

STREAM OF THOUGHTS

(I)

Why is man in distress in spite of all the material progress?

What can make material progress useful to mankind?

Can the Omnipresent be called absent also?

Man today has made tremendous progress. Many countries, many scientists have acquired vast material resources, powerful appliances and instruments. But we see our own eyes, where all these resources are being deployed. We find that the very achievements in the various fields are becoming a threat to the man's survival. We have weapons, we have bombs that can cause havoc on the earth and in the air.

Why weapons alone? Humanity is sought to be split by all kinds of boundary lines and walls. We find the walls of narrow mindedness splitting everything that is coming under man's control. All these walls, the boundaries between states, between countries are, of course, man-made. Wherever does end the jurisdiction of one country, there is a line. The entire globe is covered with such lines. Man uses water. Even water is sought to be divided. There are disputes over water everyday, resulting in bloodshed of the innocent. In fact, whatever man is coming across, is bringing under his control. He thinks of only himself and is creating distances between others. Only the objects which man has failed to capture or are beyond his control are common to all. Take for instance the air. It blows for all. All are receiving coolness from the air. All are breathing it also. If air were under the control of man, walls would have been erected by now to divide it. In that case the wind blowing in one country would not have been able to cross over to the nearby country; the air of one state would not have gone to another state. The same is the case with the sun-shine. Man has not been able to put up a wall to stop it from going from one place to another. In other words the objects which are somehow not governed by man or have escaped his rule are available to all uniformly.

As a matter of fact all the objects created by God are meant for all human beings. It is man himself who is imposing limits on them because of his own selfishness and narrow-mindedness. That is why man is suffering. Guided by these selfish motives, man takes such steps that one has to say:

KARTOOT PASHU KI, MANUSH JAT.

His actions are that of animals, while by appearance he looks to be a human being. Today we lock our houses and shops. In other countries, people go in for alarm system. Why? Do we take these steps to guard our lives and properties from animals? No. We need them against man, because he only appears to be man, whereas he is not. His actions are guided by animal instincts. We find how one animal pounces upon the other to snatch a piece of meat. The same is the condition of man, it appears.

Great spiritual masters have cautioned man at every step and counselled him to behave like a man. Animals have never needed such a caution or advice. Nobody is required, for example, to tell a horse to behave like a horse or cow as a cow. The function of the cow is to

give milk and it is giving milk. Similar is the case with other creatures. It is only the human being, described as the best among them, who has forgotten his real path, his real instinct. That is why all his material achievements are producing conflicts and leading him towards destruction.

The farmer puts manure in order to make the land fertile and the crop healthy. But what happens is that alongwith the crop there is lot of unintended and superfluous growth of grass, etc. A wise farmer will remove this unwanted growth before pouring any more fertilizer into the land, because he knows that otherwise the strength in the form of fertilizer sought to be provided to the land will be consumed by this wild growth and the actual crop will remain weak correspondingly. In case it is not weeded out, this wild growth will continue to take the place of the main crop. This is exactly what is happening in the human world. Alongwith the material progress are growing the unwanted feelings of jealousy and narrow-mindedness. Unless the same are weeded out, human energies will get wasted in bad deeds, producing nothing but destruction. Suppose lot of water collects at one place at a height and then flows with speed. Left to itself, it may cause flood. But if it is checked by building a dam, it remains in control. We can drain it well to our fields. We can also produce electricity by constructing a big barrage. How useful is the water now? Similar is the case with the worldly progress. Unbridled material progress is leading towards destruction. It is essential to have a check of spirituality on it.

God has blessed man with body, with hands, feet etc. as also the physical strength and intellect to be used for good purposes. In fact these qualities have been given by God to every human being. But, where does the fault lie? Where did this difference come from? Everybody knows that fire is quite useful to us in many ways. We use it in the kitchen and cook all types of food. It is used in industrial units also. But it will be an utter misuse of fire if it is applied to burn the houses of others, burn the people themselves. Like this, all human energies and virtues stand misused, when we utilise these gifts of God for making others unhappy. No object or power is bad by itself; bad is its misuse.

Not that the world is facing such a horrible situation only because of those who run after worldly achievements. Those who claim to be above Maya (the worldly materials) and boast of their being religious, too are in no way better. Almost every day we read in the newspapers the reports about the bloodshed of innocent people in the name of spiritual masters. No religion, no spiritual master, no holy person does endorse such killings. Even then there is bloodshed in the name of religion. People quarrel over the very name of God. A man who describes the Almighty as Ram is found to be always ready to quarrel with the other who calls it Allah. Why go they quarrel? Why do they fight when Ram and Allah are one and the same? This is so because we have not allowed the divine light to enter our minds, enter our lives. That is why there are these controversies, divisions and hatred. Since we are away from God, worldly improvements are going towards destruction. The reason for disputes in the name of religion is also the ignorance about God.

An old man lived in a desert. Even his forefathers had lived there. His time was about to be over. When he felt that he was not likely to stay in this world for many days, when he realized that his end was approaching, he called one of his friends and said, "I am now about to leave this world. My death is approaching. Kindly distribute my property after my death." His property comprised 19 camels. He said, "Please divide it among my three sons in such a way that the eldest receives half of it, the second one-fourth and the third one-fifth." After some days the man breathed his last. When his friend began to divide the property, he faced the problem as to how to set apart the half of 19 camels. A large number of people assembled, but the problem was not solved. Suddenly a camel rider appeared on the scene. On seeing the crowd, he stopped and asked the reason. He was told that the problem related to the distribution of 19 camels among three sons in such a manner that that the eldest should receive half, the second one-fourth and the third one-fifth. All were confused and nobody could find the solution. The camel rider spoke from the camel back, "If you permit, shall I suggest a way out"? Everybody felt happy and said they would be grateful if he decided the issue. The man came down and added his own camel to the 19 and made them stand in a line. Now that the number of camels became 20, he gave the half i.e. 10 camels to the eldest son (of the deceased old man). Now he asked the second son, "How many camels will you

get as one-fourth?" He said, " I should receive five camels." The man said, "You may take five." Finally, he asked the third son, "How many camels should you receive as one-fifth of the total?" He replied, "I should receive four camels." The man said, "You take your four." In this way the three brothers received their 19 camels and the 20th remained with the man. It means that the camel lent by the man made no difference. Neither did it reduce the property nor did it increase. His own camel remained with him, while a very big problem was solved. Similarly, wherever we associate this One (God), our problems are solved, our difficulties are over. Our petty feelings, jealousy and hatred vanish. In order to save the world from destruction to-day, we must find a way to see that spiritual knowledge prevails upon all our material achievements and all our actions are influenced by the association of God based on the realisation of its omnipresence.

The spiritual masters teach us that man must stumble or fumble at some place or the other, if he forgets this God-Nirankar and attaches importance to material wealth only. Take for instance a building. We all know that houses are meant for men. If we start thinking the other way round, give priority to houses or consider that men are meant for houses, it will be our mistake. Shoes are meant for the feet; not that the feet are meant for the shoes. This is a question of attaching importance, giving priority. We must give top priority to this God, to know it, to hold it. Without this, there cannot be peace around us. In fact all our sufferings and hardships will disappear, if alongwith material gains, we give place or importance to God knowledge, if God becomes an integral part of our life.

A king sat in his garden and announced that whatever in the garden is liked by someone, he may place his hand on it and he will be given the same; it will become his own. A man entered the garden. He stopped at one place, then at the other and after that still another. Many others also did the same thing, and started taking away whatever they liked. The former, however, passed by the various objects and approached the king. He asked him whether he too could be considered as a part of the garden. The king said, " Yes, I am also included in the objects of the garden." The man at once placed his hand on the king. As per the condition, now the king became his own and alongwith the king he received everything that formed part of his kingdom. This is how we realise everything when we realise God and if we do not make it an integral part of our life, we do not know it, we are bound to lose everything.

Today man is confused, upset and distressed. Why? Because man is becoming distant from man. Why so? Because God has been forgotten; God whose presence is the source of happiness has been taken as absent. This is, however quite surprising. On the one hand, God is said to be present everywhere and on the other we say 'absent'. How can God, the Omnipresent, be absent? This absence relates to our minds. When we forget it, it becomes absent from the mind. Take for instance a man who while walking struck against a pole. He was asked, "Brother ! Is your eyesight alright? Do you really have eyes?" He told, " My eyesight is perfectly alright. Only two months back I got it tested by a specialist. He asked me to read a chart which had big letters, small letters. I read them correctly from distance as also from near. Thus there is nothing wrong with my eyesight." " Then, how did you strike against the pole?" he was asked. He replied, "My brain is working, my eyes that you see on my face are working. But what to do? My mind was somewhere else. While walking, I was thinking of something else." Now eyes are working, the light is there. But the mind is somewhere else. So people are striking against poles; they are getting hurt. Similarly when the thought of this God - Nirankar is not there in the mind, it is absent from the life.

Whenever man forget this God, took it away from mind, he went on losing peace, went on losing joy. As the light illuminates our path, our journey becomes easy and as the light reduces, we only stumble. Similarly, whosoever makes his mind the dwelling place for God, remembers it for ever, he receives the real happiness. If the mind concentrates on God, one receives joy that is free from pains. The path of one's life becomes smooth. Even if the path has thorns, ups and downs of the world, there is pleasure. No doubt it is difficult to remove the thorns one by one, it is impossible to put them aside one by one. But a man who has put on shoes remains unhurt. A person who wears the shoes, shoes remains unhurt. A person who wears the shoes, virtually finds the entire prick him? Similarly, a person whose mind

enjoys the cover of this Almighty, finds only the joy spread all over the earth. Then, how will the thorns of distress prick him?

Divine masters never opposed material progress. However, they did say that increased possession of worldly material might bring suffering if it were not accompanied by spiritual enlightenment. If God enters one's life, the feelings of hatred, jealousy and pride disappear and then all the material progress of the world becomes a source of joy. Nobody appears to be an enemy, nobody remains a stranger. It has also been said:

**VISR GAYEE SAB TAT PARAYEE
JAB TE SADH SANGAT HUM PAYEE;
NA KO BAI RI NAHIN BEGANA
SAGAL SANG HUMKO BAN AYEE.**

This state of mind arrives only when God starts dwelling in it or one realises God. Take for example a man carrying a lantern in his hand. The light has no use for him, if his eyes are not working. Only a man who has the eyes can enjoy the benefit of light. The light does have its own significance, but it is complete only if it is accompanied by eyes which are open and working. In the same manner the light of material progress is beneficial only if it is accompanied by the eyes spiritually open, capable of seeing God in every person, in every object.

A spiritually enlightened person or the one who has realised God, sees the Almighty in all and is guided by the spirit of service for all. In regard to such saints, it is said:

**SANTAN KE GHAT RAHT HAI,
SAB KE HIT KI BAAT;
GHAT GHAT DEKHE ALAKH KO,
PUCHE JAT NA PAAT.**

If man thinks in terms of goodwill for all, there can be no conflicts, no problems at all. The cause of these problems and conflicts is the narrow-mindedness, the tendency to think about oneself only. Today we are all self-centered, narrow-minded and selfish. We have closed our windows. That is why we feel the suffocation. Suppose a person has confined himself in a room which has not even a single window, it will always be suffocating and may have deadly gases. Man's condition today is also like this. Today, we have the walls of language, religion and region etc. Surrounded by these walls, indulged in selfishness, we are moving towards downfall.

If walls are erected around a man, he cannot see the world outside. He is shut out from the reality of the world. He is cut off from the entire world and finds himself in utter bewilderment. As you know, criminals are kept in cells. Behind the bars, they are cut off from the world. They sit in closed rooms where each and every moment of life passes like hell.

Man created this hell for him, when he erected the walls around himself, the walls based on caste, creed, colour, language and religion. Surrounded by these walls, he can see only himself. He thinks everything for himself, for the fulfillment of his own interests. The result is conflict between man and man, separation from each other, pain and suffering.

So long as these walls are not broken, man cannot be free, cannot find peace. There are so many diversities in our social life - the diversities of language, dress, diet and mode of living. Once we are in alliance with God, all these diversities stand converted into unity. No doubt, we may never be able to achieve uniformity i.e. similarity of dress, diet and mode of living, which is impossible. In this way, we cannot bring minds closer. Here we require sense of unity, unity which is possible only through the realisation of God. Suppose we want to make a garland. This is not possible without a thread. Once we have the thread, we can put together flowers of different colours - red, yellow, white and so on. But if we do not have the thread at all, we cannot make a garland. Similarly, it cannot be possible to make a garland of mankind without the thread of God.

Every year I get an opportunity to go round the various parts of the country. We find people speaking different languages, wearing dresses of different styles and having different modes of living. These diversities have always remained there and will always remain here. Uniformity in regard to the same is just not possible. Man may make any amount of effort, he cannot compel everybody to wear the turban or the dhoti, to eat rice and so on. Uniformity based on these factors is not going to be possible. These diversities have existed for ages and may continue for ever. If we concentrate on or remain engrossed in these outward factors, differences will continue, conflicts will never end. Uniformity cannot be brought in these factors. Such diversities can be seen even in our body. The fingers of our hands are not similar. Their impression is different from each other. Even the two thumbs do not give the same impression. Infact uniformity is not something that we require. What we need is unity- unity in diversity. We do not want uniformity of material goods but unity of hearts. In case we are guided by the feelings of love and affinity, we are all equal, bound by the same thread. Since our garland has the same thread, we talk of this one: know One, adore One and be One. So long as we do not realise One, worship One, unity is impossible and we just cannot think of goodwill for all. Then these walls of language will remain there, the discrimination of high and low will continue. It is because of these divisions that innocent people are killed today. Let us consider for a while as to which language is the best? Let us suppose it is Hindi, Punjabi, Marathi or any other language. But call names in Marathi, you will be caught. Call names in Hindi, the listener will come to hit you. No doubt you have used the Hindi language, but why did it produce bad consequences? Because, you made a wrong use of the language, you called names, you hurt the feelings of the other person, you treated him as low. The dispute is not that of languages, neither states nor nations; the problem lies in not treating others as our own, in treating them as lower than ourselves, inferior to ourselves. The body has different parts. The feet have one function, the hands another. But we also know that inspite of being different, these parts belong to the same body. If one part of the body gets pain, the pain is not confined to that part; the entire body feels it. One part of the body cannot think of harming the other. The same becomes true of mankind, when they are unified through their relationship with God, when they become one by knowing One. For this, knowing God is essential. If God is associated with our life, everything else becomes in order automatically. What we require is only to incorporate God in our lives - not merely to make a mention of God. If religious people are found to have any dispute or clash, their reason too is the ignorance about God. Once they come to know God, these disputes will end automatically.

Once upon a time a man was passing through a street. He heard some people quarrelling inside a house. He stopped and then went inside with the intention to resolve the dispute. He found that the quarrel was between husband and wife, quite angry with each other. The man asked them, "Why are you quarrelling?" The husband told him that he wanted to make his son a doctor, while his wife was creating a fuss and insisting to make him a lawyer. The man said, "Why don't you call your son and ask him? May be he does not want to become either. He may like to become a businessman or an engineer. If he is reluctant to tell you, call him, I will speak to him." Hearing this, both husband and wife became silent. The man asked them again to call the boy. The husband said, "Sir, the son is not yet born." This is exactly what the (so called) men of religion are doing today. One is bent upon running down rather killing the other in the name of God. They are, however, yet to realise God, foster it in their hearts. When we associate God with our lives, nourish it, there is no reason why we should disown or try to run down one another.

All these disputes, bickerings and tension will exist only until God dwells in our hearts, until we realise God and have communion with the Almighty. As soon as this occurs, the entire world gets peace and there is joy everywhere.

(II)

What is the purpose of human life?

Is God - realisation possible? What is the source?

Why do we need blessings of the True Master?

It is said that one gets human body after passing through many other lives. It is said that there are 84 lakh lives in all. Those who argue get stuck up on the question of the number itself. They say, "How do you know they are 84 lakh?" Let us not enter into argument. You go by the number of animals, birds, insects and other creatures you have heard or known. Even then we find that human life has been determined and treated as superior to all others;

**AVAR JON TERI PANIHARI,
IS DHARTI PAR TERI SIKDARI**

It means human life is the best. Then, its objective, its purpose should also be the noblest!

In case the human being even after coming to this life and judged to be superior to all others, continues to indulge in the same actions as can be performed by animals also, what is the usefulness of this life? For example, if man makes the construction of houses the aim of his life and spends all his time in its pursuit, what remains special about the human life? Even birds make their dwellings. Even a sparrow constructs a beautiful nest on the branch of a tree by collecting straws one by one. Even a tiny ant which is hardly visible digs a hole somewhere and makes it a dwelling place. If we get children, even they (animals etc.) procreate. Similarly, there are other activities that cover the entire course of human life; they are also being performed by the creatures in other lives. Animals are performing them, birds are also performing them. In fact, over and above man has adopted an action from the life of animals. Like animals men also pounce upon each other (over a piece of flesh) and cause bloodshed. Then, where is the difference? Where is the superiority of the human being? His importance is there only when he establishes his relationship with God. This is what has been accepted as the real aim of human life. This makes human body important. Take for example a vessel, which contains valuable articles. The vessel also becomes precious and it is kept with lot of care, it is kept under constant watch. But we know that nobody cares for a dustbin. Similarly, this human body has no value if man does not realise God. Man must, therefore, give top priority to the realisation of God, during this very life, for this is the opportunity, this is only spell to do so, and it not must be missed :

EHI TERI AVSAR, EHI TERI BAAR

You have got this opportunity, your turn to know yourself, to know the Creator. Bible says, 'Know thyself.' Man must know himself, understand what he is. Do you think that only this body which can be seen is everything? We know the body by the parts it has - the eyes, the tongue, the hands, the ears, the feet, the fingers, the hair and so on. All these parts of the body continue to exist even after death. Then, why don't they move or work? Why does the body have no value? Unfortunately, man is ignorant and he considers the body as his complete self. The body is, however, not ever lasting. It is a composition of five elements.

Once they disintegrate, the body is no more. In fact, who is the man? Who does cause movement in this body? Which is that power due to which this body is working? When you say : this is my hand; my head is aching; there is pain in my foot; these are my eyes, my ears and so on - it means there is someone, who says: 'my ears' etc. For example, when we live in a house, we do not say, "I am the house, I am the almirah". We live within, we live inside the house. Unlike the house, we are living beings. That is why we say : this is my house, this is the almirah, garage or drawing room of my house. Similarly, we say: these are parts of my body. Just as 'I' is not the house, similarly, 'I' is not the body even. Then who is this describing himself as 'I'? We must know it, we must know the fountain-head, the source of energy that moves the body. We must know this life force, that makes this body active, causes its movement, makes it act? What is this life force that makes this body valuable? What is the use, if we did not recognise the soul, recognise this God? When we know the basic truth, i.e., God, we come to know the self also. We realise that 'I' is not this outwardly visible appearance, this body only, 'I' is infact a spirit originating and flowing from God, a ramification of divine entity. The value of human life or importance of the human body comes from the very realisation of this fact.

Now the question arises : How to realise God? We go to the school. We are taught a particular subject by a teacher who is thoroughly familiar with the same and knows how to teach it. Similarly, God-knowledge can be revealed to us only by a person who is fully familiar with it. Only such a person can establish our relationship with God. The only condition is that we must possess the requisite desire, the requisite will to receive the divine knowledge. Without a strong desire for self-realisation, man may suffer from hesitation and miss the valuable treasure. This quest is rather very essential.

The spiritual masters have repeatedly counselled man: "If you are in search of God, if you have the desire to know God, please look for someone who knows God. Once you find the one who is familiar with God, he will bless you with God-knowledge". Suppose you want to learn a language, geography, history, mathematics or any other subject. There are subjects of which even names are not known to many. There are a number of sciences, a number of topics. But do we ever search for mathematics? Do we ever look for geography? No. We search for a mathematics- teacher, a geography- teacher, the one who has the knowledge of the subject. We send the child to such a person only. That is why the spiritual masters seek to convey this basic idea, this basic principle to man; If you find a person who is blessed with God-knowledge, you will also receive God-knowledge and thus get rid of the cycle of births and deaths.

We admire Meera for her devotion. Did she not wander for years with Lord Krishna's picture in her mind? But did she achieve complete realisation (of God) through this only? No. Even though she always carried the loving image of Lord Krishna in her mind, finally she had to approach Guru Ravidas (for the actual realisation). The divine truth which was once revealed by Lord Krishna to Arjuna, Meera received it from Guru Ravidas. Only then she felt fully satisfied and started singing:

**SATGUR BHED BATAYA KHOLI BHARM KIWARI HO,
GHAT GHAT DIKHE ATMA, SAB HI SON NYARI HO,
MOHE LAGI RAMKHMARI HO.**

There is a popular story about the great Sufi saint Bulle Shah. It is said that once he was transplanting the onion buds. Somebody came and enquired about God-knowledge. Bulle Shah, continuing to shift the buds from one side to the other, replied:

RAB DA KI PANA; EDHRON PUTNA TE EDHAR LANA.

It means it is quite easy to realise God. The only thing that you require is to seek the blessings of a saint who is to detach man from the worldly wealth and attach him to the divine truth.

