master. They address God as:

ੜੁ ਨਿਜ ਪਤਿ ਹੈ ਦਾਤਾ ॥

(SGGS, P. 666)

“*You are, O God, the only provider*”.

The Gurus thus toppled all the (supporting) pillars of Hinduism, some of which are as follows:

The first pillar: Hindu has forgotten the God almighty and started worshipping the visible forces of nature, e.g., Sun, Air, Fire etc., as gods and goddesses. But the voice of Sikhism says:

ਮਾਇਆ ਮੋਹੇ ਦੇਵੀ ਸਭਿ ਦੇਵਾ ॥

(SGGS, P. 227)

“*All gods and goddesses are enchanted by Maaya*”.

The second pillar: Vedas were the second pillars of Hinduism; considered revelatory Divine scriptures. The Guru said, “The Vedas are like a trader. They created differences between high and low and inculcated bigotry. Bani (Guru’s word) on the other hand imparted spiritual knowledge”.

The third pillar: Caste system and believing in the superiority of Brahmins is the third pillar. The Gurus eliminated the position of a Purohit (a Brahmin only who could perform religious ceremonies). In the Sikh society Guru Arjan Dev went

to the extent of saying that nothing should be given to these (bad) Brahmins because they themselves are ignorant and try to deceive innocent people. Only Satguru is the emancipator and his grace showers on the Sikhs.

The Tenth Master had also enjoined that exhortations and commandments of the Brahmins should not be obeyed. He said, "Do not make your conscience dirty with their company. Do not even think to follow the rituals of Hindus. Always have faith in the most revered 'Akaal Purakh' (God)".

The institutions of Sikhs, their life style, social behaviour, spiritual, political and religious beliefs are totally different from Hindus or any other faith. They do not have even remote resemblance with anyone else. Their institution like *Langar* (free common kitchen), *Pangat* (everyone sitting at the same level to take food together), *Sangat* (congregation), *Gurdwara*, *Nagaara* (war drum), *Nishaan Sahib* (flag), *Bungaas* and *Chaukis* are distinctly their own.

The Sikh code of conduct (*Rehit Maryada*) tells the values to be adhered to in leading ones life. According to this code of conduct one is advised to stay away from all those customs that create doubts, absurd fanciful ideas and subjugation of any one class of people.

As far as religious beliefs are concerned; from initial invocation to observing and celebrating important days, births, weddings, naming (of a baby), etc., and even the consumption of the kind of foods, are all different. The political objectives are also quite different. When the Sikh empire was established, its first blow fell on the feudalistic system. In Nanderh Sahib the Sikhs said to Guru Gobind Singh that they would not help anyone who would want to be a king (by himself). It is *Khalsa* (as a nation) that is to be known as all powerful. Guru Gobind Singh once said, "Khalsa has been bestowed upon with a kingdom by God

Himself". Sikhism has its own spiritual ideas and objectives. A Sikh does not believe in salvation after death. He wants emancipation while he is alive. He believes that in the end taking of Amrit, which leads to a life lived according to the Khalsa code of conduct, is going to help in attainment of eternal peace and vision of Akaal Purakh.

Once when a Sikh passed away and his relatives and friends expressed their concern (about his next life), Guru Gobind Singh told them not to worry. He said, "the Sikh had led his life in humility and observed the Khalsa code of conduct therefore he has gone straight to *Sach Khand* (the realm of truth), i.e., merged in the supreme truth.

Arubindo Ghosh once said, "A Sikh always puts his step forward".

At this point it will not be out of place to write the observation made by Indira Gandhi in her book, "Eternal India" (P. 217). This will give some food for thought to those people who do not tire saying that Sikhs are only Hindus with unshorn hair. According to her, "the actions of Guru Nanak and the Sikh movement after him were astonishingly original and novel. On no account would this be called revivalism of any religion. It was an outburst of fresh creativity like that of a volcano that conserves energy for ages and then suddenly erupts.

Guru Nanak gave an entirely original idea:

ਸਚੁ ਓਰੈ ਸਭ ਕੋ ਦੁਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਆਚਾਰੁ ॥

(SGGS, P. 62)

"Truth is higher than everything, but higher still is truthful living".

In his book, "Bhagat Mala of Sikhs", Bhai Mani Singh writes: When the quazi asked Guru Nanak if he was a Hindu or a Muslim, his reply was, "I do not know anyone except God". It is the body (of a human being) that is either Hindu or Muslim, but I go beyond the body".

In his book, "Dabistan-i-Mazahib", written between 1630 and 1640 A.D., Mohsin Fani writes in the very first line of the chapter on Nanak Panthis: They (the Sikhs) neither believe in idols nor in idol worship. They neither believe in the doctrine of Avtaras nor they consider Sanskrit as the language of Gods".

McCaliff, addressing the world said, "Let me introduce to you a religion from East whose followers neither believe in idol worship nor in meaningless rituals. They do not believe in caste system or in the terrible custom of burning a widow on the funeral pyre of her dead husband. They do not consider a woman to be inferior to man and do not use intoxicants. They do not worship rivers and places of pilgrimage like Hindus do, and refrain from calumniating others. On the contrary they lead their lives with gratitude to the Creator, patience, sharing, justice, truth, honesty, brotherly love and other high ideals of leading a clean life without taking any sides."

The officials of the Delhi emperor, Ibrahim Lodhi, the successor to Behlol Lodhi, informed the emperor that a faqir whose tenets were different from those of the Quraan or the Hindu scriptures (Vedas), was openly preaching in the public; and the way he was being accorded respect and the importance he was gaining might, he may, in the long run, prove to be a threat to the state.

An imperial order was immediately issued and Guru Nanak was brought before the emperor. After listening to Guru Nanak's ideas on his religious philosophy the emperor was convinced that it was different, and in some ways contrary to that of Islam. He ordered that the Guru be kept in prison. Guru Nanak was kept in the prison for seven months where he bore the hardships of grinding corn. He was released just before Ibrahim's defeat in the battle of Panipat from Babar's hands.

Those who read the Sawaiyya of the Tenth Master in the

evening prayer of Rehraas Sahib:

“Ever since I came unto Your feet, O Lord, I do not (care for) anyone else. I do not follow the ways preached by various religions and do not believe in Ram, Mohammed, Puranas or Quraan. The Simritis, Shastras and Vedas lay down different doctrines but I do not recognize any of them”.

Thus one should never even think that Sikhism is a branch of any other religion. It is an independent and sovereign faith.

Q. 65. What do the Sikh tenets say regarding food (what to eat) and attire (what to wear)?

Ans. Guru Nanak has given three main rules in regards to eating and wearing. Do not eat or wear what would result in:

1. Turning your joy into regret, just as it happens after the use of intoxicants and excessive rich food in lavish parties.
2. Making your body feel compressed, as when one wears extra-tight clothes as a result of which it becomes difficult for one to sit properly (e.g., in Gurdwara) or making it difficult for one to perform bodily functions.
3. Ones mind getting filled with foul thoughts, as it often happens on taking intoxicants.

According to the Sikh code of conduct one should eat simple food and stay away from intoxicating substances. On what one should wear, the '*Rehit Maryada*' says that except a turban and underwear, which must be worn, there is no restriction on the rest of the attire*.

About restriction on eating there is a story. In the time of

* For women the wearing of turban is not mandatory.

Guru Har Gobind a Hindu told a Muslim that he was thinking of converting to Islam because there are very few restrictions in Islam regarding what one could eat. Pandit Partap Mal, a learned man, was listening to this conversation. He said to the Hindu, "My good man, if you are planning to convert into another religion only because of eating restrictions, then why don't you embrace the Sikh religion where there is practically no restriction on what one should eat. In Islam eating of pork is a taboo".

Q. 66. Does ritualism have any place in Sikhism?

Ans. Sikh religion does not recognize any ritualistic procedures. The details of *mantras* (formulas) for various rituals together with their performing procedures are given in a part of *Rig Veda* known as '*Atre Brahmin*'. These are supposed to be used to defeat the enemy or to acquire occult powers. The votaries of ritualistic procedures believe that a particular *mantra*, chanted at an exact moment, does have its effect.

Sikhs believe only in God's Grace. Guru Arjan Dev, in a hymn in *Basant Raag*, enjoins that requesting God for His Grace is above and beyond all rituals and *mantras*:

ਸਗਲ ਧਰਮ ਮਹਿ ਉਤਮ ਧਰਮ॥ ਕਰਮ ਕਰਤੂਤਿ ਕੈ ਉਪਰਿ ਕਰਮ॥

(SGGS, P. 1182)

"Of all religions the most sublime is the religion of God; It is above and beyond all rituals and occult practices".

In the rather lengthy hymn of '*Baarah Maah*' (the twelve months) the fifth Master gives another very meaningful example:

ਕਿਰਤਿ ਕਰਮ ਕੇ ਵੀਛੁੜੇ ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਮੇਲਹੁ ਰਾਮ॥ (SGGS, P. 133)

"Through the practice of rituals separation (from God) resulted. It is only through His Grace that one could meet Him".

Because the ritualistic procedures involve accounting

(repeating a *mantra* so many times at such and such time and such and such place) and mental jugglery (make and break), they will lead to separation. Karam (ritualistic chores) are actually ties (with Maaya).

Guru Nanak has said in *Siri Raag*:

ਕੇਤੇ ਬੰਧਨ ਜੀਅ ਕੇ

(SGGS, P. 62)

"The mind is tied up with many ties".

The second Master, Guru Angad Dev has exhorted the Sikhs to work in order to become worthy of God's Grace, "Meditation on Lord's Name is the real task".

Those who believe in God's Name do not recognize the power of any ritualistic chores or *mantras*.

Q. 67. What is the place of miracles in Sikh religion?

Ans. Guru Nanak has strongly condemned the working of miracles. According to him to show (work) a miracle is a curse. The third Master, Guru Amar Das, has called it attachment (to *Maaya*):

ਰਿਧਿ ਸਿਧਿ ਸਭੁ ਮੋਹੁ ਹੈ

"The pursuit of occult powers is attachment to Maaya".

When the Sidhas (yogis) asked Guru Nanak to show a miracle, his answer was:

"I do not possess any miracle other than the true Name (of God)". (Bhai Gurdas, Vaar 1, Pauri 43)

To show a miracle in order to exhibit ones superiority or greatness, to win over or conquer someone is not only prohibited but is considered as an obstruction in the planned work of God.

When Guru Har Gobind's own son, Baba Atal Rae, revived his dead friend (Mohan), the Guru said, "Who is this competitor of God born in our family?"

According to Guru Hari Rae, those who resort to occult powers in order to win in a spiritual argument, are fighting a boxing contest.

When Guru Tegh Bahadur was asked to accept Islam, upon his refusal he was given a choice between showing a miracle and accepting death (martyrdom). The Guru replied, "Those who stay within their home (religion) are humble while those who forsake their religion are apostate. To show a miracle is atrocity, therefore a true faqir will not do it; and God smiles on him". He accepted martyrdom but did not show a miracle.

When Guru Gobind Singh shot an arrow from Moti Bagh that reached Red Fort Delhi (a distance of several miles), all Mughals who were playing a game of dice there said, "It must be a miracle". At that moment the all-knowing Guru shot another arrow to which was attached a message that said, "It is not a miracle but art of archery".

God is showing miracles everyday. A live human body in motion is a miracle. Bhai Samman said so beautifully, "Is it not a miracle that five antagonistic elements have been put together to form a human body that moves?"

Q. 68. Why (has Sikhism) so strongly condemned the Brahminical way of life?

Ans. The responsibility of introducing all the complications, hypocrisies, frauds, meaningless rituals and customs in (Hindu) religion falls solely on Brahmins. The great Gurus came to relieve us from the load of meaningless rituals prescribed by *'Atharv Veda'*, to snap our bonds of slavery to these, self serving frauds (Brahmins), and making us free. That is the reason why they issued such strong directive of never to adopt the Brahminical way of life. The Tenth Master went even a step further and said that if any Sikh ever adopted this way of life, he would lose all

his credibility with him (the Guru).

The Brahmins considered themselves superior to all other human beings and had reserved all the rights and privileges for themselves. They had assumed the exalted position of gods and had thrown all others in the pit of spiritual slavery, thus condemned to suffer for all times to come.

The Brahmin's way is to divide the society. For example:

1. The sacred thread worn by Brahmins has three strands, that of a Kshatriya has two, that of a Vaishya has a single strand and a Shudra cannot even wear a sacred thread. A Brahmin's sacred thread is made of silk, that of a Kshatriya is cotton and the Vaishya's is wool. The ceremony for a Brahmin to wear it is in Spring, for Kshatriya it is in Summer and for a Vaishya it is in Autumn. The age at which a Brahmin youth should wear the thread is 7 years, for a Kshatriya youth it is 9 years and for a Vaishya youth it is 11 years. But the Tenth Master finished this discrimination by making the Amrit available to all.
2. According to Brahminical way, only a Brahmin can accept donations. But according to the directive of the Gurus, donations should be given to all (needy) persons.

ਹਰਿ ਕਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਇ ਸੁਣਿ ਸਭਨਾ ਨੋ ਕਰਿ ਦਾਨੁ॥ (SGGS, P. 135.)

The Tenth Master said, "giving donations to saintly people is good, giving to anyone else has little merit".

