

God – The Right Concept

-By: Anand Sarup

This universe is continually changing. In fact, change is the Law of Nature. Even in our short span of life we have seen so many changes in practically every field of human activity - political, social, economical, cultural. The scientific knowledge has also not lagged behind; scientific theories and concepts have undergone a great metamorphosis. This transformation in the various fields of human activity is mainly due to the mental development of the mankind. The spiritual field cannot remain isolated in this panorama of human activity.

In our earlier days we were given to understand that God was an inaccessible entity somewhere in the Heavens, a realm created by the ever - soaring imagination of mankind-wherefrom He watched our actions closely, may be like a policeman and dealt out punishments to us for our acts of omission and commission. He was also liable to get annoyed if we did not sing His praises day and night like courtiers in Durbar (court) of an autocratic ruler, and did not lead a ritualistic life. It was indeed a horrible impression that was created in our minds. So, we acted under the policy of “Spare the rod and spoil the child”. But as ‘fear’ makes coward of us all, we can never act rightly under the pall of fear. What we do under fear or compulsion is never genuinely done, and we may, sooner or later, react adversely to it. Fundamentals do not alter, but human concept about them does undergo a change with time. So, with passage of time, the concept of God has also changed. The Sant Nirankari Mission has done a yeoman’s service to humanity in propounding the new concept, which has appealed both to intelligentsia and masses. Under the spiritual guidance of Nirankari Baba Ji, God is not something to be dreaded but something to be loved. The theory of 'God in the Heavens and Man on Earth' has been exploded. Nirankar – Formless God- does not dwell in the Heavens, nor has He special affinity for conventional places of worship like temples, churches and mosques. He does not need praises or ritualistic offerings from His creation. He is all pervading entity who is ever with us like a friend in this battlefield of life and is our sole motive force as was Lord Krishna to Arjuna in the great epic battle of Mahabhart. So, it behooves us that we reciprocate God’s friendliness and conduct ourselves in a fashion which should win His approbation and make the ties of friendship stronger and everlasting. Like our beloved, He should be our sole confidant, and we should at all times draw inspiration from Him for our everyday actions. We should have full faith in Him - faith uninhibited by mental reservation - and submit to His will for a meaningful life and final salvation.

The First Priority

-By: G.M.Saxena.

The world is like an inn where travelers stay for a short duration and then depart. It is like the market place where diverse types of people gather for business and then leave for their respective places. Just as an inn, the departing travelers feel sorry to leave their temporary acquaintances, with whom they had passed some days and become close, in the world also we find relations, friends and near ones crying and wailing for the departed ones. As in an inn, we find the people feverishly busy and interested in their pursuits with an eye on the predetermined date of departure, in the world also everybody is engrossed in his pursuits but with the difference that neither the date of departure is known nor it is in the hands of the individuals to determine it . At the time of his end, the individuals realises that it was all a delusion, because the world in which he lived was actually not his real abode and that the companions, friends and relations that he called his own, were also 'visitors' to the worldly inn, where there is nothing permanent .

In this world, most of the time we remain engrossed in earning money for food, clothing and shelter as also to save something for a rainy day. Our planing is for hundred years or more, but suddenly our life betrays and all our hard - earned acquisitions are left behind. Even then money has become the be-all and end-all of human life.

Just as in an inn, we remember every moment that our stay is temporary in the world also we must remember that our stay is not only temporary but also uncertain because in the case of an inn the programme of our stay is in our hands, but here in the world the programme is fixed by the destiny . Therefore, we must set out priorities and avail of the life span to achieve the prime aim of human life. One thing, which needs to be clearly noted, is that at the time of death one may cry or beg for a fresh lease of life or even one extra breath, but it will be of no avail. Within a few moments of death, the vital organs like the heart, the liver, the brain, become lifeless. Bearing all these factors in mind salvation should be given the first priority in life, which is actually meant to achieve this very noble aim. Those who regard 'eat, drink and be merry' the aims of rare human life, waste it away. Its real aim is union of the soul with the Over Soul. One may be literate or illiterate, black or white, high or low, rich or low, rich or poor, this ought to be his first priority. Union with the Over Soul can be attained only by the grace of a Spiritual Mentor or Satguru . The Satguru is the person who himself is in communion with God and is able to establish the same between the seeking soul and the Over Soul.

People believe that salvation or merger of the soul in the Over Soul is achieved after death. It would be pertinent to point out here that if we have not known and integrated ourselves with God while we are alive, merger in Him or salvation after death is not at all possible. Therefore, God-realisation should be the first priority of our life. If we do so, our merger in the Over Soul becomes not only certain but also spontaneous.

Sometimes we hear people argue that salvation is of no interest to them because they are enjoying comforts, conveniences and luxuries and are quite happy. Such people are ignorant because they do not know that the Creator, who has bestowed these bounties, is Himself an inexhaustible treasure house of matchless happiness, satisfaction and contentment. Therefore, by 'attaining' Him-Salvation-man attains abiding peace, bliss and happiness. This is the teaching of all religions. Every messenger of God has laid stress on the elevation and sublimation of the inherent divinity in man with the benevolence of the Satguru to the extent that the soul should be united with the Divine Most – Supreme Soul - during the life-span, which is the First Priority.

Gleanings from the Garden of Eden

-By: Lt. Col. H.G. Majilya (Reg.)

'Who has broken these Idols? Have you done it, my dear?'

'No father, I have not broken them.'

'Then who has broken them?'

'The Idol, who has got a scythe in its hand, has broken them.'

'How come?'

'The Idols have been fighting amongst themselves.'

'You are telling a lie.'

'How, my father?'

'Because the Idols can't fight by themselves. They can't even move about by themselves. All this is your handiwork.'

'All right, father! Let us assume that what you said is correct. If so, kindly tell me of what use are these Idols?'

'These are for worship.'

'But father, this is funny! They have got eyes but can't see, have got ears but can't hear, have got legs but can't walk. In what way their worship...'

'What you have said is correct, my boy, but...'

‘But what, my father? What is the utility of worshipping the Idols? We make them ourselves by our own hands and then worship them. Can man create God? It’s only God who creates man’

‘Then whom should we worship, my boy?’

‘We should worship Him, who has created this world and the universe, the one that sustains all, the one who has made the sun and the moon, by whose grace the seasons change, by whose grace our sheep give birth to their siblings.’

Aeons ago, father ‘Terah’ of the family of ‘Nuh’ was stunned by the talk of his son, Abraham, but nonetheless he felt that his words were worthy of thought and that they were true.

Prophet Abraham introduced the worship of one God that is without any form, the same formless ‘Par Brahm’ that has been spoken of in the ancient Vedas and has been exalted in the Upanishadas. It’s ‘Nirankar’ (God Formless) that he spoke of, the one that does not have the eyes but can visualise, that does not have the ears but can hear, that does not have the legs but can walk about without any hindrance, the one and unique unalloyed gnosis and bliss whose knowledge can only be imparted by Satguru or True Master of the day by the word of mouth, for as the Bible says: Word was with God and Word is God. Truly in the sense, Satguru is God in the human form, for his Word is Truth and again he is the Son of God, for his Word reveals the Father (Truth). Thus, he is the meeting point between God Formless and man in form, through World.

Abraham used to be called ‘Ibri,’ which literally means man of the outer sphere, that is, not the man of this world of forms and phenomenon but the universal man of noumenon, the ‘Satnam’. From this word as derivative has come the well-known word ‘Hebrew’. The Hebrew Prophet Abraham just like the Brahma of the Indians, is called Ibrahim or the patriarch of humanity and revered not only by the Jews, the Muslims and the Christians but who knows, perhaps the Hindus as well, if per chance ‘Brahma’ is a synonym of Abraham or Ibrahim. The Hebrew name of the noumenon or “Nirankar” is ‘Yahweh’. ‘Ihudi’ was a direct descendant of the Prophet Abraham, whose followers are known even today as Ihudis (Jews), which means one who constantly remembers God, the Yahweh, or, in other words, Nirankar. Their faith is like this:

-The physical world and whatever is contained therein is nothing but only the Yahweh. For he is the one, unique, who is the ship formed out of Him, floating in the formless ocean of noumenon, that is, He himself. He has become all and yet has remained the everlasting one without any change whatsoever, that is, has never left the unique status quo ante. Who can understand this paradox? Who can cross this mountain of obstacles that is devoid of all logical process of human thought? And who can take the a priori stand, where his altar is? Those who are without any selfish motives, whose hearts are pure void, whose minds are unattached to this illusory world and who, after taking the oath in the name of God, do not violate or

betray, only they are the ones that get the blessing of Yahweh. In the graceful eyes of Yahweh, they are the true wayfarers, the pilgrims of Truth, and the alter ego of God.

-Open your eyes and see how good is God. Blessed are those who notice and surrender. Mahapurshas (elevated ones) of Yahweh, always tread your path with fear of Him in your heart.

-Control your tongue. Keep your mouth clean don't deceive. Avoid that which is bad for anyone and do always that is good for similarity amongst you and constantly yearn for union with Him. Eyes of Yahweh are roving everywhere and are watching you always.

Ihudis (the Jews) believe:

- ❖ The formless Yahweh is the creator of all the worlds and all the beings who inhabit them.
- ❖ Yahweh is one.
- ❖ Yahweh is all love.
- ❖ Yahweh is always merciful.
- ❖ Yahweh is everywhere.
- ❖ Yahweh is nearer than the nearest.
- ❖ Yahweh is farther than the farthest.
- ❖ Yahweh is mysterious like the dark night.
- ❖ Yahweh is clearer than the sun.
- ❖ Yahweh can be propitiated by deeds of goodness, universal love, compassion and selfless service to all beings.
- ❖ Yahweh is His name.

Nothing!

-By: H.S. Paul, Advocate

A Chinese proverb says: "Where there is nothing, there is the way." Ostensibly, I find that whenever we think of a way, we think of a smooth, unhindered passage. Whenever even the most precious thing is found in the way, it is an obstruction and has to be removed to go ahead. I am of the opinion that wherever there is nothing, it is always the way and nothing else. To exemplify, let me point out that solution is always found for a problem. If there were no problems, there could be no solution. Similarly, a thirsty man needs water and not a person who is already satiated with drinks. Riches always flow to the needy, because they need them the most. One has to be sufficiently poor to invite riches. Of course, even a very rich man can be a very poor person! One, who is totally ignorant, is most qualified for knowledge. To quote the Holy Bible: "You knock and it shall open unto you." A person, who is already inside, does not need knocking.

Nothing or the way signifies that if you travel on it, you are likely to reach the destiny. But remember if you remain wedded to it, you are merely an obstruction and likely to be removed by someone else who intends to travel. Under no circumstances, Nothing should be conceived anything else but a place to start with-your starting point. It is not the end nor it can be the end. The traveler on this significant way is likely to enter terra non-cognate, where all kinds of fears and all kinds of illusions would be found lurking, because the path has not been charted. To add emphasis, I may say: It is your own way; nay, your very own way. If anyone is to chart this territory, it is you. You are the grand cartographer and it is for you to depict the miles you travel. For, now it shall be terra cognate. And for the travelers, who come after you, will travel henceforth and shall open up new territories.

Human mind is one of the most sparingly used vehicles. The owner never uses it more than the tenth of the capacity. When I say one tenth, the user is the person who has made the greatest use of it. A normal person uses much less. The concept of nothingness in one's mind is hazy and it has to be bordered with positive or the presence. The nothingness if traveled upon, would enter the fields of negativity, which is full of great possibilities, hitherto untaught of.

Yun Meri Khamoshi Goonji
Goya Har Simt Jawab Aye
Faiz, Rah Thi Sar-Ba-Sar Manzal
Hum Jahan Ponchey Kamyab Aye.

(My silence so resounded that
it echoed all around;
Faiz, the way was in fact the destiny,
hence every step was a success.)

The Spirit Alone -By: Kirpa Sagar

The hearts burning today with hatred and jealousy because of controversies over Religion may automatically melt with the feelings of love and understanding, if they just look up the meaning of the word Religion in a good dictionary.

The word Religion has been described as 'the belief in a superhuman controlling power entitled to obedience and worship.' In other words, Religion is man's belief in a superhuman power that controls the universe and thus entitled to be obeyed, praised and offered thanks. A little elaboration will take you to certain fundamental considerations about Religion that remain too outstanding to be challenged. In fact, it is these basic truths that seek to grant uniformity to the

various religions known to the world. When we say that Religion is the belief in a superhuman power, we accept the existence of God. We may address this power as Allah, Om, Rama or by any other name, but we do not deny its existence.

God

This superhuman power, God, controls the universe. Since when, nobody knows; up to when, nobody can forecast or foretell. It means superhuman power is eternal, a creation of its own. The description 'controlling power' may further mean that God is the creator, nurturer and destroyer of various objects of the universe. Nothing may alter without His will. He must, therefore, be omnipresent, all-powerful, the almighty. Moreover, since God is to 'control' or run everything, He must be present everywhere, in every object. He must be responsible for everything that moves or occurs in the universe. He must be present inside and outside every object. Similarly, He should be omniscient, an observer of everything that takes place in any part of the universe.

This power, God, is superhuman; so it must be formless. Man may not be able to see it with his worldly or physical eyes. Being formless, it should not be possible to burn it, cut it or split it.

Now we come to obedience. This superhuman power is entitled to man's obedience. Why man only? It deserves obedience from every object. It is the will of God that prevails ultimately. Man must surrender before it, whether it suits his worldly interests or not. Man is too humble to make suggestions. He just cannot interfere in God's scheme of things. If at all, he can only make use of the various objects as a custodian so long as God destines it; after all it is God who is looking after him. Similarly, wind must blow as He wills, water must flow as He wills, plants must grow as He wills.

Worship

Whatever we have discussed in the above paragraphs does not give rise to any controversies. There is hardly any scope for views to conflict. At the most one may say, "I do not believe in God" and declare himself unconcerned or indifferent in regard to Religion. But he has no substitute or alternative to offer. He cannot change the situation for those who choose to 'believe'. Similarly, he just cannot cease to be a part and parcel of the universe, a creature of the Almighty, simply because he refuses to believe in the existence of the superhuman power that controls it. By doing so, he is only failing to appreciate what this superhuman power is doing for him and be grateful to the same.

The believers, however, do praise this power, whatever name they may give it. They admire it for whatever it has provided to them- the sun, the moon, the stars, the air, the planets, the mountains, the rivers, the oceans, the birds, the animals

and so on. They are indeed grateful to this superhuman power for the numerous blessings they enjoy day and night.

The expression of man's admiration and gratitude to God is what has been described as 'worship'. And this is the area where uniformity has remained a mere dream. For the initiative here rests with man and not the superhuman power. Man has always shown reverence to the superhuman power as per his limited understanding depending on his natural surrounding and social environment. Simultaneously, man has been trying to know the superhuman power he believes in. Efforts have always been made to understand the relationship between God and man - another dimension of Religion.

There was a time, when man tried to know God through His creations, like the sun, moon, water, plants and so on. This led to the worship of those objects as gods, perhaps because they too remained beyond man's control of comprehension. With the passage of time, the list of these gods went on expanding till, according to a belief, it reached thirtythree crores. Even literature that spoke of these gods became sacred, entitled to man's reverence.

Search Lost

Man would like to offer the best available to him to these gods. Milk, honey, flowers, food grains and even animals killed for human diet started being offered or sacrificed in the worship of gods. Certain places on the earth became more significant and people started being treating them as pilgrimage spots. They would undergo penance, chant the name and sing the praise of the gods. In the process many forgot that by keeping these gods happy, man actually wanted to please or adore the superhuman power that controls the entire universe. The very search for man's identity vis-a-vis God became lost. Instead, ignorance and superstition overlook man's thinking. The sacred belief in the superhuman power controlling the universe was then reduced to mythology only.

The religion of worship became a symbol of culture. Different groups of people, living in different climates, speaking different languages, in the search of their collective identification acknowledged the mode of worship as one of the facets of unity, describing the same as their religion. As the groups' multiplied, deliberate efforts were made to keep there identify distinct from others. As a result, the modes of worship too became rigid and complicated, so much so that the word Religion was reduced to a name given to a bunch of rites and rituals.

This situation has, of course, caused worry to men of wisdom from time to time. They tried to take man out of ignorance and superstition in their own way, depending on the contemporary environment - political, social, cultural and economic. However, with the passage of time, the matter became more complicated only, one of the reasons being petty selfishness of the vested interests. And experience shows that hatred and violence spread with greater speed than the forces of love and peace.

The Mission

The Sant Nirankari Mission is currently endeavoring to redeem the lost definition of the word “Religion”. It does not describe itself as a new religion, so that it may not be taken as another bunch of rites and rituals for the ignorant people. It is a spiritual movement, seeking to present Religion as the spirit alone, having little to do with modes of worship.

The Mission helps people to know God, so that they can realise His existence and presence, wherever they go – in a temple, mosque, church and Gurdwara, rather everywhere. It enables them to understand the truth through spiritual enlightenment. It endeavours to make them appreciate man’s direct communion with God, all the time. Once you realise your identification with God, the various modes of worship become irrelevant and meaningless. Man has only to remember God and express his gratitude to Him, spiritually.

To the Nirankari devotees, Religion is a means to complete human integration with Formless God-Nirankar. God being one, He cannot be identified with any particular caste, creed or community and so is the case with Religion. There is, therefore, only one religion and that is the Religion of God. Here people belonging to different nationalities, faiths and cultures sit together, live together. There is complete unity as regards the ultimate reality. The Nirankari devotees firmly believe that religion unites and does not divide human beings. Simply because it concerns the spirit, the soul, the mind and, of course, the Super Soul, the Almighty. It blesses one with the divine vision to perceive and realise the same Divinity in all beings.

The Mission is thus evolving a new pattern of classless society wherein all God-realised souls live as world citizens, as members of the same world-family, having belief in one Formless God – Nirankar.

Man and True Religion

-By: Lalitesh Malhi

Each human soul is potentially divine and each human being, the crown creation. He thinks marvelously and draws inferences from the nature around. His uniformly pulsating heart pumps blood and also believe in certain facts, appearances, earnestly, as does his mind. His body organs co-ordinate and co-operate to act as per the dictates of his brain, and his nerves faithfully feed the various senses, freely. How diversely gifted man is, is difficult to evaluate. Yet, man is a social animal, so usually termed as. In fact, he is no better than beasts in hunger, thirst, sleep, fear, procreation, etc. Bereft of true knowledge of oneness of

God and humanity, he has so much divided the humanity into castes, creeds, religions, races, and nationalities, that he does not regard himself to be an integral unit of the humanity. He professes to be religious. Through every religion preaches and teaches mutual love, fellow feeling, amity and harmony, man is full of envy, hatred, ill-will, jealousy, for others. Even amidst material affluence, he cannot keep his mind free from irrational and base instincts such as lust, anger, greed, pride and attachment. Man has made astounding advancement in science and has landed on the moon. However, consumed by pride and narrow-mindedness, he shuns the company of those who differ from him in caste, colour and creed. These are some of the maladies, which have made man sorrowful and worried – a pathetic being.

There have been great kings, emperors, and conquerors and mighty of there times, but now no one even remembers them. On the other hand, Guru Nanak, Saint Kabir and Sant Ravidas, though of humble origin, became spiritual stalwarts and are revered, worshipped and glorified even today for their love, humility and service to the humanity. They realised the Truth and imbibed and propagated it. They expounded the true religion and set personal examples how a true religious being should conduct him.

In the word rife with doubts and delusions, superstitions and miss-beliefs, strife and violence, hatred and jealousy, discordance and dissidence, man runs from pillar to post in search of peace, bliss and happiness till he, fortunately, encounters a Spiritual Master who makes him realise the true aim of human life, bestowed by God with the faculties of realising his true self .

The Great Masters ever exhort man to learn the science of the true religion and realise the all pervading Reality – true spirituality -, because the people mistake worship or performance of rites and rituals as religion. The Great Master of the time questions them: Is God finite or infinite? Can the all pervading God be confined in an idol or image? Who you are, in reality? Where do you come from? Where will your soul go after leaving the perishable body? But they cannot answer even one of these questions. What a pity! Thus they waste away the rare human life in ignorance or amassing the passing wealth in the transitory world and remain tightly bound to attachments. Still the Master endeavours to guide them and put them on the path of the true religion.

Love is the essence of the true religion. The true religion fosters peace, bliss, humility, harmony, tolerance and the spirit of selfless service. The true religion ever unites never divides. A truly religious or spiritual master establishes a Holy Communion between the soul and the Over Soul, its true origin and final abode.

Only a true religion can inspire one for self-realisation to satiate one's soul's spiritual aspiration. Only the realisation of the all-pervading God, permeating the self, can bestow abiding peace, bliss and happiness. All doubts, false concepts, ever changing painful life-pattern, steeped in falsehood, and misbelieve, vanish in a single moment buy the grace of a True Master. To abide by the true religion (of God-realisation) and to get transformed from, an animal-man into a god-man is

the way of real worship, and none else. With this, all pains and vain notions cease and the primary universal vitality starts vibrating throughout the redeemed being. As God is omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, unchangeable, self-existent and ultimate truth, God-realisation, the essence of the true religion, brings about a change of head and heart. With the divine vision bestowed by the True Master, one perceives the whole universe dwelling in God and every human a living image of God. Consequently, the feelings of otherness, selfishness and alienation get dissolves. Now a true and meaningful prayer flows from the heart of the realised being in a spirit of devotion, dedication and altruism. One realises that the pride of health, wealth, status, caste or colour is erroneous, even fatal, as the Supreme Father has 'made' all humans equal. Thus a God-realised person is unmindful of others' diets, dress, life-style, as matters of little importance. He loves all and serves all without any distinction or discrimination. He lives in the world but in a spirit of non-attachment i.e. of not being worldly. He eagerly joins the sagacious and holy company of saints. Out of humility and self-surrender, he regards himself as humblest of the humble.

The essence of the true religion is total obedience to the teachings of the True Master. And a truly religious person is one who practices what he professes and preaches. He ever relishes and aspires for God-remembrance, God-glorification and fellowship of the enlightened as the source of perennial peace, bliss and happiness.

A truly religious or spiritually awakened person is honoured here and hereafter. God-knowledge sublimates his life. He takes minimum from the world but dedicates his whole being to human uplift, human service and human redemption. The true religion raises man above the barriers of borders and boundaries of time and place, norms and forms. He is immune to pain and pleasure, loss and gain, triumph and defeat, birth and death. Being a true Homo sapiens, he fosters world peace and harmony, pure conscience and mutual understanding. Since his heart, mind and soul are imbued with God-consciousness, his love is divine and pure. He regards every human as a member of the vast human family, who ought to be loved, honoured and served.

In short, the true religion transforms a human into a divine being, who dedicates his all – body, mind and wealth – to the service, uplift and enlightenment of the whole humanity.

Truth

-By: Madan Lal

'Om Poorn-madah Poornamidam
Poornaat Poornam-udachchyate,
Poornasya Poornamaadaaya

Poornamayvavashishyate.'

The word 'Om' denotes the attributes of the Absolute such as 'Sat' (truth), 'Chit' (Consciousness) and 'Ananda' (Bliss). The Upanishad (Isha Upanishad in this case) opens with this verse and the verse in its own turn opens with the word 'OM' that describes the attributes of the Absolute. The Rishi-author of this Upanishad does not use any word not absolutely required. And there lies the beauty of the verse(s).

The above-cited verse is very typical and contradictory inasmuch as it says:

'Brahma' (God) is Poorna (absolute) and this Universe is also absolute. And this Poorna has been created from that Poorna. If Poorna is taken out from the Poorna, there remains yet the Poorna.