There are many people who presume that realisation of God-knowledge or God is not an easy affair. For this, they feel, one requires to pass through several lives. We have to tell

such persons: Let us agree, but is it not possible that this is the same life during which man is to realise God? After the separation for several lives, this is the opportunity for the reunion of soul with the Creator. Even if this soul, this being has been away from God for several lives, their reunion does not require the same duration i.e. several lives. Suppose a person has not taken food for a week. Do we presume that he has to go on eating for seven days continuously to remove his appetite? A garment has been torn for one month. Does it require full one month to stitch it? No. It does never happen like this. Given a needle and thread, you may stitch it no time. Similarly, it takes no time for the soul to be re-united with the super-soul, i.e., God. And this message has been reaching every human being during every age and it is reaching him even today.

The realisation of God is quite simple and easy. The process can be completed in no time-as soon as a spiritual master shows mercy and reveals the divine truth. Raja Janak received God-knowledge in this way. His condition was that the process of knowing God, understanding the difference between the truth and the falsehood, should not take more than the time required for riding a horse, going from one stirrup to the other. When Lord Rama approached Guru Vashishtha, he too was told that God-realisation requires very little time, even less than the time taken to crush a flower. Once we come across the True Master, Satguru, God realisation takes no time.

There are people who follow several kinds of (religious) practices for God-realisation. The desire is kindled, but the goal is not achieved. Suppose we want to increase our appetite. Some may take lemonade, while others may use some other appetiser. Thus the appetite increases. But suppose the meal does not arrive. The appetiser may cause pain in the stomach or restlessness of the heart. What it means is that appetite, whether created with the help of an appetiser or even if it is normal, does require food in both the cases. No doubt, some people do possess the appetite, the desire to know God. They do follow the practices like repeated recitation of the name of God, sitting close to the fire, etc. But they do not get peace until they realise God. In other cases, people do not feel the appetite at all. They approach the doctor, who tells them that there must be something wrong with the liver, or the liver is enlarged and that is why they do not feel hungry. Similarly, if you do not feel the desire to know God, you are sick; you must go in for treatment.

Some people argue: Who does realise God in this Kalyug, the Black Age- the age of Iron? Man gets the impression as to who can realise God now-a-days? It was possible only in the olden ages which are gone. This brings the idea to our mind that when the very time to know God is gone, why do we meditate now, why do we recite the words of great spiritual masters, why do we listen to the same? If their thinking is correct, they should not perform any worship or go on pilgrimage to any holy place. And if they are still doing so, obviously it is to seek the blessings of the Almighty. In fact, whatever spiritual masters have stated about God-realisation, it does not refer or relate to a particular period of time. This is a principle that if a person does not seek alliance with God, his life goes waste. So long as this condition is not fulfilled, the cycle of births and deaths continues.

Methods or means have not changed with the change in times or ages. For example, since ages, it is water that has been used to quench the thirst. Not that during those times people would take food or put on attraction clothes and then their thirst used to be quenched. It was quenched by drinking water only. Again, during those times, the grains would ripen with sunshine, germs would be killed by the heat of the sun. Whatever functions the sun had during those ages, it is performing the same even today. Whatever means or resources were there in the past, they continue to be the same till today. Then, has there been any change in devotion? If humility was a part and parcel of devotion during those days, has ego taken its place today? Has pride become the means to salvation? No. We shall have to follow the same path, have faith in the same course even today, as was shown by all spiritual masters who appeared in this world since olden ages and knew God. If we adopt those principles even today, seek the benevolence of a spiritual master, we shall definitely know the Almighty.

Some hold the opinion that man will attain the association with God, the soul will merge with the Super-Soul, automatically. After all this body is a compound of five elements. It is only a

vessel. When it breaks, the soul will merge with God automatically. However, if this principle were to hold good for all- that once these vessels break, the souls are bound to merge with the Almighty- doesn't the body of a sinner decay? He may have remained a thief, a murderer, a robber or created trouble for others throughout his life. His body too is bound to disintegrate. Then, as per this principle, does he too merge with God automatically? Was he not required to do any good deed during his whole life? Then, one may commit any number of sins one likes. No. So long as this soul does not know its real destination while dwelling in the body, it is not going to be liberated from the cycle of births and deaths. We have an example. Suppose a person does not know English and someone suggests that he should travel in a magnificent car and then he will learn English. He is not going to attain the knowledge of English by travelling by car. And if we ask him to get down and go on foot, even then he is not going to learn English. If he does not know English, it is not going to change his position whether he sits in the car to gets down. He will continue to remain ignorant about English. Similarly, it is the soul which is to attain salvation; it is not the body. If the soul is ignorant, it does not attain peace even while it dwells in the body; and it continues to wander even when it is outside the carrier, the chariot or the body. There is only one way to get rid of this wandering, the cycle of births and deaths and that is to realise God while human body is still there.

Some people think that truth (God) can be realised by merely talking or reading about it. But the very mention of Truth is not going to satisfy the appetite of the human soul. When the father takes food, it improves his health. His children must take their own food to provide blood to their bodies. We have been hearing since childhood that nobody was able to quench his thirst only by uttering the word 'water' repeatedly. Similarly, a boy goes to the school and then to the college, works hard and receives the degree of M.A. And there is his own younger brother who has never gone to the school or studied. He, however, feels proud and says, "You see, I shall get a job within a month." But the fact is that this degree has been obtained by his brother. It is, therefore, possible that he may get a job. But how can you (the younger brother) hope to get a job on the basis of the degree obtained by your elder brother? Nobody else is going to be benefited. Every individual must go through the process personally, as laid down in the rules.

What is the process that must be adopted? What is the seeker of Truth required to do? The only condition is that he should approach every person with the specific desire to know God. Wherever he goes, whosoever he meets, he should express only one desire, i.e., to know God. In case someone helps him to know God instantly, he should bow his head and surrender. But if that person tells us to follow all kinds of religious practices instead of bringing about our union with God, we should proceed and continue the search so long as we do not come across the one who is capable of telling us about God, i.e., Satguru. You must trust that God is merciful. Therefore, if you are truly interested, God Nirankar will bless you and soon put you in touch with the spiritual master who will fulfil your desire instantly. You should, however, not give up the quest. You must continue the search.

For the realisation of God, the urge in the mind of the seeker is as essential as the benevolence of Satguru (the True Master). According to Thakur Ramakrishna Paramhans, this urge should be comparable with the desire of a person to come out of the water, when he is drowning, losing his breath. Such a person has only one desire and he concentrates on it. He wants only to come out of the water, so that he can breathe freely; he wants that his mouth should be out of the water. The way this man is feeling uneasy at this moment, we should feel restless for this Almighty; we should have the same kind of impatience to cross, to go out of this ocean of the world.

In fact man does not take the soul's thirst for meeting the Super Soul seriously. But when his body needs water he goes out, calls everybody loudly and asks as to where he can find some water. Somebody guides him and tells him that if he goes a little further and turns right, he will find a tap, he will get water. The man goes, turns the tap but not a drop comes out. Now will he stop there? No. He will inquire from someone else. This time, he is told to go a furlong further, where there is another tap and where he may find water. He goes but he does not get the water even there. Even then, will he sit back there thinking that he has already come a long way and still found no water? No. The thirst for water will make him restless and will

continue to make him restless until he gets water. If someone tells him to run, he will do it, do it even if there is a storm, because he is thirsty, he is restless for the water. Similar is the case with a person who is impatient to know God. He goes wherever he is asked to go. But if he is not satisfied, he moves further. He must continue to make efforts and must not stop until God is revealed to him in reality, until he understands that God is stationary, immortal, unperishable, it is there in every particle of the universe, it is omnipresent, above destruction, above creation and so on. Man is often found saying that he wants to know God, he has the quest, he has the thirst. But if their thirst were real, they would not put off the search. If I am thirsty now or I am feeling hungry at this moment, shall I say that I have no time, I will take the food tomorrow or I will drink water the day after? No. If someone is really hungry or thirsty, his throat will be dry after some time or he may get pain in the stomach or feel restless. Similarly if man's hunger or thirst for the divine truth is real, he will always step forward towards God and will never forget it.

In the absence of God, the man who seeks to realise it feels just like a fish without water. If the desire is so strong God will definitely create a situation in which man finds the True Master standing in front of him, who will bless him and fulfil his desire (to realise God).

In this connection, some people think that God-knowledge need not essentially come from a (living) person. We have so many religious books. They were written by those who had the personal experience of knowing God. They contain all details about God. The various ways and means (religious practices) are also mentioned. If we study them and adopt the practices mentioned there-in, we should come to know about God ourselves. In this way, we will not only avoid the hard labour required for going from place to place in search of a spiritual master, but also fulfill the condition of meeting some one who has already known God. However, the spiritual masters and holy scriptures themselves say that although there is no doubt that the religious books are full of details about God and that they have been written by the saints who knew God, yet it is a fact that even to appreciate what is written we require a person who is familiar with God-knowledge. An ordinary person may be able to read them, even learn them by heart, but not understand them. A book written by doctors can be understood or appreciated by a doctor only. Anybody can go through the words (terms) and the names of diseases and medicines used in a book on medical science, but their meaning can be understood only by a doctor who knows the subject.

We are all family people. We send our children to the school. The book on Arithmetic does not contain the sums alone; the methods to solve them are also given, solved examples are also there. Even answers are given at the end. In spite of all this, in spite of the book being so comprehensive, we have never told our children to learn Arithmetic by going through the book alone. In order to learn Arithmetic and understand the Arithmetic book, we send our children to the Arithmetic-teacher only. Similarly, in order to understand the religious books, in order to know what is religion, we must approach some spiritual master who is familiar with religion. In order to know God, to understand the books that speak of God, we must go to Satguru, the one who has already known God. Even the religious books mention that God-realisation can be attained only with the help or benevolence of Satguru. Therefore, if we have faith in religious books and want to follow what they teach, we must seek the blessings of Satguru.

This God, the Formless is omnipresent. There is no place where God is not present. If we meet a holy person, receive the blessings of Satguru, God can be realised instantly, here and now. For this, there is no need to give up normal family life, our duties and responsibilities. Arjuna spent a number of years with Lord Krishna but all those years were spent in ignorance. As soon as he expressed his desire and Lord Krishna considered the moment appropriate, he revealed the Ultimate Truth to him in no time. If somebody may suggest that we may leave home, give up all our worldly attachments and start living at a remote, lonely place, he is mistaken. Lord Krishna blessed Arjuna with God-realisation right on the war front, in Kurukshetra. Even if we accept that Kurukshetra here has been referred to as field of action and not a battle-field, even then it gets accepted that Lord Krishna revealed the Eternal Truth to Arjuna when he was right in the field of action. Lord Krishna did not require him to give up his action or run away from his responsibilities before he could be shown the Ultimate Reality.

What we say is that God is present every where. We can remember it, realise it even while performing our normal duties. Just as Arjuna could remove his misapprehensions only when Lord Krishna removed his ignorance, blessed him with God-knowledge, revealed God to him, explained this all-embracing and all-pervading divine spirit, similarly Meera did have the devotion, she also worshipped Lord Krishna, but could realise God only when she approached Guru Ravidas. Meera says :

**PAYOJI MAINE RAM RATTAN DHAN PAYO,
VASTU AMOLAK DI MERE SATGURU KRIPA KARI APNAYO.**

Today, here also we say the same thing. You can know this Formless, Almighty God. You can align your soul with the Super-Soul, Nirankar. You can achieve the real purpose of human life. What you require is only to seek the benevolence of Satguru, the one who knows God. This is the only way, this is the only path and there is no other way, no other path.

How to recognise Satguru? He can be recognised only by the knowledge of truth, the knowledge of God he has. A doctor is not known by his physical appearance or his dress. He is known by the knowledge he has, by the skill he possesses. Similarly, only a person who has studied law, who possesses the knowledge of law, is called advocate. Mere physical appearance or black gown does not make one advocate. Similarly, we call a person saint only if he possesses God-knowledge or knows God. The one who unites us with Truth, with God, is Satguru.

Once we know this God, all misgivings and misapprehensions are over. The sense of difference between our own and strangers is gone. The walls that tend to divide people as high and low on the basis of caste, are shattered. There is no hatred, there is no malice. This life is automatically filled with joy. And all this is possible only with the benevolence of the True Master.

(III)

Who can be described as Gurmukh, a saint? Who is Manmukh, an ignorant?

What is the difference between Gurmukh and Manmukh?

Where do the saints receive their virtues from? Who is the source of virtues?

This world, it is said, is full of sorrows. But saints also lived in this very world. Whenever they appeared on this earth, whether in this country or elsewhere, they found the same kind of situation, the same kind of complications of worldly attachments. They found armies of every country fighting wars like this. They found people having the same attitude towards living. Everything was like this and the saints also lived in their midst. But with them there was a difference. When this boat of human body moves on the surface of water, it is welcome, but when water enters the boat, as we know, it brings trouble. The saints do live in this world, but they do not permit it to enter their minds.

The saints live in this world just like any other people. But the difference, as stated above, is that of the boat in the water and water in the boat. An unenlightened person lives in this world

and his mind is also occupied by this world all the time. A saint too lives in this world, but he does not allow it to occupy his minds. He puts this Almighty Nirankar there. And this is the biggest reason of his happiness, the most important secret of his joy.

In fact this difference between a saint (Gurmukh) and an ignorant person (Manmukh) is that the latter is always attached to the worldly materials. He forgets God and is influenced by ego. Even a small little power makes him arrogant and he indulges in deeds that drift him away from God. No doubt, he does not preach that people should give up their devotion to God and run after the worldly materials, But his actions will tend to create a distance between God and ourselves. That is why saints always advise us to avoid the nature and company of the ignorant as they always shake our faith in the Almighty.

Once Baba Avtar Singh Ji asked, "Who is your friend, the greatest friend? Who is your worst enemy?". Everybody expressed his own opinion. Somebody said that a friend in need is friend in deed. He helps us whenever he finds us in trouble. On the other hand, a person who creates hurdles in our way, tires to cause our downfall and spoils our image in the eyes of the world is our worst enemy. Baba Ji did not agree. He said, "Your best friend is the person who introduces you to Satguru, the True Master and he who shakes your faith in God is your worst enemy."

Saints! A saint (Gurmukh) is known by the fact that he becomes our true friend. He always strengthens our faith in God. He has praise for fellow saints. He always tells us that man is never perfect; only God, Nirankar is perfect. But what do we do? We treat others as inferior. We point out their shortcomings. On the other hand, we think we are complete, we are perfect. As soon as we believe this, we start criticising others. Contrary to this, when we go to the company of saints, we become modest. We start realising our shortcomings. We learn that we are not perfect because we have greed, we have anger, we tend to defame others. But in action we are perfect since we do not withhold somebody's payment; our dealings in business are neat and clean. However, we also learn that even this perfection of behaviour ends, if we do not give up criticising or defaming others, insulting others. A person who makes us realise these things is our real well-wisher; he is our favourite.

Who is called a saint (Gurmukh)? Who can be called a saint? In fact Gurmukh is a composite of two simple words Gur (the Master) and Mukh (face). The man who keeps his face towards his True Master or looks forward to Satguru for guidance in life is Gurmukh. And the person who goes by what his own mind (Mana) wants or says, is Manmukh. Not to cheat others, not to deceive others, not to usurp what rightfully belongs to others, not to indulge in telling lies- these are the signs to recognise a saint, a Gurmukh.

In fact, it is man's own attitude or behaviour that makes him Gurmukh or Manmukh i.e. saintly or unsaintly. For example, we use fire for cooking. We prepare tasty and sumptuous dishes. This is its right use. But the same fire is used to burn Somebody's house also. Similarly, wind blows, drives the clouds away from us and we suffer in the heat of the sun. But the same wind may bring the clouds over us and it may rain and make us happy. Similarly, the company of the non-believers of God takes us away from happiness. But when we start believing in Truth, we get peace.

An ignorant person (Manmukh) adopts several rituals to get this peace. But all his practices fail because he is not integrated with the real source of peace and happiness i.e. God. No other means that the man's merger with this source of eternal joy, the Almighty, can make him happy. Man cannot take rest or find eternal peace of mind so long as he remains attached to the worldly materials which by themselves are not permanent, stable and independent. Once a man gives place in his heart to the ever-living Almighty, he himself rises above decay and whosoever comes in his contact, he too finds peace, lasting and all the time. Thereafter, no worldly illusions can attract him, allure him, shake him. History tells us the tales of troubles created by people for saints and the way they were tortured. But these

saints did not detach themselves from the true name, the ultimate truth i.e. God. They continued to rely on it; they always gave importance to this name (God).

Saints! Only a person who knows this Permanent Power (God) and aligns himself with it can remain fearless, unshaken and firm and love all while having faith in truth. In fact all saints are loving devotees of the True Master. The one who loves every saint, indeed loves the True Master. Therefore, we must show love and respect to all saints or fellow devotees. And we must have this feeling throughout our life.

An ignorant person is unable to have such a feeling. When mind prevails over us we are overwhelmed by the non-cooperation of the mind, we are overwhelmed by ego. In other words, when we start to believe: I know a lot, I understand a lot, I am perfect, I am a great intellectual, I am physically very strong and so on, the 'I' enters our mind and there is no room for the love for others to flourish. With the coming of ego, the stream of love ceases to flow. where 'I' dwells, God Formless does not; and where God dwells 'I' does not.

A saintly person removes 'I', gives the place to 'You', takes refuge in this Almighty and is all the time aligned with God Nirankar.

Saints love all. Their love flows from heart. Body is not the consideration; it is the invisible self or the soul that they love. It is devotion, which has always been shown by devotees or saints. Their love or devotion for God is always real, from the core of their hearts. It is never unreal or for show off. Neither they love God for worldly materials, because they know it is never the purpose. They know that worldly possessions can be had, perhaps more than anybody else, even by thieves, robbers and other evil doers:

**SUT DARA AUR LAKSHMI, PAPI KE BHI HOYE;
SANT SAMAGAM HARI KATHA, TULSI DURLABH DOYE.**

A sinner, who does evil deeds may also find these things (son, wife and wealth) but the most valuable is the company of saints, the company of spiritual masters. And the saintly persons would love only this rare thing. They never depend on material goods. They only make use of them as per the need. Their real love is only for God. Their only reliance is this God, the Formless. They know that their devotion to God is the panacea for all kinds of diseases:

**HARI KO NAAM SADA SUKHDAI;
JAKO SIMR AJAMAL UBRAYO,GANKA HUN GAT PAI.**

The nectar of God's Name (praise) has always brought relief, produced happiness. Worldly materials are not always the same. Their impact too varies. One thing may be useful at one time, but the same thing may prove harmful at some other. We know that milk gives strength to the body. But in diarrhoea, the doctor always advises one to stop taking milk. Different materials of the world have different uses, different effects. But the divine praise has been described as always soothing. It gives happiness when we are unhappy. In fact whosoever has given it place in his mind, sought its protection, rises above all ups and downs of life and enjoys peace all the time in all situations. A saint is so firmly aligned with God that he never fumbles. He does not give up his saintly character, whatever the circumstances:

**SANT NA CHHOREN SANTAYEE, KOTIK MILEN ASANT;
CHANDAN VISH VYAPAT NAHIN, LIPTE RAHT BHUJANG.**

It means, just as the sandal tree does not give up its coolness, its fragrance (even when it is coiled by snakes), similarly, a saint does not leave the path shown by Satguru, does not give up service of others. If the world has found any salvation, it is only because of such saints. That is why it is said:

**KABIR DHARTI SADH KI TASKAR BAITHA AYE;
DHARTI BHAR NA DHAYAEHN, INKO LAHA LAYE.**

It means this earth belongs to the saints, but the thieves have occupied it; and they are spoiling it. This earth cannot bear the burden of such people, such sinners. But this earth is still there. Why? Because the saints are also there. This earth is holding itself because of these saints only:

SANT NA HOTE JAGAT MEIN, JAL MARTA SANSAR.

Today, we see the flames of hatred all around. We see them in our own country, we see them elsewhere. There are bamboos in the forest. As the wind blows they come into friction with each other. Their friction produces a spark that causes fire all over and threatens to destroy the entire forest. The flames, however, fail to cross if there is some water in between. Now that water is there, where should the fire go? There is no way to proceed. Similar is the case with the feelings of hatred and jealousy. They spread like fire in the forest. But with the appearance of a saint, they give way to calm and peace. The evil fire just cannot spread. Perhaps that is the reason why those who spread hatred in the world consider saints as a hurdle in their way. Saints speak of love, humanity and universal brotherhood. But those who want to exploit caste and communal feelings for power, consider the spiritually enlightened saints as undesirable blockages or barriers of their path. Saints preach equality only, saying that all human beings are the creation of the same God. But the selfish people do not like this. That is why saints have always been the target of their enmity, hatred and jealousy. Even then the saints do not give up their nature. The sandal tree does not stop shedding fragrance even though the snakes cling it. Somebody stands on the bank of the Ganges. He starts throwing stones into the water with all his might. Does the water of the Ganges cease to be meant for the person who is throwing stones? No. The Ganges still provides water (to him). It still quenches thirst of all, makes everyone clean.

It means that saints possess calm. They do not give up their saintly nature even if they come across millions of unsaintly persons. We get peace of mind from this kind of conduct of the saints only. It is such qualities that provide peace of mind. It is because of these qualities that even sinners get pardoned; they too get salvation. A saint does not vacillate. He remains firm, because he is aligned with this God. In fact that is the reason why such qualities enter his life. So long as we are not aligned with God, we remain narrow-minded. As soon as we are associated with God, our narrow-mindedness gives way and then we pray for the goodwill of all, we do good to all. This change in our life comes when we are associated with saints, when we realise this God Nirankar and when we become the humble servants of humanity.