Guru Arjan Dev has said even this for the Brahmins:

ਪੂਜਾ ਤਿਲਕ ਕਰਤ ਇਸਨਾਨਾ॥ ਫੁਰੀ ਕਾਢਿ ਲੇਵੈ ਹਥਿ ਦਾਨਾ॥ ੨॥

ਬੇਦੁ ਪੜੈ ਮੁਖਿ ਮੀਠੀ ਬਾਣੀ॥ ਜੀਆਂ ਬੁਹਤ ਨ ਸੰਗੈ ਪਰਾਣੀ॥

(SGGS, P. 201)

"He takes a bath, puts sacred mark on his forehead, and

worships (idols).

He recites the Vedic mantras with sweet and melodious voice, (but) forcibly extracts charity (as if by showing a knife) and does not hesitate killing beings”.

3. According to Brahminic way one should believe that impurity sticks to a house (family) under certain circumstances. For example, on hearing the death of a relative or the birth to a child, a Brahmin must immerse himself in water with all his clothes. According to Sikh teachings:

ਸਭੇ ਸੁਤਕੁ ਭਰਮੁ ਹੈ

(SGGS, P. 472)

“The idea of such an impurity is mere illusion”.

4. According to Brahminic way, the worship of ancestors and giving a feast to Brahmins annually in their (ancestors) memory is a must. According to Sikh way of life such rituals are against the advice of the Gurus.
5. According to Brahminic way it is necessary to plaster the kitchen with cow dung and draw a line (which no one should cross) while one is taking food because this is the way to worship gods; as if they live because of this ritual of plastering and drawing the line in the kitchen with cow dung. Brahmins preach that if one does not use cow dung for plastering the kitchen and drawing the line, then demons take away the taste of the food.

The directive of Guru Nanak Dev to the Sikhs is that the whole earth is our kitchen and those who recognize the Supreme Truth (God) are free from impurity:

ਪਾਠੇ ਐਸਾ ਕ੍ਰਮ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ॥ ਨਾਮੇ ਸੁਚਿ ਨਾਮੇ ਪੜਉ ਨਾਮੇ ਚਚੁ ਆਚਾਰੁ ॥

(SGGS, P. 355)

“O Brahmin, contemplate God in such a way that His Name becomes your ritualistic purity as well as the study of the scriptures”.

A Sikh is not a fiat to every (god).

6. Brahmins preach the so-called ‘*Avtaar doctrine*’, which means that from time to time God gets incarnated into human form. They have several such *Avtaars* in their mythological stories. But the Sikhs believe that these so-called *Avtaars* were only the kings at different times who ruled justly, and ignorant masses, by blindly following the cunning Brahmins, started worshipping them as *Avtaars*:

ਜੁਗਹ ਜੁਗਹ ਕੇ ਰਾਜੇ ਕੀਏ ਗਾਵਹਿ ਕਰਿ ਅਵਤਾਰੀ ॥

ਤਿਨ ਡੀ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਆ ਤਾ ਕਾ ਕਿਆ ਕਰਿ ਆਖਿ ਵੀਚਾਰੀ ॥

(SGGS, P. 423)

“(People) worship the kings, that ruled in different ages, as Avtaars. Even these so-called Avtaars could not gauge His (God’s) limits, How could a man describe His extant”?

To us Sikhs, the Guru’s commandment is:

ਸੇ ਮੁਖ ਜਲਉ ਜਿਤੁ ਕਹਹਿ ਠਾਠੁਰ ਜੋਨੀ ॥

(SGGS, P. 1136)

“Burnt be the mouth that utters, “God comes into womb”.

7. Brahmins lay stress on the performance of sacrificial rituals or *Yags*. There are several different categories of *Yags*. The first category includes five types of *Yags*: a) *Brahm Yag*; b) *Pitri Yag*; c) *Dev Yag*; d) *Bhoot Yag*; and e) *Atithi Yag*.

These *Yags* must be performed. Then there are rituals to be performed occasionally. These are of four types: a) *Sanskaar*; b) *Shanti*; c) *Varat* (fast) and d) *Praischit* (penance).

The *Sanskars* are of forty types, the *Shanti* has nine “*grihas*” and the worship of god Ganesh. There are fifteen types of *Varats* or fasts along with which the recitation of *Ramayan*, *Maha Bharat* and *Puranas* (scriptural books) is necessary. For *Praischit* or penance there are twelve types of rituals, which include learning and teaching of *Vedas*, performing of *Yagnas* and instigating others to do so. Give alms (charities) and accepting them. Ablutions at sacred places, *havans* (burning butter, dry fruits and spices in fire while reciting *mantras*) and worship of various gods (depending on the occasion and purpose) are other rituals recommended by Brahmins.

In every one of his six books on Sikhism, MaCaliff has written the following hymn from Guru Granth Sahib:

ਭੂਟੇ ਆਂਡਾ ਡਰਮ ਕਾ ਮਨਹਿ ਡਇਓ ਪਰਗਾਸੁ ॥

ਕਾਟੀ ਬੇਰੀ ਪਗਰ ਤੇ ਗੁਰਿ ਕੀਨੀ ਬੰਦਿ ਖਲਾਸੁ ॥

(SGGS, P. 1002)

“The eggshell of doubt is shattered and the mind illumined. The Master has freed (me) from the bonds (of Maaya) by snapping fetters from the feet”.

A Sikh is never to follow the Brahminic way of life and remember the following stanza of Gurbani:

ਬਾਮਨੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਜਗਤ ਕਾ ਡਗਤਨ ਕਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਹਿ ॥

(SGGS, P. 1377)

“The Brahmin may be the preceptor of the worldly (people), but he is not the preceptor of the devotees of God”.

Q. 69. What is the significance of human life in Sikhism?

According to Sikh teachings what duties, in particular, are assigned to various human faculties (hands, ears, nose, eyes, tongue and feet)?

Ans. Bhagat Kabir says:

ਕਬੀਰ ਮਾਨਸ ਜਨਮੁ ਫੁਲੰਫੁ ਹੈ ਹੋਇ ਨ ਬਾਰੈ ਬਾਰ ॥

(SGGS, P. 1366)

“Kabir: human birth is hard to attain, it does not occur again and again”.

This is why the Gurus’ directive is that we should not waste the (counted number of) breaths that the Creator has bestowed upon us.

When the Gurus called *“the human body as the abode of God (Harimandir):”*

ਹਰਿ ਕਾ ਮੰਦਰੁ ਸਰੀਰੁ ਅਤਿ ਸੋਹਣਾ (SGGS, P. 952)

They really meant that God could be attained to while there is life in this body.

ਹਰਿ ਮੰਦਰੁ ਸੋਈ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਥਹੁ ਹਰਿ ਜਾਤਾ॥ (SGGS, P. 953)

Therefore to run away from life or to commit suicide (or the current movement of euthanasia) is not accepted in Sikhism. On the contrary *“those who commit suicide are called world butchers”*:

ਆਤਮ ਘਾਤੀ ਹੈ ਜਗਤ ਕਸਾਈ॥ (SGGS, P. 118)

When a calamity befalls someone, he/she should consider it as a gift from God and turn himself/herself to meditation on God. The recitation of *Naam* or meditation on God is also service to Satguru (true Guru – God). Those who recited the *Naam* have the same place (in Guru’s eyes) as those who wielded the sword for a righteous cause, or those who shared food in companionship.

The following are the duties of various faculties according to Sikh teachings:

EYES: Should not look at others beauty with covetous thoughts.

TONGUE: Should not speak a lie; should not have uncontrolled attraction for delicacies.

EARS: Should not listen to anyone’s calumny.

HANDS: Should not steal; should not touch other women.

FEET: Should not go to perform an evil task.

One should use ones body to help others. One who does not do so, his/her body is useless:

ਮਿਥਿਆ ਤਨ ਨਹੀ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰਾ ॥

(SGGS, P. 269)

Guru Nanak's remedy for every malady and calamity is to remember the Name of the Lord:

ਅਉਖਧ ਮੰਤ੍ਰ ਮੂਲੁ ਮਨ ਏਕੈ ਜੇ ਕਰਿ ਦਿਛੁ ਚਿਤੁ ਥੀਜੈ ਰੇ ॥ (SGGS, P. 156)

“O my mind! There is only one remedy, one mantra and one formula (for all your ailments); focus yourself firmly on the Lord”.

Q. 70. The five maladies (lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego) are all very powerful. What is the prescription given by the Gurus to control these?

Ans. According to *Gurmat* (Sikh tenets) these five should be controlled and utilized in moderation rather than *harbouring* hatred towards them and uprooting them. Stress is laid on detachment (*bairaag*) rather than giving up (*tiaag*).

Gurmat accepts those who annulled their worldly attachment:

ਅੰਦਰਹੁ ਜਿਨ ਕਾ ਮੋਹੁ ਤੁਟਾ

(SGGS, P. 917)

One has to dam the lust and become an honest householder, transfer anger into courage; greed has to be controlled by honest hard work; ego has to be tempered with pride and chivalry and attachment has to be converted into Divine love. One should always remember the exhortation of the Gurbani:

ਕਾਮੁ ਕੋਧੁ ਦੁਇ ਕਰਹੁ ਬਸੋਲੇ ਗੋਭਹੁ ਧਰਤੀ ਭਾਈ ॥

ਜਿਉ ਗੋਭਹੁ ਤਿਉ ਤਮੁ ਸੁਖ ਪਾਵਹੁ ਕਿਰਤੁ ਨ ਮੋਟਿਆ ਜਾਈ ॥

(SGGS, P. 1171)

“Make lust and anger your weeders (channelize their energy); with these dig the earth (of your body). As you weed your farm, joys come to you, deeds (good or bad) cannot be effaced”.

One should always keep in mind this great commandment of Guru Nanak. The correct use of lust and anger is like that of a weeder. At the time of weeding one uses loving care with the crop but anger with the weeds that one uproots. The same way one should make lust and anger as scrapers to remove the dirt of the mind. This will lead to the birth of love (for God) within. This hard work will never go unrewarded.

Q. 71. According to the Sikh teachings (*Gurmat*) what is the prescribed rite of passage on the birth of a baby?

Ans. On the birth of a baby, if honey is available in the house that is fine otherwise some crystal or lump sugar should be dissolved in water, the Mool Mantra (the creedal formula) should be recited over it and using the tip of a sword a couple of drops put in baby’s mouth. The mother should take the rest of this sweet solution.

To put a black woollen thread or any magic formula (written on a piece of paper) around baby’s neck, is against *Gurmat*. When the mother can walk and take shower (irrespective of the number of days passed since delivery), at that time the family, relatives and friends should prepare ‘*Karhah Prasaad*’ (sweet sacramental pudding) and take the baby to the Gurdwara (If it is not practical to prepare the Prasaad at home then it could also be prepared at the Gurdwara). At the Gurdwara hymns of gratitude, like:

ਪਰਮੇਸਰਿ ਦਿਤਾ ਬੰਨਾ ॥

(SGGS, P. 627)

“The Supreme Lord has given the prop”;

And hymns of joy:

ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸਾਚੈ ਦੀਆ ਭੇਜਿ ॥

(SGGS, P. 396.)

“*The true Guru (God) has sent (the baby)*”, should be recited or sung.

After the singing (or recitation) of these hymns, if the reading of Guru Granth Sahib had been started (in anticipation of the birth) and is now complete, then it should be concluded. Otherwise a supplication should be said*. Then the “*Vaak*” (random reading of a hymn from Guru Granth Sahib, according to the given procedure) is to be read. The first letter of the first word of this hymn will be the starting letter of baby’s name. The Granthi could suggest some names and the family and friends could pick one out of these or any other name that they feel appropriate for the baby. The name is then announced in the congregation and accepted. Singh should be added to this name if the baby is a boy and Kaur should be added if it is a girl. Following this the first five and the last stanza of “*Anand Sahib*” is sung and then ‘Prasaad’ is distributed.

There is no restriction regarding eating and drinking (for the mother). The idea of impurity (*sootak*) on the birth of a baby, as prevalent among Hindus, is not recognized among Sikhs.

To take a fabric (*Rumala*) used to cover Guru Granth Sahib and make baby’s clothes with it is inappropriate.

Q. 72. What does “Gurmat” (Sikh code) say about starting any significant project?

Ans. Every one has, from time to time, occasions of joy and happiness or is embarking on an important project; for example, the purchase of a new house and occupying it; starting a new

* *In the supplication it is appropriate to state, “O God, this creature has been sent by you, please give him/her capacity and ability to serve (your humanity)”.*

business; sending a child to school; turban tying ceremony of ones son, etc. On all such happy occasions a Sikh should say a supplication to Waheguru (God) for His help (to make the occasion a success).

One should never forget that in Sikhism, the recitation of Gurbani (hymns form Guru Granth Sahib) and a supplication is an essential and integral part of any significant event in ones life.

Q. 73. Describe the marriage ceremony (*Anand Kaaraj*) among Sikhs.

Ans. The very first recommendation regarding marriage, given in the book "*Prem Sumaarag*", is that to marry ones child one should pick a family that believes in honest work and teachings of Sikhism. One should not look for a wealthy family to develop relationship. In "*Mukat Naama*" it is further recommended that one should marry (ones daughter) to a boy who is sweet tempered, intelligent and knowledgeable (regarding religious teachings). In particular one should make sure that he is not under debt.

Along with these suggestions, it is also directed that one should start looking for a suitable match for ones daughter only after she has been brought up to possess sweet temper and is capable of carrying out household chores.

The Sikh codes include very strong directives that anyone who gives his son or daughter in marriage after accepting money is a "*Tankhaahiaa*" (apostate). Dowry has been described as a curse and those who give and accept (money and/or goods) are detestable.