The above is the literal meaning of the verse. Clearly, the word 'Poorna' has been used paradoxically.

In mathematical terms, the verse be explained as under:

$$0-0=0 \qquad 0+0=0$$

$$0/0=0 \qquad 0 \times 0=0$$

It means the whole universe is engulfed by a force or say energy. That energy pervades in the universe and causes all the inertia and activity, both.

If we explain the above equation in words it will be thus : God is absolute and the universe is also absolute, just because only absolute can be created from the absolute, and by taking away from the absolute, there remains the absolute; and if absolute is added to the absolute, there remains the absolute; and if absolute is added to the absolute, the sum total will still be absolute.

This is the conclusion drawn by the Rishi of the Upanishad. He has declared the Truth first and the means to realise this Truth follows in the subsequent verses. And, ultimately, he proves the equation by closing the Upanishad with the same verse with which it opens. In other words, when it opens, the absolute Truth is declared and after explaining from all angles, it ends with the same verse. Thus the Rishi has proved what he had declared at the outset.

In reality, the whole Upanishad is encapsulated in the opening verse. But this is valid in the case of all those who have realised the Absolute (God). The explanation that follows in the subsequent verses is for those who have yet to realise Him. Thus, the following verses are a sort of explanation and for proving the equation drawn in the apparently contradictory statement and ultimately closing the statement with the same verse.

Let us try to understand the above with the help of some examples. It is said that God is Love. The whole of this Universe is, thus, the product of love. It is the creation of love; it depends upon love. Now if you love someone or something, your love for that is whole. You cannot love anyone or anything in parts. Either you go for it, or you do not go for it, at all. Similarly, when you take out Absolute from the Absolute there remains the Absolute just as if you love, you love. Love does not part with the lover when he loves. Similarly, Absolute does not turn into emptiness when Absolute is taken out of it.

Again, let us take the instance of Space. Quite recently a picture sent by a rocket, shot in the space by the U.S.A., shows an abyss in which millions of celestial bodies are attracted and being absorbed by natural phenomenon. Just think whether the space is reduced or increased in any way, in this process. God-Existence means that He permits all things. In whatever is formed in this existence, simply changes take place and nothing is reduced. Thus, the sum total always remains the same.

For God, this universe is like a dream and when an individual also realises that the universe is like a dream, does he attain Godhood? At this stage he declares that he is a God (Aham Brahamasmi). Thus, each individual is complete in all respects (absolute). Similarly, each atom is God. Those who know anatomy will understand it better in the manner that millions of cells in a body die every day and similarly millions of new cells are formed instead.

I would like to make a mention that the Nirankari way of teaching is based on this verse in as much as it reveals the Truth first and puts the seeker on the path to realise it for himself. And those, who are in a position to understand at the very outset, they are the blessed ones. And the rest have to tread the path and reach the goal as the Upanishad shows the way.

The Good Ground

-By: M. S.Chawla (U.S.A)

Once Lord Jesus Christ narrated a parable- the Parable of the Sower (Luke8:5-15):

“A sower went to sow his seed in his field. As he started sowing, some seeds fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

“And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away because it lacked moisture.”

“And some fell among thorns; and thorns sprang with it, and choked it.

"And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundred fold..."

"And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be?"

"And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand."

Explaining the true meaning of the parable and the four types of devotees, Lord Jesus said:

"The seed is the word of God."

"Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and take away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

"They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

"And that which fall among the thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

"But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience."

Let us pray to our benevolent Baba Ji to bless us to be good ground - honest and good hearts and nurse and nurture the 'seed' (the Word of God or God-knowledge - Gyan) with patience and faith to bear fruit – spiritual peace, bliss and happiness, so that we may share the same with mankind.

Mystery of God

-By: N.D. Ahuja

A good number of people believe that, geographically, geometrically and physically God is neither tangible nor visible nor perceptible. Yet, simultaneously, almost the same person would like to seek Him or to be one with Him. People tend, by instinct or by compulsion, to grasp and physically feel what is perceived by the senses.

There are others who certify that there can be a satisfying and perceptible familiarity with God (the Self begotten, Imperishable, Omnipresent, Omniscient and Omnipotent) through an adept of scientific clubbing of Gyan (God's knowledge), Dhyana (God meditation) and Naam (God's Name). They stress that

God can be sensorial conjectured, feelingly conceived and realised through knowledge, rationale and experience. Some advocate His being and a natural scientific reasoning stretched to encompass their plea.

Some believers vociferously vouchsafe that God, as an Entity, can be visualised metaphorically, philosophically, experimentally and through a knowledgeable Guide or Preceptor. He, they proclaim, can be clung to, or companioned constantly, through cementing prayer.

It is widely believed that there was nothing before God. He, alone, is Original and Eternal. He, Himself caused His own being and the primordial matter (call it by any name) as well as real or illusory forces and factors.

Science may have to come to a standstill in an answer to trace the ‘mother’ of the primordial existence. It is here that Spirituality i.e. philosophical beliefs and intrinsic Faith, have to tread in to the seeker’s rescue.

God’s being or self-existence, perhaps, cannot be proved in a laboratory or by a chemical formula. Still, He has to be acknowledged as the self-begotten Fundamental Force or Supreme Being and All-pervasive Unique Entity. It is only after this realisation or acknowledgement that a craving to ‘meet’ Him gets invigorated. This craving gets satiated only when a “solution-sweet” (in Keatsian metaphor) is effected between the seeker and the Sought, the lover and the Beloved, the made and the Maker i.e. between the Bhagat (devotee) and Bhagwan (Deity).

God reveals Himself to those who turn to HIM solemnly and solicitously, through the True Master.

Number and Spirit

By: Dr. Ragina Clarke (U.S.A.)

“An equation for me has no meaning, unless it expresses a thought of God.” So said the great mathematician Ramanujan, whose genius continues to inspire scientific thought internationally. For him, the understanding of numbers was a process of spiritual revelation and connection. In his investigations into pure mathematics, he drew extraordinary conclusions that mystified his colleagues, but were usually proven, eventually, to be right. He opened a universe of theory that still today is reaping applications. The landscape of the infinite was to Ramanujan a reality of both mathematics and spirit.

He would talk for hours on the relationship he saw between God, zero and infinity. He spoke of the quantity “ $2^n - 1$ ”, explaining that it stood for “the primordial God and several divinities. When n is zero, the expression denotes

zero, there is nothing; when n is "1", the expression denotes God; when n is "2", the expression denotes Trinity; when n is "3", the expression denotes "7", the Saptha Rishis" (a group of seven stars called the Great Bear). And he continued with the idea that "Zero represents Absolute Reality. Infinity, or ' ∞ ', is the myriad manifestations of that Reality. Their mathematical product, ' $\infty \times 0$ ', is not one number, but all numbers, each of which corresponds to individual acts of creation." For Ramanujan, numbers and their mathematical relationship were the measure of how the universe fits together. Each new theorem he explored was one more piece of the Infinite to fathom.

It is the purity of numbers that holds the key here - number is a universal entity that crosses language and cultural barriers - available to all in its constancy, its predictability, its infallible certainty. It is a numerical message we sent with the Voyager, in the hope it might be found by another world some millennia hence, knowing that in the power of numbers lay a prime communicator. For Ramanujan, it seemed that the designer of the universe had presented us with a cosmos that ultimately existed in that same purity and communication, the same Absolute certainty. Numbers for him were a reflection - and the substance - of that Absolute.

In his philosophical outlook, Ramanujan concentrated on the area of infinite series, and it was in this realm that he made his most valuable conclusions. He explored that depth of the unknown, utterly at ease with penetrating the mathematical secrets of the universe. For him, he was not simply arriving at formulaic results, and proofs were almost irrelevant to him. Rather, he was writing down the patterns and forms that would lead him ever closer to the spiritual Infinite Oneness of that Absolute Reality. He was an artist, a creator. His medium was number. To it he brought a total faith that nothing existed without the influence of All That Is, and he brought a willingness to take his gifts to the limit, wherever that might lead him to.

Imagine what Ramanujan would have done with a Crayon? It is like asking what Mozart might have done with a synthesizer. A question comes to each of us in the continuing experience of life - what might we do with our gifts if we use them, really sought to use them, take them as far as we could - man and woman each - and in turn through this expression of our talents, God's gifts, contribute to the spiritual manifestation of life, and thus to the Absolute Reality? What might our children do, if we raised them to express their true selves this way? And another question follows - what if we do not? For what, then, is this physical existence intended?

Ramanujan's numbers are an analogy for all of us, for those elements of universal truth that are there for each of us to find and accept, and finally to take us further into unknown realms, yet always signaling the presence of spiritual growth and fulfillment. Let us become aware of the signposts that guide our lives, that enter our vision - anything that leads us into the unknown, but at the same time opens up to us the variety and wonder of our own creative power. Let us receive these gifts, and with them, whatever they may be - and there is always a gift we have

been given - let us allow the possibility of discovering our own route towards O and ∞ .

Sainthood

- By: Prof. R. S. Pappu

A saint is one who unravels the secret of the self – his true being. In fact, this is one of the most important tasks of a saint. Sainthood is a passage from ignorance to self-knowledge, from an outer phenomenal existence – physical, mental and material – to an inner spiritual existence. A saint passes from the phenomenal to the real man, the consciousness of the life force behind, his real self - Atman or the in most man, purusha, which he truly and eternally is. He becomes aware of a cosmic consciousness, which is the secret of the cosmic energy – the cosmic self or the cosmic divine – the universal Godhead.

A saint becomes aware also that his own self or true being is one with the cosmic self or spirit. Also, he becomes aware of the transcendent being or existence who is not dependent on him or the existence of the universe and that the same Supreme Being or self manifests as a cosmic self or spirit, cosmic energy or nature. And in that again is his own self or spirit which becomes aware of him as an individual being and nature.

To the animals, man is supernatural and God is supernatural to man. The ascent to divine life is the journey of a saint without which he would be only a crawling existence among other ephemeral insects. To be precise, for a saint al life is seeking to imbibe and manifest the Divine. A saint is the master of his body, his mind, blissfully living in God and one with God in his being and all beings, for the spirit is freedom, unity, infinity and immortality.

A saint transcends himself to become the self. He is the seer of knowledge. His mind soars high into the super mind or divine mind or knowledge. He is swarat samrat or self-ruler or all-ruler. He discovers Divine in himself and reveals Him to himself in all things. He lives in His being, shines with His light, acts with His power, rejoices in His bliss.

A saint's aim of life is integral experience of the Divine Reality as enunciated in the Gospel of the Gita "Samagram Mam" or "the Whole Me" of the Divine Being. He lives in the perfection of the Eternal and in His presence and by His infinite nature-Syuiva (unifying with Him) Salokya (perceiving Him), Samipya (feeling Him in vicinity) and Sadrysa (equity with Him). The objective of a saint is not only to liberate the soul from nature, but also to liberate both soul and nature by sublimation into the Divine Consciousness from whom they emanate. "We come from God and go back to God," says the Holy Bible.

One of the most striking mark of a saint is that he is free from the idea of achievement because for him there is no differentiation between the terms, the ideal and the actual. He is an embodiment of simplicity, integrity and detached love or a man of Variagya. He loves everyone without any motive and remains undisturbed like an ocean in any situation. He is indifferent to dualities like success and failure, pleasure and pain, honor and dishonor and so on.

Sainthood is one's inner psyche. It is this state that throws open the door to spiritual illumination and blessedness. It is only through the gateway of self-effacement, total eradication of the ego principle and selfishness and with the spirit of renunciation that one can enter this effulgent realm of spiritual life, progressive sainthood- meditation and illumination. Hence it is the state of mind, which paves the wave to blessedness and perfection. This awakened awareness is the higher essential trait of a saint.

A saint always maintains perfect equanimity and contemplates on the Supreme Lord. He is always by himself, and eternally in the company of the awakened souls. He does not do anything that is likely to stigmatize his sainthood or retard his progress towards the still brighter spiritual illumination. So the discovery of one's real self and identification of the self with the Primal Source is sainthood. It is the actual being and becoming. This upward, God-ward urges always his life; only then he is considered to live truly or is alive. That Brahma Satyam Jagat Mitya(God alone is the reality and the entire universe is an appearance and is not re) is clearly understood by a saint.

Rigveda X11 4,9; Atharvaveda V1 91, 1; Katopanishada II 3, 10-11; Shweatassswitar Upanishad II 12-13; Yoga Vasista V1 13, 3; Gita II 48, 50-51; V1 21-23-35 and Yoga Sutra of Patanjali I 12 enlighten us what sainthood is. Hence the sainthood is the highest pinnacle of glory that every human being should ever strive to attain in his lifetime.

Know God

- By: Principle S.K.Bedi

Let's know that highest great Lord of lords,
The highest deity of deities,
The master of masters:
The highest above is God,
The lord of the world,
The adorable

-Shweataswitar Upanishad

The world being the creation, definitely there must be a creator, known as God. He is dwelling in all beings, the witness, the perceiver, the only one without a second. He is the ultimate reality, omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, infinite and eternal. This is how God has been described in the Holy Scriptures.

Now the question arises: Is it necessary to know God? As we are all part of the creation, our creator is God, as is the case with everything else. There is a ceaseless evolution and dissolution: the creation of the world is evolution, and its return to its origin is dissolution. In the case of man, too, there is evolution and dissolution: he is born, grows young, then old, and finally dies, and this birth-death cycle continues for ages. This is the greatest misfortune of man. He is in bondage. The cause of his bondage is that he is attached to the world and its pleasures. He is busy in accumulating wealth and making gains in one field or the other. His kith and kin, his assets, his reputation, his talents, are everything for him. He does not care to know his real self and final abode. It is only at the time of his death that he thinks of God, but then there is no scope for knowing and realising Him. He does not heed the basic message of the scriptures during his life, because he is engrossed in worldly affairs, and misses the golden opportunity of realising God.

The Holy Scriptures tells us that man has been endowed with a special faculty, the power of discrimination, and can realise God to enjoy bliss and happiness. The True Master imparts God-knowledge and by realising God, one becomes one with God, the Deity of deities, the Master of Masters, the Lord of Lords and the Adorable. Then 'Maya' (the creation) which is an illusion is shattered, while God alone abides God here, God there and God everywhere. By realising God, the origin and God abode of whole creation, man attains enlightenment, bliss and freedom from the bondage. About this transformation, Baba Avtar Singh says:

The one, who knows the Formless Lord,
Does not fear Yama's* rod;
The one, who knows the Formless Lord,
Does not face the death's cord;
The one, who knows the Formless Lord,
Is a spiritual, blissful bard;
The one, who knows the Formless Lord,
Isn't by the worries marred;
The one, who knows the Formless Lord,
Is not by fire or fear charred;
The one, who gets his pride discharged,
Avtar, from Master knows the Lord.

-Avtar Bani, Hymn 34

So, a person, who realises God from the True Master, does not fear Yama (god of death) and has no worry: he is redeemed. His life is a life of peace, bliss and happiness, here and hereafter.

Enjoying the Bliss of God-Realisation

- By: S. S. Bassan, P.Eng.

Congratulations to those human beings who, with the divine blessings of a True Master, have been able to realise God. I pray, they may keep on enjoying the bliss of God-knowledge. To maintain a state of blissfulness at all times, a clear understanding of the message of Truth, feeling of gratitude to Almighty God and the Messenger, company of the enlightened souls and rendering of selfless service to the humanity are some of the guidelines to be followed.

Some holy scriptures reveal that a soul has to go through a cycle of 8.4 million forms of life prior to achieving human birth. It will not be possible for anyone to count all these millions of life forms or calculate the span of each life. However, it may take millions of years to complete a cycle before one is born as a human being again. This should sound an alarm in anybody's mind. The Holy Scriptures also points out that the prime aim of human life is to realise God and thereby get the soul released from the agony of various life cycles. Human beings have no control over the time of birth, place of birth, choice of parents, body-structure, colour of skin, place, time and circumstances of death, etc. The more we think about this, the more perplexing it becomes. In any case, now that God has given us human life - a healthy body, a sound mind and worldly wealth – we should always be grateful to Him for these generous gifts.

Need of a True Master for God-Realisation

The planet Earth is only a tiny creation in the entire universe. Human beings, numbering over 4 billion, are scattered all over the earth. Everyone is preoccupied with his own pursuit, with only small fraction of the population paying attention towards fulfilling the principal aim of human life. Those who, wish to pursue this lofty aim of life, will have to take the next step that is to find a True Master. The search for such a personality is by no means an easy task. The holy scriptures clearly explain that God-Realisation is not possible unless we meet a True Master and that such a Master is always present in the world.

Gratefulness to the Friend who introduces us to the True Master

In normal course of worldly dealings in everyday life, we feel obliged to somebody who did something for us and we wish to convey our feelings of gratitude to him. For example, a person was drowning in a lake and just as he was going to breathe his last, a passer by suddenly rescued him. Naturally, the drowning person shall always be thankful to this passer-by. Similarly, in search of the Supreme Knowledge, a seeker has to knock at so many doors, till finally he

finds someone who has already found the True Master. The former feels ever indebted to the latter for leading him to the True Master.

In my own case, right from my childhood, I was fascinated by the lives and history of the past prophets and their disciples. At the same time, I felt disappointed that I was not born in their times to attain their blessings in person and prayed to God to bless me with such an opportunity. Finally, my prayers were answered in the year 1957 when I was blessed with God-knowledge by Baba Avtar Singh Ji and later on enjoyed the bountiful blessings of Baba Gurbachan Singh Ji.

Gratefulness to the True Master

When a seeker humbly approaches the True Master for God-realisation, the knowledge of God or Brahm Gyan is imparted to him instantly. The seeker's mind is enlightened with the divine wisdom, and the soul, after experiencing millions of years of separation due to ignorance, finds peace and harmony in communion with God, also called Nirankar. The True Master guides his followers to lead pious and peaceful lives in all situations. This has always been the basis of the teachings of all the past True Masters.

It is worth mentioning that every word and action of the True Master is directed towards ensuring the spiritual and worldly well being of all human beings. He is not here to found a new religion or sect but, instead, wishes to enlighten us by explaining the relationship of the soul (child) with the Over Soul (Father), thus creating an environment of better mutual understanding, harmony, peace and love in the world. The underlying secret of unity among the human beings having diverse diet and dress, colour and creed, faith and belief, is the realisation that despite such diversities all of them are related to one and the same Universal Soul. This being the basic ideal which the Nirankari Mission, also known as Universal Brotherhood Mission, upholds and propagates .

Keeping Company of Enlightened Souls

In order to maintain professional competence, professionals apart from performing various duties toward the society must also keep in touch with their fellow-professionals. Similarly, the devotees should keep company of fellow - devotees – the enlightened souls – to maintain a blissful state of mind.

Performing Selfless Service

Any service performed with a selfish motive is not a true service and is more like paid labour. Such a service will not result in a happy state of mind. The hallmark of a true saint or devotee is the pleasure he or she derives from selfless service rendered according to the wishes of the True master.

Humble Prayer for the Humanity

The darkness of ignorance can be dispelled only through the Light of Divine Knowledge, about which it is said in Holy Gita:

I shall unfold to you in its entirety this wisdom (Knowledge of God in its absolute formless aspect) along with knowledge of the qualified aspect of God (both in form and without form), having known which nothing else remains yet to be known in the world. (VII:2)

This knowledge [of both the Nirguna (Formless) and Sagun (in form)] of Divinity is a sovereign science, a sovereign secret, supremely holy, most excellent, directly enjoyable, attended with virtue, very easy to practice and imperishable. (IX:2)

Needless to say, every sincere student wishes to excel in his class, every player to win the match and every devoted child to be the darling of his parents. In the same way, an earnest student of the divine science would aim to be dear to the True Master. The traits of such a disciple are summarised in the following verse of the Holy Gita:

He who is free from malice towards all beings, friendly and compassionate, rid of 'I' and 'mine' balanced in joy and sorrow, forgiving by nature, ever contented and mentally united with Me, nay, who has subdued his mind, senses and body, has a firm resolve, and has surrendered his mind and reason to Me – that devotee of Mine is dear to Me. (XII: 13-14)

Obviously, such saints and devotees are dedicated to human uplift, human well being and human redemption:

Saints should not simply wish well of others, rather prove this by their practical life. As fire gives heat and water coolness, saints should, naturally, strive for the greatest good of the humanity.

- Baba Hardev Singh Ji

To be able to imbibe these traits, one has to follow and practise the Five Pledges of the Nirankari Mission in conjunction with the aids of God-remembrance (Simran), Selfless Service (Seva) and Congregation (Sangat).

Receipe for Eternal Bliss

This, my friends, is the receipe for a blissful godly life for a human being. Pray, in pursuit of worldly possessions and position, we may not distract from the godly path. It is rightly said: "It is not over, till it is finally over."

May every human being fulfil the principal aim of human life by realising God. This is the key to enjoying the Bliss of God-realisation.

God in Daily Life

- By: Winifred Mowbray (U.K.)

In Ezekiel, Chapter 22, Verse 30, the Holy Bible says:

I looked for a man among them who would build up a wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so that I would not have to destroy it, but I found none.

God is looking for people who stand in the 'gap' We, the devotees of the Mission, should be bridge-builders, who bridge gap between a lost and dying world and God.

It is now ten years since our present Baba Ji's ministry began. Babaji, we love you, we believe in you and we are with you with all our hearts. Go for it!

Multitude of people around the world has been deeply touched by Babaji's love and concern for the lost souls. Because of his faith, determination and tireless efforts, in a spirit of love, countless lives have been touched. Love is more than just words. In fact, in I Corinthians, Chapter 13, Verse 13 it is stated:

But the greatest of these faith, hope and love, is love.

Also, in Matthew, Chapter 5, Verse 44:

But I tell you, Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you.

Baba Ji is an inspiration for the future as he has bestowed revealed knowledge, that is, knowledge imparted directly into the heart of man from the heart of God. Ask yourself: 'What is God's will for me?' 'How can I follow God and not the world?' In John's Gospel, he says:

Be in the world, but not of the world.

The answer to questions like these are to be found in the teachings of this Mission. Baba Ji very often speaks about forgiveness, because he knows that faith simply cannot function in an unforgiving heart. He knows that if we harbour unforgiveness for others, we'll be unable to receive God's forgiveness for ourselves. As Jesus Christ points out many times in the Bible: If we so not forgive others, it blocks the flow of our own forgiveness.

What do you think is the prime quality, which God looks for in those He has chosen to do His 'work'? Courage? Faith? Ability? All these are important, but the prime quality is Character. As someone said: 'No character, no consequence.' Yes, this is just what Baba Ji has – Character. God always sends the right person, at the right time, and what a blessing it is to be favoured with the company of the chosen one!

Remember, you cannot make God's truth real to others until it is real to you. So, now pause for a moment and ask yourself: 'How am I doing my duty to the Mission?' 'Do I make the most of every opportunity?' 'How much time I devote to the diligent study of the teachings of the Mission?' No one has ever entered into a great ministry without first spending time, analysing its philosophy. There are no short cuts to effective service. In 2 Corinthians, Chapter 9, Verse 6, it is clearly stated:

“Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

If God has recalled you to do some special work for Him, then you must come to terms right away with the fact that at some time you will face opposition. Don't be discouraged by this, for the stronger the opposition, the bigger the opportunity.

Someone once said: 'Whenever religion goes wrong, it goes very, very wrong.' How hurtful it must be to God to see people approaching Him through rituals that are devoid of all meaning. All of us in this Mission approach God face to face – it is so easy, it is so natural and it is so satisfying!