The nature of a saintly person can be compared with that of a cow, while an unsaintly person is like a snake. We feed the cow with grass, sometimes not even green. Even then it gives us milk. On the other hand, we offer milk to the snake and we know that it gives only poison in return. In fact the snake stings even after drinking milk, because it can give to others only what it has. Saints are known to be helpful to others. They share the burden of others. In their company millions attain salvation. Take for instance a nail, which is quite sharp. If we drive it into a piece of wood, it makes a hole, it causes damage. If it is thrown into the water, it sinks and is lost for ever. But if there is a big log of wood floating on the water and we put the nail on it, it will also swim across.

Exactly like this, even the ignorant people get salvation when they find the support of saints. It must, however, be noted that the unenlightened persons can swim across only when they seek help from saints. In the darkness of materialism, it is difficult to know as to who is a devotee and who is a devil; who is accomplished with spiritual knowledge and who is not; who is devoted to his divine master and who is not. To look at, they appear to have no difference. By deeds, of course, they may be distinguished from each other. Sometime back we were on a long journey. We carried some food with us. On the way, we sat under a tree to take our food. As you know, the taste of pickles is acidic or sour and often it is said that its use spoils the throat. As we were throwing a piece of pickles that was left, we saw some crows hovering over there. Suddenly, it came to our mind that a crow is already not having a sweet

voice, it has a hoarse voice. We said, rather in a light vein, that a crow has nothing to lose if it takes pickles, because its throat is already like this. But if we give pickles to the cuckoo, it may harm its throat because it has a sweet and charming voice. Similarly, there are evil persons in this world, whose actions are bad, who harm one another. In case they do a bad deed, we do not bother. We simply remark that they are like this only. But if a good person whom we call a saint, adopts an evil, everybody takes notice. Sainly persons are always expected to be good and gentle in their behaviour. In case any shortcoming is noticed in their conduct, it gets highlighted. Therefore, saints are required to be more careful about their conduct. In fact they always remain alert.

The gain from spiritual enlightenment is more in the case of saints who make use of it. For example, when the sun rises, it rises for all, but only those will gain from its light who leave their dark, dingy rooms and come in the open. There are several other effects of the sun also. For instance, it provides strength to the human body. It makes the corn nutritious. But all this can be possible by becoming face to face with the sun. However, those who continue to stay in darkness, who on their own keep themselves imprisoned in their rooms or who cover themselves with sheets of cloth, can not derive any benefit from the sun. Whenever Gurus or Prophets appeared in this world in the olden ages, it was said:

MITI DHUND JAG CHANAN HOYA

It means the mist of darkness is gone and there is light.

It is just like the sun, we were discussing above. If it was the age of Guru Nanak, even during those times the (real) beneficiaries were only those who listened to what he preached, who submitted to him and sought his blessings. No wonder, even persons like Sajjan Thug were pardoned and began to be counted in the category of saints, But this divine light was of no use to the people who described Guru Nanak as a misguided man (Kurahiya). Satguru was very much there, but blessed were only those who sought his holy company, listened to what he taught and acted upon the same. A saintly person (Gurmukh) always acts on the advice or principles of his divine master. On the other hand, an ignorant person (Manmukh) goes the way where there are only evils, only thorns. He does feel the pain, which results in the loss of peace of mind. He treads on the thorns of five (notorious) instincts- lust, anger, greed, passion and ego and feels the pain but still continues to walk on the same. No doubt even saintly people have to walk on these thorns, but they cover their feet with the shoes of spiritual enlightenment. Thus these thorns do not prick them, do not become a reason for the pain. Divine masters have always advised man, given him the wisdom so that he understands that if he goes by thorny path, there is bound to be pain, there is bound to be suffering. On the other hand, if he adopts the path, which is full of flowers, he will get the fragrance only, the pleasure only. An ignorant person (Manmukh) does not only adopt the thorny path but also keeps on spreading the thorns so that the others who pass that way are also troubled. Saints, however, do not spread the thorns for others; they endeavour to remove the thorns. They know the method, they have the knowledge to make others feel happy. They tell them that they can be happy by aligning themselves with this Ultimate Truth, God-Nirankar, by making their mind the dwelling place for the Almighty at the time and submit to the divine will in all situations. These illusions, these false allurements of worldly materials are there at every step, but a saint associated himself with God and finds peace and happiness not only for himself but others also, notwithstanding opposition from the people of the ignorant world. For example, the scorpion does not give up stinging, while the saintly people do not give up their selfless effort to save it. Similarly, saints do not give up their path of spiritualism, even if the ignorant people continue to make efforts to harm them. Those who have faith in the divine masters, those who are saints and devotees, they do not spread the flames (of hatred); they only extinguish the same. They are men of peace. They do not possess any weapon to cause any harm to others. In fact, herein lies their distinction, their greatness. They do not follow the path of the downfall of others. They march on the path of the uplift of others. The person, who causes downfall of others thinks that he is brave, but the principle that has been proved since ages says that the person who rescues others is in fact great. Anybody can be wounded anywhere with any weapon, but can we find the healers of those wounds too in every house, in every street? No. This does not happen. Suppose a person is injured in a village. He has to rush to the town in search of a doctor. There too,

when he inquires whether there is a doctor he gets the reply that he should go further, he should go the next ward, where he may find a doctor or a hospital.

What we mean to say is that those who heal the wounds of others are not found in every street, in every ward. This is so because it is a noble task which very few can afford to perform. To tear a cloth into pieces does not require much effort. Give the scissors to a child, he will do it in no time. But these pieces can not be stitched together in one second or in one minute. It requires a lot of labour, a lot of skill to do so. This tough job of stitching together, uniting together, this noble task of the uplift of others, healing the wounds of others is the privilege of the saintly persons only.

Where do these noble people acquire these qualities from? They obtain them from the company of saints, by doing the service to them. The company of saints always glorifies us, fills our minds with nectar (righteousness) and helps virtues enter our lives. The only requirement, however, is that we should fully surrender to and align with godly persons. In case there appears a wall of ego or some other kind of curtain in between, we may be deprived from being purified, from becoming gold. Divine Masters have always emphasised the need for the company of saints. They have always advised not to go in for the company of the ignorant and the ungodly:

**SADHU KE SANGAT RAHE, JAU KI BHOOSI KHAY;
HONHAR SO HOYE HAI, SAKAT SANG NA JAY.**

Whatever we may have to do in the world, we must remain in the company of saints. We may face any ups and downs, we may receive anything to eat- even the husk of barley, yet we should not go to the company of the unsaintly persons. We should cherish the company of saints all the time, because it is only here that our belief in God remains firm, our faith in the Almighty is strengthened. No more we stumble; we continue our march on the path of truth. It is because of the company of saints that our mind becomes spiritually enlightened. It comes to know what is good and what is bad. Automatically it stops moving towards evils and adopts the path of goodwill. Man indeed has never found salvation unless he got the company of saints. Man achieved salvation only when he found this righteous way of thinking, this wisdom. And this wisdom comes from the company of saints. Spiritual masters say:

JO JAANE APAS KO NICHA, SO HI GINIYE SAB TE UCHA

The man who considers himself to be humble is in fact the highest of all. His name is included in the category of saints and he deserves to be revered. He has no ego, because ego brings hatred for all. A man occupying some high office always talks in terms of 'I', 'I can do this', 'I can do that'. Similarly if man gets a little honour it goes to his head and makes him diseased with ego.

One may be proud of one's good piece of writing or a poem. One may be proud of being a singer. But so long as man has ego, he does not receive real respect. He has no name, notwithstanding his high caste or number of degrees he has obtained. Saints, on the other hand, receive instant respect because they are modest, they are humble. The world goes through what they say and attaches importance to the same.

As we look at the life of the divine masters of the past, we do not find any ego in them. They possessed all noble qualities, yet they never claimed themselves to be superior to others. They always maintained their modesty and behaved like servants of the servants. We see that the water of the spring flows. As it moves downward, it moves towards the vast ocean, it goes acquiring vastness. On the other hand, the water that stays on a height, does not come down, produces bad smell and may spread diseases. Similarly, we can merge with this God (the divine vastness) if we give up all kinds of ego and adopt humility and modesty in all matters. The man who surrenders himself before divine masters is always held in high esteem and is blessed with all kinds of happiness. On the other hand a person with ego is always in a fume and makes others fume too. A person who is humble and modest bestows his fragrance on others and himself remains cool and calm. He is venerated in this world and

hailed in heaven. That is why the noble and virtuous always opt for humility. They would never oppress others. They would never scare others and at the same time never feel scared from anyone. The virtues that are once imbibed by the noble, remain always there. No power whatsoever, no action whatsoever can dissolve their virtues. Saints are always free from fear. They have no worry. A pyre (Chita) burns the dead, while worry (Chinta) burns the alive. That is why saintly people avoid worry. They are, of course, alert. A saint is always conscious. He does not utilise his devotion to God for worldly gains. He (devotee) sold a commodity to saints at a little higher price. This came under discussion. he quoted :

SANTAN SIYON HUM LAHA KHATYA

It means that we have to gain from saints only. Saints! We have not to earn this kind of profit from saints. We have to borrow from them their qualities, learn the skill of having faith in God. We have to learn from them as to how to serve others even when we have little capacity to do so. Saintly people always pay attention to the way they are leading their lives, and they continue to ponder until their last breath suppose we travel by train . Who does win our admiration? There is a passenger. He is assisting and helping others. He offers space to accommodate others. It is possible that he might get down at the very next station. He may get down after 50-100 miles. However, even during such a short a journey, he pleases every body around him. The fellow passengers continue to feel enchanted with the fragrance of his behaviour even after he gets down. He creates such an impression in their minds that they remember him with joy until they reach home. They indeed feel inspired by him. Now, there may be another person, another passenger travelling in the same compartment. His journey may be comparatively long. But in that long journey he quarrels with everybody, abuses them, harasses them, dumps their luggage on the ground and stretches himself over the entire berth. He too will be remembered by fellow passengers, but merely for his bitter words. Remembering him will make them feel pained only. A Gurmukh (saintly person) is just like the first passenger and Manmukh (unsaintly person) resembles the other.

The saintly persons are virtuous because they are always aligned with the divine source of virtues, the Almighty. That is why they are always happy. On the other hand, the unsaintly persons are not even aware of the truth. So there is nothing unusual when they make mistakes. For example, a man was jumping into the river again and again. Someone asked him the reason. He said, "I am searching for a necklace. Look, there it is in the water. I want to take it out. The problem is that when I am outside the water, I can see the necklace. But when I jump into it, I just cannot find anything. It is really baffling. I have been trying to get at the necklace for quite some time (but in vain) ." Hearing this, the other man said, "Brother! Look over your head there." He looked and found that the necklace was hanging on a branch of a tree over his head. What he saw into the water was only its reflection. While the necklace in fact was hanging on the branch of a tree, he was searching for it below (in the water). that is why saints point out:

VASTU KAHIN, DHUNDAT KAHIN

It means the thing is somewhere else, while it is being searched for somewhere else. The source of happiness is the Almighty. But man is searching for the same (happiness) in worldly objects, which are only a reflection. The deer looks for the musk in the bushes whereas it exists within its body. A saintly person knows as to who is the ocean of happiness, where it is. That is why he is always content, fully satisfied. An unsaintly person does not know this. That is why he is baffled. No doubt he is familiar with the names used for God, he does not know what exactly they mean. There are many names used for this Almighty. Somewhere it is Allah, somewhere else it is Ram. Similarly, at places it is called Waheguru and elsewhere it is described as God , Nirankar etc. A Gurumukh does not enter into the controversy of names. He goes after the object, the truth, for which these names stand. Spiritual masters point out:

JIS VAKHAR KO LEN TU AYA,

They refer here to the object (Vakhar) and not to the name (Akhar). It has also been stated clearly that one need not wander in remote lonely places in search of this divine object:

**KAHE RE BAN KHOJAN JAYEE,
SARAV NIWASI SADA ALEPA
TOHE SANG SAMAYEE.**

In other words, God is there with you, while you are searching for it in remote places, in caves, etc. Man continues to wander from place to place in search of the Almighty. This aimlessness is the root cause of his bewilderment. A spiritually enlightened person realise God all pervading and omnipresent, with the benevolence of the divine master. He then rises above all misapprehensions. He does not fall prey to superstition; he is never a victim of blind faith. He does not stop if a cat cuts across his way or somebody sneezes. All these are the signs of being ignorant, being unsaintly. Blind faith breeds from misapprehensions, from not knowing the truth. A young lady got married and came to the house of her in-laws for the first time. She found that her mother-in-law had put a basket over a cat. In fact the cat had come there by chance and the basket had been placed to stop it from spoiling the sweets etc. The bride, of course, saw the mother in-law doing this. Time passed and the bride had her own children. When her son got married and the bride began to enter the house, she asked the servant to bring a cat. A cat was brought as also a basket. The cat was covered with the basket. The woman had only seen her mother-in-law doing this and she took it as an essential ceremony for the wedding. She thought that it was essential to call for a cat and cover it with a basket at the time of the bride's entering the house of her in-laws. Only then wedding ceremonies would be complete.

This was ignorance. Because of ignorance the woman started doing whatever she saw being done by her mother-in-law. In fact her mother-in-law had covered the cat with a basket only because it was creating disturbance. We find such ignorance all around. Unsaintly people get stuck up in such superstitious activities. Sainly people, however, do not indulge in such things at all. All their misapprehensions end with the knowing of God and their devotion to this Nirankar. A person who is blessed by Satguru and realises God Nirankar, attains communion with the Almighty, he in fact leads an enlightened life. He pursues the path of selfless service through body, intellect and his material assets. Even this earth feels purified by the touch of the feet of such noble persons.

(IV)

What is the relationship between Gyan, God-knowledge and Karma, the deeds?

If deeds are bound to attract the corresponding reward, how can a spiritually enlightened saint escape this binding?

What is sacrifice?

Both Gyan (God knowledge) and Karma (the deeds) have always occupied an important place in life of the spiritually enlightened saints. A bird flies and goes quite high in the sky. For this the condition is that both its wings should be functioning. In case one of the wings does not work, the bird just cannot fly; it will remain crawling on the ground only. Similarly, we may presume that a saint also has two wings- one in the form of God- knowledge and the other in the form of his own deeds. In devotion, both God-knowledge and actions are vital. Without God knowledge, action is said to be blind and without action, God knowledge lame.

The two must be in harmony with each other. Only then we can reach the heights (of devotion to God).

In order to know a subject or science, practical is as important as the theory. The same is true of God-knowledge. Saints do not teach others only by word of mouth, but through their practical life. Action is found to be more effective than the word. The spiritually enlightened devotees always speak through their actions. They practice what they say and inspire others to do the same. to-day, there is no dearth of the words. We have before us the sacred words spoken by the great spiritual masters in the form of holy books and scriptures. Many things have been said since ages. There seems to be no need to say more; a lot has already been spoken. What is needed is the action, a practical life based on the words of the great masters. Only such individuals as put these words into action make the society ideal, a model. It is important to listen, to read and mention God-knowledge, but it is all the more essential to put it into action. This we can understand with the help of an example also. A husband and his wife were asleep in the courtyard of their house. A thief climbed the boundary wall. The wife got the sound and saw the person's head over the wall. She alerted her husband who was sleeping on the nearby cot and said, "Look ! somebody is trying to climb the boundary wall to enter our house." The husband said, "I am watching." The thief climbed the wall and jumped into the courtyard. The wife again said to the husband, "Look ! The person has come in and is passing by us." The husband silenced her by saying that he could see and understand everything. The thief went near the room. The wife asked her husband, "What are you doing?" The husband replied, "Don't think I am a fool. I am watching everything, understanding everything." The thief committed the theft, carried the bundle on his shoulder and moved towards the wall. At this again the wife said, "Look ! The person has looted us and is taking away everything." The husband repeated his reply and said, "Do you think I am a child? Are my eyes not working ? I am watching everything. I understand everything better than you do." The thief took away the bundle while the great husband kept lying on the cot. What is the use of watching or understanding, listening or telling things like this, until the man does the leave the cot and move? Wisdom is no wisdom if not acted upon. Such knowledge as also God knowledge is of no use.

We hear a lot, we tell a lot, but in case we do not match the same with action, many may try to rob us - they are ready. There is lust, there is anger, there is ego, there is passion, and there is jealousy. All of them are ready to rob us. God-knowledge and deeds are like the two parallel lines of the railway track, laid for the train of devotion to move forward. Just as a railway train goes thousands of miles on its track and the passengers on it also cover the journey of thousands of miles, similarly a saint moves on the track of God-knowledge and the deeds, acts as per God-knowledge, puts into practice the principles of spirituality and thus finds salvation not only for himself but even for those who come in contact with him, who are associated with him; he makes them happy in the real sense. This is a great service to humanity which becomes possible only with the combination or conjunction of God-knowledge and the deeds.

Lord Jesus Christ gives an example. He says, suppose we have placed a lamp in our room and we are moving without any difficulty. This cannot be described as service to others. We are using the light for our own movement in the room and saving us from any kind of stumbling. This will be converted into a service to others only when we place the lamp in the window, so that there is light not only inside the room but outside also where it is dark and in this light even the people who are passing by do not stumble. It means the other will also receive comfort and be delighted all the time. Such a selfless service to humanity is provided by saints only. Their life is full of selfless service of this kind. Such people who devotee themselves to the service of humanity do not care for their own comforts or their own assets. They move on the path of pure, simple selfless service. They spend their while doing good to others. We all know that even if we do not sing the praise of such people, each breath of ours acknowledges their gratitude. The saints who bring happiness in the life of others, who adopt this practice, create in fact a place for themselves in the hearts of others. Their influence does not last for ten or twenty years; it remains there for ages. The privilege of leading such a life goes to those saints and spiritually enlightened people who make this Almighty, God Nirankar the base of their life, make their hearts a dwelling place for this Formless after realising that God is all - pervading. After assimilating God in their hearts, they find coolness

not only for their own mind but provide the same to others also. In fact this action, this practice is the practical version of their God-knowledge.

In case we are sick, we go to a doctor. He gives us medicine and alongwith it prescribes certain precautions to be observed by us. The medicine proves effective only when we observe those precautions also. Similarly God- knowledge remains just a piece of information and serves no purpose, if it is not combined with such actions as are expected of an enlightened person. Such God-knowledge does not produce any significant gain.

The five pledges or principles based on solemn undertaking of the Sant Nirankari Mission too seek to inspire man with Karma (action) free from ego. It will not be wrong to say that these pledges are the practical expression of Gyan (God knowledge). They are the visible reflection of the change that should come in the life of a devotee and the kind of life that he is expected to lead after attaining God- knowledge. These five pledges are nothing but what was sought to be taught by the great spiritual masters of the past. They are the same principles through which they (the spiritual masters) taught us the way of living. The first pledge is that we should treat all our assets physical, intellectual and material, as gifts of God and we should not be proud of them at all. We should not feel proud of our body and say it is handsome, it is strong and we care little for others. Neither we should be proud of wealth and think that others are nothing before us. Nor we should claim to be great intellectuals and highly educated and look down upon others as illiterate and unimportant. We must avoid these things, because a man with ego is never found welcome in the realm of divinity. That is why great spiritual masters have always cautioned man against the evil of ego:

**KABIR GARB NA KEEJIYE, UNCHE DEKH AVAS;
AAJ KAAL BHUIN LOTNA, UPAR JAME GHAS.**

O Man! Today you are proud of your wealth but you have no knowledge as to what is going to happen the very next moment. You may be proud of your physical strength, boast that you can defeat ten persons at a time and nobody around will have the courage to challenge you, but you may fall sick any moment, lie on the bed and be unable to pick up even a glass of water yourself. In fact you lose your sense when you are under the influence of ego. You realise it only when the death approaches you. But by then it is too late and nothing is possible to be done. Therefore, you should wake up from the slumber of negligence right now and seek refuge in the Truth. Don't feel proud of your physical, intellectual and material assets. In fact this is what we learn from God-knowledge. When the whole world is a falsehood, an illusion, then why feel proud of it? All our pride based on the physical, intellectual and material assets vanishes as soon as we align ourselves with God. This is the principle of God- knowledge, and this is the visible form, the practical expression of the first pledge (of the Sant Nirankari Mission).

The second pledge is not to feel proud of one's caste, colour, creed or religion, not to consider others to be inferior or low on these accounts. When does a person who is spiritually enlightened recognise these discriminations? Discrimination is just not possible in God-knowledge; it has no place here.

The third pledge is: not to hate others on account of their dress and diet. There is no scope for hatred in God-knowledge.

The fourth pledge is: to fulfil the responsibilities of family life, to perform one's duties sincerely. Spiritual enlightenment does not permit one to run away from the responsibilities of practical life. All great spiritual masters, saints had their family life.

The fifth pledge is: not to unfold God-knowledge unto others without the permission of the True Master. This denotes that we have no authority; God-knowledge is an act of mercy, an act of benevolence towards us by the True Master. We have, therefore, no reason to be proud of being spiritually enlightened. Moreover, even God-knowledge does not permit the pride of any kind.

All these pledges are the visible form of spiritual enlightenment. Only their practice will prove that we have known God. Just as a flower is known by its fragrance, spiritually enlightened person is known by his deeds.