The marriage of a Sikh boy to a Sikh girl should be consummated without any consideration of their castes or ethnicity. A Sikh girl should marry a Sikh boy. To marry young children is prohibited in Sikhism.

BETROTHAL (KURHMAAEE):

It is not necessary to have the betrothal ceremony before the *Anand Kaaraj*'. However, if the girl's parents wish to perform this ceremony, they should pick any day and gather before Guru Granth Sahib (as congregation) along with their family and friends and the family and friends of the boy. A supplication (Ardaas) is said and a 'kirpan' (sword), a steel bracelet (karha) and something sweet should be given to the boy. The meaning of the Punjabi word "kurhmaaee" is love, devotion and restraint.

To fix a day for wedding: While deciding for a date of 'Anand kaaraj', a search for an auspicious (or inauspicious) day, date or *tithi* (time and day according to the lunar calendar) is considered egotistic and is prohibited:

ਬਾਹਾ ਗਣਹਿ ਨ ਕਰਹਿ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ॥ ਸਾਹੇ ਊਪਰਿ ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ ॥ (SGGS, P. 904)
"One calculates for auspicious days but does not think that God is above and beyond such calculations".

Any day that suits the parents of the girl and the boy should be agreed upon.

The marriage party: Only a minimum number of members should be taken in the marriage party after consulting with the girl's parents. Meaningless rituals like worship of (dead) ancestors, washing of feet with milk and water mixture, performing of 'havans', reciting of dirty couplets, having performances of dancing girls and consumption of liquor etc., are ego-directed acts and are thus prohibited.

Reaching the bride's home and meeting (new) relatives: On reaching the bride's home both sides should sing hymns from Guru Granth Sahib:

ਹਮ ਘਰਿ ਸਾਜਨ ਆਏ ॥ ਸਾਚੈ ਮੇਲਿ ਮਿਲਾਏ ॥
 ਸਹਜਿ ਮਿਲਾਏ ਹਰਿ ਮਨਿ ਭਾਏ ਪੰਚ ਮਿਲੇ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਇਆ ॥

ਸਾਈ ਵਾਸਤੁ ਪਰਾਪਤਿ ਹੋਈ ਜਿਸੁ ਸੇਤੀ ਮਨੁ ਲਾਇਆ ॥
 ਅਨਦਿਨੁ ਮੇਲੁ ਭਇਆ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਨਿਆ ਘਰ ਮੰਦਰ ਸੋਹਾਏ ॥
 ਪੰਚ ਸਬਦ ਧੁਨਿ ਅਨਹਦ ਵਾਜੇ ਹਮ ਘਰਿ ਸਾਜਨ ਆਏ ॥
*“Dear friends have arrived into my home.
 The Holy Lord has brought about the union.
 This union has come by spontaneous devotion
 My heart is fallen in love with God
 I have found joy by this union with the chosen ones
 I have achieved what my heart desired
 This permanent union has filled my heart with satisfaction
 Our home has assumed a beautiful appearance
 The mystic music of five instruments is struck
 On arrival of dear friends”.*

After this the supplication should be said. At the end of the supplication, *“Waheguru Ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji ki Fateh”* should be loudly announced.

The ugly ritual of *“Jai Mala”*, the exchange of garlands by the bride and the groom should never be followed. According to Hindu tradition, *Jai Mala* is the complete consummation of wedding. It is prohibited according to Sikh code. The members of the marriage party or those of the girl’s side should not get involved into any useless and/or unpleasant discussion. All should stay mentally satisfied and happy.

Anand Kaaraj (marriage ceremony): To perform this ceremony the relatives and friends of both sides should gather in the form of a congregation around Guru Granth Sahib. *Kirtan* (hymn singing from Guru Granth Sahib) should be performed either by professional musicians (Raagis) or the congregation. Then the bride and the groom should be made to sit in front of Guru Granth Sahib. The bride should sit on the left side of the groom.

On taking permission from the congregation the person (man or woman) who is going to perform the ceremony should say a supplication to God for the successful completion of the ceremony. During this supplication only the bride, the groom and their parents (or guardians) should stand. Then a “*Vaak*” (commandment from Guru Granth Sahib) should be read. Following this a sermon in which Guru’s instructions for a successful married life are explained, should be delivered. The explanation of the four “*Laavaan*” (circumambulations around Guru Granth Sahib) should be given to the bride and the groom:

The first ‘*Laav*’ means that the marriage is an unbreakable permanent bond. Do not protest but adjust. Stay attached to each other, through thick and thin, the rest of your life.

The second ‘*Laav*’ means never to break or jump over the wall of respect for each other.

The third ‘*Laav*’ means that in the life of a householder joy and dispassion towards the world are always together. One has to stay in restraint and discipline. On one side is the bliss and on the other is separation. Pleasure and suffering should be accepted with equal indifference. Do not waiver.

The fourth ‘*Laav*’ means always keep balance and poise in your life. Eternal bliss comes out of this balance. Always keep your expenses lower than your income. Those who do not follow this advice, ultimately come to grief. Stay as two bodies but one soul. Never forget God. Stay under the refuge of Akaal Purakh and always depend on the advice of Gurbani. This union should be considered as the pilgrimage of human life and both have to make it a successful journey. This is a union of two Sikhs, which amounts to holy congregation. Therefore this union should result in both, the bride and the groom, leading their lives like ‘Gurmukhs’. Both should be baptized (Amritdhaari) Sikhs because only then they will have the ability to fulfil their promises.

According to Prof. Christian, children born out of happy combination of genes of father and mother turn out to be bright and genius. After this bride and groom should be made aware of Guru's directives separately.

The groom should be told, "the bride's parents have picked you as the most suitable match for their daughter. You must consider your wife as your half and give her all your love. Share the bounties of life with her. He who keeps on enhancing his love with time for his wife, is a successful householder. He whose love decreases with time is deceitful and lustful husband. You should practice fidelity steadfastly. You are the protector of her body and honour. Consider her parents as yours and her relatives as your own relatives; give them proper respect".

The bride should be told, in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib and the holy congregation you are being wedded to this man. Consider him as the center of your love and devotion and stay within a relation of respect and affectionate regard with him. In happiness as well as sufferings, wherever you live stay steadfast in the duties of a model wife:

ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾਉ ਸੁਹਾਗਣੀ ਤਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਭਾਬ ਨ ਹੋਰ॥

(SGGS, P. 1384)

"Those blessed in matrimony look to no one but their spouse".

"Never give bad counsel to your husband. The secret of having a united family is that you should consider his parents as your own and his relatives, your own relatives. Those homes fracture and families break up where elders are not served respectfully. As Bhai Gurdas has said: "Those who abandon their parents are murderers".

By quoting Bhai Gurdas' couplet it should be emphasized that to follow those who have separated from their parents is a bad act, which a Gursikh does not follow:

"The son, forgetting all the kindness of the parents, follows

the bad tradition of evil people and separates from them”.

The advice given to Bibi Veero, the daughter of Guru Har Gobind, by her mother is worth repeating here: “Get up early in the morning, take a bath and keep reciting Gurbani. Never utter a slanderous word for any one”.

The bride and the groom bow to Guru Granth Sahib indicating that they accept all items of advice given to them.

Laavaan: At this point the bride’s father or guardian hand over one end of the sash worn by the groom around his neck, to the bride to keep holding it throughout the remaining ceremony (this signifies that she should hold on to her husband for the rest of her life).

Now the Sikh sitting in attendance to Guru Granth Sahib should recite the hymn containing the four ‘laavaan’. This hymn is in *Raag Suhi* on page 773. After reciting only one stanza (the first laav), the same stanza should be sung by the Raagis and at the same time the groom followed by the bride should circumambulate around Guru Granth Sahib (If there are no Raagis then the circumambulation can be carried out while the stanza is being read from Guru Granth Sahib). Then the two should bow and take their original seats. This process is repeated four times while the four stanzas of the hymn are being sung (four circumambulations around Guru Granth Sahib). At the end of the fourth stanza (and the circumambulation) the bride and the groom should take their seats and the Raagis (or the congregation) should sing the six stanzas of “Anand Sahib” (*Ramkali Mahalla 3*). Following this a supplication, with expression of gratitude to God and the Guru for their grace on the occasion, should be said and then the ‘Karhah Prasaad’ (blessed sweet pudding) should be distributed.

It must be remembered that followers of others faiths cannot be wedded according to the procedure of *Anand Kaaraj*.

If the girl's parents happen to visit their daughter (after she has settled in her husband's house) and food is served, they should not hesitate to partake it (among Hindus, eating food at daughter's house is considered improper). According to Gurmatt (Sikh way) son and daughter have equal status, and food is a gift of God. Therefore one should not have any doubt in mind regarding the propriety or impropriety to its eating.

Widow marriage: Unlike Hinduism, Sikhism allows the widow marriage. If a husband passes away, his widow is allowed to find a suitable match and remarry. If the wife of a Sikh passes away, he is also allowed to remarry. The procedure of the marriage of a widow or a widower is no different from the regular Anand Kaaraj.

When did the *Anand Kaaraj* start: According to Sikh history when Hindaal's brother wanted to get his daughter married, the Brahmins refused to perform the ceremony saying that he was the Sikh of Guru Amar Das and therefore no longer a Hindu. Guru Amar Das then himself performed the marriage ceremony*. The first marriage with the recitation of the hymn of "Laavaan" was that of Bibi Veero, the daughter of the sixth Master, Guru Har Gobind. Even today in the Jhabal village, where this marriage took place, there is a Gurdwara called "Laavaan Sahib".

Up to the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, most Sikh marriages were performed according to Anand procedure (some intermarriages, between Sikh and Hindu families were also performed according to Hindu procedure). After the Sikh empire was annexed by the British empire, the Sikhs gradually started adopting the "Bipran ki Reet" (Brahminical rituals). However,

* This, however, was a marriage without the recitation of the hymn of "Laavaan" because, this hymn was later on composed by the fourth Master, Guru Ram Das. It must therefore be a different Anand Kaaraj.

the Anand Marriage could not be completely eliminated because the widow marriages were not allowed by Hindus, and therefore, had to be performed according to the Anand procedure. All Nihang Singhs also continued to follow the Anand marriage procedure. Also Baba Dayal (Nirankari) took upon himself to revive the Anand Marriage.

On October 22, 1909, Government of India passed an act according to which the Anand Marriage became legally accepted. Tikka Ripudaman Singh of Nabha played a very important role in the writing of this legislation. Everyone agreed that Anand Marriage was a simpler and less expensive ceremony as compared to the Hindu marriage.

In Sikhism, the worship of idols and elements is prohibited. According to Hindu procedure for marriage, it is necessary to circumambulate fire (an element) in order to consummate a marriage. Brahmins demand money for performing a marriage while among Sikhs no one demands any money. If any one does, he is considered immoral and worthless. Among Muslims the marriage is a kind of bargain while Christians take it as a companionship. A bargain can get annulled, a companionship can be abandoned or forsaken if there is a disagreement. However, among Sikhs this relationship is unbreakable.

In the second volume of the book, "History of the Freedom Movement of India", it is written (page 399) that the passage of Anand Marriage act was not an insignificant event. This made the widow-marriage legal and because of this the inter-caste marriages became legal. It opened a window on the close Indian social structure whereby it could enjoy the breath of fresh air of a bit of freedom from the Brahminical strait jacket. The nation got liberated from the slavery of hollow rituals and false ceremonies. Thus it became capable of going forward on the path of progress. It constituted a distinct point of break – away of

Sikhism from Hinduism.

Q. 74. What procedure is a Sikh supposed to follow at the death of a relative (dear one)?

Ans. It is a directive of the Guru for every Sikh to recite the 'Sohila' at the time of going to bed. Also according to Guru's commandment the 'Sohila' should be recited and a supplication said at the time of cremation of the dead body. From this parallelism one could understand that death is a long slumber and sleep is a short death.

A man or a maid servant takes the children for playing. If and when the parents take their children back, the servants do not cry. On the contrary they consider that they have been relieved from the load of their responsibility. Similarly, when someone goes back into the lap of God (the Father), the crying of his/her parents and relatives is inappropriate. This (human) body is not everlasting while the soul is indestructible. One should always remember that whatever God has made to happen, is for our good.

The Guru has made it clear to the Sikh that nothing is lost when this pot (body) breaks. The purpose for which the body stayed alive will continue to live:

ਘਟ ਭੂਟੇ ਘਟਿ ਕਬਹਿ ਨ ਹੋਈ॥

(SGGS, P. 340)

"Even when the pitcher (body) bursts, he (soul) does not diminish".

A Sikh must always stay ready for death (which can come any time). He is to go to the realm of truth (God) with a smile rather than a doubt in his mind. According to Gurbani:

ਤੁਝ ਹੀ ਕੀਆ ਜੰਮਣ ਮਰਣਾ॥ ਗੁਰ ਤੇ ਸਮਝ ਪੜੀ ਕਿਆ ਡਰਣਾ॥

(SGGS, P. 1022)

"I have understood from the Guru that You (O God) have created birth as well as death. So why should I be afraid (of death)?"

When several of his close associates passed away, Guru Har

Gobind had said, "A *Giaani* (one who has spiritual knowledge) does not get overjoyed on meeting his friends and associates nor he grieves on separating from them".

At Damdama Sahib when Mata Sundri, the consort of Guru Gobind Singh, did not see the four sons (Sahibzadas) in the congregation, she expressed her grief aloud. Then the Tenth Master said, "Why do you feel grieved so much? This world is like meeting of various streams. They meet and again get separated. The sons were the gifts of God bestowed on us and they gave their lives for Dharma and left as the Lord willed".