Those who are greatly 'used' by God, are those who possess a 'servant' heart. But how can you tell whether you have such a heart? It's simple. The heart of a servant is preoccupied with service, the heart of a non-servant is preoccupied with manipulation. In Luke's Gospel, Chapter 22, Verse 27, he says:

For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? It is not the one who is at the table. But I am among you as one who serves.”

If we think of the basic qualification of service to the Mission, would it be an ability to preach or to teach? No, the basic qualification is willingness to serve. In Matthew, Chapter 23, Verse 11, it is said:

The greatest among you will be your servant, for whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.
Remember, the purpose of this Mission is to be a Missionary.

How desperately the world today needs the thoughts and ideals that Baba Ji preaches? Do you experience this knowledge, or more important, do others experience this with you?

The Panacea

- By: Rashida Begum (U.K.)

Who does not wish to see this earth to be a better place to live in than what it is today?

Who does not wish to see that the starving and shelter less people around the world are fed and sheltered?

Who does not wish to see the Human Brotherhood imbued with the feelings of love and affection?

Who does not wish to know the mystery of life and death and body and soul?

If yes, do come to the Nirankari Baba and be blessed with God-knowledge and be free from all bondage and taboos, pride and prejudice, illusions and delusions, superstitions and misconceptions.

The Nirankari Baba shows the positive and righteous way of life and imparts God-knowledge, the panacea for all human ills, and instills the spirit of self-sacrifice, self-abnegation and selfless service.

Need of True Master

- By: R. Minocha (Canada)

Scriptures tell us that man is the superior most creature/species on the surface of the planet we call the Earth:

Man is the lord of the earth,
Other species are meant to serve him.

In other words, man is the crown creature. Is he?

Long time ago, there was news that biologists raised a baby in isolation who, as a consequence, grew up deaf and dumb. I had also read in the newspaper *The Toronto Sun of November 8, 1990*, that in Johannesburg, South Africa, a 2-year old boy was forced to live most of his life in a kennel with his bark and whimper and his hands became curved like paws.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the world -renowned philosopher-statesman, writes:

“There is an ever aspiring movement from one stage to another – from minerals to plants, from plants to animals, from animals to human beings and from human beings to God in man.”

Holy Bible, too says: ‘God created man in His own image.’ Yet, it is amazing that the same man grows up to be deaf and dumb or to bark and whimper with his hands curved like paws. These are only the physical aspects. The most important aspect of man’s life is his behaviour: he is an animal in the garb of a human. If we turn the pages of history, we will find that the people for no or very little reasons have killed countless people.

When God created man, He knew this could, rather would happen. That is why He has been descending as Avtaras. Defining an Avtara, Dr. Radhakrishnan says:

“Avtara means descent, who has descended,”

And,

"The Divine comes down to the earthly planet to raise it to a higher status."

He further say:

“The purpose of the Avtara is to inaugurate a new world, a new dharma. By teaching and personal example, the Avtara shows how a human being can raise himself to a higher grade of life.”

In Gita(IV:7), it is said:

“Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness, O Bharata (Arjuna), then I send forth (create incarnate) Myself.”

May it be so or because the scriptures say it so. However, in my humble opinion, the fact is that mankind needs an Avtara at all times. Today, don’t we see the decline of dharma or righteousness? News published in the newspapers or broadcast from the television and radio shed plenty of light on this aspect. As already said, man’s becoming deaf and dumb, barking and whimpering and his hands getting curved like paws, are only physical aspect. What is most agonising is man’s behaviour like an animal. Only constant communion with God, living up to the divine tenets and imbibing noble sentiments of love, compassion, care and the spirits of selfless service can bring about a change in his behaviour. And for this, God-realisation is an imperative prerequisite, which, in turn, is possible by the grace of the Avtara or True Master of the day. That is why mankind needs Avtaras or True Masters all the times. Such a one alone can “advance him (man) from human being to God in man.” It is rightly said:

In no time an Avtara transforms humans into gods.

Rev. R. Imman once said:

“A great teacher never strives to explain his vision. He simply invites you to stand beside him and see for yourself.”

This is what to-day Nirankari Baba Hardev Singh Ji is doing. He does not merely preach God but also bestows God – knowledge upon every earnest seeker and teaches by his personal example. This is the sure way one can imbibe love, care, compassion and the spirit of selfless service and contribute towards making this world a better place to live in.

Today's mankind, in general, and the devotees, who have taken refuge under Baba's wings, in particular, are lucky, nay blessed. Expressing my gratitude to the Baba for his benevolence, I pray in the words of Rev. Banwari Lal:

This world is a fair,
Lord, hold my finger,
Lest I should be lost in it.

The Need for Meditation

- By: Ashok Kumar Bhatt

Commonly, meditation is understood to be a religious or spiritual practice. Therefore, it is believed that it is meant for only the religious people and the common people have nothing to do with it. But it is baseless to rear a notion of this kind. Meditation is equally essential for both the common and the religious people.

The word 'meditation' has its origin in the Latin word 'Meditari', which means 'to heal'. It is not that easy to give a set definition of meditation, for it means many things to many people. Yet, let us say plainly for our convenience that meditation means to heal what is mentally painful; to prevent mind from going astray; to concentrate on what is good: to seek peace and harmony within; to rise from a lower plane to a higher plane and to conserve mental powers, in order to harness them for physical, mental and spiritual development .

Before we discuss the need for meditation, first, it is essential to differentiate between meditation and thinking. Meditation and thinking are two distinct processes. Meditation is complete absorption within. It is the transformation of thinking for the restoration of one's well being. So, meditation and thinking should not be taken alike.

Ours is the age of pollution. Pollution is of various types such as water pollution, air pollution, and noise pollution. But there is another kind of pollution, too, and this is mental pollution. Mental pollution is the worst of all pollution, for it shatters the whole fiber of man's personality into pieces and makes him suffer from a host of psychological maladies of thoughts, feelings and actions. As a result, man beings to take a pessimistic view of life. He does not take things with a smile. Rather, he takes them with a sneer. He feels that he is incapable of developing his lights and of assuming self-direction. Therefore, Sigmund Freud seems to be right when he says that everyone is neurotic to some extent.

Our mind keeps on roaming about like a vagabond. It is never steady and calm. Consequently, it lacks precision, exactitude and clarity: our thoughts are confused, values blurred and actions riotous. This is all due to mental pollution, which is the result of our fads and fancies, lack of simplicity and fixit, material point of view, cut-throat competition, lack of inwardness, craze for leading life in an ostentatious manner, enormous increase in every day requirements, high ambitions, changing social trends and standards of living, etc . All these factors have so polluted common man's mind that his mind is nothing but a jungle of wild thoughts, morbid complexes, confused perceptions and tormenting mental tendencies. As a result, most people are maladaptive and maladjusted in relation to social changes and surroundings. If we look into the history of crimes and court cases, we shall find that maladjustment and maladaptation, morbid complexes, confused perceptions, tormenting mental tendencies, are the reasons for all crimes and abnormalities. So, what do we need to be fully functioning fellows in the present-day social set-up? We need to be meditative. We should practice meditation in our every day life. Says Dr. Austen Fox Rigs:

“Meditation holds refreshment and rest, conserves energy for future needs, and helps to keep life balanced and elastic.”

(Quoted in Swami Yatiswarananda's book *Adventure in Religious Life*, pp. 100-101)

We have innumerable cares in life. But very little do we care for our minds. We cherish innumerable desires but never cherish the desire to control our mind. Desire is not a sin but sin is to lack the desire for taking care of our mind. We let our mind wander about purposelessly. The result is the tremendous loss of mental powers. We are always conscious of our body but are never conscious of our mental powers that are latent within us.

Meditation is a way to harness these mental powers for the realisation of self and elevation of personality. Meditation is a way to rule and regulate the springs of mind. Therefore, it is said in the Chandogya Upanishad:

“Meditate on the mind! He who meditates on the mind is the master as far as the mind reaches.”

Meditate enables us to explore the interior regions of our being; uplifts us from the quagmire of baser instincts, passions and mean mental tendencies; gives us mental resilience and strength; clears our mind of its dirt; broadens our views and vision; turns us inward and, above all, it makes us master of our body and mind . Says milton:

“He who reigns within himself and rules passions, desires and fears, is more than a king”

What are the essentials of constructive meditation? Meditation is likely to turn out to be a fiasco if it is not practiced in right way and in right spirit.

It is difficult but not impossible to bring the mind on the righteous track. We know that the mind is always vaporous, swerving and wavering. So, it is not that easy to discipline it. We should meditate to open a dialogue with our mind to take it in good confidence. This we can do through the following ways:

- (i) We should constantly impress on the mind that it is not to be swayed by senses, not to be taken in by sensual and mundane pursuits and not to be instigated by the gust of passions, impulses and instincts.
- (ii) We should always bear in mind that greed, jealousy, hatred, anger, lust, are man-eaters. We should incessantly strengthen our mind to conquer these man-eaters with the sword of discrimination.
- (iii) In moments of anxiety and fear, we should make our mind hope for the best prepared for the worst.
- (iv) We should always impress upon the mind that it has tremendous power to turn sour into sweet, defeat into the victory and lowest into highest.
- (v) We should constantly bear in mind that there is inner beauty within us. We should make proper use of our mind to bring this beauty out through thoughts words and deeds.
- (vi) In moments of anger, anxiety and despair we should not allow the mind to react. Instead, we should pacify it with the help of discrimination, determination and self-direction.
- (vii) We should always fix our mind on beauty and truth of life.
- (viii) We should avoid useless talks, wishful thinking, daydreaming and live realistically.
- (ix) We should learn to be cheerful and take everything, sweet or sour, with a smile.

- (x) We should always have the faith that all is not worst and the worst is not to last forever. The best is ahead and we have to achieve it.
- (xi) We should practice renunciation, which means to give up the meanness of mind to attain the greatness of soul.
- (xii) We should introspect daily to find our own errors and repair them.
- (xiii) We should minimise desires, for they weaken us within.
- (xiv) We should never react impulsively to what others say.

To sum up, mind is our constant companion in all affairs and ventures of our life. Our defeats and victories, our sorrows and joys, our meanness and greatness, our hopes and frustrations, our passions and patience, our sensuality and sensibility, are all due to our mind. It is mind that makes a heaven of hell; a hell of heaven. If we want to live in peace, there is a pressing need to master our mind. This we can do through meditation. And, hence the need for meditation.

Skyline of Understanding -By: Ambika Prasad "Shastri"

When a free-lancer is anticipated to express thoughts on so general a subject as "Understanding," his approach would be equally general. Socrates developed understanding to declare: 'I know that I don't know.' This is a negative aspect of knowledge synthesized in understanding. The positive is, "Gurprasad" (Guru or Master's grace). All else would be a permutation of unreliable intellect (Budhi).

It appears that our access is restricted to "Budhi" alone. We incline to apply it to understanding our well being. Therefore, we are involved in understanding the society with a view to begetting good by doing well. This is indeed a sophisticated facet of our existence. This is also an element of religion and sagacious vision.

Understanding as such remains a secret. We know that a two-year old infant has not developed the understanding about the marriage institution. A four-year old child has none about geography and an art student about physics. This illustration denotes certain levels of understanding.

As a matter of fact, understanding comprises individual's essence of existence, his being. This is 'Knowing Thyself'. We are manifestations of understanding operating through its million frequencies. The frequencies may be categorised as

conceptual (i.e. subjective), objective (claimed to be factual) and metaphysical (i.e. the ultimate).

The first (i.e. conceptual) is dubbed as superstition. The second receive group applause, being regarded as an element of faith. The faith is invariably supplemented with insurance of being 'factual' based on one-sided argumentation. Faiths do differ, and history bears witness, some men of faith had to fight for the cause of righteousness.

At this juncture reformers acknowledge their sacred duty or ultimate objective to show the other way i.e. of co-existence, highlighting references, which inter alia, find place in all scriptures. They were never inclined to deviate buttry to derive from, scriptures as if and intrinsic value is hidden in the books. The process is akin to selecting the words 'sun-set' to 'sun-rise' to prove that the sun moves.

The idea of 'universal brotherhood' is sought to be an extension of co-existence. However, this effort has not succeeded in the world. No brain has been able to devise this code of conduct for universal brotherhood. It remains a stage-management. Lord Buddha carried it to the 'Sangha' (Order), leaving behind the hearth and home where man dwells. Can't we suggest to the United Nations body for the observance of the "Year of Oneness of Man?" It is believed that intellectuals all over the world would display great enthusiasm in this direction. They would uphold such an understanding.

The third, that is, metaphysical understanding comprises the essence of existence or being. This knows thyself. (Our existence is our level of understanding). Metaphysical understanding assumes a subjective role. Only he knows whom understanding blesses.

Way of Life

- By: Bedil Sarhadi

We cannot deny the fact that life is a mystery, which cannot be understood in its entirety. No one fully comprehends the reality of life. It is for this reason that no scientist or thinker has ever been able to define life totally'. Why human life is as it is, no one has been able to answer this vital question. However, this does not mean that owing to such complexities we should shut our eyes to it and attend to day-to-day work half-heartedly. We must not be going to bed at night and rising in the morning as a compulsion or taking bath, eating, drinking or going anywhere as a trouble or feeling jittery while discharging other duties or go on cursing the circumstances throughout life and regarding life as a burden under the impact of material and external circumstances . To go on cursing the circumstances or lead life reluctantly is nothing short of doing injustice to it. To lead life cynically is to render life meaningless.

In the circumstances, if we ponder, we will come to the conclusion that shirking toil or performance of duty is the basic cause of our boredom and depression. Work and toil is in the human nature and when we do not discharge this natural obligation, we feel depressed and bored. The wish to do something can be fulfilled by action only. It will not be out of place to mention here that we should not only do work which we wish to do, but do all jobs with equal interest. In other words, we should do even work thrust on us with interest. In case we develop the habit of doing every work with interest, we can be free from hatred and discontentment, because work in itself brings joy, peace and satisfaction. Performance of work has its own importance in life. By performing one's work, one's courage, joy and self-confidence grow. Contrary to this, those who do not work or discharge their duties sincerely, suffer from fear and restlessness. Such people, to whichever strata of society they may belong to, neither succeed nor experience peace, happiness and contentment in life.

It is true that human life is a struggle. Both happiness and sorrow are its integral parts. We cannot lead a life free from happiness and sorrow. However, it depends upon us to lead it joyfully or sorrowfully. It is so because to be joyous or sorrowful or happy or unhappy is dependent on our state of mind and not on external circumstances or amenities at our disposal. Despite poverty and hardships, laborers are found to be holy and carefree and unaffected by adversities. In this context, Dale Carnegie had made a significant observation, when he said: If there are two persons and both performing the same kind of job, having equal wealth and enjoying equal respect and prestige in the society, yet, in accordance with their mental attitude, one would be joyous and the other depressed. This means we can be happy even without a change in our work and environment. By changing our mental attitude we can transform sorrow into joy and failures into success; we can cheerfully face obstacles and surmount difficulties that come in our way. All that is needed is to bring about a change in our mental attitude: to think positively. Life is a wall. On one side of it is cool shade and on the other, scorching sun. All that is required is just to walk into the cool shade from the scorching heat. If we learn to lead life like this, it would prove to be a boon of peace and happiness. And such a state can be easily imbibed in the company of the spiritually enlightened.

Service

- By: B.S. Clayton (U.K.)

It is the purpose of your life to serve the world.
It is the purpose of the world to serve you.
To serve the world is to serve God and love all.
It is our duty to be useful to mankind.

Only through self-realisation can we discriminate between the useful and the more useful.

It is noble to feed men's bodies but more noble to feed men's minds.

Give not just water to the thirsty but also lead them to the well so that they may be free to drink, free from obligation to men, free to their own calling.

To render service less self, is to do God's work: the self here does not refer to the true self but the imagined self. The imagined self belongs to those who still think they are this body and mind, which look for gratification of ego and senses; when we find this or realise this, can we truly know God's will for us.

A small good act for God is better than a large act which mankind regards good.

God may lead mankind to water but cannot make it drink because of its free will to choose. This is the dilemma faced by those who seek to serve.

To inspire oneness in the people with different concepts and beliefs, oblivious of the intrinsic oneness of humanity, is service to God, demanding self-surrender.

The greatest service to God is to know the true self. It is the easiest of all tasks it we approach a True Master, because it requires only the desire to know God.

Contentment

- By: Mrs. Constance Teresa Simonds (U.K.)

Contentment is the trait of being satisfied with what one has. Contentment seldom comes from an outside source; it comes from within. We all know the heights of happiness and the depths of despair, but the state of contentment is harder to come by. Meditation and prayer are not enough if we have not done our daily work diligently and to our own satisfaction. Words are not enough without matching deeds.

The state of material contentment is transient. As the days pass, it becomes harder to find contentment for, as life changes, so do our hopes and aspirations. We often believe that the Father must give us more and more to make us contented. As we pass through the different stages of life, contentment becomes a different idea: to a starving child, it is a good meal; to the sportsman, it is winning the race; to the prisoner, it is release from incarceration and to the Spiritual Shepherd, it is surely, the guardianship of his flock as he leads the way to God, teaching as he goes . Only by God-realisation can we ever hope to attain the state of true contentment, so desired. Only by discarding our negative thoughts can we enter that blissful state, to be one with mankind.

My own definition of contentment is to attend the congregation of the Universal Brotherhood (Nirankari congregation), understanding none of the spoken word, yet understanding the spirit of those words. It knows, that apart from families and friends, we are seemingly insignificant parts of the universe, yet to God, who lives us, we are all important. It knows that one day we shall all return to the Great Soul, to God, the Formless One.

Mutual Understanding

- By: D. Raj Kanwal

The present world is beset with dissension's, mistrust, suspicion and hatred. We look at each other with jaundiced eyes. Our understanding is clouded and we feel that we are the only righteous people. The rest are all liars, crooks, frauds and fanatics. Outwardly, we profess love and affection for people belonging to other castes and creeds, but inwardly we are not at all prepared to have a truck with them. The result is that we find ourselves engulfed by the flames of jealousy and hatred. We find ourselves in the vicious grip of fissiparous tendencies. The only way to develop a healthy atmosphere and create a climate of peace and happiness is the promotion of mutual trust and appreciation of each other's thoughts and feelings, aspirations and expectations. There is no other way.

Misunderstanding is a malady, which leads to all present-day ills. We are divided into watertight compartments and look at each other with blood shot eyes. We start feeling that others are out to destroy and defame us. In the backdrop of this feeling, the atmosphere is vitiated and life becomes a nightmare. All peace of mind is gone and dried up. Misunderstanding leads to unnecessary feuds and bickering. We allow our minds to be clouded and prejudiced. Everything appears dark and doubtful. Even the good intentions of the others appear to us as snares and traps. We refuse to draw a line between the right and the wrong. Misunderstanding grows like the wild weed and starts destroying the tree of wisdom. If we turn over the pages of history, we shall find that majority of the wars were fought because of mistrust and misunderstanding. Our wars with our immediate neighbours are the living proof of misunderstanding and mistrust.

But before we try to understand others, we must try to understand ourselves. The irony is that the modern man does not seem to understand himself. Remember that charity always begins at home. Before we start bisecting others, we must try to bisect ourselves. We must look within to find how true and honest we ourselves are. How far we are right in condemning others for the prevailing chaos and wrongs? If we do not do so, our assessment of others' will be wrong. We must look in the mirror of Truth and Reality to fathom our virtues and vices. How can we sit in judgement over others' omissions and commissions unless we are above board? If we fail to do so, our judgement shall always be one-sided.

Mutual understanding builds bridges of friendship, harmony and love. Mistrust only dynamites these bridges and destroys the infrastructure of peace.

The finest feature of the Nirankari Mission is the promotion of mutual understanding among various sects, castes and sections of people.

World Peace

- By: D.S. Shauq M.A., M.O.L.

It is rather surprising to observe how even in this scientific age a verity of superstitions continue to thrive in certain quarters. The growing premium placed on international peace and tolerance today has obviously made the concept of nationalism untenable. In this context it is astounding to find in our midst ardent advocates of communal fanaticism. Existence of such mystifying anomalies in this age of enlightenment indeed baffles one's imagination. In case cultural integration of India with all its diversity of languages and castes is considered impossible, the ideal of global peace will have to be dismissed as an idle dream. It is patently impossible to realise the prospect of a joint family without the uniting bond of love among its members. Similarly, a powerful nation cannot come into being without the spirit of mutual cohesion among its various communities. On the same reasoning, the goal of universal peace and brotherhood would continue to be a mirage unless all the nations develop the spirit of mutual tolerance and community of feelings.

How would you rate a man who is concerned merely with the security of the particular branch of the tree he is sitting on, and is indifferent to the fate of the tree as a whole? And if he cuts the very branch he sits on, obviously the chances of his survival would be even more remote. Let us pause here and ponder whether this analogy does not apply to all of us. As a matter of fact we are all crazy after solving national and international problems without comprehending and eradicating the rank selfishness raging in our minds as also in the minds of our near and dear ones. Consequently, all our endeavors for establishing world peace boil down merely to futile platitudes, projects and resolutions. The nations of the world are after all composed of individuals. And it is the interrelation and liaison of the individuals that goes to constitute human society. Thus it is patent that ultimately the unit of our society, nation or human community is the individual. And who is that individual? Surely, you and I. Hence no power on earth can possibly fulfil the slogans of world peace and human brotherhood unless relations between you and me that is man and man become smooth and sweet. We must, therefore, clearly realise that it is the strained relations between individuals that eventually erupt into global tension.

A pertinent question crops up here. Who is to blame for vitiating relations between you and me? And what is the remedy for this ailment? No book or person could offer a positive answer. For all this, we shall have to look within and survey our own drawbacks, infirmities and self-delusions. It is significant to note how too readily we vie with each other in advising or accusing others rather than comprehending ourselves. Thus our attention is distracted from the crux of the problem; we squander our precious lives in worthless controversies and speculations and fall a prey to self-delusion.

It is through a continuous and close study of our day-to-day ideas and emotions that we can appreciate that the fulcrum of world problems in reality lies in by our minds and hearts. Let us understand that by a complete evaluation of our inner self and renovating ourselves in the light of such evaluation, we can certainly tackle the toughest of world problems. Such a technique may apparently seem to be rather ineffective and impracticable. But deeper reflection would reveal that far-reaching results could be achieved only by making a start at the nearest point. And the nearest point is our own self.

Our real world is the one in which we live day in and day out. And it is the image of this very world as reflected on our minds through the media of communications like newspapers, radio etc., that agitates us awfully. If we bring to bear on our day-to-day and personal relations' qualities like equanimity, tolerance, fellow-feeling, selflessness and magnanimous outlook, there is no reason why we should not be able to counter the artificial and destructive influences emanating from the world outside. Only by transcending the spirit of egotism and duality in our own self, we will be in a position to help our fellow-beings in properly dealing with the errant propensities surging in their minds. Such an approach must produce in our midst a galaxy of enlightened souls dedicated to truth, beauty and righteousness. By their dauntless pursuit of such a pattern of life, these illustrious persons could serve as a beacon light for others. To start with, the strength of such dynamic personalities may be extremely limited; their influence on impending wars and formidable dangers too may be insignificant. But the attitudes and rations of such mute heroes must necessarily leave an imperishable impact. It is they who shall lay foundation of a new society and a new culture. Every such single personage shall be more than a match for a host of books. Such savants of staunch convictions and morale cannot possibly be deflected from their path by the stupidity and way-wardness of world politicians, fake leaders and their countless followers. Ever alert themselves, such live-wires shall naturally galvanize others. They must leave an indelible impress of their personality on posterity.