A man might have the knowledge of any number of holy scriptures. We quote Ravana's example even today. He too had knowledge of Vedas and shastras. But his Karma (deeds) did not match with the spiritual knowledge. He suffered from ego. Then, what was his fate? One of the popular stories says that when Ravana had the evil thought of bringing Sita by force and was about to leave home, his wife asked him, "What are you going to do? What are you thinking?" Ravana said, "I am going to kidnap Sita." Ravana's wife saw that he had dressed himself like a beggar. She pointed out, "So far, you are only contemplating to kidnap Sita and the very thought has made your condition like this. From an emperor you have become a beggar right in my presence. There was a crown on your head. You had royal dress. But a single evil thought has brought you down to this condition, you have become a beggar. What will happen when you have actually done the (evil) deed? I am just thinking of the same. This is the worry I have."

History reveals that what followed was unfortunate. Ravana did not only have an evil thought, but even acted on it. How do we look at what he had to face? We treat him as a devil. He became senseless. He did not act in consonance with God-knowledge. Consequently the entire family was ruined. Even now Ravana is shown disrespect, his effigy is burnt. Ravana was a great scholar. He was spiritually enlightened. Even then, why this humiliation? This is because his deeds did not correspond to his Gyan (God-knowledge). His knowledge could not become his shield because he had not adopted it in practice, not acted as per the same. He indulged in evil deeds for the satisfaction of his ego. The result is before us all.

People say quite often that the number of those indulging in bad deeds like thieves, dacoits and assassins of the innocent is on the increase and they are prospering, living in comfort. They have all kinds of resources. When the heavy wooden beams float on the water they seem to be quite light. Push a little, they will go yards ahead. But when these heavy beams, soaked in water, are brought to the bank, they require several persons to carry them. Now they are really heavy. Similarly when a person commits a sin, does evil deeds, he thinks: nobody has challenged me ; nobody has seen me ; I committed theft and decoties but did never fall into the police dragnet ; I am flourishing ; earlier I had only one plot of land (property), now I have many; my evil deeds have caused me no difference, have had no effect on me. But spiritual masters warn, "O man ! So far you are moving in this ocean of material world. You find the beam (of bad deeds) to be quite light and without much effect, but by the time you approach the bank or the end arrives and you are going to be confronted with the account (of your deeds), then only you will realise the load that you will be required to carry:

**PAAPI KARM KAMANWDE KARDE HAYE HAYE;
JIYON MATHAN MATHANIAN TIYON MATHE DHARM RAYE.**

It means you will realise only when the God of death gives you the churning, the stirring. These bad deeds, these evil deeds can be done only by a person who does not realise the existence of God all around, who does not know that God is there everywhere. A person who knows it, must not indulge in any kind of indiscipline. Infact a spiritually enlightened person ceases to be the master of his actions. All his deeds are as per the will of God. Then, how can he move in negative direction? For the spiritually enlightened devotees, only God is the master of all actions.

Some scholars and saints consider God to be inert or inactive. They think that all activities come under the purview of the nature or universe deriving its energy from the Almighty. Some question whether God is active (Karta) or inactive (Akarta).

God is inactive but acts at the same time. In reality, God is the supreme energy, a life - force, a power that pervades the universe in such a manner that without it not even the slightest movement can take place. The order laid down by the Supreme Power is as permanent and uniform as the Supreme Power itself. That is why this life-force does not create any obstacle in the way of the human being who enjoys the freedom of action in this order of the Almighty. In this way God is inactive inspite of being the master of every action or movement. Now the question arises that when God is a living power, why does it not stop us from doing wrong? To find an answer, we know that the scientists today have already proved that energy by itself does no work, although every work is done through it or with its help. It is the appliance or the gadget connected with the energy that works. Electricity is, for example, an energy. It does not do anything on its own. But when we connect a heater with it, it produces heat. If we put a cooler, the same electricity produces coolness. This coolness, heat, light and so on are not related to electricity but depend on the instruments connected with it. No doubt they all function due to electricity, yet the latter has nothing to do with what they produce. Electricity remains the same in all the gadgets. Would you like it if electricity provides only heat and refuses to produce coolness? This just cannot happen. Similar is the case with the life force, the supreme energy. It does not act by itself. All the actions flow from the instrument connected with it, i.e., the human body with all its fine elements or components like the various organs, the mind, the brain, the heart as also the ego. Jeeva or the human being certainly derives energy from this life force, i.e., God, but enjoys the freedom of actions based on these elements. This supreme power does not interfere. Whatever Jeeva does, it gets the reward as provided in the order or system laid down by the Supreme Power. Since this freedom of (human) activity is provided in the order created by this Supreme Power, it does not stop us from doing anything.

Some people think that saints are exempted from the principle of getting the reward as per their actions. In that case, does the order of the Almighty not apply to all alike? This is, however, not so. The order of the Almighty is binding for all. The doer must face the consequences of his action. Since a spiritually enlightened person does not use his own mind and leaves all the decisions about his actions to the will of God, surrenders all his assets at the divine alter, he is not bound by the condition of facing the consequences of his actions. Suppose a person has a stick in his hand. If by chance, he kills someone with this stick, it is not the stick that is chained or punished. In case the man saves somebody's life with the help of the same stick, even then the reward does not go to the stick. Whosoever does the deed or claims to have done it, is definitely governed by this order.

A saint is always associated with this Nirankar. He surrenders all his assets to the Almighty. Therefore all his actions are only to fulfill the will of this Supreme Power. Since the divine is always for goodwill of all, a saint's deeds are also bound to be beneficial to all, for the welfare of all. So long as he is in association with the Almighty, he just cannot harm others. In case a bad deed is found to have been done by him, we may understand that he has not been in communion with God. Such an action must have been the result of his own will or ego. He must, therefore, face the consequences even though he happens to be enlightened spiritually :

**JAG VICH RAH KE SARE JAG NAAL
BESHAK KAARO BAR KARO**

A spiritually enlightened person fulfills all his social responsibilities and looks after his family, without claiming any credit or return for the same. Such a person has been described as a man of performance (Karmayogi). There is action (Karma) ; there is spirituality (Yoga); both are inseparable so far as a saint is concerned. The spiritually enlightened persons would never disregard Karma. They do perform all their duties. But their mind is always with this Almighty. When their head and heart are with God, they become steadfast, unwavering, because the one whose support they have sought is permanent. Man in this world, however, ignores God, forgets this Almighty and indulges in all kinds of misdeeds. Whosoever has realised this divine support, has become a true devotee. A person who stays in the society just as the lotus does in water, is the real saint. Just as the lotus remains above water, uninfluenced by water even though it stands in it, a saint remains unattached even while he performs all his worldly duties; his real attachment is with God. And even though he feels

unattached, he shows love and respect to those who are members of our family. This is how we can extend the map of the spiritual way of living as taught by the True Master to the vast human family in the real sense. A spiritually enlightened person perceives God in every human being. Then why should he not be able to see the Almighty in the members of the family? If I do not see God in my spouse, it will be taken that my behaviour is not in tune with the spiritual enlightenment or I have not adopted God-knowledge in my practical life. All the great masters who appeared in this world, did not break away from their families. They had their own households, they had their children and they had their families. They fulfilled all their responsibilities of family life and immortalised themselves on the path of devotion at the same time. We have to run the family but with the condition that while doing everything we would always remember this God. There will be peace in the family only if we remember God. If we incorporate God in our family, our home can be filled with joys. O man! When you perform all your duties in the holy communion with God and all your duties are performed with the spirit of duty as against the sense of obliging others, all this really becomes a source of delight. You enjoy the peace yourself and distribute the same to others as well.

Often it is said here that to lay down one's life is a great sacrifice, but greater is the sacrifice of a devotee in whose case it starts from the very day he aligns himself with the Almighty and launches his march on the path of selfless service. Hereafter the spirit of sacrifice becomes his trait for the whole life. It is a big sacrifice to tolerate the words of others, particularly when they are full of disrespect. To allow others to take credit; to bring others forward and give them importance while keeping oneself in the background, also amounts to sacrifice. The entire life of such spiritually enlightened devotees is full of sacrifices. Baba Gurbachan Singh Ji and many loving saints laid down their lives while moving on this (noble) path. Great spiritual masters, whether they appeared in the age of Gold, Silver, Bronze or Iron, devote all their lives to bring about the unity of the mankind and to teach man that none in this world is a stranger. Apart from spreading the divine light, they took up this task, this selfless service of unifying the human society.

We can spread this voice of truth in the world in true sense only if we mould our lives also according to the same, if our actions are in line with our words. If we go on speaking but do not practice the same in life, we will be compelling the world to deny the existence of God, instead of bringing them closer to the truth. This is the reason why atheism is spreading in the world today. He who claims to be religious, a saint or devotee, does not exhibit the same in action. No doubt he speaks about the welfare of others, his hands only harm them and his feet too move in the same direction (of causing distress to others). When an ordinary person observes this being done by those who claim to be religious, he loses faith in the religion itself. Now that we have to do is to see that this world of ours does not lose faith in true religion and truth. On the other hand, we must try to bring back the people who left this path somehow. We must do this so that everybody feels happy, everybody's coming in this world becomes meaningful. Such a positive role only will prove that we are spiritually enlightened.

Wherever we stay, we must perform our duties sincerely and honestly and pray for the welfare of all. The ignorant man today has forgotten his duties but at the same time makes many demands. He does not even think of what he himself is required to do. The spiritually enlightened saints show the way that only such people have the right to receive something as perform their duties also. For example, if a bride goes to her in-laws only with the sense of her rights, there will always be trouble in the family. On the other hand, if she goes with a sense of responsibility, ready to perform all her duties, she will convert the house into heaven. In the same manner if her in-laws also reciprocate and do their duties towards her, it will become a happy home. In other words, if the new comer understands that he or she is entering his or her own house and those who are already stay there also realise that the new comer is not an outsider, he or she is only a member of the family, there will always be a different kind of peace and joy. With such an approach only we can fulfill our duties and if we continue to perform our duties, our rights will be given to us automatically. There is no dearth for those who act with a sense of duty. Such a person always remains content.

Every human being needs material goods. Everything is required for the body. But a spiritually enlightened saint feels content even in a small hut. He is content and humble

even if he acquires a palatial house with the grace of the Almighty. God has created all these objects for use and not for throwing or breaking. They have all been gifted to man. But he has become so much involved in them that he has forgotten the one who provided them all.

If a friend gives you a watch to put on, he deposits the same in your trust. You must take care of the watch. But it must not happen that we walk on the road while looking at the watch. If we keep on looking at the watch only, we are likely to strike against someone. We must use the watch but while remaining alert. We may keep our eyes on the road and at the same time turn the wrist from time to time to ensure that it is there.

The purpose of narrating this small example is to show that God has gifted everything to man. The real happiness or joy lies in their use as a trustee and not giving all the importance to them. Suppose there is a tall building. If we stand on the ground below and look at it, the building appears to be quite high so much that we have to turn our neck. But if we go to the airport in the same town and look at the building from an aeroplane, it will look as small as a toy. This however, does not mean that the building does not remain tall. In fact we rose above it. That is why the same building appears to be small. Similarly when we look at the worldly materials from the spiritual heights of God-knowledge, they look unimportant, small and meaningless.

The same is the case with the heat of the sun. It causes burning. One feels quite hot. But suppose we enter a tank, go into the water. This makes no difference to the sun. Its effect remains the same. But our own position is changed, when we found the company of water. As we entered the water, we found coolness and the effect of the heat of the sun started decreasing. What we mean to say is that material wealth is quite powerful. We indeed admit that it is powerful. But when does its effect end? When does it diminish? This happens when we acquire a higher position, when we bind ourselves to the Supreme Power, God Nirankar and are one with it, we make it dwell in our mind. There-after, material wealth does not attract us and we always derive happiness from it, we enjoy it. This is how a spiritually enlightened person, a saint or a devotee would like to act.

Devotion is the means to unite the devotee and God and this is the noblest act also. What is devotion and what is a devotee? Devotee is a flower in full bloom and devotion is its fragrance. The devotion wins glory and attains value, if it is based on the sense of selflessness, if the devotee rises above all kinds of desires and selfish interests and is guided with a deep sense of faith. This is the kind of devotion that unfolds the real image of the devotee. Moreover, it makes our life clean and bright. Others also take inspiration from such living. In fact a person who is able to attain such a sense of devotion, makes his thoughts, words and deeds alike and does not feel proud of anything, even if he may acquire any amount of wealth, may have a vast business, may be physically strong, may have many followers, may rule over others, may have kingdoms, may acquire any number of valuable objects. Such a devotee finds respect automatically. That is why it is said :

SAR KATE SAR HOT HAI SAR RAKHE SAR JAYE

We find respect only if we give up ego. Our actions are noble and for the welfare of others only when they are not accompanied by ego based on the sense of being the master of action. Such approach can be expected from the spiritually enlightened saints only, because they accept the Almighty alone as the master of every action of theirs.

God-knowledge and human action have an extremely important relationship. Harmony between the two, their combination, is essential. It is because of this combination and harmony that the image of the devotee emerges with clarity and he is spotted even in the vast crowd of the people. It is he who impresses others, makes the life of others clean and spotless. A saint or a devotee is like a bird who flies on the heights of the sky of devotion. This, however, is possible only when he uses the two wings - God-knowledge and the action.

(V)

What is religion? How to define it?

When religion preaches tolerance, harmony and inner virtues, why are there disputes in its name?

Who can be described as a religious person?

India is known as a land of religions. It is said that it is inhabited by people belonging to a large number of religions. At the same time we hear about disputes between the followers of different religions. At the same time we hear about disputes between the followers of different religions. On the one hand, religion is believed to be the source of virtues, but on the other hand, the same is also taken to be the root cause of many disputes. The point for consideration is whether the religion as we know is confined only to the outer decorations, artificial symbols and other objects visible from outside. In real sense, religion has got to be only one. Often we read that people belonging to different religions assembled at a particular place. I am, however, convinced that there cannot be a number of religions in the realm of spirituality. Instead, there is only one religion, the religion of humanity or human religion. religion means only to realise God and then love each and every human being. there may be many sects, but religion remains one. All human beings have only one race, i.e., the human race. They have only one religion, the human religion.

When a child is born, there is no symbol to indicate that it belongs to a particular religion or caste. This can, of course, be true in relation to the animals and birds. Our eyes can recognise them and point out whether it is a cow, a goat, a camel or it is an elephant. But the distinction of man is only that he is man. That is why man has been treated as superior to others. It is the same divine light that dwells in every human being. It is, therefore, essential that after taking birth as a human being one must behave like a human being. But what is happening? Today we like to be known as Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs or Christians, but not human beings. You ask some one, "Who are you?" You will get the reply, "I am a Hindu; I am a Muslim." Nobody will tell you that he is a human being. We are anxious to prove ourselves to be a good Hindu, a good Muslim, a good Sikh and for this even if we are required to kill someone, we are prepared to do so. The question arises whether before trying to be a good Hindu, a good Muslim or a good Sikh, did we become a good human being or not? Did we acquire any goodness in our life or not? If we are not a good human being, we are not a good Hindu, not a good Christian, not a good Muslim and not a perfect Sikh. The first thing we must imbibe is goodness. This is the base. Whatever the kind of seed we sow, the same kind of food we receive. If we plant a Babul, can we hope to get a sweet mango? Since we sow the seeds of Babul, we are bound to find thorns only. If the foundation is good, whatever structure we raise, will be durable, beautiful. Similarly, we can hope to receive good fruits provided we sow the appropriate seeds.

It is, however, no use longing for good results if malice and hatred lie at the roots and we have been happy to see others suffer. How can a person be a great religious man, if he causes suffering to others, hates them and feels jealous? Which religion do we serve with such a behaviour? Which category of devotees do we belong to? It is very essential that in the first instance we should imbibe goodness and humanity. Without this, nobody is religious, nobody is good. The scholars, after going through the history have to admit that the number of wars and killings that took place in the name of religion was far greater than

those on any other issue. Religion, however, does never induce us to fight. The real cause of disputes is the ignorance about the true religion. One who comes to know the true religion and follows it, can never become a cause of dispute. What is religion? After all, which religion should be called as the true religion? Today we must understand this. Great spiritual masters have taught man :

**TAJO SAB BHARAM BHAJO PARBRAHM,
KAHO NANAK ATAL EH DHARM.**

To remove one's misconceptions is religion; to remember God is religion. The misconceptions here mean to discriminate between our own and the others, to consider oneself high and the others low. It is also a misunderstanding that while the world is perishable, we consider and treat it to be permanent. All these misapprehensions and misunderstandings stand removed when we know the Almighty, we realise God Nirankar and we remember it, praise it. In this religion, there is no room for any discrimination on the basis of caste; there is no consideration for high and low. Once the worldly misunderstandings are over, all human beings appear to be equal. That is why the divine masters have said :

MANAS KI JAT SABHAY EKO PAHCHANBO

Saints! We have to know this very religion-the religion that removes apprehension the religion that was glorified by great spiritual master, the religion that was preached by Lord Christ, the religion that Hazrat Mohammad dreamt of bringing into the world, the religion that was established by the great Gurus starting from Guru Nanak Dev Ji upto Guru Gobind Singh Ji Maharaj. We have to follow the same true religion we have to adopt it. We must follow the principles laid down and acted upon by Lord Rama. Which is that religion? There is no place for intolerance in that religion. It is not based on selfishness; it does not teach us to be self-centred. On the other hand, it teaches us to think of the goodwill of all, to be good to all.

Today we recite the names of those great spiritual masters, we worship them. We should, however, not confine ourselves to merely remembering them or reciting their names. We must also act on what they said. So long as we do not agree to what they said, we do not adopt the same in our life or do not follow the religion they established, we cannot be called men of religion or religious persons. The divine masters tell us about religion:

**PARHIT SARAS DHARM NAHIN BHAI,
PAR PEETA SAM NAHIN ADHMAI.**

It means there is no religion equal to the selfless service to others and there is nothing worse than causing distress to others. So long as you do not try to be helpful to others, remove their distress, realise their pains, you cannot be a pious or virtuous person. A poet says:

**DUKH TERA HO KI DUKH MERA HO,
DUKH KI PARIBHASHA EK HAI,
AANSOO TERE HON KI AANSOO MERE HON,
AANSOO KI BHASHA EK HAI.**

If we do not realise the distress of others or we feel happy to see others being killed or hackled, we are not religious or pious people. A saint just cannot cause pain to others. He will never laugh to see others weeping. Those who do so have been addressed by a Punjabi poet like this:

**DUSHMAN MARE TAN KHUSHI NA KARIYE
SAJJNAN BHI MAR JANAO**

O Man! Do not feel happy on the death of a person whom you considered as your enemy, because the one whom you consider a friend is also to die. Nobody lives in this world for ever:

**KABIR DHOOL DHAKELKE PURIYA BANDHI DEH,
DIWAS CHAR KO DEKHNA, ANT KHEH KE KHEH.**

This is such a truth that nobody can afford to ignore. No doubt one feels horrified to hear this, yet nobody can close the eyes or overlook the same. This truth (of death) is bound with every human body, be it a ruler or the ruled, poor or the rich. Whatever the status, everybody has to go. Then why should we rejoice over the death of a particular person? Spiritual masters have described kindness as the base of religious faith:

**DAYA DHARM KA MOOL HAI, PAAP MOOL ABHIMAN,
TULSI DAYA NA CHHORIYE, JAB LAG GHAT MEIN PRAN.**

If we remove kindness from the foundation, the building of religion cannot hold itself. In case the very foundation of a building is removed, how can it stay? We construct pillars. Suppose we remove them, how can the roof stay? It is impossible. Similarly, if we remove the foundation of kindness, we do not have sympathy for one another, we do not try to uplift others, we should forget that we are virtuous or we are followers of a true religion or that we are big devotees or worshippers. This has never been the sign of a man of religion, a man of virtue. Only a person having the sacred feeling of love keeps the religion glowing. It is he who glorifies the religion. A religion based on kindness, goodwill, devotion to God can never suffer or fall in disrepute. Ups and downs can come only in a religion based on artificialities, outer symbols and controversies regarding dress and diet, etc. It is here that man clashes with man, man tortures man.

Today, what is required is that man should know the very base of religion and establish communion with this God Nirankar. Once he acquires this communion, all his misapprehensions will end automatically. Many people consider sects or communities as religion, while they tend only to divide humanity, break it and do not unite it. Sometime, on one pretext or the other some people cry that their religion is in danger. Which religion is in danger? From whom the religion is in danger? Religion is only a means to merge this soul with the Super Soul, a means to purify ourselves. Such a religion is never in danger. Moreover, we are not the saviours of religion. In fact it is the religion that saved us. It is the religion that saves us. In case there is truthfulness in our religious behaviour, there is truthfulness in our actions, we have filled our heart with kindness, we have tried to uplift others, only then on the basis of our actions and practical behaviour will be determined whether we have any religious faith or whether we are virtuous. It was the religious conduct that always distinguished spiritually enlightened saints and spiritual masters from others. Today we have faith in them, we have devotion for them. Why? Because they always followed religion, practised it. Whatever the circumstances, they did not give up their faith. They loved every human being. They carried along with them the people belonging to all the castes; their message was uniform to all. They never subscribed to caste distinctions. They valued the quest or desire of the seeker of the truth; they never asked their caste or community.