This is the reason why at Golden Temple Amritsar, an Akhand Paath (not stop recitation of Guru Granth Sahib), in memory of a deceased, cannot be performed.

For the same reason the Sikhs do not use the term 'dying'. We call it "*Akaal Chalaana*" (proceeding towards the Timeless, God), going to the realm of Truth or becoming complete, or simply passing away. In the Sikh code (*Rehit Maryada*) it is specified that at the time of death the Hindu rituals like taking the (dying) person down from the bed (and putting him/her on the floor) or placing an earthen lamp on his/her chest must not be performed. Having the dying person touch a valuable item like a cow and giving it away in charity is also not allowed. No chore that goes against the directives of the Guru should be performed. These include screaming and wailing in different ways or beating the chest etc. Only recitation of Gurbani (Hymns from Guru Granth Sahib) or repeating the 'Shabad' Waheguru and saying thank You O Lord, is advised. If someone comes to condole, he/she should only say, "it was God's Will" and then sit down. (*Prem Sumaarag*).

Irrespective of the age of the deceased his/her body should be cremated. However, where arrangements for cremation cannot be made, the body could be disposed off by putting in water or any other suitable means, without bringing any doubts in mind.

Also the time of cremation is immaterial (could be day or night).

The body should be bathed and clad in fresh clothes. Then it should be laid on a (suitable) board and a supplication for departure to be said. In the supplication to God the following words are appropriate to be said: "Your Sikh, O Lord, completed the breaths that You had granted to him/her and is now departing. Kindly grant him/her permanent abode close to Your lotus feet".

The Tenth Master had said that saying of the supplication was necessary for the peace of the departed soul. Since the soul, being that of a Sikh, had already attained such peace by listening Gurbani, only this much should be sufficient to say (kindly give the departed soul a permanent abode close to Your feet and bestow upon the family the capacity to abide by Your Will).

Then the funeral procession should proceed to the cremation ground. All along hymns from Guru Granth Sahib, which concern the subject of death and renunciation, should be recited (or Waheguru and Satt Naam chanted). On reaching the crematorium a funeral pyre should be built*. Before the pyre is set on fire a supplication should be said and then the body placed on the pyre. A son or any other relative or friend of the deceased should then set it on fire. The people accompanying the funeral procession should sit at a distance in the form of a congregation and sing hymns of renunciation. As the pyre lights up, 'Sohila' should be recited at the end of which a supplication is said. No 'Kapaal' ritual (the breaking of an earthen pitcher) is to be performed. Everyone should then go to a Gurdwara and start a 'Paath' (reading of complete Guru Granth Sahib) for the peace of the departed soul. After reciting six stanzas of 'Anand Sahib', Karhah Prasaad should be distributed.

The reading of Guru Granth Sahib should preferably be

* *These days many crematoriums have electric or gas furnaces, therefore there is no need to build the pyre.*

completed in ten days. However, if that is not possible then another day should be fixed for the 'Bhog', according to the convenience of the relatives. All members of the family and relatives should try to take part in the reading of Guru Granth Sahib. If possible, Kirtan (hymn singing) should be conducted every evening during this period. After this ceremony on the tenth day (or any other day) no other rituals or ceremony need be performed.

After the funeral pyre has cooled down, the ashes should be collected and put in a river or sea, or buried at a suitable place and the ground leveled. Building or erecting of a memorial at the cremation place, or the place where ashes are buried, is prohibited.

Performance of any other meaningless rituals like resting the body halfway to the crematorium, breaking of an earthen pitcher, wailing and/or beating of chest, lighting of an earthen lamp or having a feast annually in the memory of the deceased, are prohibited.

To pick certain bones from the funeral pyre and taking them to river Ganges or Pataal Puri etc. to put them in the river is self directed and is prohibited.

Q. 75. When did the tradition of *Akhand Paath* (the non-stop reading of complete Guru Granth Sahib) start? What the procedure for *Akhand Paath*?

Ans. During the time of Guru Arjan Dev the directive to read and/or listen to the *Adi Granth*, on occasions of joy or sorrow, had been issued. Earliest performance of Akhand Paaths seems to have been carried out by the sixth Master, Guru Har Gobind, on the occasions of passing away of his wife, Mata Damodri, his brother-in-law, Bhai Sain Das, his sister-in-law, Bibi Ramo, his mother-in-law, Mata Prem Devi and his father-in-law, Bhai

Narain Das. The Guru specially sent for the volume of the Adi Granth on each occasion, at the place where the death occurred, in order to have the Akhand Paath performed.

While departing from Damdama Sahib for Nanderh, Guru Gobind Singh also got an Akhand Paath performed. Giani Gian Singh clearly writes in “Panth Prakash” that when Baba Deep Singh was ready to depart from Damdama Sahib towards Amritsar (where he was martyred), an Akhand Paath was performed (Uttaradh Bisram, P. 50).

In the first chapter – the personal code of conduct – of Rehit Maryada (Sikh Code), which concerns the practice of *Naam* and *Bani*, the following is written under the heading of “*Akhand Paath*”:

- a) Akhand Paath is to be performed at the time of an occasion of joy or sorrow (or a problem). It is to be completed in about 48 hours and should be performed without break. **To read Guru Granth Sahib so fast that a listener could not understand is an insult to Gurbani. The recitation should be done clearly and correctly with special attention to the diacritical vowels, even if by doing so some extra time is taken.**
- b) The family or congregation responsible for the *Akhand Paath* should do the reading themselves. As many relatives and friends as possible should participate in the reading. There is no fixed number of persons who should do the reading (*paath*).

If someone cannot recite himself/herself then he/she should sit and listen while a good reader is reading. To leave a reader alone, while the members of the family are busy doing their chores, is inappropriate. If professional readers (*Paathis*) are engaged, then they should be served with food and clothes by the family

responsible for the *paath*, according to their capacity and ability.

- c) To keep a coconut wrapped in a red fabric, a pitcher of water or a burning earthen lamp next to where the *Akhand Paath* (or any other type of *paath*) is in progress is egocentricity. To recite another hymn along with the recitation of the *paath* or to recite a particular hymn at the end of every hymn of Guru Granth Sahib is also self-centeredness and against the Gurmat.

BEGINNING THE PAATH:

To start *Akhand Paath*, *Karhah Prasaad* should be prepared and brought before Guru Granth Sahib. Six stanzas of *Anand Sahib* should be recited and a supplication said for the successful completion of *Akhand Paath*. Thereafter a commandment from Guru Granth Sahib should be read (*Vaak*) and the *Akhand Paath* started.

On reaching the hymn:

ਆਦਿ ਪੂਰਨ ਮਧਿ ਪੂਰਨ ਅੰਤਿ ਪੂਰਨ ਪਰਮੇਸੁਰਹ ॥

and considering it the half-way point of Guru Granth Sahib, and saying a supplication for that is not correct. This is not the half-way-point (because Guru Granth Sahib has 1430 pages and this hymn is on page 705). However, on the second day a supplication should be said approximately at the time the *Paath* had been started the previous day.

CONCLUSION:

The recitation of *Mundhavani* (or *Raag Maala*)* should be done according to the local tradition and this would then be the conclusion of the *Paath*. After this *Kirtan* (singing of hymns from

* At the time of writing of this book a controversy was going on whether or not *Raag Maala* should stay in *Guru Granth Sahib*.

Guru Granth Sahib) should be performed. At the conclusion six stanzas of Anand Sahib should be recited and supplication said to thank the Guru for the successful completion of the *Paath*. After reading the '*Vaak*' (random reading of hymn from Guru Granth Sahib) *Karhah Prasaad* should be distributed.

At the time of conclusion, according to ones capacity, donation of 'Rumaal' (fabric for covering Guru Granth Sahib), a whisk etc., and some money for the professional '*Paathis*' and for the Panthik projects should be donated.

Q. 76. Who are Meenas, Dheer Maleeas, Ram Raaee-as, Narheemaars, Kurheemaars and Sirgums? What is their relation with Sikhs?

Ans.

MEENAS:

Literally it means a cunning person – one who does not disclose his/her malicious thoughts. Bhai Gurdas used the word 'Meena' for Baba Prithi Chand, the eldest son of Guru Ram Das* :

"The true Guru is the true emperor; the faces of Meenas are blackened".

RAM RAAEE-AS:

The descendents and the followers of Baba Ram Rae, the eldest son of Guru Hari Rae, are called the Ram Raaee-as. Guru Hari Rae had sent Baba Ram Rae, to the court of Aurangzeb, the then emperor of India, in order to answer the questions of the emperor

* *Prithi Chand, being the eldest son of the fourth Master considered himself to be the sole and uncontested claimant to the Guruship after Guru Ram Das. However, because of his egoistic temperament and abrasive personality traits, Guru Ram Das had indicated that his youngest son, Arjan Dev, would succeed him. Prithi chand, in frustration, started using unfair means. For this reason he and his descendents, who tried to start a parallel Gurudom, are called Meenas.*

regarding the Sikh teachings as delineated in the *Adi Granth* (Guru Granth Sahib). While at the court Baba Ram Rae forgot his mission and instead tried to gain the emperor's favour by flattering him. He even misquoted one of the utterances of Guru Nanak:

ਮਿਟੀ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਕੀ ਪੇੜੈ ਪਈ ਭੁਮਿਆਰ॥

(SGGS, P. 466)

He changed the word 'Musalman' (Muslim) to 'Baiman' (faithless).

On hearing this Guru Hari Rae had said, "Who is this with a leper-intellect (sick mind) to change the word of the Guru? Guru Nanak is the true emperor (sovereign) compared to Aurangzeb who is a false emperor". Saying so he disowned his son.

MASANDS:

The word 'Masand' is a transformation of the Persian word 'Masand', which means high seat (or the one who occupies the high seat). Guru Ram Das had appointed his emissaries for different parts of the country to preach and collect the tithe from the Sikhs. Considering them the representatives of the Guru, the Sikh congregations gave them respect equal to Guru. They also collected the tithe and passed it on to the Guru. Keeping even a small portion for their personal expenses was considered poison. Mohsin Fani, a historian, contemporary to the sixth Master, has written this: "With passage of time, these Masands became corrupt. So much so that the word 'Masand' became an insult. There were so many complaints about their corruption and misdeeds that in 1698 the tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh abolished this institution and enjoined the Sikhs to boycott them— if a situation arose where they had to choose between an intoxicated (mad) elephant and a Masand, they should choose

the mad elephant”.

At the time of administration of ‘Amrit’ (Khalsa initiation ceremony) the Guru directed, “Forsake *Masands*, meditate on one God”. In the 33 *Sawaiyyas*, the Tenth Master also says, “ If you want to please me, do not serve the *Masands*”.

SIRGUM:

Anyone who has kept hair (as a Sikh) and then cuts them, or does not maintain the sanctity of hair, or picks and pulls (gray) hair, is called *Sirgum*. The Tenth Master had said, “Trimming of beard is equivalent to shaving it. Do not pull out gray hair”.

NARHEEMAAR:

Those who smoke (hooka or cigarette), or use tobacco, are called Narheemaar. The latest scientific research has shown that even inhaling of smoke coming from a cigarette (secondary smoking) is as harmful as smoking a cigarette.

KURHEEMAAR:

Those who commit infanticide, those who taunt and make life miserable for a married girl so that she is forced to commit suicide, are called Kurheemaars.

The Guru’s commandment is not to associate with any of these five categories of people.

It is written in “Tankhaah Naama” (the Khalsa code), or the Sikh penal code.

Q. 77. Who is called a “Tankhaahiaa” in Sikhism?

Ans. The literal meaning of the word “Tankhaahiaa” is a salaried person. Any one who works on a salary (or wages) is not independent. He is subordinate to someone. Thus, a Sikh is Tankhaahiaa who is subordinate to a desire, e.g., greed, ego etc., is influenced by rituals, or gives in to social pressures and acts

against the directives of the Sikh code.

According to the Sikh code of conduct the following are considered "Tankhaahias":

1. Those who socially interact (deal) with Meenas, Masands, Dhir Maleeas, Ram Raeeas etc., who are antagonists of the Panth, and who practice infanticide, who use tobacco and those who cut their hair.
2. Those who eat out of the same plate as an apostate or anyone who has not undergone the 'Amrit' ceremony.
3. Those who dye their beard.
4. Those who take or give (or take) money for the matrimony of their children.
5. Those who consume intoxicants like opium, marijuana, liquor etc.
6. Those who go against any of the Sikh tenets.
7. Those who violate any of the enjoiments of the Sikh code.

PROCEDURE TO LEVY 'TANKHAAH':

Whenever a Sikh advertently or inadvertently violates any enjoiment of the Sikh code (*Rehit*) he/she should go to a nearby Sikh congregation, stand up and admit his/her fault. The congregation would then select five beloved ones (in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib). Those five would then consider the fault and propose the '*Tankhaah*' (punishment) to the congregation.

Neither those who are imposing the '*Tankhaah*' nor the person subject to it should enter into any argument or raise any objections. The '*Tankhaah*' is supposed to be a kind of service, preferably one that is to be performed with ones hands. At the end a supplication should be said to the Guru for granting pardon to the offender.

Q. 78. What is “Gurmata” and how is it passed?

Ans. A decision arrived at with an ethical base (according to Sikh Teachings) is called a “Gurmata”.

Historically, before starting a religious or a social project its proposal used to be presented to the congregation for opinion. After discussion an opinion poll was taken. If the decision to adopt this ‘Mata’, or proposal, was unanimous then it was called a “Gurmata”. Now the procedure to pass a *Gurmata* has been included in the Sikh code of conduct (*Rehit Maryada*).