Unless we convince ourselves with our own intelligence, that example is better than percept, we would not only be cheating ourselves by indulging in a sheer jugglery of words, but would also be involving others in futile doings. In the context of global peace and solidarity, it is incumbent upon us to have recourse to constant heart searching, and in this perpetual self-study, we must rid our minds of the slightest traces of regionalism and sectarianism, the moment we discern them. A parochial approach must be depreciated in all walks of life. Profession of different religions does not impair national solidarity. What really hampers

fulfillment of this ideal is the spirit of isolationism. Even national solidarity can and should serve as a link in the chain of global peace. The spirit of factionalism and isolationism fostered by rank selfishness should by no means be mistaken for nationalism. Today the entire humanity is actively seized of the formidable problem of world peace or its alternative, world annihilation. This is surely not a mere political problem; nor can a single country or nation be saddled with the responsibility of its solution. It is indeed the practical problem confronting the whole human society. Thus every one of us shall have to assume this responsibility. Depreciating any one for his failing is no answer to the problem. With a view to refining the environment around us, the only effective solution is to devote constant attention towards raising the tone of our own say-to-day life. We shall have to press into service all our faculties of head and heart and lead an exemplary life in order to cultivate breadth of vision among the masses.

To sum up, the modus operandi of establishing world peace lies in every individual adopting the technique of constant self-evaluation and the golden rule of "Live and let live." A suggestion in this context might be helpful that such a consummation may be facilitated beyond measure by the living realisation of Supreme and all-pervading Immensity.

Patience, Impatience

-By: Farida Khanam

Whenever one is faced with a problem, one may either accept the responsibility for it, or attempt to lay the blame on others. The first course results from patience, the second from impatience.

There can be no positive human psychology without patience. The patient man tries to understand the nature of the challenge confronting him, and then attempts to meet that challenge to the best of his ability. He channels all his time, energy and strength, as well as every particle of his resources, into constructive action. Awakened by the shock of an adverse situation, he makes a supreme effort to overcome all obstacles and to compensate for any previous failures. In this way, he emerges for more successful than ever before.

The behaviour of the impatient man – the result of negative thinking – is in direct contrast. He spends all his time complaining and protesting. Instead of putting all his resources into self-construction, he uses them in destructive activities directed against others. Instead of trying to make up for his own shortcomings, he plunges himself into proving that others are in the wrong. If, prior to this, he was denied his due because of his own inaction, he now becomes the greater loser because of taking a wrong course of action.

Patience is a sine qua non for well-thought-out action, while impatience can only give rise to thoughtlessness. Patience permits planned action, while impatience leads to acting in excessive haste. The patient man will attempt to solve problems only after making a proper assessment of the situation, and keeping in view the ultimate consequences. The impatient man will jump into the fray without any calculation whatsoever, fall a prey to his own seething emotions and – will remain blind to any adverse consequences. A very important trait of the patient man is that he takes the trouble to acquaint himself with the standpoint of others, while the impatient man considers only his own narrow claims.

Patience, therefore, is the wisest strategy. Impatience must at all costs be curbed, for it can lead only to misunderstandings, conflict and failure.

Thoughts and Feelings

- By: G.R. Vimal

Apparently, both the words ‘Thoughts’ and ‘Feelings’ sound to be synonyms, carrying almost the same meaning. The two are, however, fundamentally different, just as we have a popular saying by Kabir:

You say what you read;
I say what I see with my own eyes.

No doubt, both thoughts and feelings relate to man, the same, human being. Yet, the fact is that they spring from two different sources. The human body has two distinct centers from where thoughts and feelings flow separately.

Thoughts arise from the brain. To the brain they come from outside, depending on its training and exercises. Thoughts increase general knowledge and sharpen the intellect. They move on the wheels of cause and effect and reach a stage where they become Science. Based on thoughts, the world may appear like a bunch of flowers, beautiful combination objects created from matter. Through similar process of imagination, one may consider the world to be a centre of all kinds of waves, where currents flow, crossing each other violently.

The degree of mental awareness depends on one’s familiarity with material objects. In fact, that is the maximum the mind can reach out. Since it is governed by this boundary-line, it must operate within a set outline: you can describe it as mental discipline, brain what goes on beyond this limit, relating to the heart, to the soul. That is why thought has little influence on the soul.

Inner Perfection

One cannot be sure about inner perfection even after going through or listening to thoughts in abundant measure. There are many who fail to get at the state of absence of desire and exhibit the sense of detachment, in spite of their hearing the discourses in holy congregations (Satsang) day in and day out, or reciting the scripture continuously. There is no change in their basic attitude. The evil influence of lust, anger, greed, passion and pride on them is not at all reduced. They are unable to yield themselves to the same arguments with which they might have impressed others quite successfully. They fail to adopt their own reasoning in their actions.

The reason for this is that their thoughts have come from outside. Like a guest, they may stay for a short while, for a day or two and then go away. They just cannot stay on permanent basis, since they do not belong to the place. That is why thoughts can only help or educate us to know about the good or bad qualities of matter, its nature and its use. This may have its own effect on our mind and tend to make it dictator, driving it towards absolute authority. And a self-governing mind has always ignored feelings. It is the nucleus of indiscipline, selfishness and moral degradation. Once we lose the quality of faith based on feelings, we face nothing but bewilderment and suffering. The excitement or stimulation that accompanies the material wealth gives birth to a number of evil instincts, bad habits and malpractice, which make the body weak and the mind unbalanced. Material prosperity and intellectual achievement one boasts of spoil the real joy of one's life and in no way help to attain solution.

Spiritual Check

Man may remain steadfast so long as his mind and spiritual instinct (Dharma) are in harmony with each other. The strength that comes from intellectual ability must be used in accordance with the principles of spirituality. This is the only way to avoid its misuse. In the absence of the spiritual check on the mind, there may be utter indiscipline, compared to which even the most useful achievements of the intellect may lose their value. By intellect or mind, we mean here the thoughts that always remain active to find ways and means to satisfy the wants of the body.

Feelings

So far as feelings are concerned, spirituality is their supreme source and the soul, their treasure - house. The feelings are related to the soul, which attracts them from the outside world, by its own magnetism. Only a person with feelings can realise the sufferings of others. Feelings are not a prescription, but treatment itself which can remove the dull layer of opacity (Ignorance) from the inner eye. Once this happens, man can perceive the supernatural power that pervades every object of the universe. It is after this spiritual enlightenment that man can realise the omnipresence of God, the Formless, and the Super Soul, of which human soul is only a tiny constituent. Spiritualism helps one to realise the self, which enables one to acquire the requisite training and practice that keeps life under the discipline of the soul.

Feelings symbolise the flame, the divine light that emanates from the soul. To 'experience' this divine light is what we call self-realisation. In other words, when this divine light manifests and illuminates the whole sphere around the soul, the self stands revealed to us; we are able to have a 'look' at it. To understand or interpret the feelings is what we describe as the divine knowledge.

Holy men bear all kinds of hardships with a smile for the sake of the sublime feelings of love, tolerance, compassion, kindness, service to humanity, self-surrender, self-sacrifice and so on. They do not go after self-interest. They are not selfish at all. They ignore worldly gains and go in for apparently losing propositions from material point of view. And we find that such great men who sought to uphold these noble principles were always criticised and harmed by vested interest. Our religious books are full of such examples.

Belief

When the inner feelings are in a position to adopt and bear out one's principles or ideals with steadfastness, this state is described as belief, and the absolute form of belief is known as faith. It is with the help of faith and belief that one can perceive the Formless, encompassing the inner soul. By bringing the exercise of the brain or the flight of thought to rest and then manifesting the inner feelings, the soul can enjoy peace and stability. Once you reach this state, you start realising the presence of soul in your existence; you develop the sense of natural acceptance of what that soul wants or commands.

The moments of self-surrender are filled with such sentiments only. The merger of the soul with the Formless God is so blissful that one stands convinced, rather starts experiencing that all that has been said about beholding the Formless is a reality. The inner self aspires for feelings that are available only at the cost of opting for the Supreme.

Everlasting Peace

The tragedy, however is that popular traditions and the consequences of our previous actions keep us pulling towards the pursuit of our worldly desires, towards fulfillment of our wants. They induce us to go by our own will. Lashed by inner weaknesses and ego, human soul is unable to enjoy peace endlessly.

The state of everlasting peace is found when we place everything, the body, its senses, breath, mind, wisdom and ego, at the disposal of God. At this stage there is no feeling of 'I' and 'Mine'; whatever is there, it is 'Thine' that is God's. When man starts enjoying this feeling of offering everything to God as ultimately belonging to Him, he can rest assured that all his sins of the past stand washed off. Man gets protected by the divine shield and shelter. Once he passes on all the rights of his life, the control of his being to God, he stands relieved of his worries completely. He has no fear, no desire. He rises above pain as well as pleasure. He is always content. He enjoys the divine bliss, the everlasting peace. (Translated)

Harmony

- By: G S Bhatia

Harmonious development of life is one of the aims of human beings. By harmonious development, a person makes progress in physical, mental, moral, social and, last but not least, spiritual spheres. Such a person takes life as it comes to him; a matter of fact, without abnormally being emotional or sentimental. His emotions and sentiments are, however, normal, natural, and can be advantageously employed for this own good and also for the good of others. Such a one does not bother about pain and pleasure, gain and loss, honour and dishonour. He does not worry about nor fear death, since he has realised the reality of life.

‘The world today is troubled. Men everywhere are seeking the solutions to their problems, personal, social, national and international. And underneath is the real meaning of life, and the destiny to which it leads.’

(Introduction to God Speaks to Modern Man by Arthur E. Lickey)

‘Be still, and know that I am God.’

(Psalms, 46:10)

‘Can’st thou be searching find out God?’

(Job, 11:7)

God does ask men to ‘be still’. To them He says, ‘Still thy words. Still thy prejudices . Still thy preconceived opinions. For a moment, still thy pride, thy arrogance, thy rebellion, and I will speak with thee.’

‘Look unto me, and be ye saved.’

(Isaiah, 45:22)

‘Commit thy way unto the Lord.’

(Psalms, 37:5)

‘Lo, I am with you always.’

(Matthew, 28:20)

‘This simple approach does not settle all questions or bring complete understanding, but it is God’s beginning for every man.’

- (God Speaks to Modern Man, Page 12)

He who would worship God will of necessity worship a God of Power. Power is everywhere. ‘Power belongeth unto God.’ (Ibid, page 13). God is the mighty reservoir of saving grace for the needs of man everywhere. He has literally

surrounded this earth with ‘atmosphere’ of His grace and power. Breathe it. Receive it.

Of Solomon, it is said: ‘He was wiser than all men.’ (1 Kings, 4:31) . He studied plant life, bird life, fish life, and insect life, everything he saw or thought of. Solomon wrote three thousand proverbs – wise, terse sayings.

Whence cometh Wisdom? God gave Solomon wisdom, says the Bible (1 Kings 4:29)

God’s wisdom is seen everywhere in the common things. Pumpkins do not grow on trees. Elephants do not have wings and whiz through the air to perch on your rooftop. Man is finite. Wisdom is infinite.

‘The price of wisdom is above rubies’.
(Job, 28:18)

‘The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom.’
(Job, 28:28).

‘Teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.’
(Psalms 90:12)

‘The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.’
(1 Corinthians, 3:19)

Volumes might be written about beauty. There are the sunlit sky by day, the starlit sky by night, earth’s carpet of green, the wild profusion of tiniest flower perfuming the air, lofty trees, enchanting lakes, peaceful rivers, lofty mountains, and mighty seas. From the twittering bird on a lovely branch to the rainbow that spans the sky, beauty abounds in fantastic profusion.

‘Through Him the Universe is one harmonious whole’
(Bible)

Law governs fire, Law governs heat, Law governs pressure, and Law governs motion. Law governs all physics, all chemistry, all science, all art, and all life-everything. Law reigns. God reigns.

‘From the very creation of the world, His visible perception, namely, His eternal power and divine nature, have been rendered intelligible and clearly visible by His works.’

(Bible)

As law reigns in the physical realm, so does it also reign in the moral and spiritual realms.

If an intelligent, modern man is to worship God, he will conceive of Him as a God of Power, Wisdom, Beauty and Law.

Yet, these four attributes – power, wisdom, beauty and law- are not sufficient. A forceful ruler may wield immense power, possess a keen mind, admire beauty and art, and forge a great system of law, yet fail in drawing to himself the love and

willing obedience of his people. But if in addition to these four aforesaid qualities, he holds his heart love for his subjects, then a happy realm may be his.

There is much hate, but there is also much love: love of children and parents, love of brothers and sisters. All the varied and ramifying phases of filial and racial love . Love of community, love of countrymen, love of good causes and love of God.

‘Love is of God.’

(1 John 4:7)

‘God is love.’

(1 John 4:8)

God made man after his own image. The image of power, of beauty, of law, of wisdom, and of love . All power belongs to God and so do the aforesaid attributes. Man out of his ignorance considers himself as the master of power, of law, of beauty, of wisdom and of love. This state of his mind, coupled with arrogance and foolishness, plunges him into troubles, pain, problems and all ills in his life. He then tries his best, endeavors very hard, puts his brain, his intellect his education, his experience, in search of solution of his problems so much so that, more often than not, he employs the whole span of life in it. He wakes or is awakened to the stark reality by some jerk of fate or the iron hand of destiny. Very often he has then no time, no wherewithal to achieve a bit of success. He is so much engrossed in his self-created world that he has little time to stand and stare. May be some people cry hoarse to warn him against pitfalls, against ditches, that he may fall or is going to fall in. But unfortunately he pays no heed to all this.

If by good luck he comes in contact with saints and sages and listens to their divine words and lives up to the same, there comes about a transformation and a perfect harmony in his life which is reflected in his physical, mental, moral and spiritual life.

Are We Secular?

- By: H.S. “Almast”

Ours is a land of saints and prophets and yet God finds no place in our Constitution nor the spiritual values have been enshrined in this great document to which all Indiana owe allegiance. Spiritual values could not, in any way, harm the secular texture of the Constitution as the word ‘Secular’ signifies the age-old Truth, which transcends all boundaries of the religious estates. The fundamental spiritual values should have formed the base of our book of faith and these should have been preached and propagated like other fundamental laws and the directive principles. Had we practised secularism in a wider sense of the term? we would have looked at our Constitution with religious reverence and our obligations under the Constitution would have been like the Ten Commandments and would

always have been considered above our rights for which we clamour all the time, ignoring our responsibilities.

Secularism, which is the corner stone of our Constitution, has been so much misunderstood and misapplied that, in course of time, it has lost its original meaning. The dictionary meaning of 'Secular' is, pertaining to an age or generation, coming or observed once in a century; permanent. It also means as something, which gradually becomes appreciable in the course of aged; as only something which pertains to the present world and not bound by monastic rules. The meaning, that has gained ground in our country, is that the term "Secular" is something which is not religious or spiritual, with the result that it has promoted a materialistic outlook. It has also resulted in the degeneration of spiritual values. Service, sacrifice, truth, humility, love, brotherhood and other such noble traits of the human mind, which are the outcome of our spiritual pursuits, are almost missing in the present set-up. Human mind and human intelligence is engrossed in material gains and in amassing wealth. Hunger and greed are the secular pursuits as compared with peace and contentment, which are considered to be religious and spiritual. Religious riots are secular as they relate to this world but religious accord and communal harmony fall in the spiritual arena. All agitations grow out of an agitated mind, the control of which falls within the purview of the spiritualist. A truly Secular Society, as understood in our country, would always be bleeding and seething with riots and agitations, with men fighting for their material needs. But the reverse of it would be the people understanding the age-old Truth revealed through the centuries, bringing peace and prosperity to the people who can understand and appreciate the real relationship between man and man.

Secularism in its true meaning is not something opposed to spiritualism, It is, in fact, the spiritual Truth as distinguished from the religious tradition, which has degenerated into communal and divisive attitude towards life. The Universal Truth, which is above all religious traditions, is the real binding force, which can bring men nearer. Only a man of God can be truly secular as he knows the Truth of all religions and is not particularly inclined towards any one religion. For him all prophets have an equal place so far as they revealed the same Truth and freed human race from the religious bigotry and dead traditions. "Secular" also means something permanent. There is nothing permanent except the Truth or the all-pervading God Almighty. God is the only Secular Entity and it is this Truth which revealed to man only once in a lifetime when he understands the futility of his material pursuits. As man was supposed to live for 100 years, this Secular Truth was also said to have been revealed once in a century.

The word "Secular" has also been defined as the priest who is not bound by the monastic rules. Who can be such a priest? Surely, not the one like those who exploit the people's religious sentiments for material gains including the political interest; surely, not the one who lives on religious tradition and superstitions. He is, surely, the priest who has realized the Truth and has risen above the religious tradition as also the monastic rules. He is the one who preaches and practices a blissful life and has no sectarian affiliations.

“Secular” has also been described as something, which gradually becomes appreciable in the course of ages. It is the bitter Truth, which gradually becomes appreciable in the course of ages. Prophets were crucified, murdered and poisoned just because they revealed the Truth, which the contemporary people could not appreciate except the very few who, had a high spiritual I.Q. and who were truly secular in the tradition-ridden society. This Secular Truth gradually becomes appreciable to the ignorant in the course of ages.

I do not know the real connotation in which the word “Secular” was used by the framers of the Constitution, but it would be sad if it loses its spiritual content in the hands of the politicians who are accustomed to make everything a plaything if politics. Taken in the widest sense, there is nothing Secular except the highest Truth revealed in Bhagwad Gita as All- pervading and All-embracing, into which all our differences of race and religion sink and disappear. To make our study of the term “Secular” complete in all respects and on all aspects, it has also been defined as something pertaining to this world. Unfortunately, the Universal Truth or the All-pervading God has been preached as something pertaining to the next world. But the Prophets have revealed the Truth as something very much pertaining to this world, nearer to our life vein, in and around us. In fact, it is God Almighty who pervades the world, nay the Universe and every aspect of human life. He is above all our local affiliation where there is no place for communal or sectarian feelings. In fact, He is the only secular entity in the world in the widest possible sense of the term. Let us be truly secular and learn to live with the truth.

Detached Attachment

- By: John Linnenmeyer (U.S.A)

I was about to leave on a six-month journey to Central America. Before leaving the United States, however, I felt a strong urge to meet my dear friend and mentor, Professor J.S. Puri. The world is filled with intelligent men, but truly wise man is a rare bird, indeed. On meeting him I have always felt not only warmed by his usual kindness but also enlightened by the spirit of devotion and wisdom of this great wise man.

My son, Jacques, and I arrived at Professor Puri’s residence- Nirankari Bhawan, Chicago- on a cold and wet October evening after a long drive up from Indiana. We were immediately made comfortable with hot tea and food served with divine smiles. When we were completely at ease, we began to talk. The subject of material needs came up and Professor Puri posed a question to my son, Jacques, “To whom, dear boy do you think you are doing a greater favour: the one whose desires you satisfy or the one whom you help to eliminate the same.” My son immediately replied, “The person whose desires I really satisfy.”

“Ah!” said the Professor, “So you fell, he is a happy person. Let us ponder deeply over the matter. Suppose, the man had a desire for a new car and tells you that if he has this new car, only then he will be happy. So you buy him a new car. For a period of time, he will indeed be happy and satisfied. But before long, he will start looking for another larger or latest model. Even after acquiring that, this mad race and craze goes on and on to which there is no end. Don’t you think that a person having no car or no desire or craving for a much better and costlier car is far happier? The point is not whether it is better to have or not to have a car. A car in this country is not a luxury, but a dire necessity. You cannot do without it. We don’t have to renounce these worldly needs and live the life of a stoic. However, we must give a serious thought to the fact: Were these comforts made for us or were we made for these comforts alone? As per the very first basic principle of our Mission, if we just see all our possessions. Including our physical body and mind, as a trust from God, we shall not be overly upset as these come and go. The so-called religious leaders have preached renunciation to us and all that we have learnt is attached detachment, whereas we actually need detached attachment. If we keep on identifying ourselves with the body rather than the soul, this craze for worldly desires shall never lead us to real happiness.”

Elaborating the soul, the Professor came up with another question: “What would be left to you if you are stripped of all your belongings, physical and mental? Nothing? And, this Nothing is something, which is directly related to all. O.K., if it is not so easy to give up and eliminate the possessions, then start expanding yourself. Go beyond the four walls of this room, edge of the city, borders of the country, this planet and the entire solar system this universe. What would you have then? Would it not be exactly as if you had stripped everything away!”

On the long drive back to Indiana, the next day, I had much to ponder over. I felt grateful to Nirankar (God Formless) and Baba Ji for blessing me with the company of such a wise man.

Value and Price

- By: Joginder Singh

How often we have heard or read: “That fellow may be knowing price of everything but value of none.” Obviously, price is different from value, though, at times, we use these words as synonyms.

As a matter of fact, the equivalent that is paid for acquiring a thing or commodity is its price. Since payment is generally made in currency, the price is also expressed in terms of currency. In common usage, it is also called its cost:

Price of this cycle is Rs. 15,00.00

One kilo of flour will cost you Rs. 8.50.

However, price by itself is not the determining factor for us to go in or not to go in for a particular thing. A thing may cost us only a few paise, yet we may not purchase it. On the other hand, we may go in for another thing, price of which may be a few hundred rupees, which we willingly pay. The factor that guides us to purchase a particular thing is its value. Value is the utility that we expect to derive from a thing. This is also called its worth. For example, a book has all the value for a student, though it is worthless for an illiterate person. Again, a needle may be worthless for a teacher, but it has all the value for a tailor, because it is an indispensable tool for him. It is for this reason that a jeweller, who knows the value of a diamond, is prepared to pay lakhs of rupees, whereas an ignorant person may hesitate to pay even a few rupees because for him it is merely a shining stone. However, coming to know of the reality, the latter may repent for not knowing the value of what he mistook to be merely a piece of stone.

It is not essential that value of a thing is great only if its price is high. For instance, price of a sword may be one hundred rupees. But what we would have not paid as price for Netaji Subhash Chander Bose's sword if the person, who had acquired it, so desired. Surely, we would have paid any price demanded, may be thousands or even lakhs of rupees to acquire this particular sword. We all know that in this rocket age, sword as a weapon of war has lost all its significance. Yet, we wanted this particular sword, because for us it was of tremendous sentimental value as a relic of Netaji.

Again, salt is a very cheap commodity, though it has a great value for us. Suppose we spend a few rupees for a dish of peas and cheese. We prepare it in pure ghee but fail to add salt into it. The dish will not give us taste. But a little salt added to it will remove its insipidity and we may exclaim: What a tasty dish! Now we will be relishing the same dish, which a moment earlier was declared tasteless. The question that comes to our mind is what contributed the taste? Obviously, the pinch of salt that was added to the dish! The price of the salt added may be just a fraction of a paise as against the total amount already spent for the dish, but the value of the pinch of salt was, undoubtedly, much greater than that of its actual price.

Man is a bundle of needs and desires, which are essentially material in nature. But he has also an inherent quest to know his Creator. The self-styled saints and religious preachers know this very well and are, therefore, ever ready to exploit this urge. Accordingly, they name and even extract a heavy price from the seekers for imparting God-knowledge. There is a price, so to say, to rinse every sin and enter into the heaven! However, in the name of God-knowledge, they prescribe renunciation, pilgrimage, performance of rites and rituals, charity and so on and so forth. The seeker most willingly pays the price named because he attaches great value to God-knowledge. But what he actually gets is mere religious routines or performance of rituals, turning him superstitious and orthodox. At times, he is forbidden to undertake journey or wash clothes or hair or to take a particular kind of pulse on certain days. The seeker has to abide by all these in his own interest, without knowing their real significance. Even a slight deviation

from or negligence of these is always threatened with dire consequences, if not in this, then in the next world! Thus the seeker of bliss of God-knowledge is actually 'blessed' with routine religious practices, superstitions and dogmas. With the passage of time, he fancies himself as having attained salvation and becomes a closed minded. Realisation of God remains a far cry for him. This is quite understandable. Instead of approaching a True Master, he fell a prey to those who pretend to reveal God, whom they themselves have not realised. Consequently, seeker's quest for God-realisation remains unfulfilled, and despite all material comforts at his disposal, he finds his life to be insipid.