Take the example of a doctor. When a patient comes to him he is concerned only with his ailment. He is not bothered as to which sect or caste the patient comes from. He is not concerned whether the patient has read English or Urdu, whether he knows Hindi or speaks Sanskrit. All these considerations have no relevance for the doctor. His job is only to cure the disease. The patient too has not approached the doctor with the consideration that he wears a turban or a cap. He has no feeling whatsoever that if the doctor is wearing a dhoti, he cannot treat him or he cannot be a doctor at all. We know that a doctor is not known by his outward appearance. He is known by the qualification he has, the medical education that he has received. Similarly, today if we want to be known as pious persons in real sense of the term, we must adopt religion (in our behaviour). Religion has no relationship with the language, dress or diet. It is a subject of the soul, which is above all worldly objects. But today we want to be known as religious or pious persons by our dress alone. We consider the dress as religion itself. This reminds us of a bottle which contains poison. Whosoever takes the content will stand harmed, because the bottle is filled with poison. We may decorate the bottle from outside with a garland, apply sandal on it, colour it red, yellow or anything, all these are not going to make any difference. What is important is not what is

outside the bottle but what is inside. Significant is the substance that it contains. Does it contain the nectar or poison? In case it contains poison or acid, whosoever consumes it will be in trouble. If there is nectar inside, the one who consumes it will find happiness, will get peace.

What we mean to say is that today we consider the dress as a symbol of our religion. But in reality we do not possess any religious faith so long as we are not helpful in our attitude, we do not have the spirit of kindness, we have no feeling for others. Once some people who were claiming to be followers of a religion but had hatred towards the real pious persons, propagated that they themselves were the real men of virtue or truthful followers and upholders of the religion while the others were anti-religion. The controversy spread and the matter was taken to the king. The king called the people belonging to both the groups. He sent them to two different rooms. He ordered that both the groups should be served food. But before they start taking the food, pieces of wood should be fastened to their arms so that they remain straight. Thereafter the group that finishes the food first will be accepted as virtuous, as religious (in the real sense). People felt surprised. They could not understand the condition prescribed by the king to distinguish the truthful followers of the religion from others. They wondered as to how this could happen, how could the difference be known? But what could they do? The two groups were taken to two separate rooms. Wooden strips were tied to their arms and the food was laid. The group that believed in the outer display, considered the dress or the modes of worship as everything, began to complain. How can this happen? How can we finish the food? Our hands reach the plate containing food but we cannot eat because of the wooden strips. Our hands just cannot reach our mouths. Thus they spent the whole time finding fault, blaming and complaining. In the other room, where the truthful followers of the religion were sitting also the food was served in plates. Their hands were also tied with wooden strips. But they started taking the food without any loss of time. One person would pick-up a morsel and put it into the mouth of the other sitting in the front. The other person would reciprocate and serve the food to the former in the same manner. In this way all the members of the group served the food to one another. Everybody's stomach was full. At the same time, they fulfilled the condition. All this was accomplished quite easily; no big effort was required. They were not required to spend much time even to think of the solution, because this was their daily practice. They always offered food first to others, put a morsel into their mouth, showed them respect and then only took the food themselves. The condition imposed by the king was thus satisfied. As regards the other group, what to speak of offering food, they continued shouting at each other, continued cheating each other. So they had to hang their hands in shame. What we mean to say is that so long as our behaviour is not religious or pious in the real sense, we cannot become the followers of a religion in true meaning of the word.

Religion is not related to the outer paraphernalia. It is related to the behaviour. Religion is not a synonym to the outer appearance or the symbols that one acquires by taking birth in a particular family, caste or community. This appearance or the symbols do not represent or indicate our religion. Religion (Dharma) means to acquire - to acquire the truth. One who acquires the truth, who is broadminded and who loves all human beings created by God, is the man of religion.

The religion based on such broad feelings cannot be acquired by hearing the words alone. This is possible only by acquiring and adopting the truth, by merging with the supreme power, i.e., God. The vastness or omnipresence of the Almighty broadens our view point also. Then, instead of pointing out the shortcoming of others, we try to improve ourselves. You might have heard a story about Swami Vivekananda. Once he announced at a place "I want reformers". He repeated the announcement for two or three days. Several people stood up and offered to work as reformers. Swami Vivekananda said, "But I have not completed my announcement, I want : Reformers who can reform themselves". A man with religious mind also thinks on these lines. He looks at his own shortcomings. There are others who will not hesitate to exaggerate even the smallest shortcomings of others, while ignore even the biggest of their own. We do not look at the spot on our own face, whereas we highlight similar spots on the face of others. Religion inspires for self improvement. It teaches the lesson of moral development. Man reforms himself through religion. When we improve ourselves, the entire world improves for us.

Sometime back the United Nations announced that the total population of the world is 5,000 million. The announcement was made when the last human being in this number was born. No doubt we are 5,000 million in number, we have to think whether we are counted as human beings in the divine court also. There is no denying the fact that only God has created us all as human beings, but we will continue to be known as defaulters of our faith, so long as our actions are not human. A religion is true when it teaches us to be human. That is what a religion teaches. We must remember this lesson but not in the manner we prepare for a test in the class. A child may learn the lesson and appear in the written or oral test. This is, however, not going to prove adequate in spirituality. Whatever we learn here has got to be shown in practice. Only then it becomes meaningful or useful. We must recall the examples of pious saints like Bhai Kanahiya Ji. If we are really religious or pious minded, we must acquire their qualities (of Bhai Kanahiya and others). For religious faith, we must possess the same kind of feelings and sentiments. Lord Rama owned Shabri. Do we too own everyone? Men with religious faith would never wish bad for others. Such people would not oppose even those who tortured the men of virtue. Otherwise, there have been kings who indulged in bloodshed, who opposed the men of virtue, tooth and nail. The great spiritual masters would never make any category of people, any group or caste an exception while wishing well. They did not only pronounce that God Nirankar dwells in each and every human being, all are its people, all are its creation, but accepted it also.

Divine masters who came to the world like Lord Rama, Lord Krishna, from Guru Nanak Dev Ji to Guru Gobind Singh Ji Maharaj, all of them united the humanity and made no discrimination whatsoever. Today we sing their praise. Centuries have passed but their names are still alive. No doubt we must sing the praise of these divine masters. We must recall what they did in their own times. But the mere mention will be of no use. We can never become virtuous by doing so. In order to gain from them, we must adopt their religion, their faith. We have also to adopt their virtues we praise.

The greatest quality of the divine masters was that they themselves knew God and helped others to know it. They united everyone with God and taught the lesson of devotion. They themselves showed devotion to the Almighty and helped others to do so. Once man knows God, all his feelings of discrimination are gone. The walls dividing the high and low do not stand any more. One sees the image of God in all human beings. The cow may be black, white or brown, but milk remains white in all the cases. Similarly all human bodies are comprised of the same five elements. Man, however, is not able to appreciate this secret, this truth, due to his ignorance. He looks at the appearance or the dress one wears and draws the conclusion that they are strangers. He considers himself to be different from them, superior to them. But those who know the reality, do not go after the outward appearances. They appreciate the milk and not the colour of the cow. Kabir says:-

**JAATI PAATI PUCHHE NAHIN KOYE,
HARI KO BHAJE SO HARI KA HOYE.**

All human beings in the world have soul in them. In terms of soul, they are all equal. Religion is also related to this aspect of ours. Divine masters always attracted the attention of man towards this aspect. Name any divine master - Gyaneshwar, Eknath, all of them worked for the unity of mankind. A person who works for the division of humanity cannot be known as religious. He remains irreligious because religion always unites. The saying also goes, "Religion unites and does not divide." Religion does not create fissures between man and man, because true religion will always enable us to see the Almighty dwelling in every human being and appreciate that all human beings are made from the same five elements. People may be of dark complexion, their skin may be white, they may speak Konkani, Marathi, Punjabi, Oriya or English, they may have different eating habits, their living styles may vary, they may wear different styles of garments, but they remain one so far as the soul is concerned. Spiritual masters did not disown people on account of their dress and diet. They never divided them. On the other hand they always treated them as equal, children of the Father, the same Creator, the One. Some children go to a confectioner. They see horses, camels and elephants made from sugar. Some say that only horses are sweet while

the others claim only camels are sweet. No doubt the reason of controversy is their ignorance. Since they are ignorant, they are describing something as good and something as bad. Whether it appears to be a camel or an elephant, the sugar from which they have been made is the same. Even the khoya used is the same. The confectioner, therefore, does not make any discrimination. Similarly this God Nirankar does not differentiate between man and man. True religion acquaints us with this sublime aspect of humanity i.e. the relationship between soul and the Super soul.

Today, we claim that we have faith in God. But it will be possible to please the Almighty only when we consider the entire humanity as our own. We can win its pleasure only by uplifting the downtrodden, by healing their wounds. O Man! If your mind remains rigid, if you make the laughing weep, if you divide people or sabotage their unity, you can never attain nearness to God, and God will never be kind to you. If you plunder in the name of religion, this will be an utter violation of the religion itself. These are some of the truths which man has refused to accept. If man accepts them, makes them a part of his life, he himself will remain happy and makes others happy also.

In fact, religion seeks to bring people closer and make them united. Stories from ancient ages, and history also, reveal the same. There are Manthras who create distances, who create hatred in the mind. The mind of the same Kaikayee who showered so much of love on Rama, was filled with the poison of hatred and the world had to see all that happened. These Manthras were not found during the time of Lord Rama only. Even today we have persons with this nature all over. Even this is not true that such persons always happened to be women. Not that only women can do so because Manthra was a women. It is the mind, which may take any form. It may do its evil work, create misunderstanding, in the form of any human being. It may spread hatred in the name of religion, caste or community and turn good friends into enemies, ready to take each other's life. We find such feelings prevailing quite often. We also find that some people do recite the name of God, visit religious places, make offering of money, get lodges constructed for the pilgrims, but in reality, they only look like Rama, while they are inspired by Ravana, their mentality is that of Ravana, their deeds are that of Ravana.

Every year we prepare large effigies of Ravana and put them to flames. Do we ever think as to why do we do so? An ordinary person would reply that Ravana opposed Lord Rama, he behaved as an unpius person and that is why we have been burning his effigies for ages, year after year. But we must consider that Ravana had certain good qualities also. He was a great scholar of scriptures. He, however, violated discipline inspite of all his knowledge. He had ego, he had pride. That is why today we look at him in this manner. We must realise that regular visits to religious places, learning of scriptures and the study of holy books alone do not enable us to enter the category of the men of virtue. Whether we are truly religious minded or not is decided by our actions. For example, there is a question as to how to distinguish a cuckoo from a crow. They appear to be same to look at. But the difference is known only when they speak. Similarly our actions will indicate whether we belong to the category of crows or the cuckoos, swans or the ducks, pious or the unpius. If we are uniting people, we are following the religion and if we create divisions between men and men, we have no faith in religion.

Religion is deeply related to man's behaviour. A person with religious faith will never run away from the field of action. The life of Gurus, from Guru Nanak Dev to Guru Gobind Singh Ji shows that they performed all their duties of family life. The men with religious faith also stay in the material world. They function as any other member of the society. All the objects of material world also remain there. For them the sun, the moon, the stars have the same service as does to others; it makes no discrimination. Everything remains the same. But only one fact i.e. the knowledge of truth, distinguishes him from other fellow human beings. The spiritual light converts him from human being into a holy human being and from man into a holy man.

Now a days people talk of world religion and global parliament. Swami Vivekanand also made some contribution and he glorified India on international forum. While others addressed the gathering as "Ladies and Gentlemen", he addressed them as "Sisters and

Brothers". With this, he won the hearts of millions of people. If the mere expression of the words "Sisters and Brothers" can create such an impact, what can be the effect if we all accept each other as sisters and brothers? It is not very difficult to make a guess. What we mean to say is that whatever the image of religion is there, it is because of the contribution of the saints. These men of virtue whether they lived in the Age of Gold, Silver, Bronze or Iron, moved with only one objective. They had only one aim i.e. to unite mankind. They were of the view that if man is aligned to God, he will automatically start loving the fellow beings, the living images of the Almighty. He will consider everybody of his own, dear and near. And if he gets aligned only with the names of the divine masters instead of what they preached, this nearness will stand converted into distance. We have telescope. In case we use it correctly, the people standing at a distance will appear to have come closer. But if by mistake we use the telescope from the other side of the lense, even a man standing near us will appear to be at a distance. This is the difference between the way of looking at things by a man with religious faith and an ignorant person. With a vision of God-knowledge, even distant people appear to be close by. We need to have this vision or way off looking at others. We should never forget that this is the real religion, the religion that brings man closer to man, the religion that unites humanity.

(VI)

What is the place of ego in human life?

Can God-knowledge be a reason to be proud of?

What kind of life should a devotee have?

Often we hear that it is for man himself whether he swims or he drowns. If he wants to swim, if he wants his emancipation, he can himself bring it about. Similarly, he himself can become the cause of his own death. When he leans towards the material world, he moves towards death and if he concentrates on God-Nirankar, he is definitely going to swim. In this connection, it is said:

**KABIR BERA JARJARA, JIS MEIN CHHED HAZAR,
HALKE HALKE TAR GAYE, DUBE JIN SIR BHAR.**

O Man! Your body is just like this boat, having thousands of holes. Nobody knows when it may sink. Those who are light, carry no load, will swim across, while those who are carrying the load of ego, are bound to sink.

Saints have mentioned another type of death in this world:

**MARTA MARTA JAG MUA, MARBHI NA JANE KOYE,
AISII MARNI JO MARE, BAHUR NA MARNI HOYE.**

After coming to this world, if man can put an end to his ego, his pride, he attains salvation in the real sense. Death is certain to come to each and every body. Which body has escaped the death? Some go early, others later. Lord Rama's body is no more. Even Ravana, who was so proud, lost his body. Physical death is there for every person. One may like it or not, death has to come. It is bound with every living being. Then, what is the type of death which has significance, which has been praised? The significance lies in the death of one's ego, the end of "I", one's complete surrender (to the will of God). This "I" or the ego is the load which does not allow one to swim :

So long as man continues to say "I" - "I" or is proud of oneself, there are bound to be problems, troubles and the fear of getting sunk. In case one gets rid of this "I" and surrenders to God - Nirankar, one swims across, stands liberated and escapes the problems. Divine masters have always advised man to avoid all kinds of ego and pride.

Fire is fire. If it can burn a small cottage, it can reduce to ashes a costly bungalow also. Similarly, the fire of ego may ruin anybody irrespective of the fact whether he is spiritually enlightened or ignorant, whether he is a scholar or illiterate. It is said:

**MAAN MUNI MUNIWAR GALE,
MAAN SABHI KO KHAYE.**

Wherever there is ego, it causes hostility, which does not spare even saints and sages.

To-day, man is found to be proud of his body. Sometimes, he is proud of his wealth. Sometimes he is proud of his intellect. But all his ego remains there so long as he thinks that he himself is doing everything; so long as he thinks that his success is there because of his own strong body or his education. He forgets that this body is not dependable. Just now it is strong, but the very next moment one may fall sick and the strength of the body may disappear. One may not be able to pick up even a glass of water. Similarly, you have money, you have wealth. You can buy anything on the earth. But suppose, the money is stolen, the wealth is robbed. You have nothing left with you. You may have to spread hands before others. There are moments in life, when even wealth is of no use. Lakhs and crores of rupees may fail to defer the one moment of death. Then, why be proud of it?

Life reaches the heights of greatness, when man gives up his ego, his pride and gets rid of this : "I" . He moves towards downfall, so long as he does not leave the "I" . When he gives up "I" , he rises in life in the real sense. You might have noticed that when a person climbs a hill, he is bent forward and when he comes down, he keeps his body as straight as possible. It means that bending down (humility) is a sign of going up, while the tightness (pride) is a clear indication of downfall.

Ego, whether it exists in an enlightened person or in an ignorant, it remains a cause of distress. In a way, the enlightened person owes an explanation more than the ignorant does. Whosoever was proud, had to meet the downfall. The spiritually enlightened person become all the more responsible (to explain), because the stumbling of a person who has climbed only a few steps is quite understandable, while a man who has already reached the top has no excuse. While the former may receive one or two injuries, you can imagine the condition of the latter who falls from the top. His survival is difficult. That is why the spiritually enlightened saints, the devotees are required to be more cautious in the matter of ego. A person who claims to be enlightened on the one hand and suffers from ego on the other, is like a kite flying up in the sky but all the time looking on the ground for a piece of flesh. As soon as it sees a piece of flesh, it forgets about the flight and swoops down, lands on the earth and stays there.

One should never be proud of God-knowledge, because pride is after all pride. Only such a person is known to be a saint, a devotee as may have the desire to learn and keep learning throughout his life. Whosoever considers himself complete and is proud of himself, cannot march forward. In a way, he hinders his own progress. Why does a saint moves forward? Why is he remembered and praised for ages? This is because he spent his entire life as a humble person and kept learning good things, acquiring virtues. These very virtues made him great, established his name for ages to come.

In the world to-day, even castes and sub-castes have become a source of pride. They consider their family to be superior than others. The saints, however, do not think like this. They consider a family superior only if it has produced a devotee to God:

**KABIR SOI KUL BHALI,
JA KUL HARI KA DASS.**

A person having sense of humility is held in high esteem in the field of religion. Nobody becomes superior just by going through scriptures or taking pride in the caste etc. In fact, the pride based on caste has no meaning. All human beings have the same five elements. Can somebody produce a man who may be having only four elements or may have seven? This is not so. All human beings are made from the same mass of earth. The bodies belonging to all of them consist of the same elements. Whatever functions the hand has in one body, the same functions it performs in another. Similarly, if eyes in one body are used to see things, they have the same function in another; they are not used for hearing. Ears are for hearing, whichever the body. Nobody uses them for the purpose of looking. Then, why be proud of one's caste?

All human beings are the creation, the children of God. A person who is guided by ego thinks that the other person is inferior, while he himself is superior. Once he takes someone as inferior, he starts having hatred against him, he may feel jealous of him. He will make all possible efforts to humiliate him. And a man whose life is governed by enmity and jealousy can never remain happy. There is no rest for him. This ego does not take into its fold only a person or a family, it has affected almost all localities, societies and countries. Big countries or nations suffer from ego because they are proud of their strength, their power. They are stopping so low that they may even think of the annihilation of humanity as such; they are producing things that may ruin humanity, finish the mankind.

Often we find that whosoever had ego, it became the reason of his end, his downfall. A deer used to go to a tank to drink water. He saw his reflection in the water. Whenever he saw his horns, he felt happy. They looked quite attractive to him. But when he saw his legs, he would find them quite thin. He felt that all his grace has been spoiled by the legs. He always criticised his legs, while he took pleasure to think about his horns. One day, a lion also came to the tank. After drinking water, the lion saw the deer also taking water on the other bank. He ran after the deer. The deer ran, while the lion chased him. The legs that he always condemned saved him from the lion for miles together. Then came dense bushes. The horns he was so proud of, got stuck up into the bushes. Consequently the deer could not go forward and the lion caught him. The horns of which he was so proud, became the cause of his death.

Wherever there is ego, or there is pride, it pinches like a piece of stone in the shoe, gives pain at every step. Similarly, whenever a person develops ego or pride, it gives pain. Those who give up ego, forego their self and surrender to God, are always happy. Those who are under the influence of ego, they are entrapped by it like a cob-web.

When the ego of a person is hurt, when somebody challenges him, he feels angry. He just cannot see or listen. He falls into the trap of his own ego. We have a story of wolf. He was living in a cave. Whenever he saw some animal coming towards the cave, he would start shouting as if he was calling his cubs. He would say, "Will you alone eat the lion? Why don't you divide it amongst yourselves?" The wolf would do this only to impress the coming animals that he was so strong that he could kill a lion, which was being eaten by his cubs. He wanted to scare the other animals. Hearing this, the other animals would go away. Somehow, a lion also heard about it. He became upset and went back. On the way a fox met him. The lion told the story to the fox and said, "No doubt, I am king of the forest, but there is someone mightier even than myself. He has killed several lions like me. His cubs are eating them." The fox said, "Don't worry. Let us see who is this animal who has come to the forest." She went to the cave and stood outside. She shouted. "Whosoever is there in the cave, has become king of the forest. He is mightier than all others. All the animals of the forest have assembled here to welcome him. Please come out and accept the greetings." The wolf inside was mad to hear his praise and came out. At once, he was exposed. The lion roared and the lion ran away, puzzled and humiliated. All this happened because of the greed for false praise. This greed is another form of ego. Instead of harming others, such people ruin themselves only. It is they who suffer. If a person goes on putting stones into his boat, he is bound to sink. Similarly nobody can save us if we go on loading the boat of our life with the stones of ego.

The Puranas have a story about the churning of the ocean by the gods and devils. They used the mountain as churn and Sheshnaag, the serpent as the chord to move it. The gods were on the one side, while the devils were on the other. The gods were a little fast and went to the side of the hood of the serpent. Its tail was on the other side of the mountain. The devils could not tolerate this. They felt that the gods caught the hood of the serpent rather cleverly. They challenged them and asked them, "Why have you caught the hood of the serpent? What do you think of yourselves?" The gods replied, "Since we are gods, we will not catch the tail of the serpent. We will catch his hood only." Hearing this, the devils became all the more furious. They saw in this an insult for themselves. They retorted proudly, "We are stronger than you. We have already defeated you many times. You do not our strength." They went on saying such things angrily. Someone from the gods said, "Why are you getting angry? We reached here first and caught the hood of the serpent." But the devils did not agree and insisted on standing on the side of the hood of the serpent. One of the gods said, "All right, there is nothing to mind. Why make mountain of a mole-hill? You come to the side of the hood of the serpent, we will go to the tail." Then started the churning of the ocean. Both the groups pulled the serpent turn by turn. The serpent felt pained by the friction with the mountain. He started being violent. He began to emit poison and sting those who were standing on the side of its mouth i.e. the devils. The result was that there was humiliation because there was ego, because the devils wanted to prove to be superior (than gods). Those who suffer from ego, are always after "I", are proud and consider they have excelled and achieved a lot. In fact they lose in the end.