Any decision taken using personal discretion cannot be called a *Gurmata*. The prescribed procedure for passing a *Gurmata* is as follows:

A *Gurmata* is to be passed only on those issues, which concern the basic questions of Sikhism and their confirmation. For example, the status of Guru or Guru Granth Sahib, the sanctity and permanency of the anthology of Guru Granth Sahib, questions regarding Amrit and the Khalsa Code and the structure and maintenance of integrity of the Panth. For any other matter regarding educational, religious, social or political issue, only a ‘Mata’ can be passed. Only a chosen representative group of the Guru Panth has the authority to pass a ‘*Gurmata*’. Malcolm has described the procedure adopted by earlier Sikhs for passing a ‘*Gurmata*’. In his book, “Sikhs’ Sketch”:

“When Sikh Sirdars gather, they forsake any mutual animosities. Grievances, gripes and personal feelings are forgotten for the sake of well being of the *Panth*. When they sit together, they have only one object in their minds, which is the progress of Dharma and victory of the Panth”.

“All sit in front of Guru Granth Sahib and utter aloud,

“*Waheguru Ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji ki Fateh*”. The sacramental pudding (*Karhah Prasaad*) is brought in and all of them stand up for supplication. After this a randomly picked hymn (*Vaak*) is read from Guru Granth Sahib. All of them then partake of *Karhah Prasaad*, in token of their general and complete accord in the cause for which they have gathered. At this moment the head Akaali of the Akaal Takhat explains the *Gurmata* for which they have gathered. He then urges everyone to take a vow before Guru Granth Sahib that they do not harbour grudge or feud with anyone and that all of them are together – that their sole objective is the sanctity of religion and patriotism and for that they have forsaken any personal discards. Then they are made aware of the dangers to the *Panth* and suggestions are made how to cope with them. Various proposals are put forth to face these dangers and successfully tackle them. Leaders are then selected who would not hesitate to sacrifice themselves while leading the *Panth* in facing these dangers. A supplication is then said at the end of which the *Panthik* slogan is loudly pronounced and then everyone departs”.

Major Brown has also described the procedure for passing a *Gurmata*. He differs from Malcolm only in the procedure adopted for the selection of five ‘*Piaaras*’ (representatives). According to him, “first the name of one ‘*Piaara*’ is proposed at Akaal Takhat. The second name is then proposed with the consent of the first (chosen) *Piaara*. The third name is then proposed with the consent of these two. This procedure is continued until the fifth name is proposed and selected unanimously. Then all five selected Sikhs (*Piaaras*) sit in front of Guru Granth Sahib and proceed to pass the *Gurmata*”.

Q. 79. Why has ‘Gita’ not been mentioned in Guru Granth Sahib?

Ans. Gita is not a separate book by itself. It is a part of the Hindu epic “Maha Bhaarat” in which Dhritrashtra, the Kaurav king, has asked questions (regarding the battle between his sons and their cousins, the Pandavas); and Sanjay, who is said to have the capability to know what was happening in the battle-field, at distance, has given the answers. In these answers of Sanjay, are included the questions that Arjun, the hero of the epic, asked Lord Krishna and the answers he received. This portion is what is known as the ‘Gita’.

Gita teaches the philosophy of Karma, worship of Avtaaras, dialectics and criticism. In Sikhism, rituals do not have any place, Avtaar worship is prohibited and instead of dialectics meditation is recommended. Bhai Gurdas, the Sikh savant has said:

“The dialectics of Gita, the questions and answers involved therein, are of not much value in Sikhism, because it is the conduct and values and not the dialectics alone that are considered important. Sikhism is the religion of service and meditation while Gita stresses on Avtaar worship.”

Dr. Kasumbhi says: “Guru Nanak did not preach the teachings of Gita. He did not depend on Gita because it concerns not the common people but people belonging to specific status, caste and clan. Those who consider Gita as their mother or the base of their thought process, they have ego and an urge for self glorification. Sikhism enjoins to forsake ego. This is the reason that there is no mention of Gita in Guru Granth Sahib.”

Q. 80. Why is it a great mistake to call Guru Granth Sahib, another ‘Ved’?

Ans. The (Sikh) Gurus and Bhagats have described the contents of the Vedas as exaggeration, doubt, business-like and confined mainly to the discussion on good actions and sins. The Vedas emphasize on worship, which does not equal to meditation on

the Name Divine:

ਪੁਜਸਿ ਨਾਹੀ ਹਰਿ ਹਰੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮ ਅਮੋਲ ॥ (SGGS, P. 265)

According to Guru Granth Sahib the Vedas teach bias and put fetters (of rituals):

ਮਾਦਲੁ ਬੇਦਿ ਸਿ ਬਾਜਣੇ ਘਣੇ ਧੜੀਐ ਜੋਇ ॥ (SGGS, P. 1091)

“The drum of Vedas beats, bringing dispute and divisiveness”.

Guru Granth Sahib teaches how to meditate on only one God and recite His Name. It shows the way to the state of equipoise.

The second Master, Guru Angad Dev, has accurately described what Vedas are, in one of his ‘Saloks’ in the ‘Vaar’ of the *Saarang Raaga*:

ਕਥਾ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਬੇਦੀ ਆਣੀ ਪਾਪੁ ਪੁੰਨੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ॥
 ਦੇ ਦੇ ਲੈਣਾ ਲੈ ਲੈ ਦੇਣਾ ਨਰਕਿ ਸੁਗਿ ਅਵਤਾਰ ॥
 ਉਤਮ ਮਧਿਮ ਜਾਤੀ ਜਿਨਸੀ ਭਰਮਿ ਭਵੈ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ॥ (SGGS, P. 1243)

“The Vedas have given currency to myths that make a man reflect on good and evil, and also to believe that one takes only what one gives; through this (give and take) is man cast into heaven or hell. The sense of high and low, and of caste and colour; such are the illusions created in mind”.

On the contrary, Gurbani deals in meditation and contemplation, and brings us close to God, from whom we have been separated:

ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਬਾਣੀ ਤਤੁ ਵਖਾਣੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਧਿਆਨ ਵਿਚਿ ਆਈ ॥ (SGGS, P. 1243)

“The nectar word of the Guru makes one know the Quintessence, for it sprang from wisdom and contemplation”.

Once the seventh Master, Guru Hari Rae said, “the Vedas have their root in ‘vidya’ or education (knowledge). By studying

Vedas ones mind does not get imbued (with love and devotion to God) but is inclined towards doubt and criticism – tries to find arguments. With Gurbani, on the other hand, the mind is imbued (with God’s love)”.

Q. 81. What were the questions that the Hajis asked Guru Nanak while he was going to Mecca? What answers did Guru Nanak give?

Ans. The questions asked by the Hajis and the answers given by Guru Nanak were as follows:

1.Q. What do you consider asceticism?

Ans. Assumption of ultimate humility is the real asceticism.

2.Q. What is the ultimate limit of asceticism?

Ans. To believe that only God’s Name is going to last, is the ultimate limit of asceticism.

3.Q. With what kind of chain should one bind oneself to escape the onslaught of Maaya?

Ans. Devotion to God is what can save one from the onslaught of Maaya.

4.Q. What is the final resting place (of a human being)?

Ans. Humility is the final resting place for a human being.

5.Q. What is the real treasure?

Ans. (Remembering God in) congregation is the real treasure.

6.Q. What is the (real) light?

Ans. (Spiritual) knowledge is the (real) light.

7.Q. How can one attain ultimate happiness?

Ans. Ultimate happiness is attained through God’s vision.

8.Q. What food should one take to satisfy ones hunger permanently?

Ans. Contentment is what subsides all hungers

permanently.

9.Q. What kind of attire should one wear to stay comfortable?

Ans. By wearing the attire of truth one is always comfortable.

10.Q. Where should one abide?

Ans. One should abide in freedom from care and worry.

Q. 82. Describe the eight questions that Guru Nanak has posed in “Japu Ji”, and has then given their answers?

Ans. The eight questions posed in Japu Ji are:

1. ਕਿਵ ਸਚਿਆਰਾ ਹੋਈਐ (SGGS, P. 1)
“How can one become spiritually pure (truthful)?”
2. ਕਿਵ ਕੁਸੈ ਕੁਟੈ ਪਾਲਿ* ॥ (SGGS, P. 1)
“How can one pierce the partition of falsehood?”
3. ਢੇਰਿ ਕਿ ਅਗੈ ਰਖੀਐ ਜਿਹੁ ਦਿਸੈ ਦਰਬਾਰੁ ॥ (SGGS, P. 2)
“What should one offer to unite with Him?”
4. ਮੁਹੈ ਕਿ ਬੋਲਣੁ ਬੋਲੀਐ ਜਿਹੁ ਸੁਣਿ ਧਰੇ ਪਿਆਰੁ ॥ (SGGS, P. 2)
“What words should one utter that would invoke His love?”
5. ਕਥਣੁ ਸੁ ਵੇਲਾ ਕਥਣੁ ਕਥਣੁ ਕਿਤਿ ਕਥਣੁ ਵਾਰੁ ॥
ਕਥਣਿ ਸਿ ਰੁਤੀ ਮਾਹੁ ਕਥਣੁ ਜਿਹੁ ਹੋਆ ਆਕਾਰੁ ॥ (SGGS, P. 4)
“What were the time, the lunar day, and the week day; what season, what month was it when the universe was created?”
6. ਕਿਵ ਕਰਿ ਆਖਾ ਕਿਵ ਸਾਲਾਹੀ ਕਿਉ ਵਰਨੀ ਕਿਵ ਜਾਣਾ ॥ (SGGS, P. 4)
“How is one to express His greatness and how to praise Him; how to describe and how to know God?”

* ‘Paal’ here means a small stream going through a field, separating two pieces of land.

7. ਸੋ ਦੁਰੁ ਕੇਹਾ (SGGS, P. 6)

"How great is His gate"?

8. ਸੋ ਘਰੁ ਕੇਹਾ ਜਿਤੁ ਬਹਿ ਸਰਬ ਸਮਾਲੇ ॥ (SGGS, P. 6)

"How great is His mansion from where God takes care of all"?

The answer to the first question is:

ਹੁਕਮਿ ਕਜਾਈ ਚਲਣਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਲਿ ॥ (SGGS, P. 1)

"One should willingly obey His command".

Sometimes the command may be harsh, but it is for the benefit of the human being. It should always be taken as sweet.

The answer to the second question that Guru Nanak gives in Japu Ji is: The partition (*Paal*) between man and God consists of water of avarice, mud of jealousy and scum of rituals. One has to destroy it and instead bring in clean water of Lord's Name. The impurities in this '*Paal*' of ones mind are: thoughts of pilgrimages as a means to attain salvation, taking crutch of yogic exercises, longing for excessive wealth, pride about ones smartness. All these have to be forsaken. This '*Paal*' breaks if one always stays in a state of equipoise, not let anger get better of him/her. In others words one should stay happy under all circumstances and unscathed by problems.

The answer to the third question is that one should offer uninterrupted devotion to God. One should not waste even a single moment of the ambrosial hour of morning, which is the best time to meditate on Him.

The Guru's answer to the fourth question is that if one contemplates the greatness (of God) it will lead to the development of His love. One should understand the meanings of Gurbani. The first step towards the goal of love is to sing His praises. The second step is to listen and the third step is to have

only His and no one else's love in ones mind. Thus the path to meet the infinite Lord is to recite Gurbani with love, contemplate on its words and follow them.

The answer to the fifth question regarding the time of creation of the universe is that neither the Vedas, nor Quraan have the knowledge to answer this question. Because there are many worlds (in addition to ours), this much is sufficient to say that it is not possible to know the limit of God Almighty. There are hundreds of thousands of earths beyond which there are even more. Therefore He alone knows when and how He created this universe.

In answer to the sixth question, how to describe God, the Guru enjoins that while singing His laudations one must keep in mind that:

ਇਕ ਦੂ ਇਕੁ ਸਿਆਣਾ ॥ (SGGS, P. 5)

“There are many smart and knowledgeable people around”.
One should therefore recite the following couplet of Guru Nanak:

ਨਾਨਕੁ ਢੇਚਾਰਾ ਕਿਆ ਕਹੈ ॥ ਸਭੁ ਲੋਕੁ ਸਲਾਹੇ ਏਕਸੈ ॥
ਸਿਰੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਲੋਕਾ ਪਾਵ ਹੈ ॥ ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ਜਾਉ ਜੇਤੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਨਾਵ ਹੈ ॥

(SGGS, P. 1168)

“What can poor Nanak say (that is new)? The whole world lauds the one God. Nanak, in reverence, places his head at the feet of those who utter Your Name, O Lord. To all Your Names (uttered by various people) I am a sacrifice”.

Anyone who claims to have known His limit, cannot find a place in Lord's court:

ਅਗੈ ਗਇਆ ਨ ਜੋਹੈ ॥ (SGGS, P. 5)

Furthermore the laudation should be done with humility in ones mind.

In answer to the seventh question, regarding God's portal, the Guru says: At His door there are countless harmonies, musical measures, tunes and minstrels. In Judeo-Christian Mythology it is said that when God created the body of Adam, to it, the soul was introduced by the help of music. So music has the capability of taking (ones conscience) to God. That is why everyone is singing His laudations.

There are five elements (air, water, fire, earth and ether). By combination of these elements God has created all creatures including gods, and human beings (prophets, sages and all). It is only through singing His praises (irrespective of who he is) that one could meet Him.