God is all pervading, formless and eternal. Therefore, God realisation cannot be a momentary experience or a flash or (divine) light, as is generally contended. Having once been told who her bridegroom is, she becomes aware of him for all times to come. In the same manner, from the moment of God-realisation, we ought to perceive and be conscious of God at all times and at all places without any special effort or contrivance, as we are conscious of hunger, cold, heat, the food we eat, the clothes we wear or the persons we talk to . If it is not so, it can be anything but God-realisation and, therefore, we will be perfectly justified in not accepting the same. To repeat, knowledge of all-pervading and eternal God is not a momentary experience but a state, which abides for the rest of the life. Of course, only a True Master, who is himself a God-realised being, can bless us with God-realisation. A True Master, whose sole mission of life is redemption of the humanity, never demands any price to impart God-knowledge, because this knowledge is not a commodity for sale. He imparts God-knowledge to the earnest seekers out of sheer love for the humanity, human redemption being the chief mission of his life. He steadfastly upholds the principle that the more the God-knowledge is imparted, the more it flourishes. However, such a True Master may be one in millions. It is our great good fortune that we have amidst us such a True Master in the person of Nirankari Baba by whose benevolence and grace God-knowledge is imparted to anyone who nurses an earnest quest for the realisation of the Lord Creator. The seeker is not questioned about his caste, colour, race, nationality, his past, the way he lives, what he eats, how he dresses or the belief he holds. In fact, none of these and such factors are a bar to God-realisation. It is natural that such factor should vary from place to place even in the same country, depending upon the geographical and climatic conditions, culture, customs, etc. of the region. But so far as seeker's quest for God-realisation is concerned, he should be treated as a human being as such. It will not be out of place to mention here that imparting knowledge of the all-pervading and omnipresent God implies no time lag, as is the case with introducing one person to another person, provided one knows the persons being introduced. For this very reason, the question of prescribing methods, plans and practices to realise God does not arise. Since God is all-pervading, all that we need is someone to tear off the veil of our ignorance about Him.

We cannot name any price for the God-knowledge bestowed upon us, but for which, rather in whose name, the so-called saints and gurus load us with rituals and religious practices and disturb, even destroy our normal life through renunciation and rigid Do's and Don'ts, all of which taken together are no

substitute for God-knowledge . In truth, God-knowledge is priceless. Seekers having earnest quest should, so to say, make their otherwise insipid life savoury by adding to it the salt of God-knowledge, which though invaluable, is given free!

The Law of Karma

- By: Krishan Lal, Advocate

Death is only a special kind of variation. It is a mere dissolution of the elements of which the mortal coil is composed. The real man, the soul, never dies.

He *Jivas* when embodied (embodied souls) are subject to the Law of *Karma* or the Law of Causation. All beings must reap the consequences of their actions. No action goes in vain. No effort is lost. As one sows, so one reaps.

Our actions are our only property, out only title deeds of which we can not be disinherited.

Consequent on death, when the soul gets liberated from embodiment, it does not travel alone to the beyond. It is not correct to imagine that it carries nothing out of the world. Our actions follow and accompany it beyond the grave.

Karma is aggregate of our acts, both in the present life and in the preceding births. It covers our present, out past and out future.

Actions have full weight in the balance of eternity. The balance sheet of good and bad actions determines the destiny in the life to come. Destiny is thus the net product or effect of the actions in the previous birth. It forms only one limb of the Law of *Karma*.

Man is what he is because of his past actions. His present status is caused by his past. If he has lived a life of dignity, purity and nobility, he will reflect these virtues. But if his conduct had been vicious and immoral, he will project these vices.

Conceding that man is the product of his past actions, called *Karma*, it does not mean that he is a helpless victim of his destiny over which he has no control. Such thinking will make the Law of *Karma* an inert philosophy.

If it were so, there will be no new action which will determine the future destiny, and man will be no better than other living creatures who are blindly yoked to the destiny to live a life of '*Bhog Jeuni*', run-of-the-mill existence, meekly put up with and perforce, insensibly (lacking-Chetanta) and passively bear all that is meant for them .

The Law of *Karma*, on the other hand, is a vital force that gives man the faculty and spirit of dynamic thinking to achieve the aims of human existence. Unlike other creatures, he is gifted with the highest intelligence, ability, reason, wisdom and will-power to act in exercise of his judicious discretion and measure up to the challenge of destiny. As such, he is rightly acclaimed as “*Ashraf-ul-Mulhlukat*” (highest being of God’s creation).

Man has the capacity to choose his actions. He has the faculty to discriminate (*Vikeka*) between right and wrong and adopt the path of his choice. Through self-effort (*Purshartha*), he is in a position to contain, modify or change the influence of destiny, the effect of his past actions. Right thought and right action can reduce and disarm the effect of destiny. The freedom to modify the past and create a future, good or bad, better or worse, lies on man’s self-effort.

What man meets in life is destiny; how he meets it through self-effort becomes *Karma*. This leads us to understand that man can act to shape his future by regulating and channeling his self-effect in right or wrong directions. Time spent in the company of wise and noble leaves an edifying impact on man’s thought-force: he is more than likely to reflect similar virtues in practical life. On the other hand, a person who seeks and keeps company of the vicious is bound to be influenced by evil tendencies. It is up to the man himself to opt and decide upon the course he likes to adopt. Man has the liberty to engage himself in self-effort, which, in turn, helps him to make or mar his destiny. In other words, destiny is of man’s own making.

The self-effort of today, becomes the destiny of tomorrow. Man’s duty is to act and perform true actions by resolutely turning the mind away from antagonistic forces. Destiny yields to consistent application of self-effort. But man has got to develop a new judicious vision, undaunted spirit, strong determination, unbending will-power which equip him with integrity, character and right thoughts that materialise into right actions. It is not proper to grumble that *Karma* has brought about all this and that. Virtuous deeds of past life do help to be born in/foster good environment in the present life. Exert and concentrate on self-effort and change the unfavourable into favourable possibilities.

The wise and the noble have ever emphatically exhorted human beings to be good and do noble deeds. This presupposes their faith in the capacity of human spirit to act and perform righteously irrespective of what the destiny provides.

Man has got to pay for all his deeds. This explains why a person, leading a noble and chaste life for years, is suddenly punished for something he did earlier, though he may be ignorant of his crime. But his ignorance cannot prevent the operation of the Law of *Karma*.

Relevantly, it may be asked to why spiritually rich holy men, seemingly from worldly point of view, meet with hardships at the hands of destiny and even sacrifice their lives for the good of mankind. Such exceptional holy luminaries appear on the earth as trusted apostles of God Formless and appointed to willingly

carry out and cheerfully fulfil His Mission to lighten the burden of the ailing humanity and to show light to the ignorant stumblers with their voluntary spirit of submission, self-effacement and humility. They serve as light-houses to guide human beings groping in the prevailing darkness. And possibly there may have been some causes too in the past of which even the spiritually advanced have no knowledge but have shaped the present state.

The Law of *Karma* is governed by cause and effect . The effects experienced in the present must have had their cause in the past life, and the causes of the present shall become the effects of the future.

The Law of Destiny refers only to our past actions making man its victim. But the Law of *Karma* infuses the spirit of action, the urge to work and progress by focussing attention on a better future through self-effort. It is a basic formula for right and purposeful living. Man should, however, remain warned that his duty is to act but the consequences of action are beyond his reach, control and competency. Fruit of action is entirely in the hand of Paramount Adjudicator, Supreme Rewarder and Sole Benefactor.

“Thou hast a right to action or work alone, and never to its fruits; let not the fruit of work be thy motive, let not thy attachment be to inaction.”
(Gita 2:47)

Necessity of love - By: Kishin Samtani

Once a Professor of Sociology took his students to Baltimore Slums to get case histories of 200 young boys. The students were asked to write an evaluation of each boy's future. In each case, he student wrote: “He hasn't got a chance.”

Twenty-five years later, another Professor of Sociology came across the earlier record on the study of the slum children. He had his students follow up the project to find out what had happened to those slum boys. With the exception of 20, who had either moved away or died, the students found that 176 of the remaining boys had achieved more than ordinary success as lawyers, doctors, and businessmen.

The Professor was astonished and pursued the matter further. Fortunately, all of the boys were in the area and he asked each one of them, “How do you account for your success?” In each case, came an emotional reply, “There was a teacher.”

Fortunately, the teacher was still alive. So the Professor sought her out and asked the old but alert lady what ‘magic formula’ she had used to pull these boys out of the slums into successful achievements. The teacher's eyes sparkled and her face wore a gentle smile. “It is really very simple.” She said, “I loved these boys.” The

above is a story by Eric Butterworth whose underlying message is “Love is a creative force.”

Mother Teresa, one of the most dedicated missionaries, has said in her inspiring words:

Spread loves everywhere you go. First of all in your own home. Give love to your children, to your wife or husband, to a next door neighbour. Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God’s kindness: kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile, kindness in your warm greetings.”

Today the world is moving at a jet-speed. No one wishes to spare time to lend a patient ear to share the feelings of others or to cater to the needs of others. So much so, that in certain cases, even the children are neglected by their own parents who, in a mad rush, are either busy making their own careers or building beautiful houses but not strong and secure homes. Consequently, what do we see around us? Moving Human Robots, who appear physically strong but lacking confidence, security, tolerance, large heartedness, etc. What then should be done to revive and reap the harvest of human values like love, honour, service, compassion, and optimism? As said by Lord Krishna:

Divine love is a flower which in its early bud is happiness and in the full bloom, heaven.

Regular saintly congregation helps to prepare the human minds (soil) for developing an urge for God-realisation (seed). It is only the True Master, who like a dedicated farmer, sows this seed of God-knowledge in the human beings and continuously nourishes, nurtures and irrigates it with the water of love and affection in order that the world may enjoy its fragrance and fruit.

We must remember that none of us lives alone, nor for ourselves alone. Each of us is a part of the Universe, and one with it. Just as oil poured from one vessel into another falls in an unbroken stream, so are we an unbroken part of the society. We live in and are with it. As such we should be aware of the fact that hatred and violence are a great hazard to happy human relationship. If we hurt others, we hurt ourselves too. On the other hand, if we affectionately help others, we reap a rich reward for ourselves too. If we lovingly work for humanity, if we make it our aim in life to improve the condition of others, we benefit ourselves in more ways than one. First of all, we gain inner satisfaction from the good deeds. Secondly, we know the well-known saying, ‘Love Begets Love.’ Love brings its own reward, especially, if it is only for the sake of love and demands no returns. In the words of Swami Vivekananda:

It is Love that gives you the supernatural power,
Love that gives you Bhakti (Devotion), Love that
gives illumination and Love again, that leads to
emancipation.

Lastly, we benefit, too, in that the society of which we are members is improved for ourselves as well as for others and this, in turn, will produce healthy beings, who will strive for the welfare of humanity.

Luckily, amidst us is Baba Hardev Singh Ji, who spreads his ancient and true message that Love is the base of all virtues and imbibing it is the only way to achieve salvation.

Divine Love – A View
- By: Mohammad Farooq Khan

Supposing one visits a place and finds that arrays of musical instruments are being tuned. However, after tuning, they are simply set aside: no instrument is played, no music is enjoyed. On such an occasion, one's natural reaction would be that they are naives; they have all the musical instruments, but no flair for music. They're having the instruments and setting them in tune have no meaning.

This is exactly the state of mind of a person who is conscious of his physical being, takes all precautions for his health and security, earns his livelihood, enjoys the good things of life, but his life does not string any rhythm or harmony whatsoever. His life is like a harp without tinkling. His life's instrument does not play, strings no symphony.

Man is not a mere physical entity. His physical demands are not all. In fact, his real self is over and above the physical being. As compared to death, which is not so significant, life, in fact, is highly significant.

Man, in fact, is not physical, but metaphysical – pure consciousness; and love is its highest realm. Benevolence is the hallmark of life. Where there is no benevolence, it is not life but death that reigns.

When a tree withers, we can't expect any flower or fruit from it; once extinguished, the fire emits no heat, because it is dead. There is nothing more precious than love to give. Love is life. God is all love. His love is eternal. This is a fundamental truth. It is the love of the benevolent God, which is the essence of all creation. The Holy Quran says:

“And He is the Most forgiving, the loving.”
(85:15)

God Almighty can be realised by love alone. It is our sacred duty to love Him. The Holy Quran guides us:

“And there are some among men who take for themselves objects of worship other than Allah, loving them as they should love Allah. But those who believe, are stronger in their love for Allah.”

(2:166)

Holy Prophet Mohammad (Peace be on him) says that Allah proclaims:

The one who loves me the most, worships me more than the normal to attain my nearness, I too start loving him, so much so that I become his eyes, ears, nose and hands, and, above all his stay and support.

One of Prophet Mohammed's prayers is:

“Allah! Grant me your love as also of the one who brings me closer to your love. May you become dearer to me than the cool water.”

Love is the music of life and nature of the soul. To merge in love is the food for the soul. God's love is, in fact, the real bliss and happiness. Devoid of love, the harp of soul remains bereft of the divine symphony. It is likened to a bed of flowers in full bloom withering for want of water. Love is the essence, which permeates the whole creation. Love is the real life force behind all beauty and evolution of the whole nature. It is through love that the soul blooms. Love, at its climax manifests in the form of spiritual subtlety, light, beauty, and force. To sum up, love is that basic element which exists in every form of the creation. Love is synonym of life. It seeks to manifest itself in all expressions of life. In case man understands love and its significance, he can very well perceive its miraculous working within and without. However, love is a matter of personal experience. Miss Underhill has aptly said;

“They know by the experience the unique nature of the spiritual love, and no one can know anything about it in any other way.”

The more one contemplates on love and its significance, the more one gets enamoured of it, so much so that one cannot think of anything but God.

Immersion in the love of God brings about a radical change in man's personality and outlook. His surrender to the Supreme Lord is total; for him pain and pleasure are both God-willed; he will in the will of God; his consciousness is replete with sweet emotion. Now the worldly odds are no stumbling block to him. As one in his dream feels quite relieved of all burdens including that of his own body and, at the same time, feels free from the bondage of such things, such is the state of mind of a devotee. Love of God or Bhakti assumes the state of self-consciousness, a personal experience. This is known as Samadhi or trance. Maulana Rumi says: I have broken all my bonds with the 'alien' and now I am with my Beloved at all times and at all places. He further says: A true lover perceives the Unknown and those who are not in love, are deaf and dumb and die in that state.

Love has been defined in several ways. Its one definition is : One derives joy from the one whom he is inclined to.

Generally, the following are the objects of devotion:

- Beauty
- Benefactor
- Excellent personality
- One who conforms to one's nature
- Eternal
- Close relative

All these characteristics are found in God; and if anyone has any of these he is a God-gifted person. Since God is the reservoir of all these characteristics, only He is worthy of our love, but for love and devotion to god life is barren and cannot be made fertile by any other means.

Some of the salient features of devotion and traits of a devotee are as follows:

- Craving to meet the Beloved to such an extent that the pangs of separation become unbearable.
- Submissiveness: Complete surrender to God.
- Constant remembrance of God.
- Praise of God: One derives supreme bliss in singing the Lord's praises.
- Worship: The lover gets so much absorbed in the Beloved that he does not tolerate any distraction.
- Eternal bond: He simply cannot think of separating himself from his Beloved even in death.
- Constant effort to please his Beloved.
- Ever conscious to avoid His displeasure and wrath.
- To derive solace even from the pain afflicted by the Beloved.
- To take Beloved's hint as His command. For this, he is prepared to sacrifice his very life.
- Ever eager to hear the Beloved's Word.
- Ever craving for a divine glimpse of the Beloved.
- To consider His friends as his friends, and His foes as his foes.
- To value His loving glance more than anything else such as status, riches position.
- To look to the Beloved for all his hopes.
- To dedicate his all to Him.
- To wish and pray for the welfare of all.

In Islam, we have explicit and exhaustive instructions on all these aspects.

Creation and The Creator

- By: Nirmal Joshi

Man is bewildered to think how vast, beautiful and useful the material world is. His practical life is so closely depended on the material world that it is but natural that it should have great significance for him. It will be no exaggeration to say that man is totally lost in the vast creation. His achievements prompt him to probe its mystery still more. He feels that in case he continues to probe, he will secure more comforts and conveniences. He devotes his entire life in research of the material creation. That is why material progress has become the sole aim of his life. Despite his research since time immemorial, he has not reached the end. For this, one reason can be that the material creation is going moment to moment change. When one thing is extinct, other takes place. Thus, the man remains entangled in this cycle. This is called illusion. Caught in the crisis, man falls a prey to success and failure in his game of life. There is no stability.

The holy personages draw man's attention to a simple solution to this vexing problem. They exhort him: Why have you engrossed yourself in the creation instead of identifying yourself with the Creator? Don't you think, if the creation is so vast and alluring, how much more vast and charming its creator would be? This way they awaken man to his foolishness to forget the Artist in his infatuation with the art. The fact is that we are committing this folly at every step, with the result that we do not experience peace anywhere. In our homes, we love and adore our grandchildren but do not respect and honour them but do not wish to revere those whose utterances are enshrined in them and live up to their teachings. We forget that books containing prescriptions are not more important than a physician. A physician can write many books but all the books can not produce one physician. Similarly, scriptures, new or old can not be greater than their authors. It is our great luck that Nirankari Baba has made his devotees understand that Avtar Bani though holy is, not the object of worship. In truth, every word uttered by a True Master is a scripture and need to be translated into action.

The True Master of the day has cautioned us not to regard the creation as more important than the Creator. While making use of the material creation, we should not forget the Creator. We should strive not only for transitory happiness of the material creation but realise and identify ourselves with the Supreme Creator for experience abiding peace, bliss and happiness. (Translated).

Compromise – Cause or Curse?

- By: P. M. Arora

Why is it that we usually compromise with our conscience from time to time? We develop a sort of habit of compromising in all aspects of life. Probably, this habit

is developed unknowingly since the childhood; and the habit developed rather innocently in the childhood, becomes a tool for camouflaging our shortcomings when we attain majority.

If we just recollect the past we shall observe that as a child we used to cry to be fondled. If we wanted some toy or sweets we pretended to cry in front of the mother. If we reached the school late, may be because we got up late in the morning, we gave a lame excuse to the teacher. If we had not done our homework, again we simply gave an excuse to the teacher to escape punishment. If in the school we had skipped from the classes, we reached home 'wearing' innocence on our face to avoid an explanation to the parents. If the result in the class was not good, we told our parents that the question paper was out of the syllabus. All these excuses and tricks we did under the guise of innocence, but gradually these small tricks made us experts in covering our misdeeds.

When we take up a job we indulge in all sorts of manipulation, misrepresentation and make false claims, may be, to please the employer and to retain the job. Similarly, when we start our business or profession, we do not hesitate to win over the confidence of the customers, suppliers, clients or any other related departments to extract the maximum benefit for ourselves.

Even while driving on the road, just for fun's sake, we jump the red light, overtake from the wrong side and do not observe the traffic regulations, drive without license, over speed, at times and on top of all, if stopped by the policeman, we persuade him to compromise on the basis of the 'expertise' developed since childhood.

If we are unable to fulfil a commitment made to our parents, brothers, sisters, children, relations, friends, officers, departments or as a matter of fact, in any sphere of life, we try our best to compromise with our conscience and put the blame on others. Perhaps the cause for the compromises always is our selfishness.

You might have noticed that each time we so compromise, our conscience always sends us signals not to do the way we are going to do, but we ignore the same. The tragedy is that after doing all this, since we have done it knowingly, we simply go to temples, congregations and other religious places, pretending to be praying, again as a ritual. So all this leads us nowhere by to utter confusion in life.

The art of compromise, which is the cause of our mental deterioration, can be made use of as a cure for our degradation and a source of our enlightenment if used honestly. If at all we have to 'compromise', let us make a compromise with the Almighty God that whatever has been done by us till to-day, knowingly or unknowingly, against our conscience was a folly and we sincerely feel sorry for the same and hence onward we shall strive to tread on the path of Truth and Truth only .

In short, the knowledge attained through religion should be used as a detergent to wash and prevent the misdeeds rather than as a perfume to suppress their foul odours.

Self – Surrender Versus Self – Assertion

- By: “Rajab”

The knowledge of self is at the bottom of all spiritual knowledge. Blessed is the one who knows his true self. For him the duality is ended and he is one with the Lord. Unfortunately, this state of being is not achieved automatically. Neither is it a matter of hard work or a super intellectual feat. It is a simple act of self-surrender to the Word of our Guru (True Master). It can come about in a jiffy when the time is ripe and the Guru’s grace is present. Some struggle for it over years and years. For others, it is an immediate achievement, most easily attained and the most natural event in their life. Can one prepare for it? Let us examine this aspect.

No one can doubt the existence of this physical world, where the human race has found itself, as the supreme entity or being. At one end we see the material progress of the human in terms of technology, mobility and physical sciences. We have houses, TVs, aeroplanes, roads, vehicles, air-conditioners and a vast array of material goods, including food, clothing, beverages, drinks, drugs, and what you have. On the other end is the bankruptcy of man’s mental and spiritual needs. By following the path of self-assertion, he is disturbed, dissatisfied, unhappy, worried, pained, over-stressed and joyless. Those with surfeit of physical comforts, bemoan their lack. Those, who have surplus of material items, are constantly in search of more and more of these, without achieving peace or happiness. Look around you and you would find the majority of the human race caught in this *Chakravyuha* (Puzzle). Every one is in this game of self-assertion to achieve something, which he feels will give him happiness. And once he achieves this, he is presented with another goal, which he now starts chasing. Is this the be-all and end-all of life? It would be summarised as the “constant chasing of material goals till the end of your life” without purpose, without joy and without bliss. No! This is not the aim or purpose of life. The enlightened ones amongst us like Satguru Baba Hardev Singh Ji Maharaj explain and tell us the real purpose of life. The real purpose of life is to “know thyself” and surrender yourself to the true lord and master, which is your own higher self. Let us revert to our original query of preparation for this life or the new blissful life. It is clear now that the preparation portion is both weird and simple. You need no preparation except to bring yourself to a point of self-surrender Just walk out today and with folded hands ask an emissary of my Satguru Baba Ji, the most sought out and most precious items of them all “Kind Sir, Please show me the True Lord, who is the True Self of All .” Yes! This simple act of self-surrender is all you need to do. Are you surprised or disappointed? Don’t go by your such feelings. God is beyond feelings or intellectual reasoning. He is what He is. He can be seen by the

grace of the true Guru. He is available, discernable and knowable, by a simple act of surrender in just one sitting with an enlightened person.