O Man! You are proud. Do remember that this itself will become the cause of your end, your ruin. Humility, which you consider useless and meaningless, alone will make you live for ever. Modesty alone will bring you honour and make people remember you for all times to come. Human body is a mass of earth. It is known that it is not permanent or ever lasting. It may break any moment. In spite of this, man is overwhelmed with the feeling of pride. God only knows what man would have done if this body were immortal!

A man who suffers from ego does not only agonise others, but invites distress for himself also. Suppose a person is thinking that he has to humiliate another, he would like to teach him a lesson, and goes to sleep while thinking so, he may see the same in the dream. Even after he gets up, he is obsessed with the thought that he is to teach the other person a lesson, he is to talk to him in plain words. In fact he does not give up the idea until he meets the other man and most probably the other person is not even aware of it. When we are angry, we suffer the agony within ourselves even before agonising others. The same is the state of a person suffering from ego. What we mean to say is that a person who is proud and jealous and goes on thinking how to harm others, suffers himself far more than others. He agonises himself, he causes distress to himself.

A person who does not take a lesson from the life and teachings of the divine masters and lives in the state of narrow mindedness, narrow vision and continues to have ego and pride, commands no faith or respect in our minds. It is often said that every day of ours should pass as Holi and the night as Dewali. What is its significance? The Holi has the name of Bhakt Prahlad connected with it. His own father was insisting that he should give up his faith in God. He made several attempts to shake him from the path of Truth, the path of spirituality. The father was proud. He wanted that people should worship him. That is why he tortured Prahlad. His sister Holika, who was proud that fire could not harm her, offered to sit in the fire with the child Prahlad in her lap. She thought that the fire would burn the boy, while she would remain safe. But it happened the other way round. Bhakt Prahlad survived, while Holika was burnt. It was the defeat of pride and a victory for the humble Bhakt Prahlad. Dewali too is celebrated to mark the end of pride in the form of Ravana. There too, it is a defeat of pride. Thus we can have our days like Holi and nights like Dewali, when our pride is defeated, humiliated. In fact what is there for a man to be proud of? After all what does he have to be proud of?

A gentleman went to a rich person, who was owner of a palatial building, a large business, big factories and vast properties. He started talking of spirituality. But the rich man began to point out his property, his factories, his respect in the town, his popularity, his acquaintance in various departments, etc. He mentioned that nobody else had as much property as he did.

He claimed that he had worked hard, he had used his intellect and created vast properties with tact. Thus he went on speaking about his wealth and his achievements. The gentleman kept on listening. Saints generally have patience and act sensibly. They do not use rigidity for the breaking of ego of a proud person. They use tact. The gentleman, the saint, decided to bring home the reality to the rich man in such a manner that the latter was able to understand it, digest it. He saw a child of the rich man studying something by their side. He asked the child. "My son, what are you studying?" The child replied, "I am reading Geography." The saintly person again asked, "What is lying in front of you?" The child replied, "It is atlas. It has a map of the world." The gentleman picked up the atlas and asked the child to point out India in the map of the world. The child indicated the same. In the big map, India looked like a small guava. The gentleman further asked the child to point out Maharashtra in the map of India. The child pointed out a still smaller patch. It was just equal to a plum. Then the gentleman asked the child to point out Bombay. The child showed a small dot and said, "Here is Bombay." Now the gentleman asked the child to point out Bombay. The child showed a small dot and said, "Here is Bombay." Now the gentleman asked the child, "My son, can you now point out the factories and other properties, palaces, owned by your father in Bombay?" The child retaliated, "What a strange thing you are asking for? You are searching for our factories and palaces in a map where a big city like Bombay is shown as a small dot. It is quite strange on your part." At this, the gentleman started laughing. The rich man was also listening to the conversation of the gentleman and the child. He understood that his claiming all the time that he was the proprietor and owner of so many properties was meaningless. He replied, "I am too small a person in this vast world. What is my position? I have seen only the map of the world. The whole Bombay city is like a small dot. This universe is comprised of many other planets. As compared to them, where do I stand?" As soon as the rich man realised the truth and the greatness of the Almighty, his pride melted. He understood that whatever he possessed, carried no significance. There was no reason for him to be proud. He was less than even a straw in the universe created by God.

Saints! Ignorance is the root cause of pride. Ignorance gives rise to ego to disputes. This is the reason why people quarrel in the world to-day. The day man gives place to God in his heart, the day he realises the Truth, all the disputes will end automatically. There are no disputes for you, as your mind is enlightened and your heart free from ego, free from hatred. You realise God all around and, therefore, love the entire mankind. To love the creation is the real way to love the Creator. After coming to the world man has forgotten the Creator. He goes on working, ignoring the creator. From morning to evening, from childhood to old age, whatever he does, shows that he is entangled and occupied by the lust for worldly materials. Houses were made for man, but to-day it appears that man has been created for houses. Man after going astray from the path of truth, does not even think as to what after all he is

**KABIR YEH TAN JAYEGA SAKI TO LEH BAHOR,
NANGE PAON TE GAYE, JINKE LAKH KAROR;
KABIR EH TAN JAYEGA KAWNE MARG LAYE,
KAY SANGAT KAR SADH KI, KAY HAR KE GUN GAYE.**

Here, the great spiritual master (Kabir) warns man and asks him to know himself. The body does not ultimately belong to you. Then why should you be proud of it? Even those who were rich, could not save their bodies. In any case, this body has to go. So long as you possess it, you may sit in the company of saints and praise the Almighty.

It is in the nature of man that he thinks himself to be correct and considers others to be wrong. Man has always considered himself superior, nobler and intellectually more advanced than others. On the other hand, the enlightened saints, the divine masters, have always thought the contrary and considered themselves most modest and the humblest. An ordinary person considers others to be bad but what do the saints pronounce?

**KABIR SAB SE HUM BURE, HUM TAJ BHALO SAB KOYE,
JIN AISA KAR BUJHYA, MEET HAMARA SOYE.**

The spiritual masters have always explained that only a man who considers himself to be inferior, is the real man. Such a person who looks at his own shortcomings instead of the weakness of others, is really great. He is our friend. If Kabir Ji says that he is inferior to all, one should not conclude that he was really a bad person. No, our mind, our heart, is not prepared to accept it. We think just the other way round. Our heart says the contrary. Kabir Ji was condemned person, the humblest of all, having no intellectual ability, it is the proof that he has no ego. A person with ego will not look at his own shortcomings or accept his mistakes. He just cannot admit that he is a bad person. And not to be aware of one's own shortcomings, is the greatest human shortcoming. To see one's own fault, is the sign of modesty.

History tells us about Alexander. He had huge wealth. He had armies. He captured a large portion of the world. Then, do we have very high regards for Alexander in our minds? Do we respect him? Do we have faith in him? No. In spite of the fact that the name of Alexander does appear on the pages of history, we probably do not carry any respect for him in our minds. Similarly, we have the example of Ravana. There are many other such names as are part of the history, but who has been recognised to be great? The spiritual masters alone have been accepted as superior to others. Whether they appeared in this world in the form of Kabir or Ravidas or any other saint, they command our respect, they have their name in the world. They are accepted to be great, to be noble. Does their greatness lie in the wealth, or the power they commanded? No. They became noble because they aligned themselves with the Almighty, because they were humble, because they had devotion for God. Kabir Ji says that we should have no ego, no pride; we should not laugh at the poor:

**KABIR GARB NA KEEJIYE, NA HASIYE KOYE;
ABHI TO NAW SAMUDR MEIN, KYA JAANE KYA HOYE.**

In this world we find that if someone acquires a small asset, it may be in the form of wealth, physical strength, intellectual ability, degrees of education or high level posting, he becomes proud of the same. As a result of this pride, he does not attach any importance to others. On the other hand the spiritually enlightened saints will always consider themselves humble and modest, the servants of all, in spite of possessing all kinds of good qualities. They are humble because they know that after realising God, there is no asset or achievement, which man can be proud of.

A rich man was proudly sitting in front of his bungalow. A saint who wanted him to realise the truth, asked him, "Who does stay in this inn?" On this, the rich man felt angry with the saint. He said, "Does your sense not work? Does this appear to be an inn? It is a palace having huge value. Materials worth crores of rupees have been used to build it. It is all made of marble. It has been furnished with costly articles. In spite of that you call it an inn. This is my palace and not an inn." The saint said, "I am sorry, you minded what I said. Kindly let me know who stays in it at present." The rich man replied, "I stay here." The saint asked, "Who did live here before you?" The rich man replied, "My father lived here." "And before him?" the saint asked. The rich man continued to tell the names of his forefathers. At the end the saint said, "Then, why did you feel agitated, when I described it as an inn? Your father stayed here before you. Prior to that, your grandfather lived here. Who did stay forever? If not an inn what else is a place where people come, stay and go? And can one take pride in the inn?" In case man understands this truth, there remains no reason to be proud. Man, then, understands that the big bungalows that he is proud of, which he thinks to be the source of pleasures, are only given by God to him to spend sometime. We invite agonies for ourselves, when we think that these objects are everything for us. We are so fascinated by them, we are so engrossed in them that even the slightest change in them becomes intolerable. We feel unhappy. A real saint or spiritually enlightened person understands that this world is only a temporary halting place where after taking birth, our real purpose is to know God as the Super Soul, of which human soul is only a part. If we remember the real purpose of life, achieve it while living in this world, we live an ideal life.

The spiritually awakened saint lives in this world as does the non-awakened. The spiritually enlightened saint, however, does not allow this world to overwhelm his mind. He gives the place to the Almighty. What do we do to take the boat forward? We push the water

backward, the boat moves forward. If we push the water forward, the boat is bound to move backward. Similarly, if all that we see in this world, all that we use, is pushed backward, we will move forward. There is no contradiction in staying in the water and pushing the water backward. When I say that the water should be pushed backward, I do not mean the entire ocean or the entire tank. The water is very much there. When it is pushed back, the boat moves forward and when the water is pushed forward, the boat goes backward. Similarly, if we are caught in what we see and consider the worldly materials as every thing, it will mean that we are pushing them forward while we ourselves are moving backward. In this way, we will be moving away from our near and dear ones. In case we cheat others, misbehave with them, we treat the worldly materials as everything and are proud, it will mean that we are pushing the water forward whereas our boat is moving in the reverse direction instead of going towards the destination. That is why, the great spiritual masters have always advised man to push the worldly materials backward. We must not get lost into them. We should not be proud of our worldly assets. The very first principle followed by our Mission says that our body, intellect and our wealth, all belong to God and we should not be proud of them at all. After all, what are you being proud of? The body? If this was under your control, man would have never become old or died. If you are proud of your wealth, if you are using it for oppressing others, if you think you can purchase or win over anybody else with it, if you consider others inferior, all your pride is meaningless, has no meaning. A small incident may snatch away the wealth and cause pain. The same is true of our mind or the intellectual ability. There too, it is not possible that the same should remain under our control forever. That is why saints consider the body, the wealth and the intellectual qualities as mere gifts of God, ultimately belonging to the Almighty. A saintly person is never proud of them. He pushes such a pride backward so that the boat of his devotion to God moves forward and reaches the destination. A saint would push back the ego or pride of all kinds - the pride based on physical, intellectual and material assets, caste, creed of colour, diet and dress, abdication or self sacrifice or even spiritual enlightenment and so on, and thus move forward. He does not go after honour or praise for himself. He is free from ego; he is a humble person.

Kabir Ji at one place mentioned about the life of a saint. According to him, a saint endeavors to be as humble as a piece of stone in the path of people. Then he says, it may not be a service to the people, because a piece of stone may hurt anybody's feet. He, therefore, prefers to become the dust. But here also is a problem. The dust may go with the wind and spoil the clothes. In that case, a saint would like to live like water. The problem with water, however, is that sometimes it is hot and sometimes cold. No doubt one gets relief when the water is cold, but it may cause boils on the body when it is hot. Finally, it is decided that a saint, a devotee of God, should be like God itself. A person who makes his heart the dwelling place for God, acquires communion with it, becomes like it free from any fault, free from pride. There are no feelings of pride or jealousy in his mind, they all disappear. He will endeavor to serve all, respect all and bring happiness to all.

(VII)

All man's endeavours are directed towards happiness, but still he is unhappy. Why?

What is the relationship between the creation, Maya and the Creator, Mayapati?

How can the resources provided by Maya become the source of happiness?

Every human being coming to this world wants to be happy. Everybody has the desire that he may receive all pleasures, all comforts. Guided by this desire he makes efforts. He adopts all kinds of means. But still he is unhappy, he finds misery. Why? It happens because man searches for tranquillity in the worldly materials (Maya) which Infact can not produce it. About such people, it is said :

**JOGI DUKHIA JANGAM DUKHIA,
TAPSI KO DUKH DOONA HO;
ASHA TRISHNA SAB KO VYAPE,
KOI MAHAL NA SOONA HO;
AVDHU DUKHIA BHUPATI DUKHIA,
RANK DUKHIA VIPREETA HO;
KAHE KABIR SAKAL JAG DUKHIA,
SANT SUKHI MAN JEETA HO.**

What is explained here is that even those who are living in palaces are not happy. They are in distress because they have ambitions even over there. Wherever the lust for worldly materials has the upper hand, there is distress, there is misery. Desires produce unhappiness whether man lives in a small hut, a big bungalow or a palace. Then, who is happy? In this world, only a saint is happy, because he controls his mind. He surrenders his mind to God, integrates it with the Almighty. As a result, he receives contentment. Once man is attached and the mind is integrated with God, who is above all pains and pleasures, he gets contentment. And once there is contentment in life, where is the question of misery? Pleasure comes from contentment, it comes from, submission to the divine will. Whether you take Kabir who lived in a cottage or Janak who dwelt in palaces, you find both of them happy, because they were saints. On the other hand whether you take kings and emperors who lived in palaces or the poor living in huts, there is tension, pain, discord, strife and hatred in both the cases, if they happen to be ignorant, spiritually unenlightened. Those who depend on worldly materials (Maya), are attached to them, cannot be content whether the resources they possess are huge or small. And those who are attached with the Creator of these materials (Mayapati), the Almighty, they are found to be content even with fewer resources. Man attains true happiness not from Maya but from Mayapati.

The human body is also a worldly creation and is bound to stay with worldly materials. In case the body stays with worldly materials, there is no escape, if the mind starts living with the same. For example, if boat stays in water, there is no harm, but if water enters the boat, it is harmful. With God in mind, dealing with worldly material is no problem. But if the worldly materials overshadow the mind, man cannot remain happy. The problem, however, is that today it is Maya and not Mayapati, that man has placed in his mind. He has forgotten the Creator and that is why he is misery.

Taste or flavour is a passion of the tongue. Because of this, the fish runs after a piece of (kneaded) flour. In case the fish knows that there is a hook in the back of the piece of flour and it sees, it will control itself and put its mouth forward with caution, pick up the piece of flour and avoid the hook which is hanging with a rod held by the main standing outside. The man puts this kneaded flour on the hook in order to confuse the fish, puzzle it and trap it. A fish that is ignorant, that is not in the know of it, will run after the flour and be caught by the hook. In other words, it falls into the trap. Similarly, there is no doubt about the fact that all that is seen in the world, all worldly materials are a divine gift to man. But man does not use them for the rightful purpose. He chases them for his self - interests, to satisfy his own ambitions and gets caught into their trap just like the fish that felt lured by the flour and was caught by the hook. That is why Maya has been described as a source of pain, a fallacy, a serpent. Saints! Even a serpent can harm only if there is poison in its hood. In case the poison is removed, you can play with the serpent. It may be lying by your side or coiling your neck, it just cannot harm you.

The spiritually enlightened saints detach their minds from the worldly wealth and attach the same with this God Nirankar. But it is in the nature of the mind that if it is stopped from one side, it runs to the other. The various organs of the body also take it towards the worldly

materials and push it into the trap of their fascination. Once this happens, the mind loses everything and falls into the trap. For example, people who hunt for the elephant, dig a deep pit in the ground and cover it with grass, etc. Close to the pit, they place a dummy female elephant to attract the male elephant. The elephant gets lured and moves towards the dummy. The result is that he falls into the pit. The hunters catch him and put him into chains. This has been described in the following words :

**DHOKHE KI HATHNI LAKHI,
DHAYO GAJ LALCHAYE;
KHANDAK MAHIN GIR PARAYO,
SIR DHUN DHUN PACHHTATE.**

In the same manner, man indulges in ambitions, falls into the pit and repents. At times the ambitions are fulfilled also. This, however, does not make man content. On the other hand, delightful taste (of fulfillment) creates a chain of desires. Man follows the chain bit by bit and is never able to liberate his mind.

Just as the fish is caught because of the weakness of its tongue for the (delightful) taste and the elephant is chained because of lust, in the same manner the moth (Patanga) loses its life because of its passion for light. When the passion of one organ does so much of harm, we can imagine the disaster created by all the five organs with their respective passions in the case of man - the sound for the ear, contact for the skin, beauty for the eyes, taste for the tongue and smell for the nose. More than the passions themselves is harmful their thought, their lust.

That is why the divine masters have always called upon man to understand that as he goes on indulging in the pursuit of the worldly materials and their bad effects, he will go farther and farther from God, forget the Almighty and fall a victim to the worldly pleasures (Maya). When do the desires end? When are the ambitions no more? It is such a fire which will never say 'no' to the fuel. It is said also :

**MAYA MARI NA MAN MARA, MAR MAR GAYE SHARIR;
ASHA TRISHNA NA MARI, KAH GAYE DASS KABIR..**

As soon as the desire for one thing is satisfied, the urge for another follows. Every time man thinks that he will not ask for anything more if he gets this particular object. But he starts wanting something else as soon as the earlier want is satisfied. For example, man thinks that if he gets a child, he will not need anything more. But is he satisfied later the child is born? No. Now he needs money, he needs wealth, since he has to bring up the child, arrange for his education and then his marriage. In this way so many other things get included in the chain. O man! This chain will never end and you will remain involved in this vast material world (Maya).

The material world is like darkness that bewilders man. But if the mind is enlightened by the sun of God-knowledge, Maya gets pushed into the background automatically. Just as when we stand with our face towards the sun, our shadow goes behind and if we stand with our back towards the sun, the same dark shadow is in our front, similarly the worldly materials do not affect or harm us when our face is towards God. We must, therefore, always remember God. God must remain in our mind even after we leave the congregation (Satsang) and move in the world, deal with others, interact with others. If we remember God, the material world will not be able to confuse us, to deceive us.

Maya is like a dream. Under its influence, even falsehood appears to be truth. For example, even a rich man possessing lot of wealth may in a dream find himself in a lonely place, thorns picking his body, no water to drink, wandering in the scorching heat of the sun. In reality he remains a moneyed person but in dream he finds himself in horrible poverty. He spends the whole night in thorns, the sun and bears all the agonies. He finds himself suffering from their effect. What is the greatest service that we can do to such a person so that he is saved from the misery? It would, of course, be to wake him up. The moment he is

taken out of the slumber, all his agonies will be over. Awakened, he will realise the reality, full of comfort, full of peace.

Similarly, man has forgotten God and is in deep slumber. He is pained by dreadful dreams where, of course, there is no truth, no real pleasure, no real calm. The reality is that God is the only truth. As soon as somebody wakes man up from the slumber of Maya, he is face to face with the reality and stands rescued from all his agonies and miseries of the world. Surely he will find happiness in life and salvation thereafter.

So long as a person doesn't wake up, he does not realise that he is asleep. So long as he is asleep, he is not aware of the fact that he is sleeping. It is only when he wakes up that he realises that until a minute ago he was asleep, he was in slumber, he was dreaming and accepting the dream as reality. He comes to know that it was in the dream only that he was wandering and some thorns were pricking his feet. Although in reality he was sleeping on the bed, in dream he was finding himself walking on the thorns and feeling the pain also. He was in agony, he was in distress. That is why spiritual masters observed :

**KABIR SUTA KYA KARE,
UTH KE NA JAPE MURAR.**

O Man! Where are you wandering? You haven't lost much even now. You have still a chance. Give up passion for false hopes; start loving the truth. This message was being given earlier, it is being given today also. Earlier also the people who heeded for it, received happiness. Those who heard the voice, believed it and acted upon it in those days became happy. Even today, if we follow it, we can enjoy.

Lost in the false multitude of the world under the influence of wealth, man forgets the Almighty. It is just like a child in a fair. He continues to watch the round about unaware of the fact that he came to the fair with his father. He is happy watching the round about and forgets even his father. The round about halts after 5 - 10 minutes. Suddenly the child discovers that he is alone. He looks for his father here and there. When he does not find him, he weeps. Similarly, O Man! You have also come to the fair of the world. If you forget your father, the Almighty, leave divine hand, you have to repent as soon as the fair ends one day. Since man forgets God in the fair called world, his mind is in misery, in agony.