The answer to the eighth (last) question, "how great is His mansion?" the answer is:

One has to abide by His will in order to know this secret, or ਰਹਣੁ ਰਜਾਈ ॥

To say it differently, it is that place where there is contemplation on Him, or where the laudations of fearless God are sung, or where those who see all creatures alike. That house is within ones mind. He who has pervaded His power throughout the universe, has made the human body as His abode:

ਅਉਹਠਿ ਹਸਤ ਮੜੀ ਘਰੁ ਛਾਇਆ ਧਰਣਿ ਗਗਨ ਕਲ ਧਾਰੀ ॥

(SGGS, P. 907)

God is not an imaginary entity, idea or illusion; He has a place, He has a door.

Q. 83. What are the sixteen questions that the fifth Master, Guru Arjan Dev, posed and then gave their answers?

Ans. The following are the questions and their answers:

1.Q. Who is emancipated?

Ans. He/she who recognizes God's Will, is emancipated.

2.Q. Who has found the correct path?

Ans. He/she who follows God's Will has found the correct path.

3.Q. Who has the true spiritual knowledge?

Ans. He/she who has unshakeable faith in (God).

4.Q. Who is a good preacher?

Ans. He/she who practices what he/she preaches, is a good preacher.

5.Q. Who is tied up (in fetters)?

Ans. The egoist is in fetters.

6.Q. How can one escape the fire of 'Maaya'?

Ans. By Guru's grace one can escape the fire of 'Maaya'.

7.Q. How can one end the cycle of birth and death?

Ans. One can end the cycle of birth and death by abiding by the Will of God.

8.Q. Who devotes himself/herself to the service of God?

Ans. He/she who has forsaken the ego devotes himself/herself to the service of God.

9.Q. Who is a selfless devotee?

Ans. He/she who has recognized Him is a selfless devotee.

10.Q. Who is (always) happy?

Ans. ਏਕੁ ਕੁਸਲੁ ਮੇ ਕਉ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਬਤਾਇਆ ॥

ਹਰਿ ਜੋ ਕਿਛੁ ਕਰੇ ਸੁ ਹਰਿ ਕਿਆ ਭਗਤਾ ਭਾਇਆ ॥ (SGGS, P. 176)

"My true Guru revealed on secret of happiness to me, God's devotees stay happy in whatever happens (whatever God does).

11.Q. Who is always in pain and misery?

Ans. A self-directed person (*mannmukh*) is always in pain and misery.

12.Q. What is helpful in controlling the evil personality traits?

Ans. The Guru's Word (*Shabad*) is helpful in controlling evil personality traits.

13.Q. To please God, what kind of meditation, devotion, worship, austerities and penance one should do; and what kind of words one should (or should not) utter?

Ans. One should beg only for God's Grace. It is through His Grace that one can realize the significance of 'Shabad' (the Word). This is complete devotion, meditation, and worship:

ਗੁਣ ਪੁਜਾ ਗਿਆਨ ਧਿਆਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਗਲ ਘਾਲ ॥

ਜਿਸ ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਦਇਆਲ ॥

(SGGS, P. 187)

14.Q. Who is the wisest of all?

Ans. He/she who has exterminated his/her ego is the wisest of all.

15.Q. Who is intelligent?

Ans. He/she who does not get misled by the greed (for worldly goods), is intelligent.

16.Q. Who is free (from Maaya's fetters)?

Ans. He/she who is contented, is free.

Q. 84. Describe the four questions, along with their answers that Baba Farid* asked the hundred fakirs of his time.

Ans. The first question was, "who is the wisest person"?

** Baba Farid is the only Sufi Fakir whose poetical compositions are included in Guru Granth Sahib. He is also known as the first recorded poet in Punjabi.*

Farid's father, Shaikh Jamanuddin Sulaiman, whose family was related to the rulers of Kabul, migrated to Punjab in twelfth century A.D. Shaikh Farid

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The answer of all the Fakirs was, "the one who has forsaken worldly goods is the wisest person.

The second question was, "who is the greatest person"?

The answer of everyone was, "the one who considers joy and sorrow the same is the greatest person".

The third question was, "who is the richest of all"?

Everyone answered, "the one who is contented is the richest of all".

The fourth question was, "who is the poorest of all"?

The answer of everyone was, "the one who is greedy is the poorest of all".

Q. 85. Charles Beard has described the history of the world in four sentences. What are these four sentences?

Ans. The four sentences of Charles Beard are:

1. Anyone whom God wishes to destroy, He first makes him power-intoxicated to the extent of madness.
2. The mill of God grinds slowly but grinds extremely

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was born in 1173 A.D. at village Kathowal, near Multan (Pakistan). His father died when Farid was still a child and his mother, Kalsum Bibi, who was a very pious lady, brought him up in a way that he grew up to be a great saint.

As a child he was very fond of sugar. His mother used sugar to induce him to do his prayers regularly by placing a lump of sugar under his prayer mat as a reward. As a result the title of "Shakar Ganj" or the treasure of sugar, got associated with his name.

He got his spiritual training under Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiar Kaki. Shaikh Farid is considered one of the founding fathers of Chishti Sufi order in India and the most revered Sufi Fakir in Punjab. He died in 1265 A.D.

fine.

3. The bee pollinates the flower it robs of its nectar.
4. When it is pitch dark one can see the stars clearly.

The total Sikh history can be summarized as follows:

The (true) Gurus came to this world and lived here. They gave the boons of *Naam*, spiritual advice and method to lead true life. Like any other householder, they had dealings with people. They showered their kindness. They went through problems and obstacles created by jealousies and animosities by others. However, they stayed steadfast on their principles even if by doing so they had to sacrifice their lives. They saved many beings from the darkness of ignorance. These (morally and spiritually) alive people carried out fantastic deeds of self-sacrifice.

Q. 86. When the sixth Master, Guru Har Gobind, described "Sikhi" as a tree, what according to him were its roots, branches, flowers and fruits?

Ans. Guru Har Gobind said:

Humility is the root of "Sikhi".

Service (of human kind) is the branches of "Sikhi".

Holy congregation (*Saadh Sangat*) is the leaves of "Sikhi".

Understanding the Word (Shabad) are the flowers, while the fruits are becoming completely oblivious of care for ones body (ones own well being) compared to the well being of others.

Q. 87. Describe the principles for which the Sikhs have been agitating and sacrificing their lives.

Ans. The Sikhs have been agitating, fighting and sacrificing their lives for the following principles:

1. Truth.
2. Love.
3. Self respect.
4. Freedom.

In the future also they will keep on doing so.

Q. 88. According to Bhai Gurdas what are the attributes of the Sikh spirit (Gursikhi)?

Ans. The Sikh spirit and those Gursikhs who chalked out a new path, started a new order and carried out fantastic (spiritual) deeds, are described by Bhai Gurdas as subtler than a trich, sharper than a sword and tasteless like licking of a stone.

A Gursikh who treads the path of such Sikh spirit, is called a sweet speaking being who has acquired the state of equipoise, who is generous and does not care for petty accounts, who has forsaken ego and is leading his/her life according to God's will, who serves humanity by sharing his/her honest earnings (with needy), who is a householder who strictly observes fidelity to his/her life partner; who gets up early in the morning and considers holy congregation as his/her real abode. He/she is a "*khair dalal - dalel*" (a bold broker of God's Name). He/she enjoys serving those whose life is spent in devotion to God.

He/she single-mindedly meditates on the 'shabad'; leads his/her life in God's Will with unquestioned devotion; is an integrated personality; is thankful to God for whatever has been bestowed upon him/her; is fully contented and does not have an element of envy or jealousy for anyone; is always alert (so that he/she may not commit a sin, advertently or inadvertently) and is a personification of humility. He/she never frets on a loss.

According to Bhai Gurdas, there is no Sikhi (Sikh spirit) without humility; because humility is a necessary prerequisite for being charitable. Also one must have devotion in order to

stay consistently charitable. For devotion one must have love for Guru – it is utmost necessary. Devotion springs from love and through love it becomes firm. Firm devotion uproots doubts and duality. The mind becomes clean like a mirror and one can see oneself in it. Such a Sikh lives in the present and disregards past or future.

Thus a Gursikh is one who first burns like the wick of a lamp (forsakes ego) and then burns in the thought of welfare of others just as oil burns itself but does not let the wick get consumed. Then he gives light like a burning lamp and spontaneously spreads the light of (spiritual) knowledge.

Q. 89. Why rituals are not approved in Sikhism?

Ans. There is no place for rituals in Sikh teachings. All the omens and presages result from doubts and uncertainties in ones mind. People who believe in omens have created further confusion by dividing good and bad omens into seven categories. These are:

- Yagan:** The purpose will be fulfilled in a few days.
- Ragan:** The purpose will not be fulfilled.
- Shagan:** The purpose will be fulfilled some time in future.
- Tagan:** The result will be calamitous.
- Jagan:** The result will be good and enjoyable.
- Bhagan:** The result will be blissful.
- Nagan:** Best and outstanding results.

The Gurus, by saying,

ਗੁਰ ਪਰਸਾਦਿ ਭਰਮ ਕਾ ਨਾਸੁ ॥

(SGGS, P. 294)

“By Guru’s grace the doubts have been shattered”,

Bhai Kanahiya once said, “A Gursikh is above and beyond all rituals”. To be a slave of rituals, omens and customs is sign of weak mind. Gurbani clearly tells us:

ਸਾਹੇ ਉਪਰਿ ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ ॥

(SGGS, P. 904)

Which means: Those who depend on Ik Oankaar (God), are unaffected by Ragan, Lagan, Shagan, Jagan etc.

Q. 90. Is there any significance of fasts, full moon nights (*poornima*), new moon nights (*amaavas*), or the first day of a month (*sangraand*) of Bikrami calendar, in Sikhism?

Ans. The fasts, the full moon nights, the new moon nights, or the first day of a month of Bikrami calendar have no place of any significance in Sikhism. The fasts, prevalent in the Hindu society, are all associated with a god or a goddess. These gods and goddesses themselves are trapped in attachment of Maaya and are not considered of any significance in Sikhism. Gurbani enjoins:

ਇਸੁ ਮਨ ਕੋਉ ਹੋਰੁ ਸੰਜਮੁ ਕੋ ਨਾਹੀ ਚਿਣੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਸਰਣਾਇ ॥

(SGGS, P. 558.)

"The mind is not controlled by any discipline other than seeking refuge of the holy preceptor".

The new moon and full moon nights are related to the moon (a god considered by Hindus). But a Sikh daily recites Jaap Sahib where the words of the tenth Master. "*Namo Chandra Chandre*", (I bow to the Almighty God who is the moon of moons), enjoin us to bow only to one God.

The first day of a month (*Sangraand*) is related to the Sun (also a god for Hindus). When the sun goes from one '*raashi*' (zodiac sign) to another that time is considered auspicious, and is worshipped. A Sikh, on the contrary, is the worshipper of Fearless, one God, and all these so-called gods like stars, moon and sun are under His fear. It is enigmatic that a worshipper of '*Nirbhau*' (fearless God) is afraid of these gods and goddesses who

themselves are under His fear (control).

ਭੈ ਤੇ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਭਰਤਾ ਫਿਰੈ ॥

(SGGS, P. 900)

Bhagat Kabir has very clearly said so in Gurbani:

ਜਉ ਭਰ ਭਰੈ ਤਾ ਫਿਰਿ ਭਰੁ ਲਾਗੈ ॥ ਨਿਭਰ ਜੁਆ ਭਰੁ ਉਰ ਹੋਇ ਭਾਗੈ ॥

(SGGS, P. 341)

“As long as one has fear in ones mind, one is afraid. As soon as one casts off this fear, one becomes fearless”.

Q. 91. Why the religion and politics are inseparable in Sikhism?

Ans. Politics is an inseparable part of religion. Efforts to separate the two (from time to time) have resulted in deterioration of morals and ethics. Just as the famous Urdu poet, Dr. Iqbal has said:

“Whether an autocratic system of government or a democracy, when religion is separated from politics, it results in a ruthless regime, like that of Changhez Khan”.*

People could not realize how their culture was being trampled by another religion because it (the other religion) had the political power.

Guru Nanak Dev realized this and told that it was the subjugated religion that bore the blows (of oppression). He told that if the political power was against a particular religion and/or culture, then this culture of the slave religion would sustain a heavy loss. In ‘Aasa di Vaar’, Guru Nanak says (to Hindus), “In privacy of your homes you worship your gods (and goddesses), but in public you follow the customs dictated by the (Muslim)

** There is, however, a prerequisite that the religion is not misinterpreted to serve the purpose of the politicians, as was the case at the time of Guru Nanak. In the modern time, the success of democratic type of government in USA, where the religion and politics are separate, seems to negate this hypothesis.*

rulers whom you call “Malechhas” or evil. How could you save your culture this way? What is responsible for this ridiculous condition of yours”? The only answer would be, political power.

Guru Nanak’s concept of ‘Dharma’ (religion) was multi-faceted. He considered the personal as well as social duties of man and woman, government and public, Brahmin and Kshatriya etc., as Dharma (religion).

He raised his voice when he saw that neither Muslim religious leaders (Mullahs and Quazis) nor Hindu religious leaders (Brahmins, Yogis, Kshatriyas) were practicing or following their religions. His observations are clearly expressed in his words in Guru Granth Sahib:

ਖੜੀਆ ਤ ਧਰਮ ਛੋਡਿਆ ਮਲੇਛ ਭਾਖਿਆ ਗਈ॥ (SGGS, P. 663)
“The Kshatriyas have abandoned their religion and have adopted the language of the Malechhas”.