Does the journey end with this the so-called *Gyan* (Knowledge) imparting ceremony? No, it does not. For the simple-minded, who cannot or do not wish to reason, question or investigate, the matter ends here. Their Faith carries them to the land of joy and happiness. From the state of self - surrender. There is only happiness, bliss, for such souls. Blessed are such individuals but their number is very tiny. They are few and far between. For most of us, the real journey starts now. Having known the true Self of all is one thing. To be able to practise self-surrender, as a constant central idea and theme of your life, is yet another. One forgets and slips. References of such falls from Grace are available in almost all cultures and religions, starting with the devil in the Christian mythology who was once an angel. Somewhat of the same thing can happen to all of us. O.K., we have the knowledge of our true Lord Nirankar (God Formless) which is the true Self of all. But can we and have we truly surrendered to Him? In Sikh scriptures two words indicate this dilemma admirably. You could be a Man-Mukh (facing your self) or self-asserting person. Or you could be the opposite of it, namely Gur-Mukh (facing your Guru) or self-surrendering person. This journey from Man-Mukh to Gur-Mukh is to be performed by all true seekers as a part of their life. On one end is the Man-Mukh (Self-asserting person) whose life is full of hurry, pain, stress, restlessness. The Gur-Mukh, on the other end, is calm, collected, joyful, and peaceful. The choice is yours.

Satguru Baba Hardev Singh Ji makes us all Gur-Mukh to face this sea of life. He first asks us to know our true Lord. Then he asks us to surrender ourselves to Him. This surrender is achieved and facilitated through Seva (Selfless service), Simran (Remembrance of Lord's Name) and Satsang (common congregation).

This is the same philosophy and the same means which have existed in this world from time immemorial. Baba Ji has given a new urgency and a new meaning to this ancient wisdom. It is now available simply, easily and without any trappings of rules, regulations or stipulations. Also this ancient wisdom is bestowed freely without the bias of caste, creed, gender, age, nationality, religion. What more can a man ask? Hail! Baba Hardev Singh Ji who is the real Saviour of our age. Let us make use of his presence and save ourselves. Let us go from, the life of drudgery, routine and emptiness to the life of meaning, joy bliss and happiness. All it needs is a simple act of surrender. Seek and ye shall find. Knock and ye shall enter. This is the clarion call to all seekers of the Truth in this present age. Come ye all and be blessed into a life of Eternal Bliss.

Get Rid of Anger

- By: Rajan Suri

How to overcome anger is a seemingly complex issue. All of us suffer from this malady with varying frequency, at one time or the other. Does this problem have any solution, at all? Let us see.

Whenever a student is called upon to solve any complex mathematical problem, he or she has to first comprehend the underlying principle. Once, the correct principle or formula is understood, the same can be applied for arriving at the correct solution. Let us ponder whether there is any principle to be understood which will help one overcome anger.

Why does anger arise? It is laid down in Bhagwad Gita (Chapter II, Verse No. 62) that anger arises out of desire. What is this desire? It may be for money, comforts, house, children, name, fame, etc. These all are no doubt desires, but there is one very basic desire which lies aflame inside every human heart and which is the root cause of all other desires. This basic desire is 'This should so happen' and 'This should not so happen'

Whenever we decide in our mind that something should happen in a particular manner and that something does not accordingly happen, we become angry. If we wish that something should not happen or other should not do something and if our wish is belied, we become angry. This goes to establish that the basic cause of anger and frustration is our latent desire i.e. 'This should so happen' and 'This should not so happen.'

It is easy to understand with a little logic that there is hardly any use of keeping such a desire alive in our heart. Will the entire world dance to our tune? Is it possible that everyone around us would act only on our bidding? When we expect our family members and others to blindly obey us, do we think that they have no desires of their own? Does not a similar overpowering desire dwell in their hearts as well? So, why should they, at all abide by our wishes? If they abide by our wishes, then we should also abide by their wishes. If we are not prepared to dance to others' tune, do we have any right to demand obedience to our wishes from others?

It is, therefore, vital to completely relinquish our insistence on compliance to our basic desire that something should so happen or something should be so done. But we insist on this because of our ego, which arises due to entirely false and misplaced notions of superior wisdom or exalted position. It is basically our ego, which manifests itself into anger in our day-to-day behavior. If one desires peace, one has to surrender one's ego. There is absolutely no other way. In fact, all the evil instincts like anger, grief, greed, attachment, falsehood are based solely on ego and thrive on it.

May I be permitted to ponder a little further. A person, who blindly obeys our commands, tends to strengthen our ego by his actions. On the other hand, a person who justifiably acts against our wishes reduces our ego-level. Those who do not blindly obey you or criticise you or your deeds, are, in fact, your well wishers, as

they save you from falling into the ego-trap. A wise person should, in fact, be sincerely indebted to such critics whose actions are nothing but blessings in disguise.

A widely preached teaching of saints, that we should always look for good qualities in others and ignore the bad ones, is hardly ever followed. We not only specifically look for bad qualities and weakness in others but also sometimes in our zeal to reform others, become angry and start preaching to others to save them from what are perceived by us as certain pitfalls. It may kindly be remembered that Satguru has not assigned any such job to his devotees. It would be better to refrain from expressing whether others are properly discharging their duties or not. If at all necessary, we may politely bring the correct position to the notice of a wrongdoer, but should desist from demanding compliance, as this generally proves counter-productive.

In nutshell by shedding our ego and by picking up only the good qualities of our fellow-beings, we can overcome the tides of anger and become truly the worthy members of our society.

The Awakened

- By: Prof. (Mrs.) Raj Vasdev Singh

Self-awakening is the be-all and end-all of human life. A human being, who is so blessed immortalises himself. Rarely, one comes across such a person in this world. Only the blessings of the True Master, total surrender of body, mind and soul enables man to attain such a divine state in which he is one with God Almighty, whose grace maintains and sustains him, whatever the circumstances may be. The devotee who spreads the message of the True Master through his practical life, is very dear to him.

But total surrender is not so easy as it sounds. It is aptly said that one may conquer a thousand men in the battlefield, yet only he is the true victor who conquers his own self. In Gurbani it is said:

Conquest of the mind is the conquest of the world.

A true devotee is, therefore, ever humble and contended.

Psychologically, it may be said, that the mind is the axis around which the whole of life revolves. Our failure or success and distress or happiness life depends upon how we think, speak and act. If our thought words and deeds are dictated by the soul, we march towards righteousness and divinity. If, however, they are reigned by the mind and the soul is subdued to the mind, they take us to the path of falsehood and suffering. Lord Buddha said:

By restrained effort, earnestness, discipline and Self-control, let the wise man make for himself an island which no flood overwhelms.

- Dhampapada

And, again Buddha cautions:

Coming from home to the homeless, the wise Man should abandon dark states and cultivate the bright. He should see great delight in detachment, so hard to enjoy. Giving up sensual pleasures with no impediments, the wise man should cleanse himself of the impurities of the mind.

- Dhamapada

Which are the impurities of the mind that lead us to the path of darkness? To my mind, and, as is expounded in to holy books, Ego is the root cause of all evils. It makes man inhuman. Even the most learned Ravana, the King of Lanka, and Pharaoh, the King of Egypt (who tortured Moses), King Hirahkashyapa, etc. became slaves of their ego and earned a bad name in the history. But ego, in various degrees, is there in almost every human being. A spiritually awakened or enlightened person alone escapes its effect by way of God-remembrance, selfless service and congregation.

One ought not to regard oneself as a doer but only a medium in the hand of the Creator. If one regards oneself a doer, one shall have to reap the fruit of one's deeds. But as Lord Krishna said:

They right is to do thy duty and not to the fruit thereof. Do thy duty best, leave unto the Lord the rest.

-Gita

To regard oneself to be a doer is to be an egoist. To be relieved of ego, one had to be humble in words and deeds. In other words, such a person is never proud of his intellect or learning. The great masters ever exhort man to be a Dass or slave. A slave is a purchased servant, who has no right, no choice, no say, and no ambition. He lives as his master wills without any claim or grudge. A true devotee is also a slave of the True Master who, unlike the worldly people, is merciful and benevolent and showers his choicest blessings and bounties on the former.

Ponder over the following words of Baba Avtar Singh:

Who so has impact of God,
All his acts and sayings are God's,
Has compassion, ever, the Lord,
Deeds of his, are deeds of God,
Results thereof are good to heart.
He has Light Divine in heart,
He shall merge in God, at last;
In this world has joyous accord,
In the other, he rests in God,

Avtar, they differ not naught.

- Avtar Bani, Hymn 68

Baba Gurbachan Singh Ji upheld this truth when he said:

If anyone desires to be great, he has to be the Dass slave) of every devotee. In the realm of Truth, great is he who serves humbly and considers himself the dust of saints' lotus feet.

Hypocrisy is another impurity, which 'soils' the mind and obstructs the path of devotion. Under the worldly influence, we are given to false show and pretence, consciously or unconsciously. In fact, we deceive none else but ourselves. Once Baba Avtar Singh Ji observed:

Some devotees do not attend the congregation when Babaji (Baba Gurbachan Singh Ji) is away on tour. But as soon as he returns, they stand in the first row with garlands in their hands to welcome him. The Lord is never pleased with show. He is pleased only with a true, sincere and longing heart.

Here I am reminded of an incident. Once a devotee from a village in Patiala district came to Delhi. In the congregation, he sang with gusto a song, the theme of which was that he longed for the Darshan or holy glimpse of Babaji, whether or not he possessed worldly possessions! Happily, he returned to his village. It so happened that incessant heavy rains washed away all his belongings. Heart broken, he along with his family members again came to Delhi and related the unfortunate incident to Babaji. With a little anguish and grudge in his heart, he asked, 'Babaji, what is this! I am your humble devotee, still I suffer thus. Babaji replied, 'Did you not in your song pray for my Darshan (holy glimpse) alone, even at the cost of losing every worldly possession? Now I am right before you; have my Darshan and be patient.' The devotee realised his folly and begged forgiveness and mercy. The moral: We should not make tall claims, rather we should be ever humble and practical. The True Master is all knowing.

Flattery is yet another kind of impurity that defiles the mind. It is perhaps the greatest human weakness. Consciously or unconsciously, everyone feels happy when flattered. However, an awakened being discriminates between praise and flattery. He is neither prone to nor indulges in flattery. He, however, does not hesitate to praise a person whenever it is due.

The difference between an awakened being or devotee and a worldly person is that unlike the former, the latter is not allured by base feelings, emotions and instincts. Being awakened and enlightened, he is ever in tune with God. His thinking is rational and spiritual. He reposes full faith in the teachings of the holy person ages, which lead him from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge and truth. It is, therefore, the sacred duty of the awakened and enlightened beings not only to keep the spark of divine enlightenment aglow but also lead an exemplary life to inspire others to be spiritually awakened and

enlightened, so that the torch of Enlightenment is kept ever burning brighter and brighter. Khahlil Gibran has aptly said:

God has placed a torch in your hearts that glows with knowledge and beauty. It is a sin to extinguish that torch and bury it in the ashes.

The supreme state of the soul is to obey even that against which the mind rebels and the lowest state of mind is to revolt against which the soul obeys.

He who reveals to himself what his conscience has prohibited commits a sin. And he also is a sinner who denies himself what his conscience has revealed.

Spirituality and Children

- By: Dr. Sanjay Jasuja, M.D. (U.S.A.)

It is said that children are the backbone of our society. They are images of God. Most of us work hard for our children and would do anything for them. However, there remains the painful fact that some children suffer abuse by their parents, some are in serious conflict with them and some take to drugs.

Can spirituality be one of the solutions to the problem of today's youth? A lot of parents want their children to attend church meeting or Sunday school. Some children go along with this wish and some resent it strongly. In the latter case, this also becomes an issue of prestige.

Spirituality can help parents and children to come closer. It teaches parents that craze for material wealth and possessions, status and praise, is not the ultimate aim of human life. That can happen only when a person sincerely tries his best to follow the teaching of his or her religion in letter and spirit. Having an understanding of the higher values of human life will enable the parents to guide their children better. With this understanding they will spend more time with their children.

If parents explain to children why going to the church meeting is beneficial instead of forcing them to do so, the latter may be, more compliant with their advice. Going to such meetings will help children to be understanding and to build self-esteem from inward, rather than depending on external agents e.g. material gains, drugs etc. The children will learn to avoid worrying and leaving the rein of their lives to the Higher Power. This will relieve a lot of childhood anxieties and instills in them self-confidence. The children would also learn to

respect their parents, teachers, friends, and elders and, in turn, receive far greater respect and admiration for themselves.

The important thing is a continuous dialogue about spirituality between parents and children, so that a strong base is laid. It is this foundation which will encourage children to attend congregations and be able to enjoy the fruits of spirituality.

(Unlike religion, which has become synonymous with rituals and traditions, spirituality signifies a living communion with God and an enlightened life. – Editor)

Contentment is Divinity - By: Prof. Surjit Misree

India's glorious spiritual heritage was nurtured and nourishes by sages and saints who have left for us their rich experience in the form of scriptures and religious literature. These 'men of God' led a pure life and did have a vision of Truth. They proclaimed that people attaining the highest good and nobility would never be wanting in anything. Such human beings are perfect oasis of Bliss. And "blissfulness" gets engendered by Contentment alone .

Swami Ram Tirtha has very beautifully summed up the term " Contentment". "Man minus worldly contents," says the great saint-philosopher, "is contentment." Thus, it simply follows that material gains can never ensure lasting happiness, peace and calm. It is rather selfless and disinterested service that is the hallmark of the pious and contented souls. Along with all this, we must associate ourselves with people having saintly traits. These realised souls have already reached the conclusion that this life, this body and these material benefits are transient. They teach us never to entertain any worldly desires. These saints explain to us that God's grace will be showered on us only when we contract all our desires to the zero level. And this Divine favour can only be houses in a contented body that invariably carries out God's will.

We are always on the lookout for harmony and happiness in life. But the trouble is that we try to squeeze the same out of wealth, power, fame and children. On inquisition, however, we shall find that this lack of harmony is due to our utter disregard for its primal source i.e. God. We live and exist simply because of the spark of divinity in us. And if we realise this, we can in no time achieve balance, equanimity and contentment. Behind this veil of maddening chaos shrouding our life, an unseen and invisible pall of serenity, saintliness and contentment does exit. Regrettably enough, we are hardly conscious and aware of the same. His

Divine Grace Baba Hardev Ji Maharaj very often resounds the same path of sanity in his discourses and sermons.

Each one of us wants to be happy but, sadly enough, we seek happiness in sense-gratification, in the fulfillment of our desires. That type of happiness is no happiness at all. We tend to forget the Law of Cause and Effect, which is bound to overtake us ruthlessly if we just allow our senses to run riot. It is because desire itself indicates want. For every desire that is fulfilled, there remain ten that are denied. Desire, thus, is infinite, fulfillment is limited. It so follows that as long as we are subject to desires, we can never enjoy lasting happiness. True happiness consists in contentment only. It is a state of mind that emanates from within. Lord Krishna says:

"One who seeks happiness within,
His joy within, this light within,
That saint shall salvation attain,
And shall ever live in God's domain."

(Gita V: 24)

It proves that happiness issuing forth within is, in fact, perfect happiness. In the religious parlance, it can be called "ecstatic bliss." And this nectar-like spontaneous flow is generated only by contentment. Guru Nanak Dev experienced it, Mira tasted it, Kabir had it, and Baba Avtar Singh delved deep into it. In the Avtar Bani (Hymn 114), this godly attribute of contentment has been called "sabar saboori." All duality, says the hymn, gets dissolved when contentment reigns supreme in hearts.

Shelley, the great romantic poet, blessed with a prophetic vision, very poignantly but emphatically declares:

"Alas ! I have no hope, nor health,
Nor peace within, nor calm around,
Nor that content, supposing wealth,
The sage in meditation found."

(Stanzas written...near Naples)

Evidently, contentment is no ordinary virtue. It rather surpasses all other virtues. It is divinity itself that embellishes the hearts of only those who are perfect saints. The Bible also supports the same view saying: "There is great gain in godliness with contentment." (1 Timothy 6:6). Thus, contentment is divinity personified.

Saint Kabir, the great mystic, through one of his "Sakhis" calls contentment "Santosh", which is singularly unique. All other wealth pale into insignificance when confronted with this most outstanding heavenly virtue. Mahatma Buddha also echoes the same philosophical truth when he enjoins on us:

"Let us live very happy, we who own nothing. Let us become enjoys of contentment, like the luminous gods."

-Dhammapada XV :4

Poverty, no doubt, wants much, avarice everything, but contentment wants nothing, It is a state of perfection when the enjoyer of the bliss is in direct communion with God. True contentment and satisfaction are thus attained only by a saint . Wisdom never dawns upon the mind, which is under the control, and at the mercy of desires and wants. He, who remains calm, cool and contented, is truly wise and learned.

It is contentment that enables us to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Jealousy, the green-eyed monster, causes untold havoc. Let us never compare ourselves with others and thereby grumble our lot. That is most precarious. We must always remember that worldly ambitions are out to destroy our mental equipoise. The Adi Granth ("Sukhmani Sahib", Astpadi XII.5) clearly lays down that no man can be satiated without contentment.

A true devotee merge his personal will into God's Will. In a way, the essential characteristic of contentment is the consecration of all activities by self-surrender to God. While doing this, man attains perfection and divinity and becomes thoroughly contented. He gets completely immersed in that heavenly ecstatic frenzy of bliss. His Holiness Baba Gurbachan Singh Ji, calls the contented ones "truly rich."

Plato has somewhere remarked that misery and strife keep haunting an individual even after his death. It happens as long as desire is dominant in man. There can be no victory over the evils of life until desire has been utterly subordinated to spiritual knowledge and intelligence. And contentment settles to reside only in the heart that is "sure", serene, simple and saintly.

Towards the Right Path

- By: Sunil Nagpal

Our country, known for its unity in diversity, tolerance, patience, harmony and peaceful co-existence of different faiths and religious, was rudely shocked recently. The religious frenzy and fanaticism tore the very fabric of the nation, supposed to preach the virtues of love, kindness and mercy. The country had hardly recovered from the terrible events of December 6, 1992 and the riots, which shook many parts of country, when Bombay, the 'melting pot' of the country, was rocked by synchronised explosions at different places in the city. It sent shock waves throughout the country and even in international circles. It was a brutal and heinous crime to cause so much devastation and agony. Who are the victims of this mindless killing and mayhem? These blasts brought to the fore the ugly face of terrorism and satanic forces at work to destroy humanity. The simple and innocent people suffer endless agony, torture and pain. This is the biggest crime against humanity. It is the height of degradation and depravity of finer

human values that the land of Buddha, Nanak and Gandhi should be subjected to so much violence and bloodshed. It is a barbaric and naked dance of violence and ignorance. The very soul of the country is bleeding. This blood bath and destruction has shaken the faith of the people in goodness. We should soothe and heal their wounds. There is a need for restoration of faith. The Bible says: "Love thy neighbour as thyself."

The spirit of love and brotherhood can relieve this pain. The feeling of brotherhood comes up when we realise that we are all children of God. This realisation is only possible with true knowledge. Then we think of the maximum good of the maximum. Selfishness and narrow vision have dragged us to the "Nether" world. We should strive to move towards the "Zenith". Selfless service, mercy, compassion and fellow feeling, are the hallmarks of a noble soul. The followers of devil have disgraced and desecrated this beautiful earth created by God.

Is there any escape for the shackled people? Yes, if we follow the path shown by the Satguru. Let us hope and pray for the global peace, harmony, amity and welfare. Consider this world as one big family. Shed the ego and 'merge' in this omniscient and omnipresent Nirankar - God Formless. Break down the barriers of religion, colour, caste creed and nationality. Be generous, open and good, like this all-pervading Spirit.

Harmony, A Blend of Science and Spirituality

- By: U. Yonzon

India is one of the few shining examples of religious tolerance. Everyone is free to practice the religion of his choice. Despite diverse cultures, ways of living, beliefs and religious faiths, there is unity and harmony.

The secret lies in the solid foundation of spirituality enshrined in the sacred scriptures and holy books, which have been truly preached and practiced by the great devotees, saints and seers from time immemorial. Because of this, spirituality is firmly rooted in this country and has always played a vital role in upholding a firm belief in peaceful co-existence. The concept of peaceful co-existence advocated from ancient times had been reaffirmed and adopted even by the great statesmen and politicians at home and abroad. It shows India's deep conviction in peace and harmony.

Great destructive weapons are not the answer to unrest and turmoil, but a serene head and tranquil mind that can foster harmony amongst the human beings. The invention of destructive weapons only creates a fear complex and mistrust amongst the nations and damages the morale of the human beings. It may bring about forced and temporary peace among nations, but as soon as the adversary

invents a more powerful explosive device, the peace and harmony is shattered and in this process no permanent harmony can be fostered.

No doubt, science had invented wonderful devices and still more are to come, yet it has not led to permanent peace and harmony that the people yearn for more than anything else to-day. The scientists in the absence of spiritual knowledge believe that man is all-powerful and supreme and can shape his own destiny. Some days back, I was watching the UGC (University Grants Commission) programme on the television wherein one scientist was saying, he did not believe in the so-called god-men or soul. What a pity! I thought for a couple of days and came to the conclusion that the people are deviating from the eternal path which has been shown in the holy book all through the ages. Every holy book has time and again affirmed that God has created man. The Supreme Lord has bestowed upon man the intellect, and with this rare faculty the scientists have made their inventions. Therefore, it is clear that science is actually the product of the intellect bestowed by God. Science has provided the means of comforts and conveniences that man wanted. Why is man not happy and why is he still in search of peace of mind, is the most important question that confronts the modern man. Thus, the comforts and conveniences he has attained through scientific knowledge have not led to peace of mind and contentment. There is link missing somewhere and that missing link is spirituality. Without spirituality man can never be really happy, no matter how great his achievements; he remains devoid of true happiness and harmony. And without harmony amongst the individuals, there can be no real and perennial peace in the society. It is, therefore, imperative that the scientific knowledge be blended with the spiritual knowledge, so that while enjoying the comforts and conveniences of life, man imbibes pristine virtues such as tolerance and co-existence to promote harmony the entire world over.

The Challenge

- By: Barq Sehbai

There is a common impression in the minds of people that the conclusions arrived at by man of Science are of the nature of beliefs and have, therefore, no firmer basis than that of conviction. Nothing could be farther from the Truth.

From the earliest days of Science, the student of science is trained to ask for evidence before arriving at a judgement, and that he should hesitate to pass an opinion on a subject with which he is not familiar.

No subject is too trivial for inquiry, and no relationship must be regarded as impossible from "a priori" consideration, but the scientific will must have material to work upon before the value of the produce can be estimated. It is permissible to deny whether the grain is worth-grinding but not to deny it a trial, for without a

test any belief may be held to be a fallacy. Every belief is worthy of examination and if it has not been investigated, no man of science is justified in asserting that it is untrue. But when such an inquiry has been made, and the evidence has failed to support popular opinion, we cannot but pronounce that it has not been proved. Two such examples may here be given: one as to allege change of climate and the others is a connection between the Moon and the Weather.

Sky red in the morning
Is a shepherd's sure warning
Sky red at night
Is the shepherd's delight.

The connection between the Weather, which normally follows redness of Sunrise or Sunset can only be explained when the effects of atmospheric dust and moisture are considered as the fillers of the white sunlight. The association of a red sky with the weather thus admits of physical explanation, but it is not at all necessary that the reason should be a fact. It is, however, desirable to distinguish between accurate observation and traditional belief which asks for acceptance without inquiry into the evidence of its truth.

It is believed and evidently seen in every day experience, that thunderstorms are found to be slightly more frequent near the new moon and the first quarter than near the Full Moon and the last quarter.

Nothing easier than to be deceived by appearances, or to accept a belief without inquiry into its foundations .

Test all things and you will then be in a position to hold fast,, that which is true for both belief and evidence.