The thirst of the soul is never quenched by the worldly materials. The soul lives on spiritual enlightenment and devotion, without which it remains miserable. We may collect everything available in the world, utilize all the resources, but will not feel satisfied. It has not been possible to determine the extent of worldly materials and other ambitions where man could be declared as satisfied. It is such a fire that will never say 'no' to the fuel, whether we put a small stick or a big tree or even the entire wood in the forest into it. Similarly, human desires have no end. They continue to exist. Then, where do we find satisfaction? It is found when we realise God, acquire the wealth of its Name in abundance. A person who links himself with God, becomes content. His life is filled with contentment. He remains happy in every situation treating it as the will of God. He is happy to act as per the divine will.

Man thinks that worldly materials are a source of happiness, but he is mistaken. They are not always able to produce happiness.

That is why spiritually enlightened persons do not hanker after the worldly materials. They spend their life with the spirit of contentment. We find that there has always been dearth of worldly materials in the life of saints. Whether we refer to Kabir, Ravidas or Shabri, we find that they did not possess many items of worldly wealth, such as a good house. But the joy they received is rare to be found. They did not accept the worldly materials as the source of happiness. For them the source of real pleasures, the source of real happiness was this God Nirankar. They associated themselves with God and lived happily.

The worldly wealth (Maya) is bound to decay, but wealth of God-knowledge or the Name of God is ever lasting. This wealth stands by you in this world. It will also stay with you when

this body is no more. All other materials are meant for the body. After death, this body does not go with you; the worldly materials also stay here. We here the example of Alexander, the Great. He conquered a large portion of the world and collected all the wealth from the kingdoms he defeated. But when he left this world, both his hands were empty. Nobody can, however, steal the wealth of the Name of God, nobody can burn it. Whosoever receives this wealth, remains happy in this world.

This colorful world, full of wealth, may appear to be fascinating, but it has no value in comparison to the diamond that we may possess in the form of God. The worldly wealth is like glass (Kanch), while God is the truth (Sanch). The man who thinks that his future is bright with the glass, is utterly mistaken. Whenever the opportunity comes it is the diamond that will sell. The glass will just be thrown away. Once upon a time, a man found something glittering. He kept it with him the idea that it was a valuable diamond that he had found suddenly. He started spending lavishly. He began to take loans from people. He thought that the value of the diamond will increase with the passage of time and he would be able to clear all his loans by selling the same. Then, one day he took the diamond to a jeweller and wanted its price. The jeweller examined the piece and said, "For this I can give you two rupees" The man said, "This is a diamond and you are offering me only two rupees. This petty amount may not buy even an ordinary thing." The jeweller said. "Look brother! I am paying this, because you have travelled all the way. Otherwise, I don't need this piece of glass."

The man went to another jeweller. He also gave him the same reply. Then he approached two or three other jewellers. The response remained the same. He became upset and did not know what to do. The faces of all his creditors came to his mind. He was caught in a problem, he was in trouble.

We must also consider as to what price will be fetched at the end by these worldly materials (Maya) which we have been treating as real and everything for us. It will definitely fetch no price at that time and man will repent :

**BAHUT GAYEE THORI RAHI, KIYA NA HARI SE HET,
AB PACHHTAYE HOT KYA, JAB CHIRYAN CHUG GAYEE KHET.**

It is essential to remember God while there is time. Repenting at the end will be of no use.

Often we refer to the UK, the USA, France, etc. as capitalist or affluent countries. We say that they have lot of wealth. Have we ever done a little introspection ourselves and realised as to what is the importance of wealth for us? Do we not lose temper over others for the sake of one or two rupees? Do we not abuse them? Do we not break age-old relations with others for the sake of wealth? Then, why do we mention the names of these countries alone every time we refer to wealth? This in fact relates to the state of mind. It has no relation with the amount of wealth either. If it has its influence there, it has it here also. If they need to save themselves there, we require to do the same here.

The desire or greed for wealth is like swamp. Once a man is caught into it and tries himself to come out, he goes deeper and deeper into it. But if somebody outside helps him with a rope or even with hand, the man succeeds to come out. Exactly like this, the world is also a swamp, where there is wealth and other materials to make man fall at every step. As we make our own efforts to come out, we rather go down and get submerged into the same. But if we seek the support of God, take help from saints, we are saved. It is the blessings of the Almighty Nirankar that save us.

An unenlightened person in the world may recite the name of God but the Almighty does not dwell in his mind. His head and heart are overwhelmed with desires, with lust. No doubt he

is mentioning the names of divine masters, his mind is somewhere else. Sometimes he wants to take worldly gains even from the worldly wealth remains upper in the mind. About this wealth, it is said that when it comes, it makes one blind with ego and when it goes, it disturbs the balance of mind and makes one mad :

**DAULAT KI DO LAAT HAIN, TULSI NISHCHAY KEEN,
AYE TO ANDHA KARE, JAYE MATI MALEEN.**

It means that when the worldly wealth comes, it makes man blind and when it goes, he weeps and gets mad, loses his mental balance. In fact, man is not able to think properly when wealth comes and he loses his sense when it goes. In both the cases, it spreads darkness only.

Once we were coming from Mussoorie. It was cloudy all over. It was misty. Nothing could be seen outside the vehicle. Only the people sitting inside could be seen. But as we travelled downward, every thing became visible. Similarly, so long as there is mist of pride and nothing is visible, we do not attach importance to others. We can see only ourselves and we think that we have become superior to all. But as we travel down to the level of humility, we come out of the pride, we start realising the importance of others. Another thought came to our mind at that time. If we cannot see anything outside the vehicle because of the mist, it does not mean that nothing exists outside. In reality, everything is present behind the curtain of the mist. If we think that nothing that exists, we are mistaken. We are likely to lose the control of the vehicle, collide against something, face problem and suffer. Similarly, as long as there is the veil of pride in front of the eyes, man just cannot see anything, even though every thing does exist as usual. If he is careless, he may face trouble.

This God Nirankar is omniscient and knows what exists inside the veil and outside. This is almighty and had the power to do everything. Whosoever is united with God, he is saved from troubles. An ignorant person fails to know the truth due to which he suffers a downfall and starts creating problems for them, giving them trouble. He fails to understand that all this happening because of himself, because of his pride, because he began to consider wealth to be everything. There is a proverb in Punjabi which means "Fallen from the donkey, blames the owner". The same is the case with the unenlightened man of the world. He falls from the donkey of his own pride, but feels annoyed with others. He is unable to understand the reason of his fall. The case of the enlightened person is quite contrary. Whenever there is some hindrance in his work, he remembers God and says, "It is likely that I have made some mistake. Perhaps I have gone astray in the darkness of worldly pleasures. Be kind to me so that I always stay where there is divine light. Bless me so that I can see every thing properly in the light of the divine truth".

Man indulges in worldly pleasures and forgets God. He runs after the creation (Maya), but fails to appreciate the greatness of the Creator (Mayapati). All that we see produces pleasure only when we are aligned with the Creator, the Almighty. History tells us that when Ravana went after Maya in the form of Sita, ignoring Mayapati in the form of Rama, this caused his ruin; his Lanka was plundered. And when the same Sita came to Ayodhya with Lord Rama, the people celebrated it. The wealth (Maya) alone is a cause of misery, but the same Maya proves to be a source of pleasure, if it is accompanied by Mayapati, the Creator, the Almighty.

In fact the human soul can never receive pleasure from the worldly materials. It is like a fish which would like to stay in water as it cannot exist without it. We may place in abundance all kinds of attractive objects outside the water, such as diamonds and pearls, flowers with fragrances, perfumes, sandal and so on, and place the fish in their midst. It will not feel comfortable at all and keep on fluttering even in the company of the precious articles. It does not find life for itself in these materials. It finds the same only in water. You put it back into the water, it will start playing, its life will have another beginning. The same is true of man. The human soul derives pleasure from the Almighty. All the wealth of the world

cannot provide this divine pleasure, an ever lasting bliss to the soul, if it is kept away from the Super Soul. This God Nirankar is the source of all joys. It is the grace of God that there is this world, there is life, there is movement. As we know, when the wind blows, trees lean back and forth. If somebody says that the wind blows because the trees move, he is mistaken. The reality is that the trees are shaken by the wind. Maya, the worldly wealth has its own grace. But everything moves only with Mayapati, i.e. the Creator. A person who holds the Creator in high esteem, accepts God as the master of everything, considers that all his joys are because of the Almighty, is really a saint. It is he who can (rightfully) ask for pleasures of wealth (Maya) alongwith the Creator (Mayapati).

The world where we are born, where we stay, is also a creation of the Almighty only. Not that the objects we see have been created by someone else; they all are also the creation of God. We must value these objects. But no father will like that the child should remain busy playing with the toys brought by him, all the time. The father would not like that when he calls the child for something urgent, the latter may go on loitering with the toys in his hands, not caring for his father. No father would like such a behaviour on the part of the child. Similarly, it will be wrong to remain busy playing with toys of Maya (worldly wealth) and forget the Creator, the Almighty. It is this mistake that becomes the cause of our miseries.

All the worldly relations are based on man's selfishness. Everybody is there because of his or her self interest. While living in this world, there is nothing wrong to deal with the relatives, but it will not be correct to remain all the time attached to them. Man does have affection for his family. He feels that everybody loves him selflessly. But this is not true. A person wanted the company of a saint, to sit in congregation with him, but the love for his family dragged him to the opposite. The saint counselled him that the worldly love is based on selfishness, on self-interest. There is some purpose, some interest attached to each relationship, be it elders or the youngsters. The man, however, did not agree with the saint. He asserted that the members of his family are profusely affectionate towards him. They are prepared to do anything for him. The saint said, "All right, there is a way by which you can test and know for yourself as to who has how much affection for you. When you go home today, start showing restlessness and shouting that you have pain in the stomach which is becoming unbearable. Then you calm down and hold the breath. As soon as you hear TU HI, TU HI in my voice, start breathing again." The man did the same. He held his breath. The members of the family were upset to find him 'no more alive'. Meanwhile, the saint arrived. He asked for the reason why everybody was sad. The members of the family told him, "We do not know what happened after he returned from you. He started crying with pain in the stomach. Now he is not even breathing. What shall we do by living without him?" The saint told the father of the man that there was a solution. He asked him to bring a bowl of milk. The same was arranged. The saint recited something and blew into the bowl. Then he said that any body could come forward and drink the milk. The person who drinks the milk will die, while the man who is already dead will come to life again. Everybody remained silent. The saint asked the wife to come forward, but she said, " I am sorry, my children are too young. You know, they will get spoiled in the absence of their mother. If they do not receive the mother's love, it will have bad effect on their mental growth. It is essential that the mother should live with the children".

Then came the turn of the father. He too pointed out that he had to look after his grand children, play with them and fulfil several other responsibilities. So he also refused to drink the milk. Similarly, all other members of the family declined one by one. At this the saint said, "It means that none of you is prepared to sacrifice his or her life for this member of the family. Anyway, if you are not prepared to drink this milk, I will do". All the members of the family agreed and said, " Yes, you can drink the milk. Saints are always for the service of others". The saint drank the milk and gave the signal of TU HI, TU HI. At this the man opened his eyes and said, " I have understood how much love the members of the family

have for me, how far they are devoted to me.” What we mean to say is that the worldly affections are based on self interest. Only devotion to God is selfless. To forget God for the sake of this world is not appropriate at all. No doubt we have to fulfil our duties towards the family, but not by forgetting God. We must have faith in the Almighty. Even if somebody tries to mislead us, we should remain firm on our faith for ever. The worldly affection depends on self interest. The love of the saint or an enlightened person is, however, pure and un-conditional. If a devotee feels the presence of God round the clock, his love for God also remains certainly there. As we know, if water is provided to the field, it gives good crop. But if water does not reach the field because of some blockage in the drain, the crop will remain weak. Similarly, if our mind is in constant union with God, the flow of our devotion remains unobstructed, we will remain happy all the time. But in case the flow of devotion is interrupted by a blockage in the form of greed for wealth, ego, jealousy and hatred, this pleasure or joy will not reach us. Therefore, the enlightened people always remember God, the divine name and pray that they may be blessed with the company of saints so that their faith and devotion for God are strengthened further and further.

Man gets the feeling of contentment only when he attaches importance to God instead of worldly materials. Saints do not give importance to Maya; they consider Mayapati as more important. They may have worldly wealth or not, they are not upset. They are always content and feel grateful to God for whatever little they are blessed with. They do not become proud, of they achieve something worldly. Instead, they consider God and the man created by God as more important. In the world today, if a poor man goes to meet a rich man, the latter turns his back. They feel so proud of their wealth that they do not value men, they do not respect others. But those who have integrated themselves with God, know well that man has more value than anything else. It is essential for a house that there should be a man. Similarly shoes have been made for the feet and not the vice-versa. The reality, the realisation that human relationship has to be given the first place or top priority, remains always there in the heart of the spiritually enlightened devotee. That is why he gives importance even to a cottage where may dwell a saint, a person dear to God:

**KAKHAN DI OH KULLI CHANGI,
JIS VICH GURMUKH RAHNDA EY.**

Wherever a saint dwells, the place becomes pleasant. Why so? Because the saintly feeling, saintly trait also stays there. Wherever we place the basket of fragrant flowers, it adds to the splendour and beauty of the house. The fragrance spreads all around. Similarly, a spiritually enlightened saint, who is devoted to God and remains always integrated with the Almighty, wherever he goes, makes even the place pleasant. The worldly relationships based on wealth break away, because wealth is a means to satisfy one's interests. If it is not there, there is no relationship, no honour, no respect.

A devotee was always inclined towards spirituality. He treated worldly assets as the blessings of God. He always said that the worldly materials are only to sustain life and not to mislead others, not to trouble others. While utilising them, he was always guided by the feeling of devotion which kept him happy. On the other hand, there was a friend of this spiritually enlightened person. He always talked about wealth and cheated many for the same. With the passage of time, both of them constructed their own houses. They grew old also. After quite some time, one day the spiritually enlightened friend decided to search for the other and enquire about his welfare. He reached his friend's bungalow and found that his cot had been placed in the stable, the portion meant for animals. He asked him, "What is the matter ? Why are you here? You have a big bungalow." The friend said, "Yes I have a house. The bungalow in front belongs to me. But I have no right on it." The saintly person asked him, "Why ?" He replied, "When my sons got married and my daughters-in-law came, they were all good to me. They obeyed me. I felt happy and transferred the entire property in their names. When they became the owners of the property, they put me here in the

stable. Now nobody cares for me.” The enlightened friend said, “Then we must do something.” And he told him the way.

The next day one of the daughters-in-law passed by his room. She heard the sound of jingling. She went and told her husband about it. She said, “Most probably the father-in-law has kept some wealth with him which he did not disclose to us.” The man’s son, however said, “I don’t believe.” The daughter-in-law asserted, “You can hear it yourself.” When he listened to the jingling, he could also hear the old man counting in thousands loudly, giving an impression that he was counting the gold coins which ran into thousands. Hearing this, they all approached the old man the next morning and said quite respectfully, “Father! Why are you here?” The daughter-in-law said, “I was already asking them not to put you here. I always advised them to give you a good room. But they all did not listen to me.” Now the old man started receiving lot of respect and care. He received good clothes and good food. After some time the old man died. His son and the daughter-in-law decided to go to his room and search for the money he had hidden. They searched the room thoroughly, dug the floor but found nothing except some pieces of stone. There were some pieces of iron also, used by the old man to produce the jingling sound. At this, they started cursing the father as a cheat. This is the story of worldly relations. They are all based on wealth, the worldly materials. Those who are spiritually enlightened and devoted to God, they consider Maya, the wealth, as shadow and prefer to spend their lives in the light of God-knowledge. When the sun is right above our head, our shadow is the smallest. It comes within our feet. But when the sun goes down, when it is quite low either in the morning or in the evening, our shadow becomes quite long. It goes upto several yards even though we may be standing at the same point. Similarly if we give the highest place to this God Almighty, all our desires wishes and longings stand reduced, become small, meaningless. But if we attach a very low priority to God-knowledge, try to place it down somewhere, these shadows of Maya will become longer and longer. All these problems arise from our desires, our narrow-mindedness, our preference to Maya. Why is the atmosphere of our family getting vitiated? Here too, one member may consider himself to be superior to others, thinking that he has acquired better education and has become able to earn. Then he may start treating others with reservation. He claims that everything in the house is meant for him. Elsewhere in the society also we find that when a member starts earning, he keeps everything for himself because of his narrow-mindedness. He does not think of others. A class was going on. The teacher asked the children, “Tell me, what will be the consequences if there is drought, there is no rain?” One of the children replied, “I don’t know about anything else. But I am sure about one thing. My father has a shop of umbrellas. People will stop buying them.” What we mean to say is that the mind went immediately to his own house; it did not go to others, the humanity. The child was not worried about the fact that crops would fail, people would long for even a drop of water, the animals and birds would cry for water and it would look like a desert all around. Similarly the attention of the man to-say is confined to himself. That is why we find turmoil and disorder which cause ups and downs. That is why we find discipline being violated or vitiated. All this is happening because the shadows of Maya are being stretched while the place of God-knowledge is being lowered.

To-day man is not moving on the right path, because he is under the illusion of the worldly wealth, because he is in darkness. Instead of integrating with the Truth, he is running after the pieces of glass (untruth) , because he is feeling attached to the illusions. He is treating as true what in reality is only an illusion. All the objects of Maya, the worldly materials, are short lived. They do not accompany the human soul. They are not likely to your faith for the sake of these objects. Then, there is neither any joy during life nor salvation thereafter :

**DEEN GAWAYA DUNI SON, DUNI NA CHALI SAATH;
PANW KULHARA MARYA, GAFIL APNE HAATH.**

You sacrificed your faith in God for the sake of the world. But the world left you in the lurch. In other words you cut your feet with an axe with your own hand. The worldly wealth does not go with anybody.

Instead of Maya or the worldly wealth, remember God, the Creator of it all. If you give up the pursuit of the creation and praise the Creator, the former will become your servant, do everything for you and prove to be a source of bliss. It is said also :

**PRABHUTA KO TO SAB BHAJEN, PRABHU KO BHAJE NA KOYE;
JO KABIR PRABHU KO BHAJE, PRABHUTA CHERI HOYE.**

(VIII)

What is the object of devotion?

What do we want to achieve by means of congregation, service and praise of God?

Do we need congregation, service and praise of God even after attaining divine knowledge?

In the realm of theosophy, devotion has a special significance. Majority of the people consider singing of the praise of God as devotion. They believe that their singing of praise will please God who will then give them the reward, appear in front of them. This kind of devotion of the world is, however, based on ignorance. It is not rewarded, it is not useful, not fruitful.

Regarding devotion, Baba Avtar Singh Ji writes:

**BHAKTI LOKI AJE NA SAMJHE,
RAB NOON PANA BHAKTI EY**

Devotion begins only when one realises God and integrates oneself with it. When somebody has not even entered our life, whom do we love and whom do we show our devotion? Whom do we admire? Suppose a mother is still to get a child, whom shall she love? With whom shall she develop affection? For this love and affection she must bear a child. Suppose electricity connection is still to be provided to our house. We may buy any number of bulbs, our house cannot get the light. Although we may have the best type of appliances like heaters, fans and other such gadgets to make ourselves comfortable, yet they will be of no use if there is no power connection. Similarly if we have not known God, we have not integrated ourselves with the Almighty, we cannot have any devotion for it.

To remember God all the time while doing our normal work is the real devotion. Only the realisation of the existence of the omnipresent, being aware that it is in the know of all our actions, rather oversees them, is the real devotion. There is no moment for a devotee when God is absent for him. Somebody else may be absent, but God cannot be absent even for a moment. If God is absent, it is absent from the mind. And when it is absent from the mind,

bad deeds begin to be done by us. We think ill of others and wish wrong for them. In the matter of religious faith three things are essential - devotion, devotee and God. In other words there must be a devotee, there must be the spirit of devotion and there must be God for whom the devotee is required to show his devotion.

There is a famous story about Dadu Bhagat. A person connected with the administration of the town was told that a saint was living there. He thought of going to see him. He thought that he had spent enough time in Maya or the worldly things; now he would like to spend sometime in devotion. With this thought in his mind he rode his horse and started. As he asked him, "Where does Dadu Bhagat live? Which side to go for his house?" The person, however, did not pay attention to him and remained involved in the cutting of the bushes. The visitor again asked him, "Please show me the way. Let me know where Dadu Bhagat lives." Even then there was no reply. The man could not tolerate this and he hit him with his leg from the horse back, threw him on the ground and beat him with the whip meant for the horse. Thereafter, he proceeded further. On the way he asked another man, "Where does Dadu Bhagat live?" The man told him that Dadu Bhagat was removing bushes from the way he himself had come from, because visitor was very sorry to know this. He realised that in ignorance he had insulted the saint. He went back and requested Dadu Bhagat to forgive him for the big mistake he had committed. Dadu Bhagat said only this much: "You did that because you were ignorant. Now you are bowing your head before me because you have come to know. You misbehaved only because of your ignorance. Therefore, you are not at fault. It is your ignorance that is at fault. Man commits mistakes, he falters because of his ignorance. Man does so, because he does not know the truth. When he come to know the truth, he gets the light, he moves on the right path."