And:

ਕਾਈ ਬੁਝ ਬੋਲਿ ਮਲੁ ਖਾਇ॥ (SGGS, P. 662)
“The Quazi tells lies and eats filth”.

That is why in an answer to Murray’s question, the author of ‘Prachin Panth Prakash’ said, “Guru Nanak is true emperor. Guru Har Gobind wore two swords (of *Miri* and *Piri*) and thus emphasized that religion and politics cannot be separated. When Guru Hari Rae called Guru Nanak, the sovereign, he actually meant that we have our own independent domain. The sword, that is an integral part of our code of conduct (*rahit*) also tells us that we have never surrendered our politics to any one, nor are we ever going to do that.

The ‘*Khanda*’ (the double-edged sword) that is resulted from the joining of *Miri* and *Piri*, cannot be separated by any one.

Q. 92. Is there any relationship between Yoga and Sikhism?

Ans. There is no place for Yoga (the way it is understood in Yogic tradition) in Sikhism. Guru Nanak Dev has clearly and unequivocally explained in “Aasa di Vaar”:

ਜੋਗੀ ਸੁੰਨਿ ਧਿਆਵਨਿ ਜੇਤੇ ਅਲਖ ਨਾਮੁ ਥਰਤਾਰੁ॥ (SGGS, P. 465)

“The Yogis expend all their efforts to concentrate on ‘void’. They try to achieve this by meditating on the subtle absolute (God) whom they name, ‘unknowable’ and the one free from dirt”. However, one has to imagine a form for meditating (on someone or something) even if it is subtle and formless. Thus they also give the subtle and formless unknowable one a form of a physical body and are thus no longer the devotees of formless one.

Since mind itself is confined to space and time, anything in its imagination will also assume dimensions, howsoever subtle it may be. Therefore Yogis cannot achieve the state of equipoise—their mind keeps on wandering.

In the house of Nanak one has to stop the wandering of ones mind through meditation on “*shabad*”:

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਰਾਤੇ ਸਬਦਿ ਰੰਗਾਏ॥ ਨਿਜ ਘਰਿ ਵਾਸਾ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਣ ਗਾਏ

(SGGS, P. 798)

“The Gurmukhs (Guru-ward persons) are dyed and saturated in Lord’s colour through Guru’s word (Shabad), they sing Lord’s praises and abide in their true self”.

Q. 93. What are their national attributes as a result of which it has not been possible to suppress the Sikhs?

Ans. Several reasons can be put forth to explain why in spite of the two holocausts (*Ghallugharas*)* the Sikhs could not be

* A third occurred in 1984 and continued during the eighties. •

exterminated or subdued. Some of these reasons are, able leaders, correct policies (strategies), good battle strategy, positive attitude, three-way-wars, tremendous sympathy and devotion of masses towards Sikhs and exemplary bravery of Sikh women. However, according to Rogers, there are four particular attributes that can be considered responsible for the successful recovery, with pride and self-respect, of the Sikhs following all calamities.

1. Sikhs had deep faith that one day they will rule the land, because Guru Gobind Singh had given them the boon of "*Raj karega Khalsa*", or the Khalsa shall be the ruler. Sikhs believed that whenever and wherever they fought a battle for a righteous cause, the Guru himself was with them, fighting on their side. The Tenth Master had once said, "wherever the Sikhs engage into a struggle for a righteous cause and for benefit to others, you will see me among the Sikhs" (Bansavali Naama). According to "Prachin Panth Prakash", the Sikhs used to say, "A time will come when the Turks (the Muslim rulers) will be hiding in order to save their lives and these poor ones (Sikhs) will become the rulers and collect taxes. Our Guru's word cannot be wrong, that is why we are accepting and tolerating these hardships". With every word they would remember the Guru and while courting the martyrdom they would say, "for our sake our Guru gave his life, why should then we, his Sikhs, hesitate and try to save our lives"?

Ahmad Shah Abdali (The Afghan invader) once asked Baba Ala Singh, "why these (Sikhs) cannot be finished by killing"? His reply was, "where one Sikh would give his life for a righteous cause, two will take birth to replace him" (Jang Naama, part 35).

2. Sikhs were the sons of soil as against the foreign invaders. They knew the land of the Punjab like the palm of their hand. They knew every town, source of water, every trail and hiding place. The Afghans themselves used to say, "They (the Sikhs) belong to this land while we are aliens".

The Sikhs considered themselves the heirs to the land of Punjab and would always say, "When the lands of the worlds were distributed, the Punjab came to Nanak. No outsider could rule over it. We will not allow the Punjab to become a part of either the Mughal or the Afghan empire". Sikhs believed that the South and West had conspired to plunder the Punjab, but they were not going to allow this conspiracy to succeed.

3. Sikhs possessed an impeccable character and a spirit of self-denial. The very first lesson the Sikhs had learnt (from Guru Nanak) was acceptance of death. They remembered the Guru's commandment:

ਜਦੁ ਤਉ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਖੇਲਣ ਕਾ ਚਾਉ ॥ ਸਿਰੁ ਧਰਿ ਤਲੀ ਗਲੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਆਉ ॥

(SGGS, P. 1412)

"If you have an urge to play the game of love, come into my street with your head placed on your palm".

The spirit of self- sacrifice was so high that no one harboured an element of jealousy nor anyone would tell his problems to anyone.

Prachin Panth Prakash writes about the character of the Sikhs as follows:

"They would themselves go hungry and hardships but will not see another Singh in distress. They would give away a dress to another Singh while themselves

would ward off cold by sitting in front of fire. They would spend their money earned by hard and honest work to comfort other Singhs. Even those who went to far off places, would not forget to send money to help their brethren”.

According to Bansavali Naama (Kesar Singh Chhibber), “ It was because of such a spirit of self sacrifice of Sikhs that Turks (Mughal rulers) could be exterminated. Even today, because of resolve and sacrifices of such Sikhs, the Khalsa will again rise in glory”.

Quazi Noor Mohammed writes: “In addition to their superior art of fighting, there is another attribute of Sikhs which is worthy of mentioning. This virtue is that Sikhs will not plunder a lady of her wealth whether she is a rich lady or a maid servant.

According to Panth Prakash, “if during fighting an enemy loses his turban, they would tell him to pick it up, place it on his head and then fight. Because they consider the loss of turban equivalent to loss of honour and they are not out to dishonour anyone, because this was the directive of the Guru to the Sikhs”.

4. Sikhs had an open-house policy. Their saddles were their homes. They had no attachment to their homes. Many times they had to abandon their homes and run away (to save their lives) but they never worried about that.

The Sikhs never altered their focus. Many obstacles came that might have slowed their pace but they continued on in spite of innumerable difficulties.

It was famous that Sikhs slept while walking or riding. They would not lie down on the ground. They were always ready for expeditions. According to a folklore:

Question: "Singh Ji ! You have made your horse ready, to which direction (expedition) are you ready to go"?

Answer: "O sweet maid! I had prepared the horse to go up North but a Southern expedition has come up".

They were fond of using their arms in a battle for a righteous cause. They considered that cuts and injuries received in a battle sanctified their body. Their policy was to attack, run and attack again. According to Quazi Noor Mohammed, "If they (Sikhs) start running away during a battle, do not consider it their defeat. This is their way of fighting – be careful from this trap of theirs. I am telling you again, do not get into their trap, they will pounce back on you".

Q. 94. When did the "Chhota Ghallughara" (the minor holocaust) and the "Vadda Ghallughara" (the major holocaust) occur? How many Sikhs were martyred in these holocausts?

Ans. The minor holocaust occurred between January 1, 1746 and June 30, 1746 at reedy marshes of Kaahnuwaan. Nawab Yahya Khan and his Hindu Diwan, Lakhpat Rae, with a huge army under their command, invaded the Sikhs with vengeance. According to one estimate about ten thousand Sikhs courted martyrdom. Bhai Ratan Singh Bhangoo has described the situation thus:

"A son could not find his father and a brother could not find his brother. The food was so scarce that Sikhs ate raw or half-baked (whatever was available) chapaties, cooked on their shields that were warmed by placing on hot sand.

Still they thanked God”.

The major or great holocaust occurred on February 5, 1762 in the morning at Kupp (near Maler Kotla) in an open field. Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded the Sikhs. About thirty thousand Sikhs were martyred*. However, they did not lose their resolve and stayed in high spirits (*Charhdi Kala*).

The same evening when the remaining Sikhs, at the end of their evening prayer (*Rehraas Sahib*), sounded aloud the customary slogan (*Jaikara – Sat Sri Akaal*), at that time a Nihang Singh was heard to say aloud, “the Tatt (pure) Khalsa has remained now, we have been cleansed of all the impurity”.

In this holocaust the condition of the Sikh army was that all the Sardars (the leaders of Sikh forces) were wounded. There was no exception. Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia sustained twenty-two and Sardar Charat Singh Sukarchakia, nineteen wounds on his body. This has been described in the “Prachin Panth Prakash”, where it is said that in spite of these wounds they kept on fighting. Also worth remembering are the words that Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia said in reply to a suggestion by Sardar Charat Singh Sukarchakia.

Sardar Sukarchakia suggested that each Misl (Sikh group) commander should gather his group under his banner and fight. Sardar Ahluwalia replied, “This is no time to divide our forces. We must all stand together and save the Panth at this critical time.

Another episode is also worth mentioning. While fighting, Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia got surrounded by the enemy soldiers. At that point his bodyguard suggested to him to whip his horse and get out. To this the Sardar replied, “When the Panth hears that I whipped my horse and ran away from the battle-

* Those days the total population of Sikhs could be counted in thousands.

field, I will become the subject of jokes. How will I then be able to sit in the congregation when everyone makes a fun of me? I want the Khalsa to become ruler but you want it to be coward”.

It should be remembered that no one has been able to exterminate the Sikhs. They will always keep going and progressing — as the water is underneath the earth – quiet but keeps flowing. Several times the rulers had the wrong impression that they had exterminated the Sikhs. Each time the Sikhs came out with greater force and ultimately established their own empire by defeating the same rulers.

Q. 95. What were the last words of Sikh Shaheeds, Baba Banda Singh, Bhai Tara Singh, Bhai Mani Singh, Bhai Gulzar Singh, Bhai Taru Singh, Bhai Subeg Singh, Bhai Sahib Singh, Bhai Sukha Singh, Bhai Mehtab Singh, Baba Deep Singh and Baba Gurbakhsh Singh at the time of courting martyrdom?

Ans. King Farakh Saiyyar asked Baba Banda Singh, what kind of death he would like to have. The determination personified Baba Banda Singh replied, “The kind of death he (Farakh Saiyyar) himself would like to have”. This answer is even firmer than the historical answer that Raja Porus gave to Alexander-the-Great (i.e. that Alexander should treat him as a king would treat another king).

When Baba Banda Singh stayed unmoved, even after his son Ajay Singh was ruthlessly butchered before his eyes, the prime minister of the Delhi king, Mohammed Amin Khan, could not help ask, why was all that happening? Baba Banda Singh replied, “No one had the capability of killing me. Let me tell you why all this is happening. When human beings become sinners and go

astray from the path of justice and resort to atrocities (on innocent people) then God Almighty creates people like me to exterminate such atrocious persons. However, we are all human beings – full of faults, and do not know how much punishment should be given. Sometimes we exceed the limits that God would allow. Then the same God creates men like yourself in order to square up our account”.

According to ‘Bansavali Naama’, “Banda, along with many Sikhs gave his head but stayed steadfast on the path of ‘Dharma’. He kept his ‘Dharma’ spotless.

Bhai Mani Singh uttered the following words when he was being martyred by cutting one joint at a time: “This poor body has no value compared to Sikhi (faith) which must stay unscathed. One may get human form many times but a Sikh form is hard to come by”.

By getting his body cut into pieces, one joint at a time, and still staying firm in his resolve, Bhai Mani Singh proved the validity of the hymn of Guru Granth Sahib:

ਬਹਾ ਭਇਓ ਜਉ ਤਨੁ ਭਇਓ ਛਿਨੁ ਛਿਨੁ ॥ ਪ੍ਰੇਮੁ ਜਾਇ ਤਉ ਭਰਪੈ ਤੇਰੇ ਜਨੁ ॥

(SGGS, P. 486)

“It does not matter if this body is reduced to pieces. My fear is that I may not lose Your love, O God”.

Bhai Gulzar Singh, one of the companions of Bhai Mani Singh, was also martyred by chopping off each joint, and by first skinning alive. His last words were: “Even if he is skinned alive, a Sikh will still not tell a lie”.

When people suggested to Bhai Tara Singh to leave the village for a few days, because the news of his absence would prevent the (Afghan) invaders, who were looking for him, to come to the village. Bhai Tara Singh replied, “I have determined to face the enemy and court martyrdom. Therefore I am not going

in charge), "I am not a thief, therefore I will not come stealthily at night to take a bath. I will come during the day time". He came at noon from the direction of Guru Ram Das saraae, took bath and challenged aloud, "If anyone has the courage, he should come and stop me".