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”
- St. Paul

And this is exactly what our Sant Nirankari Mission stands for. Through its logical exposition of the Existence of the all-pervading Truth – God, you enable yourself to come into direct communion with the Ultimate Reality. Keeping in view the latest developments of upsurge in the Society on the Indian Soil, one very naturally feels perplexed and temperamentally (this is my belief) grows anxious to find a lasting solution. Same is the condition in the other lands of the World, whether Communist or otherwise. Since the earliest dawn of human evolution, the history of the growth and development of Science is a long record of the various attempts made by men through ages to probe into the remote mysteries of Nature. From the very beginning it has been a long untiring endeavor at times fruitful at times unsuccessful to lay bare before the eyes of this unbelieving world, the various occurrences in Nature.

Superstition is the religions of feeble minds. It is a fearful reverence to something called super-natural. It is the outcome of an ignorant and irrational belief in some such things as omens, deviation, sorcery, dreams and the like. As science progresses further and further with its observations, experiments and investigations, the myth of superstitions loses all its spell and what once appeared as a great enigma of magic, today redounds to a mere common phenomena. Where ignorance, darkness and fanaticism prevail, there superstition thrives into a plant of luxurious growth.

Human history amply bears evidence to the fact that superstition ruled the mind of man in the ancient ages. Even today it still has a hold in minimised form and it shall ever exist so long as humanity remains in darkness and ignorance. Sometimes a superstition, which is widespread among the nations, takes advantage of human weakness and casts its pernicious spell over the minds of millions. Indeed the greatest burden of humanity is superstition!

Knowledge is the antidote of superstition in the spiritual field. An individual is supposed to be superstitious when he blindly believes in, and venerates objects, which are not the objects of true and sound worship.

It is by the vivacity of earthly desires
That we become superstitious.
It is, on the contrary, by the sacrifice
Of desires that we become religious.

Bitter are the fruits of superstition. They have been largely responsible for a vast amount of cruelties and untold sufferings to intellectual nincompoop.

As learning grooves and our wisdom increases we shall only accept those things which are founded on the bedrock of reason. Then all superstitions will melt away like mist before the Sun.

It is a factual reality that ever since the beginning of the World, Civilisation in its various forms has been making a tour of the whole World. And since civilisation is the fruit of culture, and must necessarily decay in the course of time, time is a remorseless destroyer.

Overwhelmed by Evil, good has degenerated itself, fled to the wilderness, and lived on its own inherent strength. It has returned to the haunts of men again and again and has reinvigorated our social life. No other nation of the World has seen such a spate of rebirths. The land where people believe in reincarnation instinctively has, it seems, been reborn time and again. As we have seen in India, the civilised, mean and unscrupulous hypocrites have carried their views of hate even to the core of simple folk. If this process continues, everything may perish in a great conflagration. It is for this reason that great significance is owed to the super-human task of the Sant Nirankari Mission's Supreme Head Baba Gurbachan Singh Ji. History will record this work of the Master that of restoring love in our people of all caste and creed.

Money is one of the chief instruments of our present-day civilisation. Its worship is a common trait of a modern man. The higher values of life are obscured, even ridiculed, while the pursuit of this tangible commodity rides rough-shod over the most elementary trails of goodness. Falsehood is considered the 'since qua non' for success in business. Dissimulation, chicanery and hypocrisy are essentials of money-grabbling efficiency. Wisdom is at discount. What a pity!

If you happen to observe a section of people on the move you might be struck with the hideous expressions on their faces. As if dark shadows surround them. You may pass thousands without waving a hand or a smile on your face. You go on being neighbours, without bothering to be neighbourly. You move in certain circles and these circles always tend to be narrowed down. Mutual relations are skin-deep. Genuine respect, genuine friendship, genuine love or for that matter anything genuine is banished as impracticable.

The effect of this artificiality is that our relations even in a small household are robbed of humanity. The instability runs deep into everything. Have we ever tried seriously to enquire into it?

The so-called religious, in fact, are mere labels which have become habits like different articles or cloths the religious wear and congealed into certain likes and dislike, beliefs and prejudices. The supreme test of a religious person is his Universal Love. Where hatred reigns, the Spirit is covered with impenetrable fog. Such people are immune to the beauty of Nature; of Moon and stars, birds and spring. The grandeur of Sun does not move them; the inner Sun has no chance of a dawn.

Below the disturbed waves of activity lies layer after layer of consciousness in an artificial trance, which is, disturbed the moment activity stops. It is on the foundation of this instinct that a new civilisation has to come into being, a civilisation inspired by enduring culture – spiritualism, take in its true sense.

'There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.'

- Shakespeare

If you ponder over, there is no subject of greater concern today in this unfortunate land of ours than to think, white and work for better understanding between man and man – to strive for peace, sanity and imagination – to support and co-operate activity with our Mahapurshas – Self Realised Beings- in the Herculean task.

Talking about the national movement in our country, we all hailed freedom and the auspicious day with joy and merry-making. We rubbed shoulders with all and sundry and looked onward leaving the dead past to bury its dead and yet while the candles lighting the dawn of liberty were flickering, the wail of the massacred

innocents, woe to the fire-eaters, rent the air and the joy-bells knelled their agonies. We dare not blame Stars for what we have done; it is the wind sown by us and we must reap the whirlwind. The world has no sympathy for us as we look towards seeing the horrors wrought by our own hands.

Even years after winning our freedom we often repeat the same havoc at times. For what really is our victory or freedom worth when we have lost our balance of mind and depraved ourselves to the position of beasts of the jungle. We are to-day exposed to the ridicule of the world and must bend our heads (with due respects to all so involved) in shame. We are bankrupt socially, morally and economically.

We see in thin our barbarity the deeds of more misery but we also hold in our own hands the reigns of our Destiny. We can benefit by this bitter experience and use it to guide us in our Thoughts and Deeds so that such things are soon forgotten and thus cleansed. We bend our steps to the building up of a better Nation and Society in order to spread the same spirit throughout the whole world.

Thanks O Nirankar; help us to help ourselves and our brethren all over the World, from the path darkness lead us to Light and real Liberty.

An Experience

- By: Brother Weldek (U.K.)

Recently, during an early summer morning while exercising round a lake in the local park, I witnessed a drama, a dog that had been released by its owner, started chasing a duck. It was a big dog; so it must have used up a lot of energy in this pursuit. It selected just one duck out of the large population of wildfowl and just swam after it.

With only its head protruding above the water, the dog swam up to the duck. As soon as it came within reach, the duck would flap its wings and accelerate out of the range. And this was repeated again and again throughout the entire episode, zigzagging all over the lake. The dog ignored all the other ducks and geese; it just followed this one duck which was getting more irritated by the minute, but was obviously in no danger. The chase took on a different character when it passed through the roosting grounds of other birds, who then began gibing the dog a good sound pecking and raising a general hullabaloo. It was around about this point that the dog gave up the chase and swam back to its much-relieved master.

As I sat there, I began to ponder over what I had just witnessed, and as I did so, I began to laugh. Anyone who would have witnessed this, would have thought me mad. But a realisation had dawned on me. Recently I had been involved in just such an activity. I had been pursuing my own kind of 'duck', and every time the

object of my desire seemed within reach, off it would float. I also ran the risk of suffering a united front of resistance, Is this the behaviour expected of a Nirankari? Certainly not. Does not a Nirankari strive to shed his or her ego and live to serve humanity? Is not this sort of behaviour the complete opposite of the teachings of the Satguru? Of course, it is.

How often, does the pursuit of egotistical desire produce just such adverse results. One pursues an objective oblivious of the havoc caused in its wake, and even if one gains victory, the enjoyment is spoiled by the resulting enmity and hatred from all those hurt in the process. Yet this very same drama is enacted in one form or another in every corner of the world. The sum total of which we can see 'a hell on earth'. People are even encouraged to behave this way; in fact, they regard it as a virtue. Anyone, who has reached a certain standard in this 'art', is esteemed and regarded as a role model for all to emulate. But it is a monstrous lie. Such souls and any that follow them are blind and ignorant. For there is a universal law that every action has a reaction and as sure as night follows day; reparations will have to be made.

Recently by means of technology the whole world was party to a spectacle so horrendous that it defies description. A host of supposedly advanced nations threw a lot of highly sophisticated bombs at another less 'advanced' nation, resulting in the indiscriminate wholesale slaughter of the citizens of that nation. And for what? How shamelessly did the perpetrators of this atrocity celebrate their so-called victory. With what glee and much rubbing of hands did the manufacturers of these 'wonderful' weapons congratulate themselves on their technological expertise. Yet, so great is their ignorance. They do not realise that these same bombs will return to them one day, perhaps not in the same form, but the result may be just as horrendous. Every day one has only to switch on the television to see scenes of what at one time would have been regarded as unimaginable horror, yet humanity has grown so numb that hardly a comment is passed. Yet, these catastrophes are not the results of nature, but human activity. From time to time, under the burden of oppression, people have managed to unite and violently overthrow their tormentors with much bloodshed and subsequent suffering, and then the very means with which a temporary peace and progress is brought about, turn into even stronger shackles. The entire planet seems to be slowly smoldering and if this is not put out, a major conflagration may occur. How can all this madness be stopped? What is the cure?

Man is the cause, and man is the solution. Must the problem be solved by so much mutual destruction that man becomes extinct? Man must live in harmony not just with nature but also with his own nature. Man must learn to master and exercise control over the powerful emotions, which are indispensable to the dynamics of life. Instead of mutual exploitation, there must be mutual love. A lot of work needs to be done, but there is a solution.

The truth is that man is ignorant of his own nature and that is why man behaves worse than an animal. The only way out of this hell is for man to realize the TRUE SELF. Man is not in-charge on this planet. Man only has that illusion,

blinded by ego. God is in-charge here. God is not an entity in man's imagination. God exists here and is the TRUE SELF. All of life is God's blessing and holy man's ego is a lie and in contradiction with the harmonious process of life. But man has no perception of God. Therefore, he invents all manners of gods and even commits crimes in the name of God. There are some that take the position wrongly that God being unknowable, the question is not worth asking. But perhaps that is better than someone who does not know where he is going but insists everyone following his every step.

I was lucky enough to have met a man who actually did know God, and I got an *introduction* to God. It was the best 'gamble' of my life. I realize, I was blessed with this meeting and that without God nothing moves. God has blessed me with my life, given me a chance so to speak and instead of fruitlessly swaggering about and causing trouble, I ought to make myself useful. If God has blessed that dog in the park, that duck would have hopped into its mouth. The man I met was a Nirankari and in our time in is only through such as these that one can get an *introduction* to the TRUE SELF, in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye; on fuss, on ritual.

A Nirankari is one who has been blessed with a lasting perception of God or Nirankar, which translated into English reads as Formless. The Revelation of the TRUE SELF is in itself miraculous: one transcends from ignorance and darkness into knowledge and light, like entering a new world: even a definite change of external circumstances, for one now lives in and surrounded by God and, therefore, one's way of thinking changes.

To a Nirankari, God is a living entity: a Nirankari sees God in the same way as one sees the sun of one's own relatives. A Nirankari has the perception of the true nature of God despite the fact the God is a spirit. The true role model for a Nirankari is the true role model for mankind. A Nirankari understands that all that exists and all that occurs are the blessing of God. Seeing only God everywhere, a Nirankari lives in harmony with and by the will of God. Submitting to the will of God, a Nirankari is, in turn, blessed by God: a true human being, a useful member of the species from whom springs the true salvation of mankind. The same laws apply to a Nirankari as do to the rest of mankind. But being shorn of ego, his actions do not result in chaos and destruction. After all, are not those the blessings that egoists, in their ignorance, really ask for? A Nirankari endeavours to be a servant of mankind instead of an exploiter of mankind, and without such a way of life, how can there be peace on earth.

In conclusion, I urge those, who have a thirst to know the TRUTH, to contact nearest Nirankari they know, seek him out if necessary, and they will not be disappointed; they will find a 'permanent home.'

The Nirankari Ideology

- By: C. L. Gulati

Ever since the advent of mankind, progress made in the sphere of civilisation directly or indirectly, centers round two aspects: Science of Life and Philosophy of Life. The anatomy of the body has been studied to such an extent that now man can withstand diseases and live a healthier life. Millions of people are living in the world with artificial limbs in their bodies. Producing 'Test Tube Baby' is the latest trial in this field. The comforts and conveniences that scientific progress has added to human life can well be imagined from our daily life-experience. Man is now able to fly in the air like a bird and swim in the sea like a fish. While attaining mastery in the science of life, the equal and next important aspect is the philosophy of life, the which aims at making man live on the earth like a man, worth the name.

One of the greatest modern psychologists Sir Jung has described in his book *Modern Man in Search of Soul* that among all his patients, there had not been even one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. Another noted psychologist Dr. Hadfield also shares his experience the same way when he says that he attempted to cure his nervous patients with suggestions of quietness and confidence but without success until he linked those suggestions on to their faith in the power of God. Then the patient became strong.

The modern man has no time to think of God. Despite astounding material achievements, there is at the bottom an emptiness and yearning for peace. Great thinker, Augustine of Hippo, writes, "Restless are our souls until they rest in Thee, my God." He further adds, "There are plenty of people who are dead without knowing Him." Knowledge of God establishes relationship of man with his Creator. It is through this relation that an element of spirituality can be imparted to human thought and action. A man's life is incomplete without knowing God. People with lacerated hearts have gone to the extent of saying that even if there is no God, let us create one; therein lies true happiness of life.

Trying to live superhumanly, man has sunk into a kind of superhumanly. Bereft of knowledge of God, the world has become an inferno of frustrations and dejection. From North Pole to South Pole, it seems to be a vast seething cauldron. It is, therefore, high time to ponder where the human race is heading to. In the absence of spirituality, man is just like a cadaver with psychological blindness, while mankind, as a whole a ship without a rudder in the grip of waves of the tempestuous sea.

The apostles laboured hard, the martyrs died in torments, the scholars and the scientists proclaimed the beauties of higher life, the sociologists untiringly inculcated the sense of duty, the philosophers thought sublime thoughts. However, all agreed that God is one and that man's first duty is to realise Him. If a man loses faith in God, he loses faith in himself. This spells crisis of character, resulting in chaos and violence in the society.

Ideology

It is this philosophy of life, which is the subject matter of the Nirankari Mission. The Mission is neither a new sect nor a splinter group nor a reformist movement. As has been done by the prophets and the seers down the ages, the Mission 'deals' with the spirit in man and lays stress on the role of the individual, because it is the inter-relation and liaison of the individuals that go to constitute the human society. Ultimately, the unit of a family, nation or human society is the individual. And who is that individual? You and I. Therefore, no power on earth can possibly realise the slogans of world peace and human brotherhood unless relation between you and I, i.e. man and man become smooth and sweet. The fulcrum of every world problem, in reality, lies in our own minds and hearts. Far-reaching results can be achieved only by making a start at the nearest point, and that nearest point is one's own self. If each individual is at peace the world at large would, automatically, be at peace.

It is not a matter of choice, but sheer chance that one is born in a particular family. Surrounded by the walls of religion, caste, colour, creed languages, diet, dress, culture, etc., human family stands shattered by artificial divisions, conflicting ideologies and ism. Consequently, the human race is now passing through a period of tension and turmoil, but efforts have failed to reverse the gear of human degradation. Though gregarious by nature, human beings stand completely divided. They do not even mix up with each other, freely. As a result, there is no mutual love. In the absence of love, there is no reciprocal respect. Lack of respect breeds distrust, which ultimately culminates in hatred and consequent violence all around, alienating man from man. Loss of love is, therefore, the root cause of shocking crash of human values, resulting in global tension. Man unto man is a wolf!

To check all the human maladies, we have to reverse the gear from violence to love and peace, by realising the Fatherhood of God, the by-product of which is the spontaneous Brotherhood of Mankind. Though invisible, God is a concrete and cosmic force, unifying the whole universe. The Nirankari Mission asserts that God-realisation is the mortar, which can bind together the many-shaped bricks of human society into a coherent structure. It vouchsafes that it is possible to realise the dream of a world family with the unifying bond of love among its members in the wake of realisation of Fatherhood of God.

The Nirankari Mission believes in God, who is one, omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, eternal, formless, a non-psycho objective reality and perceivable. He is distinct from celestial bodies known as the sun, moon stars, and gross elements such as the earth, water, fire and subtle elements such as air, ether and Jiva (embodied soul). These nine elements constitute the entire creation and the tenth is the all-pervading Divine Spirit, which creates, sustains and regulates the whole universe.

Five Elements

The Nirankari Mission believes that a human being is made up of the five (basic) elements i.e. the earth, water, fire, air, ether, plus the soul. The first five material constituents form the body, while the sixth represents the individual unit of consciousness. However, the deficiency of one element cannot be made good by any other . For example, the necessity of water cannot be met with earth, fire, air or ether. Similarly, the lack of air cannot be replenished with water or ether, and so on. Exactly on the same pattern, on material elements can substitute the sixth i.e. the soul or the individual unit of consciousness.

The human body fulfils its material needs from the corresponding mainstreams of earth, water, fire, air, etc. Though simple, these elements, are precious for human life, and are easily and abundantly available around us. Likewise, God is the mainstream of individual unit of consciousness. In fact, God is the ultimate reality of life and everything else. The living experience of this objective reality is indispensable for the fulfillment of the prime aim of human life.

This reality has been termed as Nirankar (Formless God). In fact, all that we see is unreal, as it decays and dies. But what we do not see is real, because out of this invisible power, visible comes into existence. The changeless in the changing world is existence. The changeless in the changing world is called God and the changeless in the changing body is called the soul. The one who realises Nirankar is known as a Nirankari. The Mission imparts the Knowledge of Nirankar (Formless God) to the God-seekers; hence its name, the Nirankari Mission.

Co- existence

As an intake of pure drinking water does not interfere with one's religion or ideological background, the realisation of the cosmic consciousness also does not come in conflict with one's existing religious or political ideology. The Nirankari Mission reiterates that it is the prime purpose of every human being to realise the sixth aspect of the human life, irrespective of his cultural, socio-economic, religious or ideological background. This spells unity in diversity. The unity is Knowledge of God and the diversity, different cultures, languages and ideological systems.

This way the widespread alienation between man and man is abridged. They come closer by understanding and appreciating each other's viewpoint, faith and philosophy which, in turn, are discovered to be like the petals of the same flower, emitting the same fragrance. Understanding and imbibing of human values is as significant as anything else. Our civilisation, which is a civilisation of machine, can teach man everything except how to be a human. The spiritual Nirankari Mission has undertaken this job to teach man "To be human."

The Nirankari Mission does not convert anyone to a new faith, but harks the seekers back to their respective faiths with added firmness. They are advised to understand and acquire a deeper understanding of their Holy Scriptures in all

minute philosophical details, so that they can live together in a spirit of peaceful and harmonious co-existence. The Mission thus represents a right about turn, as it makes a welcome renaissance of teachings of the past saints, seers, gurus, messengers and prophets. All the higher values of life such as love, humility, tolerance, fellow feeling and brotherhood have always flown through the True Master of the time. Today, the Nirankari Baba is generating the understanding of spirituality through a living revelation of God, thus paving the way to universal peace, unity and fraternity. The Mission lays stress on the role of individual, because if each individual is at peace, the world, at large, would, automatically, be at peace. The Mission is thus rehabilitating the human race by unlocking the Kingdom of Heaven through a holy communion between man and God, and eventual understanding between man and man, promising millennium of peace, bliss and happiness on the earth.

Panacea

If one can easily acknowledge the concept of one God for all, it should not be difficult to accept the idea of one religion for all, i.e. the religion of man, a religion that can suit the whole human race. The Nirankari Mission had succeeded in achieving this end through a living revelation of God, the same for all religions, ignoring the non-essential rituals, which are different for different religions.

The world stands divided into sects and isms, each claiming to hold a banner of peace. But in order to maintain their assumed superiority, they do not hesitate striking others on the head with their banner-sticks. They are running amuck like excited molecules of an atom. It is, therefore, not the divided atom but the divided mankind, which is becoming more and more difficult to deal with.

As the Law of Gravitation was there even before Newton discovered it, the True Master has always been there to redeem the errant humanity. With the Divine Knowledge bestowed by the True Master, an enlightened person perceives God in all and all in God. He regards every human being as the image of God. With true love and faith thus developed, he starts loving and serving his fellow-beings in the real sense. A compass of righteousness is fitted in his heart, which always keeps him in the right direction and relieves him of doubts and superstitions. When spiritualism takes the place of ritualism, one follows and observes the golden tenet: All to give all for all! Consequently, one believes that all his assets, material and mental, belong to God, and as a trustee one should make use of these for the common good of whole human race. This spells a living above narrow prejudices and dogmas of caste, colour, creed, etc. One becomes tolerant towards others' mode of dress, diet and culture, and leads a purposeful and harmonious life. God-realisation is thus, a panacea for all ills.

Role of the Satguru

Lord Jesus Christ says:

"I am the way, the Truth, the Life. None can come unto the Father but by me."

- Bible (John 14:6)

In the absence of actual realisation, God is different for different persons; even different occasions for the same person. Seemingly, religions differ from one another because they were originally preached at different times and in different environments. Yet identifying their genesis, one discovers that all seek to lead man to the common goal of God-realisation. For the realisation of God, who is all pervading, all that is needed is the grace of a True Master. A True Master does not prescribe any rituals rather he frees the disciples' form such bondage. No amount of individual effort can help reveal God to any one. It is purely a matter of grace of the Satguru that God-knowledge is bestowed:

"By grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourself. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast."

- Bible (Ephesians 2:8)

As we can see the sun with its own light only, we can test the Satguru on the touchstone of the knowledge imparted by him. The True Master is the communicator of Dive Truth. He is the object of devotion and his voice is the veritable voice of God. Anyone, who approaches him, perceives God. The True Master's sole mission is to communicate the Message of Truth and Light to the whole mankind. He manifests himself to fulfil the task of his predecessors. He himself leads a household life and does not require others to renounce the world in search of Truth.

Today, the Nirankari Baba bestows enduring peace of mind on the seeker by establishing a Holy Communion between him and his Maker. He lays stress on character building and leading a pious life worth emulating by others. Completely identifying themselves with God, his devotees show deepest regards and respect for all the great masters and scriptures and fellow-humans.

Are We Truly Disciples ?

- By: Dr. Iqbaljit S. Rai (U.S.A.)

The organised religion has failed to reach the human race. Sometimes religion becomes too much institutionalised; therefore it fails to relate to the common needs of the common people. A man drowning in the Pacific Ocean is not interested in the gourmet meal. This individual is drowning and the only thing of any importance to this desperate soul is a life jacket, a rope and someone to save him. Likewise, our world is in a precarious situation. The people are addicted to different things to seek "an easy way out". There is no question in any body's mind that the modern society is very much in need of God's messenger with God's message to "jump start the spirit of the society" before it leaps into the 21st century. Andre Malraus, a French intellectual, was certainly right when he said that the 21st century would be the century of religion or it would not be at all.

The local religious leaders have admitted time and again that organised religion just does not have the cutting edge. One of the Deans of a School of Divinity has said, "We, who were supposed to overcome the world, have been overcome by the world." Even Pope Paul II has admitted that "We are divided, but I do not know why". According to the Nirankari philosophy, a person born in a particular family surrounded by walls of religion, stands shattered by artificial divisions, conflicting ideologies and ism. The Mission asserts that God-realisation is the only force that is the mortar binding together the many-shaped bricks of human society into a coherent structure. Nirankari Baba Hardev Singh Ji Maharaj, Prophet of the time, travels around the world to preach:

“To love God’s people by knowing Him is the best religion. Everything glitters with God’s spark. One who indulges in hatred against man, hates God.”