Baba Deep Singh was at Damdama Sahib when he heard about the desecration of Golden Temple. At once he decided to go to Amritsar to avenge this horrible act. He knew that a large number of enemy forces were stationed on the way and his martyrdom was a certainty. But he took a vow to give his head in the Golden Temple precinct. (Blessed be Baba Deep Singh who took this unusual vow to give his head for the sanctity of "Darbar Sahib" and that too within its precinct). When he was near Amritsar, he was fighting with Aman Khan, the commander of the Afghan army). At that time he got a deep wound in his neck and his head got severed. Another Singh, who was fighting nearby, reminded Baba Ji of his vow, that Amritsar was still over a mile from there and he would not be able to keep his promise to the Guru. At that moment Baba Ji picked up his severed head on his left palm and with sword in his right hand proceeded towards the Golden Temple, fighting on his way. On reaching the precinct of 'Darbar Sahib', he threw his head and uttered the Khalsa greeting (*Waheguru Ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji ki Fateh*) and thus kept his promise.

At the time of courting martyrdom, Baba Gurbakhsh Singh put on a saffron-coloured attire after taking a bath in Amritsar (the Golden Temple lake). He then recited six stanzas (the first five and the last one) of Anand Sahib and proceeded to Akaal Takhat where he prayed in supplication to the Satguru to grant him strength to maintain his Sikh form until the end. Following this he listened to the hymns of "Ghorian" from Guru Granth Sahib. He did not even wear his armour before riding for battle.

to run away like a coward". He also said, "by sustaining injuries (in a battle), a Sikh's body is sanctified".

Bhai Taru Singh kept on reciting Japu Ji while he was being scalped alive.

When Bhai Subeg Singh and his son, Bhai Shahbaz Singh, were ready to be put on the spiked wheel, they said, "Blessed is this hour, blessed is the wheel, blessed is your justice (the rulers) and, blessed are our bodies, ready to go on the wheel for the righteous cause".

Let us compare this with what Jesus Christ uttered at the sight of the cross (why have Thee abandoned me O Lord?). This is the reason why bishop C.F. Andrews, when he saw Sikhs being ruthlessly beaten by batons but still smiling, said, "I am watching a thousand Christs being put on the cross and none of them has uttered a cry or a sigh".

When the Quazi suggested to Bhai Subeg Singh to save the life of his son, Bhai Shahbaz Singh, (by having him convert to Islam) so that his family name would continue, he replied, "your suggestion is valid but our Gurus sacrificed their own lives and those of their family members for our sake, so why should I be selfish and save my bloodline?"

When Bhai Mehtab Singh Mirankot, who had accompanied Bhai Sukha Singh Marhi Kantho and beheaded Massa Ranghar (who had desecrated the Golden Temple), was ready to be martyred by nailing his body, he was asked to express his last wish. Bhai Mehtab Singh said, "I would like to see Bhai Taru Singh. I have great affection and regard for him and would like to die along with him".

When Bhai Sukha Singh heard that sharp shooters had been positioned on the top of houses around the Golden Temple and announcement had been made to dare the Sikhs to come and take bath in Amritsar lake, he wrote (to the Muslim officer

He told his companions that he would ask the Tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh, "Why these Western invaders plunder and loot the wealth of Punjab which the Sikhs deserve to use? Then he dared his companions to keep going forward in the battle because it was a matter of (national) honour. To retreat would be dishonour and people would (tauntingly) say that Sikhs ran away from the battlefield. Saying so he rode his horse (along with his companions) and plunged himself into the battle. He kept on proceeding forward, mowing his enemies - never looked back until his end came.

Q. 96. Describe what Baba Bota Singh wrote in his letter to Zakaria Khan, the then ruler of the country.

Ans. Baba Bota Singh and Bhai Garja Singh were passing through a village when they heard the conversation between two Muslims. One of them pointed his finger towards them and said to the other, "You were saying that the Sikhs have been completely exterminated, but look at those two Sikhs, they are still alive". The second person replied, "I do not believe they are Sikhs. They must be fakirs, because the Sikhs court martyrdom by facing the enemy. They do not evade confrontation like these two".

Baba Bota Singh could not tolerate such insulting words. There and then they posted themselves at a bridge (close to saraae of Noor Deen) and started collecting tax from passersby. He then wrote a letter to Zakaria Khan, the governor of Lahore, in which he described what they were doing, so that he may come to know of their presence (that the Sikhs are still alive and have not been completely annihilated). The words of this letter were as follows:

Bota Singh is writing this letter

He is standing on a thoroughfare, with a staff in his hand

He is collecting tax at the rate of one anna for a bullock cart, and one pice for a donkey

Tell my sister-in-law, Khano*, (the wife of Zakaria Khan)
That Bota Singh has written this.

The way these two brave Singhs courted martyrdom is also worth mentioning.

On learning about this insulting letter, the commander of the Mughal forces in the Taran Taaran area came charging where the two brave Sikhs were posted. Baba Bota Singh and Bhai Garja Singh, on seeing the soldiers, stood with their backs to each other, ready to fight. Bota Singh had only a large staff and Garja Singh had a spear.

The Mughal commander said aloud, "Why do you want to get killed for nothing"? The two replied, "We are not here to save our lives; we are here to die a brave man's death". The soldiers had bows and arrows and muskets, but the two brave Sikhs, in spite of great handicap, gave a good fight. Both were wounded in their legs and could not stand, they beat the horses of the soldiers with their staff and spear and kept on fighting even while standing on their knees till the last moment.

Q. 97. Why there is no place for idol worship, according to the teachings of Guru Granth Sahib? Also, can the respect accorded Guru Granth Sahib be considered as idol worship?

Ans. A Sikh does not practice bibliolatry. He is the worshipper of 'Shabad' (word). To show respect to the word (or to a book containing divine word) is not idol worship.

An idol is a copy of someone's form. A sculptor carves a

** Some people think that Zakariya Khan's wife belonged to the same village as did Baba Bota Singh. Others think that it was a deliberate taunt to challenge Zakaria Khan.*

stone or moulds clay in order to make a figure. But his objective is to make an exact copy of the original one. Idols of Budha, Rama, Krishna, or Shiva are made and worshipped with the idea that they are (copy of) the real. We call the Granth, a Granth and do not use any other name for it. Since it gives us (spiritual) advice and bestows upon us true spiritual life and knowledge, we call it Guru. The word 'Sahib' is added as a sign of respect. No one ever says that Granth is Guru Nanak or Bhagat Kabir. We call it the light of Ten Gurus.

Once a cynic asked Bhai Kahnaiyya if bowing before Guru Granth Sahib was not idol worship? He replied, "Yes, to an ignorant person it seems that someone is bowing to the cot, the pedestal, the scarves etc. But after obeisance one reads a randomly selected passage, and then the reader (Sikh) tries to mould his/her life according to the commandment given in that passage. A Sikh is thus the worshipper of 'Shabad' and not of the volume.

Guru Hari Krishan once said that contacts of physical bodies are always for short and limited periods. If someone wishes to talk to me, he/she should read the Granth with devotion, listen to the commandment with all attention and devotion and earnestly try to act upon it in his/her life. He/she will obtain all the four boons* .

One should always remember that in Guru's house the true worship is to adopt humility and perform selfless service. According to Bhai Gurdas (*Vaar 26, Pauri 6*) "The feet of true Guru, the root of all comforts, should be worshipped to attain the comforts".

* The four boons are, Dharam (moral duty), Arth (worldly goods), Kaam (sexual desire) and Moksh (deliverance).

Q. 98. Describe the main reasons why the Sikh empire ended so fast.

Ans. It is true that the Sikh empire went the way Baba Farid has written:

ਗੰਢੇਦਿਆਂ ਛਿਆ ਮਾਹ ਤੁੜੀਦਿਆ ਹਿਕੁ ਖਿਨੋ ॥

(SGGS, P. 488)

“It takes six months (for the formation (of human body in mother’s womb), but only one moment to break it asunder (the death)”.

There are four main reasons for the demise of the Sikh empire:

1. Those who were at the head of affairs of the empire (after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh) were not far-sighted enough to realize the (long term) significance of their actions. They got sold (to the enemy). These leaders were either rogues or fools. Rani Jindan was the only true ‘man’ in Punjab and the English people started a treacherous campaign against her. Many Sikh commanders became victims of this campaign.
2. People in general had become soft because of prosperity; they had lost their resolve to live honourably. Cunningham’s remarks are quite appropriate when he writes, **“jackals have become the leaders of the nation of lions”.**
3. It used to be that a Sikh would be ready to sacrifice his life for another Sikh. Now, however, a brother became a sworn enemy of another brother.
4. The institution of “Gurmata”, that always helped Sikhs at the time of a calamity, had been forsaken (by Maharajah Ranjit Singh). Thus there was no institution that could bring the Sikhs together at a time when they needed such an institution the most.

Q. 99. What do you know about the scriptures of various religions of the world?

Ans. The scriptures of Buddhism are called "Patikas". The first one is 'Vinay' (descriptive); the second one is 'Shatt' (teachings) and the third one is called 'Abhidham' (metaphysical). In "Dham Padd" the code of conduct (how to lead a pious life) is delineated. These rules are supposed to have been laid down by Lord Budha.

It is doubtful if any of these scriptures originated at the time of Budha. About five hundred years after the death of Lord Budha, five hundred "Ashtas" gathered at Rajgreha in the form of a Sinod (a grand meeting). These three 'Patikas' are the result of this meeting.

Zorastrians have five scriptures. These are called "Zedavistas". The first contains the rules of worship and sacrifice, the second has stories and songs, the third is liturgical, the fourth contains the code for the clergy and the fifth contains the essence of teachings of Zoratastiranism. All these books came long after the death of the prophet of the religion.

Taoism was started by Lao-zi about 607 years before Christ. The writings of Lao-zi were later on collected under the name of Taoism.

Shintoism originated in Japan. Its most famous book is "Kanziki", which was in existence long after the start of the religion. It mainly contains (mythological) stories.

The scriptures of Jainism are Agam and Ayaran Stotra. The first Agam contains the doctrines, the second one (Ayaran Stotra) has twelve parts; all of them contain only stories.

The scripture of Jews, the Old Testament, has 39 books. These are divided into three parts. Torah has the code (law), the second book (Nabi) describes the prophets and their lives, and the third one (Kateb) contains spiritual discourses. Two more books, Mission (the book of recitation) and Zamer (description)

are also considered the Jewish scriptures.

The Bible of Christians is a collection of 27 books. Most importantly, the Bible does not contain the word 'Bible' in it. This word was used some time in the ninth century A.D. It is called the Gospel (good news*).

It was first written in Hebrew. Later on it was translated into Greek and then into Latin. Now it is translated into almost all the languages of the world. Since a translation is never completely correct, there are many versions of Bible available.

The scripture of Islam is Qu'ran. The meaning of the word Qu'ran is to compile a collection of gifts. It is believed that the Qu'ran was transmitted to prophet Mohammed from God, through the angel, Jibrail. It is also said that the first revelation came to Mohammed on mount Hira in the month of Ramadan. He would write down every revelation, as it came, on whatever he could get his hands at that time, including leaves, skins, stones etc.** Sometimes these writings got wiped off or obliterated. When asked, the prophet's answer was, "Allah has taken them back". This is called 'Nasakh'. For example Suras 180 and 84 were changed.

The revelations that prophet Muhammed received over a period of 23 years during his life, were compiled by the third Caliph, Omar, (after some revision and reorganization). Thus the first revelation was put at 96th place in the Qu'ran.

About one thousand verses in Qu'ran contain stories (similar to the old testament), 2066 verses discuss the Sharia (the code), prayers and a description of what will happen on doom's day; 3400 verses are related to social behaviour, distribution of

* The dictionary meaning of the word 'Gospel' is: One of the first four books of New Testament presenting the life, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus.

** It is doubtful that prophet Muhammed himself wrote his revelations, because it is believed that he could not read or write.

loot (following a battle), and treatment of women.

The laudation of God, as enjoined by the Qu'ran, has also been approved by the Sikh Gurus.

The scriptures of Hindus are the four Vedas – Rig, Syam, Yujar and Atharban (or Atharv). Each Veda has two parts, the Sahanta or mantra and the Brahmin which contains laudation, praises of Vedas, stories, commandments, complaints and question answers.

According to Swami Daya Nand, the founder of Arya Samaj, the Vedas originated along with the earth, about 1.9 billion years ago. But according to Max Mueller, all this is only wishful thinking, just as the Bible says that the first human being came into existence on March 23, 4004 B.C; and another ignorant person, Linefoot, the vice chancellor of Cambridge University, said that the first human being was born on 26th October, 400 B.C., at 9:00 in the morning – what a joke.

The Rishi Vyas, who is considered among Hindus as the author of these scriptures, is also an imaginary person. The meaning of Vyas is 'the originator'; and there are thirty persons with this name in Hindu mythology.

From the words Shruti and Smriti (used for Hindu scriptures) one can understand that these scriptures were written by hearing (from someone) or from memory. The number of Smrities is up to 27.

According to H.G. Wells the Hindu writings cannot be believed in. They (Hindus) are people of voice. Contrary to this, Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Master says (for Sikhs):

ਕਹਤੇ ਪਵਿਤ੍ਰ ਸੁਣਤੇ ਸਭਿ ਧੰਨੁ ਲਿਖਤੀ ਕੁਲੁ ਤਾਰਿਆ ਜੀਉ ॥ (SGGS, P. 81.)

“Those who chant are sanctified, all those who listen are blessed and those who write, save their generations”.

Q.100. When and where was the first camp of the All India Sikh Students Federation held?

Ans. The first training camp of the All India Sikh Students Federation was held at Sri Paunta Sahib in 1950. The principal of this training camp was Sardar Sarup Singh, the founder president of the Federation. I (Principal Satbir Singh) myself participated in this camp as a trainee.