Baba Ji has said:

“Today, the world’s eyes are directed towards the Sant Nirankari Mandal. We are to take the Light of the Mission forward with devotion and dedication. People will be attracted to the Nirankari Mission through our exemplary deeds and actions of love, modesty and affection. We are to become the model, firstly to our family, then to our neighbour and, finally, to the whole world.”

It is time to introspect. As disciples, we have been entrusted with the duty to heal the wounds of the society by love and dedication. We may have to make some adjustments to come true to the expectations of our Master.

Let us check on what Lord Jesus Christ said about discipleship. In Luke 14:25 to 33, he says, “If any one comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters – yes, even his own life – he cannot be my disciple.” Jesus, the personification of love, used the word “hate” to get our attention! He meant that our affection for all other people and things should look like hatred relative to the magnitude and immensity of love of his disciples towards him. In short, if he was not way out ahead of everyone and everything else in their lives, they cannot be his disciples. How do we measure up to that standard?

The second standard of discipleship is in verse 27, which says, “Any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.” Jesus expected his followers to give up whatever they loved more than he. True disciples do not let anything compete with their Master for their loyalty and affection.

The third standard of discipleship is in verse 33. It says, “Any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.” Most of us will give up something but not everything for our Master. On the other hand, the True Master gives up everything for his disciples, Baba Gurbachan Singh Ji being the most recent example. To be a disciple is an all or nothing situation. We cannot serve

two masters, Satguru and the world, at the same time. As true disciples, our devotion should be to the Satguru alone.

The people in the West need God-realisation more than ever before. In a recent survey it was reported that 95 percent of the Americans believe in God. Majorities of these are believers, not belongers.

Satguru Baba Hardev Singh Ji has blessed us with the Knowledge of God. We can practice this knowledge in our life, among our community and then reach out to the world. In his discourse during an Annual Samagam in Delhi, Baba Ji said:

"Some devotees have come from far away countries. I ask them when they go back to spread the Truth among the people living there. The lamp that has been lit, should not be put in a box, but on the crossroads, so that it can light the path of the people. The devotees should try to bring peace and harmony among the people living there."

In the book, The master Speaks, Baba Ji has said:

"When a worldly person becomes happy, he wants to contain the happiness in himself, or at the most extends it to his own family only, but the devotees share their happiness and bliss with the whole mankind."

Let us all seek the blessings of Baba Ji and move forward on the path shown by him.

**Sant Nirankari Mission:
Spiritual Movement Down to Earth**
- By: K.R. Chadha

The first image the word "Spirituality" creates on the abstract screen of our mind is that we propose to refer to something super-natural, super-human and a mere flight of thought. Our usual conclusion is that spirituality relates to 'spirit' which seldom finds a form to be seen or found in the life we know - mundane, worldly, practical and within man's purview. We tend to treat everything related to spirit, even a reference or talk about it, as something otherworldly.

Naturally, man may not immediately be prepared to discuss spirituality. He finds himself too busy or engrossed in the world problems to find time to know the reality of what he rejects as abstract, as something imaginary. But as he moves on, he comes across the shrines, the sacred places, the images or idols of gods and goddesses; the ascetics in saffron, black or some other colour and sometimes without any wear at all; and all kinds of people talking about Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Mahavira, Christ, Mohammad and so on . He also finds the devotees singing praise of gods and goddesses. In short, he finds spirituality in the air all around.

Now, the point that arises is as to why should there be any talk about spirituality, why should there be so many religious books and holy scriptures dealing with the subject and why should there be so many people found to be in search of something or the other in this field, if there had been no truth or no reality in it . Why should man be advised time and again to know the supreme spirit, the supreme power, if it were of no use to him in his Life?

The Sant Nirankari Mission seeks to answer this question and present spirituality as a practical, useful and helpful aspect of human life. It seeks to reveal what is believed to be invisible, exhibit what is considered to be abstract and practice what is thought to be mystical. It endeavours to highlight the ultimate truth that man has been trying to attain through various modes of worship and religious practices and to show how the same can be adopted in our day-to-day life.

The Message

The message of the Mission begins with a brief invocation in the words: Thou Formless One. It seeks to emphasise the eternal truth that God is One, Formless and Omnipresent. The Oneness of God leads us to the oneness of humanity, unity and fraternity of the mankind as children of the same father i.e., the Supreme Father. In other words, the realisation of the truth that God is the sole and supreme creator of the universe, including mankind, promotes the spirit of universal brotherhood.

Realisation of God means to know this Formless One and be conscious of His presence all the time, at all places. It also reveals that human soul is part and parcel of the Formless and appears to be separate from Him merely by the intervention of the human body. The two will be found to be one after this veil of ignorance is removed. Further, we shall be obliged to take every human being as our own because we realise the truth that in each one of them there is a spark of the same Divine Light. Nobody will appear to be a stranger and we shall automatically shed all kinds of hatred against others. We shall no longer suffer from the feeling of discrimination, jealousy and pride. Instead, we shall look upon every human being, a fellow being, with love and respect, least interested in offending them.

In order to realise God and know the eternal truth, we must approach the one who has already realised it, known it. The Sant Nirankari Mission believes that True Master or Satguru stays in the world all the time, may be in any part, in any region. God does not only create human beings. He nurtures them also. It is, therefore, an essential part of the divine scheme that humanity must be reminded constantly, that that entire all that is seen belongs to God and moves as per the divine will only. The Nirankari Satguru is also here to help humanity realise and remember God and be grateful to this Supreme Giver for whatever we possess by the divine benevolence.

The Mission does not criticise or condemn any religious faith being professed or practiced in the world. It, however, suggests that one must know the God one worships. It is another thing that once the Truth is revealed to us, we begin to realise that there is only one divine religion and that is humanity. All other religions are nothing but set of rites, rituals and practices laid down by man himself.

Similarly, the Mission treats all religious scriptures as a precious treasure of God-knowledge: coming from the great spiritual masters of the past, they explain their philosophy with requisite authenticity. They have stood the test of time and help even the contemporary generations to understand what these great masters sought to preach. No wonder, they are worshipped even today. We are, however, reminded here that mere reading these Scriptures would not be sufficient. We must understand them and follow the message they contain, in action. Only then we can prove that our faith in them is real.

Five Principles

In order to enjoy the bliss that flows from God-knowledge on all-the-time basis, an aspirant has to take and follow Five Pledges. They are:

- (i) All physical, mental and material possessions belong to God and man is merely a trustee to use the same for the common good of humanity;
- (ii) One should not discriminate against others on the ground of caste, creed, colour, status, nationality, etc;
- (iii) One should not hate or criticise others on account of their diet, dress and culture (declaring one's own as superior and pride-worthy);
- (iv) God-realisation does not mean renunciation of normal life. One must fulfil one's responsibilities towards self, the family and the society at large, so that instead of becoming a burden on others, one serves the humanity; and
- (v) The spiritual enlightenment or the Knowledge of Truth attained from the Spiritual Master should not be divulged to others without a word from him, since every student may not be a successful teacher.

The above pledges are enjoined as complementary measures to God-knowledge just as a doctor advises the patient to follow certain guidelines in order to take full advantage of the treatment, permitting no unwanted factor to interrupt the health-gaining process. Since the spiritually enlightened persons are likely to be surrounded by many others who might not have been equally fortunate, they must be told how best they can keep themselves happy in the given worldly environment.

The Mission goes one step one step further and suggests that even after attaining God-knowledge, the devotee should seek the company of saints (Satsang). This will help him to be steadfast in devotion to God. This will serve as a constant source of moral strength required for complete and full submission to the will of God. Moreover, it will strengthen his integration with the Almighty through constant remembrance of God (Simarn). And above all, God-knowledge inspires one to render selfless service (Seva) and be helpful to others.

No wonder, one Nirankari bows to another without any consideration of age, sex and social status. The idea is to show respect to the Gyan or God-knowledge he or she has attained. After the Satguru, the devotee feels happy to show reverence to fellow- devotees. Everybody here is convinced that we must please the disciples in order to please the Master, just as we must please the men of God, if we want to please the men of God, if we want to please the Almighty, the Creator of the mankind.

Five Pledges of Nirankaris

- By: Mohinder Lal Verma

Five Pledges of the Nirankari Mission are the spiritual tenets lay down by the True Master as a prerequisite for the initiation of a seeker of God-knowledge. These pledges have a great significance, for they mould the attitude of the devotee towards life, and thus ensure his spiritual development.

However, some mistake the pledges as the God-knowledge itself. This is not proper. The precautions, which a physician prescribes, cannot be a substitute for the medicine. The real benefit can be derived on taking the medicine and simultaneously following the prescribed precautions. Where both are complementary, they are not a substitute for each other. When the pledges are made the governing principles of one's life, they relieve one of the 'shackles' of ego, hatred and jealousy, and help in realisation of one's real self. They completely change the prejudiced and biased outlook of man, transform him and also help him to sublimate his practical life. Nirankari Baba has epitomized the entire spiritual therapy in these pledges for the purpose of simplification and easy adoption. The pledges may be described, one by one, as below.

Body, mind and material possessions are gifts of God

Due to ignorance man thinks himself to be the master of his body, mind and material possessions, which is a great illusion. Also, these are not permanent: these are not changing. Everybody knows that pleasure and pain, gain and loss, health and ailment exist from the very beginning of the creation. Man cannot escape from these in spite of the huge resources at his disposal. After making all efforts whatever is the result, man has to accept it, willingly or otherwise. Hence, it is not wisdom to be worried or distressed by the ups and downs of life.

This pledge makes the devotee understand that all physical, mental and material possessions belong to God and he is a mere trustee. It is entirely the will of God to enhance, curtail or withdraw these assets from anyone, at any moment. Attachment to that which does not belong to one, in reality, causes suffering. As such, one should make use of the material possessions as a trustee.

Having surrendered himself to God, a devotee rises above the feelings of loss or gain, success or failure, respect or disrespect. In consequence thereof, his mind remains equanimous under all circumstances. Thus, the pledge relieves the devotee of all worries.

Not to be proud of caste, colour or creed

Though a hard reality, it sounds paradoxical that the people of different religions, castes and races sit together in public places like hotels, cinemas, yet they do not worship or pray together in religious places. This reflects the height of ignorance; such distinctions are man-made: God has created all as equal.

The pledge relieves one of the prejudices of caste, colour and creed and commits the devotee not to hate or discriminate between man and man on such grounds. When the mind is enlightened, all such differences and distinctions automatically vanish and man comes closer to man. The pledge instills a sense of humanism, fraternity, universal brotherhood, love and goodwill amongst the fellow-beings.

Not to be critical of others' diet, dress and mode of living

People often hate others because of their diet, dress, etc. Diet, dress and mode of living in different parts of the world, nay even in the same country may vary due to climatic conditions. Naturally, one has to adopt oneself to the same. As such, one should, therefore, not be critical of other's diet, dress and mode of living, rather imbibe the spirit of tolerance, understanding and accommodation.

Not to renounce family life

The pledge implies that one should not renounce the family life, rather discharge one's social duties and responsibilities. True renunciation lies not in abandoning the normal life, but in living in the world and yet not being worldly. Why should one run away from the mainstream of life and wander about in the woods in search of God, who is all-pervading and can be realised by the grace of a True Master even while leading a household life? Every body must earn his livelihood by honest means and not become a parasite on the society.

For the purpose of God-realisation, one neither need wear saffron clothes nor go on pilgrimage. Further, if one withdraws from the society, one cannot mould or transform others. Perfection also implies inner sublimation. For the purpose of achieving God-realisation and the ideal of universal brotherhood, if one abandons the society, one can neither contribute to one's own development not to that of the

society. As such, one should live in the family and honestly and earnestly endeavour both for material and spiritual advancement.

Not to divulge God-knowledge without permission

It is the privilege of the True Master to bestow God-knowledge. After God-realisation, one should mould one's life in accordance with the True Master's teachings. One must take utmost care of the sapling of God-knowledge, tend it and nurse it most conscientiously, so that it may grow day-by-day into a big blooming tree. In other words, one must firstly establish oneself firmly in God-knowledge before one becomes a preacher.

Needless to say that by living up to the above pledges, one can lead an ideal life, both materially and spiritually.

Operation Moksha

- By: Robin Mitra (Australia)

God-knowledge is awareness (bodha) of God. When Prince Siddhartha of Kapilavastu became aware of truth more than 2,500 years ago, he came to be known as 'The Buddha'. It is the awareness, that all desires and cravings lead to sorrow (dukha). The mind, body and wealth, which contribute to the fundamental basis of ahamkar (the I-maker), are but ephemeral; it is the superfluous gimmickry of Maya, which the Buddha called Mara (the Evil, the tempter, the destroyer, the God of lust, sin, death, etc.). Similarly, Sage Valmiki when he was feared far and wide as Ratnakar, the Dacoit, could only utter 'Mara' instead of Rama when coaxed by Sage Narada to give up his malevolent life. In utter ignorance, both his mind and body were then indulged in the illegal accumulation of wealth. In this context it is deemed worthy to be mentioned that the first tenet of the Nirankari Mission emphasizes the surrender of mind, body and wealth to the Master. They are the hosts of Mara, which ensnares us deeper into the phenomenal waters of the sansara (world) with the delusory sense of ' I ' and ' Mine', as a result, we fetter ourselves in false ego and self-imposed limitations. The Satguru (True Master) , never negated the sansara. In fact, the benevolent Satguru, out of compassion to protect us from the destructive clutches of Maya (materialism), always emphasises the utilisation of mind, body and wealth as 'Thine', not 'Mine'. Maya is a good slave but a bad master. Like the façade of a building, the ' I ' may express itself through personality (one of the many aspects of Name and Form). Personality comes from the Greek word persona, which literally means a 'mask' that was worn by the actors in ancient Greece to mimic another. Through personality we codify ourselves as an adaptation to the existing society. The sense of ' I ' and 'Mine' is tremendously resilient and is bound to return again and again to disturb the primal repose of the mind, however hard one may endeavour to get rid of this sense. Many of us are aware of the mind chattering in the backgrounds. It 'chatters away' until our fears, doubts and

worries are turned into a phantasmagoria of a lunatic. Therefore, constant vigil is indispensable. Ahankara (the I-maker) is very subtle in nature and may strike all mortals. Leafing through history we shall find even great religious personalities being swayed by 'I', one time or the other in the course of their life.

A devotee is likely to turn egoist because of the service he renders. Egoism is, indeed, a subtle malady that may strike him unconsciously.

-Baba Gurbachan Singh Ji
(Precious Pearls, 1992)

Perhaps Abhimanyu (The proud), the nephew of Lord Krishna and the scion of the mighty Arjuna, can serve as a good example. His pride and false confidence in the strategies of warfare got him Ensnared in the chakravyuha (the round stratagem), which eventually led to his death in the battlefield of Kurukshetra. Thus, just as a tiny drop of ink in a tumbler full of water spreads out slowly until all the water takes on a different hue, the phantom sense of ' I ', eventually, forges the chains that ensnare the mind into a pit of misery and weaken the physical body. For, accumulation of negative attitudes and emotions through time can drastically affect the immune system, which functions in consonance with the endocrine system and its interaction with the autonomic nervous system. If one harbours the notion that the sense of 'I-ness' and the consequent desires can be negated, denied or suppressed by a supreme effort of the will, one is sadly mistaken, for the force of will being yet another dimension for the mind, is a conflict in itself, which, in turn will envisage every possibility of inflating the ego.

Thus the concept of 'extinguishing' the sense of ' I ' and thereby fettering the unruly impulses of the mind has been the unequivocal motive of all spiritual quests through the centuries. In this context the Nirankari Baba has always asserted that if the sense of ' I ' cannot be altogether annihilated, let it remain as the servant of the Nirankar (God Formless), so that there is a perpetual sense of 'Thy-ness' and our actions free from the stains of egotism and hence devoid of the karmic (past deeds) debts, which the Bhagavat Gita emphasizes as 'Action in Inaction'.

To a modern biologist, who according to the concept of natural selection, which works on genetic variation to bring about substantial evolutionary change, may, in fact, comprehend a strong sense of ' I ' in all humans and other living species as an important factor in the genetic blueprint for self-preservation. For him a strong ego is a necessity to survive in this 'concrete jungle' where the values of 'grab and take', selfishness and individuality, superior intelligence and strength are biologically meaningful to weed out the misfits as a means of "the survival of the fittest" in the ladder of social evolution . In this way, all life is thus selective and has since existed on this planet for almost four billion years.

But woe to the strong sense of ' I ' and 'Mine' which has soiled the mind of humanity and poisoned the wellsprings of life. Instead of preservation, our planet stands at the brink of extinction today. Pesticides have bio-magnified at the top of the food chains, the ozone layer had been punched with holes, and, as a

consequence of nuclear explosions, radioactive fallout bombard our environment. The tempo of chaos in the name of religion alone stands as a living witness to the testimony of degradation of human and moral values. Thus it may be worthwhile to ponder: "Does this supra-gigantic process of biological evolution through millions of years serve only to optimise the conditions necessary for the continuation of life on the face of this planet or does the biological evolution in resonance with spiritual evolution aid the manifestation of the higher self ?" Although no physical or purely materialistic or a scientific explanation can be ascribed for the above question but the answer gradually dawns within oneself with vivid clarity after the attainment of the Brahm Gyan (God-knowledge), which unfolds the purpose of our presence on this planet:

Ek ko jano, Ek ko mano, Ek ho Jao.
(Know the one, believe in the One and be one):
This us the basis of spiritual evolution.

Through Brahma gyan the Master cuts asunder the veil of Maya (illusion) and reveals the One, the Primal Truth, to the aspirant. The aspirant then realises the One, becomes one with the One, transformed and ultimately merges in the One, during the course of which *seva* (selfless service), *satsang* (Congregation) and *Simran* (God-remembrance) serve as powerful instruments to aid his evolution into higher realisation. It is a state of awareness (bodha), of illumination, of liberation (moksha), of victory, of transcendence over the transitory. The supremacy of the puny " I " is shattered. Brahma Gyan installs love for humanity, where the mind is weaned away from the superficial fantasies of all forms and their attachments. One is liberated from the trammels of the world whilst living amidst the murky floods of ignorance and passion. As Jesus said: 'Be in the world but not of the world.' Quoting the couplets of Kabir:

Ab to jaiya chadhe singhasan
mil bo sarang pani
Ram Kabira ek bhai
koi na sakey pahchane.
(I have risen high and integrated with God: God and I are now one).
- Adi Granth, P.969

It is the Kali Yuga or the Dark Age, the age of psychological torture steeped in anxiety and disintegration of human morals. The beacon of Truth, the *Sadguru* is here and 'Operation Moksha' is in full swing. Let us awake from the slumber of ignorance and not fervently cling to the negation 'Truth does not Exist'. The Truth is ever present; it was present and shall always be present, both without and within. The Truth is the 'Self'. It is the common heritage of humanity. All we need is the 'Wisdom Eye' to behold it and the Satguru (True Master) to introduce us to it through the token of Brahma Gyan (God – knowledge).

The human eye can see everything except itself. To see it, one needs a mirror. Similarly, one can 'see' one's real self only in the mirror of God-knowledge.

- Baba Hardev Singh
(Gems of Truth, 1995)

The Experience of Becoming A Nirankari

- By: R. N. Banerjee

On 26th of January 1994, I was blessed with Gyan or god-knowledge by Satguru Baba Hardev Singh Ji .

To my extreme delight, the contents of the *Gyan* tallied entirely with my personal conceptions of and conclusions about God, and creative forces. For the last five years, I was engaged in a pursuit of knowledge to know the truth about man, animals, other living beings, material objects, tangible and intangible energies, the universe and its creation, the mind and the universal mind, etc . the pursuit was simply a spontaneous inner urge to know and was totally unrelated with either my academic studies or professional work . For the investigation, I had to go deep into different branches of knowledge such as material, mental and life sciences, philosophy, metaphysics and also some scriptures.

With the investigation, which was conducted by scientific and logical methods, I came to the conclusion that a single creative force was working from within of everything. It was unseen, silent, intangible but expressing the infinite ideas and patterns of some Great Thinker. Behind the creative force, the existence of some non-material and mental qualities were also evident, such as goal-oriented purpose, infinite and all-knowing intelligence, perfect technical skill, knowledge of all the laws and principles which operate everything in the universe, interrelation of all, infinite consideration to provide everything in the universe, interrelation of all, infinite consideration to provide everything for the created objects and creatures . These are all mental and intangible qualities, which cannot pertain to material things, tangible energies or even creatures. Evolution itself does not possess intelligence; it requires intelligence and goals to happen. All these qualities can be possessed only by a central and one Thinker and He must be God. To carry on His creative process from within everything, maintain and sustain the created, He has to be everywhere, all the time. He has to be omnipresent and omnipotent. To be thus, He must be a spirit and hence formless, invisible. This was my intellectually derived conception of God. As it was the same as the spiritual knowledge (*Gyan*) I attained, I was highly delighted that I had concluded rightly.

Prior to attaining this God-knowledge, God had existed in my head as one intellectual entity. With God-knowledge, it began to penetrate my heart and gradually become a whole time obsession and awareness. I was thinking about God almost all the time save occasions when I would concentrate deeply on work or some subject. I began to find actual evidence of God in everything and in all processes around me and in me.

With the passing of a year, I have fully realised that I have nothing really which I can call my own. I have not created my body, the most mysterious and complex brain, the life-process within me, my consciousness; even my sense of “ I ” is not my own. These are God-given. So, man has no base anywhere or anything to build his mansion of Ahankar or Ego upon. Everything we got, get, use and consume, is because God has created these and these reach us because God-directed forces work to bring them to us.

The other discovery was the effect of “Simiran” or God-remembrance on my mind. The mind of man works by association. Repetition of the words “Ek Tuhi Nirankar” or Thou alone exist reminds us of the presence of God, connects or individual mind with the Universal Mind. It also induces considerable physical and mental relaxation and most likely helps creative thoughts to enter our consciousness. Many unexplained observations and knowledge became clear and explained, totally unsought and appeared as sudden revelations. So, if any thought or problem baffles one, he can resort to *Simran*, but the solution cannot be forced out it will appear all of a sudden. It also dispels worries and other negative thoughts considerably. Every night when I go to sleep, I do continuous *Simran* in my mind and do not know when I fall asleep.

God is always with us; we are totally integrated with Him. Then why we fail to be aware of His presence? It is because civilized and social human beings develop some sophistication’s which cover their natural instincts and subject themselves to various beliefs and social conditioning, which are contrary to the truths in God-mind. To protect these beliefs in social and other forms of interests, they build a wall of inhibition on the way of unconscious instincts reaching our consciousness and thus we lose contact with God. From personal experiences I have observed my awareness of God varying from day-to-day, and that is due to the degree of inhibition I am exerting on my unconscious mind.

We need God-knowledge to dispel these beliefs and free ourselves from social conditioning which are contrary to God-mind. Only then we can regain our contact with God-mind. Only by knowing God and being in *contact* with Him we can know our true identity that we are His creation and thus integral parts of this universe and so have a definite purpose and a role to play in life which is different for every person. This individuality and uniqueness can be known by an individual by establishing personal *contact* with God. None else can do it for him because none else is built with the capacity to know the exact uniqueness of the other individual.

The right direction to know what is our role in life can give us the satisfaction of becoming really and truly successful in life and enjoy our lives.

God-knowledge is absolutely essential. It gives us the knowledge is who we are, what we are and where lies our destiny. Becoming a Nirankari has given me the full realisation of this truth.

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