The distinction of these spiritually enlightened persons lies in the fact that they know God, they know this truth. Then they try to persuade the world to follow the same path. This is the principle of the saints' life. They endeavour to unite every human being with God, the Almighty, since when man is integrated with God, hatred and jealousy will go from his mind. If he does not know God, he will consider other human beings as strangers, inferior and treat them as untouchables. So long as he carries these feelings, his mind will be full of hatred, anger and pride and he will not be able to treat others with the sense of equality. When the sun rises, every object can be seen in its light. So long as the sun does not rise there is fallacy only. Even a rope lying in the darkness appears to be a snake. The bushes move because of the air and we imagine horrible things. But with the sunrise, with the coming of the light, reality comes before our eyes. Similarly, when there is light of God-knowledge, we realise the truth that no human being is a stranger, nobody is high and nobody is low. Thereafter, man does not treat anybody as not his own. He treats everybody as an image of God. He devotes himself to the service of all. He loves all. All kinds of hatred and jealousy are gone. In fact, this is the beginning of devotion. For devotion the light of God-knowledge is essential. God-knowledge ushers in devotion. It is the first step and not the last on the ladder of devotion. While imparting God-knowledge, saints advise seekers to attend congregation, do service to others and praise God. All these have been recognised as essential elements of devotion.

Some people are of the opinion that when God-knowledge has already been attained, where is the need for attending the congregation everyday? However, why do they not think the same way in the case of bath? Why do they not say that they would both take the bath because they had taken the same two days back? Why do they not say so in regard to several other activities of life? Why do they not postpone their actions on the plea that they had done the same thing a few days back? We know that if we do not take food regularly, our body will start losing strength and becoming weak. Similarly, if we stop taking bath, our body will develop bad smell due to which it may catch some disease.

In the same way, if you want to keep your mind clean, you must take help from saints. The mind becomes clean only in the company of saints. The spiritually enlightened persons attach importance to the company of saints in every field of life, on every occasion. Whatever the occasion, they think of having a congregation of saints as the saints, that saves the boat of life from dwindling. The spiritually awakened people always hold the

company of saints in high esteem in their minds. Wherever a congregation is held, such persons take active part with full enthusiasm. Exactly this is the conduct of saintly persons.

Somebody asked Kabir Ji, "Why so we have the congregation daily? Why should we go and sit with saints everyday? Where is the need? We have so many other things also to do. Why should we attend the congregation again and again and listen to the same discussion?"

Kabir Ji did not give a reply. He simply picked up a hammer and struck it on a peg nearby. The man came again the next day and said, "I wanted answer to a question, but you did not give any reply." Kabir Ji again struck the hammer on the peg. He, of course, did not speak anything. The third day again the man came and said, "It is quite strange. I am requesting you again and again, but you are not giving any reply to my question." Kabir Ji said, "But I am giving you the reply every day. In fact you are not understanding it. I strike the hammer on this peg every day, so that it goes deeper into the ground. If I do not apply the hammer every day, the peg may come out even with the slightest disturbance in the ground, or if the animal tied there tries to pull it or even if somebody happens to hit it. Once it is out, it may not be found at all, it may get lost. It remains fixed into the ground strongly, because I apply the hammer on it everyday. This is what is done by the regular congregation or company of the saint. It works like a hammer on our mind and strengthens our faith."

When we go to a congregation, the words of saints lend firmness to our mind. We get a support and our mind stays with God. Once our mind remains fixed in the Almighty, our faith and devotion remain constant. This takes us above worldly considerations and fills our mind with Godly feelings. Once we rise above worldly considerations, the mind gets peace which is everlasting. If we continue to be engrossed in worldly thoughts, our union with God will weaken. As we know, there can be no calm, peace or lasting satisfaction so far as worldly materials are concerned.

Once a saint said to another, "I have been attending the congregation for several days, but I am yet to acquire any virtues." The other saint gave him a basket made of bamboo and asked him to fill it with water. He took the basket to the river. He put it into the river but it would just not hold the water. The next day he again went and asked how to fill the water into the basket because there were several holes in it. He was, however, advised to continue the practice. After some days, he came again and complained that even though he was trying regularly, the basket was not holding the water. At this, the saint said, "You have been putting the basket into the water and taking it out again and again. Have you noticed any change in the basket?" The reply was: "One change I have seen definitely. Earlier, the basket had some dust settled on it. Now it is quite clean. Secondly, the size of the holes of the basket has been reduced." The saint explained, "If you continue the practice of putting the basket into the water again and again, the bamboos will expand and one day the holes may disappear from the basket at all and it may be able to hold the water. Similarly, a person who goes to the company of saints again and again, his mind becomes clean and the holes in the form of shortcomings will gradually disappear and it will start holding the virtues."

A man may be doing any number of bad deeds, but when he comes to the company of saints there is a change in his life, in his behaviour. If a person ignores the words of saints even after coming to their company, he achieves nothing. The dust of his mind continues to stay. Those who hear the message of the enlightened saints, adopt the same, they make their life a success. Sajjan Thug was always robbing people. He had a lodge Whosoever came there to stay for the night, he would be thrown into the well and his baggage kept by Sajjan Thug. This is how he lived. One day, a great spiritual master (Guru Nanak) came to the lodge. Sajjan Thug wanted to try to give the same treatment to him but failed because he was won over by the feelings of the True Master. He received God-knowledge and became a disciple. The result is that today the same Sajjan Thug is included in the category of saints. His name is counted among devotees. Otherwise, how evil were his actions? Just as dirty clothes are washed with soap and become wearable, similarly the unclean people become clean and noble with the company of the saints.

Mind receives strength, when it is attached to the company of saints. It starts believing, having faith and becomes pious. Whosoever finds the company of saints, is believed to be

fortunate. In fact, a saint does not claim any credit even for attending a congregation. He only says :

**TUMRI KRIPA SE BHAYE SADH SANG
EHO KAAJ TUM AAP KIYO**

It is because of your (God's) blessings that I could find the company of saints. This has been done only by you. This task (congregation) could just not be performed by me.

It is due to the blessings of God, that one finds the company of saints. Once we consider it a blessing, those who receive will have to be called great. The company of saints promotes wisdom and it is found only with the blessings of God:

**BIN SATSANG VIVEK NA HOYEE
RAM KRIPA BIN SULABH NA SOYEE**

The devotees of God always pray that their contact with the saints should grow. They should meet only the saints. It is because of the company of saints that life gets a change. It is said

**GANGA KE SANG SARITA BIGRI;
SO SARITA GANGA HOYE NIBRI,
CHANDAN KE SANG TARUWAR BIGRYO;
SO TARUWAR CHANDAN HOYE NIBRYO;
PARAS KE SANG TAMBA BIGRYO,
SO TAMBA KANCHAN HOYE NIBRYO;
SANTAN SANG KABIRA BIGRYO,
SO KABIR RAM HOYE NIBRYO.**

Just as any tree that grows near Sandal, acquires the same fragrance; just as a dirty rivulet takes refuge in the Gages and acquires its vast form, just as copper becomes gold by coming in contact with the touch-stone(Paras), Kabir ji says that he (man) becomes merged with God by coming in contact with the saints.

So long as we do not find the company of saints, virtues will not enter our life and we will fail to move higher. If we stay in the company of unenlightened people and continue to be guided by selfishness, we are not going to attain any peace. Some time back, there was a big tragedy which caused lot of damage. In Bhopal, thousands of people lost their lives. Do you know the reason? It was because of polluted air. No doubt, the air is always there. We breathe it. We continue to live with the help of air. But when it gets poisoned, it causes havoc. Similarly, our mind is poisoned when it gets into the company of unenlightened people or is under the influence of Maya, the worldly wealth.

We drink neat water and we gain health. But if we drink water which contains worms, which contains virus that can spread diseases, it may affect our lives. It can cause jaundice, malaria, etc. What we mean to say is that when we get the company of saints, their noble feelings become a part and parcel; of our life, our behaviour. But in case we fall in the company of unenlightened people, whose life is based on selfish desires, is full of self-interests, we too will have the same attitude. Such a company proves misleading, divides people, makes them strangers to each other. That is why, saints profess for the company of enlightened people, the congregation. In other words, the company of truth and the truthful is the company of divine truth, i.e., God. And this is what is important.

The company of saints is a sacred pool that gives delight. One feels like staying in it to enjoy its coolness. When we take a bath in the pool, we are pleased, we get relief from heat. When we are inside the pool, the sun remains the same, produces heat. But we enjoy the cool when we take bath, inspite of the sun. The sun performs its own function, but it cannot affect us while we are bathing in the pool. Similarly, a person who is always immersed in the pool of the divine knowledge, a devotee, remains unaffected by the allurements of the worldly wealth, the evils like greed and pride etc; even though they are very much there. If

we remain in the company of saints, attend congregations, our mind remains unaffected by evils.

That is why the devotees always pray for the company of such people whose presence inspires them to continuously remember God, confirms their faith in God. They pray that they may not get the company of such people as may shake their belief or faith. It has been advised to avoid the company of unenlightened people, because it proves harmful. Suppose there is a banana plant with its broad leaves and nearby grows a thorny bush. When the wind blows, the soft leaves of the banana get into touch with the thorns and they are torn. That is why saints pray to God that they may be saved from bad company, from the friendship of those who are unenlightened because such company weakens their faith.

The company of enlightened saints removes the sense of discrimination, narrow-mindedness. One establishes this is the reward of the company of saints. The more we get such company, the deeper and stronger is our faith in God - Nirankar. If we do not get the company of saints, the worldly dust starts settling on our minds and we become narrow-minded. When we continue to attend the congregation of saints, our mind remains cool and calm. It is never shaken. The belief in God remains firm for ever. It is such a tonic for the mind, such a shield that whosoever takes it, continues to march forward on the path of devotion.

Wisdom does not dawn without the company of saints. And whosoever finds the company of saints becomes wise. He starts appreciating the difference between good and bad. This wisdom comes from the company of the enlightened people. Just as Sandal lends fragrance even to the nearby plants, similarly, whosoever comes near the enlightened people, he develops the sense of devotion and is happy. Suppose a student is bodily sitting in the class and the teacher is teaching. He will not learn what is being taught if his mind is somewhere else. He will never become educated. Similarly, when we refer to the congregation, it is related to mind. We may be present bodily, but if our mind is absent from here, if our mind is not very keen to learn, we will not be able to gain anything from the company of saints. If we want to take the advantage of the company of saints, we must immerse ourselves in the same. We must forget ourselves.

Saints ! A man had heard that Paras (touch-stone) turns the iron into gold. He came to know that an old saint in a far off village possessed Paras. He went to him and said, "I have come to know that you have Paras with you. Kindly show it to me, I want to have a look at it."

The old saint agreed. He went inside and took out a small box. The box was made of iron. The man who had approached him to have a look at Paras said, "Surely, the secret is out. Today I have come to know everything. I have understood everything. Who says that Paras can turn iron into gold ? You are showing this small box which is made of iron and claim that it contains Paras. Had it been so, this box should not have been made of iron. The claim that Paras turns iron into gold, is unfounded."

The saintly person asked him to wait. Then he opened the box. It was found that Paras was wrapped into a piece of cloth. The saint pointed out, "Paras is an energy, but it is not able to touch the iron because of the wall created by the piece of cloth. Since Paras is unable to touch the iron, the iron has remained iron. In spite of the fact that the box contains Paras, it has failed to become gold".

Similarly, the congregation is Paras which turns life into gold (virtue), provided only that no wall of ego, no wall of falsehood, creates obstruction.

The sun is another example like this. It has its own light. But if someone has covered himself or put a curtain, how can he take any advantage of the light of the sun? There is no defect in the sun, just as there is no defect in that Paras. It does possess energy, it does possess power, but because the iron has gone behind the curtain of cloth, Paras is not able to convert it into gold. The same is true of the glory of the company of saints. It does lend its colour, it does make a person's life pleasant, provided he puts an end to his ego before he

comes to the congregation, bows his head, shows regards from the core of his heart to others, considering them the devotees of the True Master, beloved of this God-Nirankar and removes all his pride and leaves behind his self-interest. The importance does not lie in being present in the congregation bodily. The mind should also be present in the company of saints. Only then, it is useful to attend the congregation. Neither ego nor any other weakness should come in the way. A saint has been considered more valuable even than Paras. Paras converts iron into gold while a saint converts the seeker of his company into a saint (like himself).

Spiritual masters have declared company of saints as the realisation of all the means to salvation in one. Kabir Ji shows better regards to the congregation of saints than even heaven. He says :

JO SUKH SADHU SANG MEIN, SO BAIKUNTH NA HOYE.

Quite often, a feeling is expressed that when we have realised God, we have received God-knowledge, we should go back and take rest at home. But really speaking, realisation of God-knowledge is one thing, the realisation of the fruits seed, while unstinted devotion, the sense of being unattached, is the fruit. This plant is required to be given water in the form of the company of saints (Satsang), the fertiliser in the form of service (Sewa) and care in the form of praise of God (Simran). Only then, this little plant will grow into a big fruit - giving and shady tree. Thus, God-knowledge is important. It is by attending the congregation that one acquires firmness of faith.

The same is the case with service. It brings cheerfulness, delightfulness. Devotees always cherish that in spite of all the worldly fame and reputation, they should not be deprived of the service of the fellow saints, the service of those who come to see the True Master. History tells us that when a disciple working in the stable of a great spiritual master was rewarded for his good service and made the commander, he said, "Give me any number of honours, but kindly allow me to work in the stable also".

**JO NAR DUKH MEIN DUKH NAHIN MANE;
SUKH SNEH CHINTA NAHIN JAKE,
KANCHAN MATI MANE.**

This is the state of mind of those who remain unshaken, who remain unattached, uninfluenced by worldly wealth. On the other hand, this is what happens in the world :

**PHAL KARAN SEWA KARE
TAJE NA MAN SE KAAM;
KAHE KABIR SEWAK NAHIN,
CHAHE CHAUGUNA DAAM.**

He who demands the price of his service is not a disciple. A disciple always serves without any self-interest. He simply obeys. Service is not something that you choose to do. Service is what is accepted or recognised, what has been done on order. It is this kind of service that carries value.

Those who realise the importance of service - physical, intellectual and material, remain firm and those who do not take part in any service and only criticise others, do not gain anything. Rather, they lose what they already possess. Somebody asked a lady, "Why are you so upset ?" She replied, "I have not lost anything. Neither I have done any wrong. I am distressed only to see others making donations". It means, while we ourselves are unable to find time for the service, we criticise if somebody else is doing something. This is, in fact, a sign of narrow-mindedness. The devotees are modest by mind but their thinking is quite high. They do the service in all humility. Whatever they are able to do, they do; they do not make a mention of it unnecessarily.

Like congregation (Satsang), in service (Sewa) also the spirit is important. If the body is doing some service, the mind also be put into it. The service has value if done from the core of one's heart. Two devotees were present in the service of their spiritual master. A fair was going on in the town. One of the devotees desired to go the fair. He goes and sees the fair. He watches the various activities going on. No doubt, his eyes were looking at the various objects, his mind was all the time with the master. He kept on thinking whether somebody had served water to him, pulled the fan for him and so on. On the other hand, the second disciple who did not get an opportunity to go to the fair, kept on thinking that the other devotee was enjoying the fair, while he himself was stuck up. Both the devotees went to the spiritual master next morning. He praised the devotee who had gone to the fair, saying that he did a lot for him the previous day. At this, the other devotee pointed out, "Your Holiness ! Perhaps you are a little mistaken. In fact, he had gone to the fair and I was looking after you". The great master said, "No doubt, he was not here bodily, his mind was all the time in my service. Thus he remained very much present here. On the other hand, in spite of being present bodily, you were mentally absent".

This example has only one message that only the service rendered with the True Master in mind, gets accepted or recognised. This does not mean that we should not do anything practically and go on saying that our mind is in the service. Quite often, man tries to be clever. He thinks that there is no harm in going to the fair, because his presence will in any case be marked. This is a mischief of the mind, an invention of the brain. Whatever is thought by the brain, suffers from artificiality. In fact, devotion is not the subject of brain, it is the subject of heart. Those who offer themselves in devotion, both outwardly and inwardly, emerge to be included. They receive all kinds of comforts, all kinds of pleasures.

The value of service is understood by the devotee who does it. Only he knows as to what is devotion. The devotee is a flower in bloom and devotion is the fragrance. The devotee leads his life with a spirit of submission. He surrenders everything to God and remains busy in serving physically, intellectually and materially. Service can be done only by a person who has the spirit of humility, the spirit of service. A person with ego or suffering from pride can never do the service. In fact, he who does the service does not even claim any credit for doing it. He treats it as a blessing of the Almighty. Our body is recognised by our face or the head. The question arises as to how to recognise the body which has no head. It just cannot be recognised. Similarly, a person who offers his head does no longer possess his own identity. His identity stands merged with the authority to whom he has offered his head. A devotee is always guided by this spirit. He offers his head and does not retain it with him. Then he has no separate identity. Whatever he is able to do, he considers it as the blessing of the Lord :

**NA HUM KIYA NA KARENGE, NA KAR SAKI SHAREER;
JO KICHH KIYA SO HARI KIYA, HUA KABIR KABIR.**

A devotee does not want to take any credit for his service. Such persons will never say that they have done something, although practically they have done everything. They hold out God as the master of every action. Whatever they do, they do it with the spirit of submission. Whether they serve physically, intellectually or materially, they consider it a blessing of God. They declare that they have been able to do something for the welfare of others only through the blessing of the Almighty. Otherwise, they say, "Who am I to do this? O God! You provided an opportunity to me, so I am doing this." While in service, you get an opportunity to do something in this manner only. A person who serves with devotion, moves on the path of service without hoping to be rewarded. Service produces happiness, plenty and prosperity. But if somebody feels proud of the service, it may bring loss instead of any profit. That is why in the matter of faith only the service obeys the order as considers himself a humble servant, the humblest of the humble. Those who serve with this spirit, command adoration. Hanuman served Lord Rama with the spirit of devotion. To-day we find more shrines constructed in the name of Hanuman than Lord Rama. Bhai Kanhiya presented such an example of service that is being quoted even to-day. In the matter of devotion, service is also essential alongwith the company of saints, in order to attain firmness and be prosperous.

Service (Sewa) is useful only when it is accompanied by the praise of God (Simran). The onlooker feels that these people who are doing hard labour in the scorching heat of the sun must be facing lot of difficulty. But when you approach the man who is actually working, you will find that his mind is overwhelmed with happiness; he is enjoying the service. Similarly if the service is in terms of money, only the donator knows how much pleasure he is deriving from this action. This happiness flows from Simran alongwith Sewa. By Simran it is meant to remember God all the time, to keep the Almighty in mind. It does not mean the repetition of God's name as such.

Suppose there is an electric wire and there is a bulb also attached to it. The bulb just cannot produce the light until and unless there is current in the wire. Similarly if human mind is not attached or integrated with the source i.e. the Almighty - Nirankar, mere repetition of divine name is just like the bulb that is seen very much there but is not connected with the main, the point supplying the current. No doubt we can see somebody reciting the name of God with his tongue but since there is no attachment with the Main, where will this mind get the light from?

To remember God all the time while doing normal work is the real Simran. The very realisation of the existence of God is Simran in true sense. For example, there is a cow. It has its calf. Wherever the calf may be, the cow keeps it in mind. Similar is the case with our own child. Wherever it may be, we take care of it. Just as the mother, whether she is working in the kitchen or doing something else in the house, remembers the child, she continues to have all the love and affection for it and she just does not forget it even for a minute, similarly a devotee, a saint, also performs all the duties of daily life, he goes here and there and fulfils his responsibilities but he does not forget God. He remembers this Formless all the time. His mind is fully integrated with God.

For example, fish remains alive only in water. Its mind is always in water. If it separates itself from the water, we know how it flutters in pain and then dies. A devotee has the same kind of attraction for God. He moves with God in his mind all the time. He makes God as the very base of his life. There is a saying in Punjabi :

HATH KAAR WAL, TE CHITT YAAR WAL

It means that while hands are busy in work, the heart is with God. This is the real Simran.

We must realise before starting any action that this God-Nirankar is watching us. We can hide ourselves from the eyes of the human beings, but we cannot escape the eyes of the One to whom we are answerable for our actions. Once we realise this in our mind, we cannot do wrong, speak wrong, behave wrong. Simran of this kind, in this form, saves us from bad deeds and leads us towards good deeds. This is what makes a devotee happy.

Fake and fictitious Simran is of no use. Religious books mention that some people recite the name of God only for the show of it. They only want to impress others that those who worship God and repeat the divine name all the time, are (great) devotees. But all this has some self interest behind it. For example, a beggar also recites the name of God. He too refers to the name of the Almighty one way or the other. May be, he says RAM. But this RAM RAM is coming from his tongue; his heart is in the begging. In case the chord of his heart is also connected with God, it may have some meaning. But here, the word RAM is being repeated only by the tongue. The eyes of the beggar are on the pedestrians who move along the footpath where he is sitting. He watches as to who turns towards him and puts some coin into his bowl, as to who puts his hand into his pocket, as to who is taking out the money and giving him. In short, his eyes are fixed somewhere else, while the tongue is repeating the name of God. This has never been accepted by spiritual masters as the spirit of devotion, as Simran. Simran for them means that they recite the name of God with everything surrendered to the Almighty. That is why the divine masters have always described this kind of fictitious Simran as useless, Simran of low standard.

Once Laila was walking, with Majnu in her mind. On the way she passed by a person who was sitting in penance. He stopped her and complained that she had disturbed him in his

meditation. At this Laila said, "I am having only corporeal love. I was thinking of someone (a human being), while passing from here. But you are in love with God. You are worshipping the Almighty. Your love is divine. When I failed to see you because of my love for a human being, how is it that you felt disturbed while you were remembering God?" What we mean to say is that Simran performed but the unenlightened people today is not accompanied by the concentration on this God-Nirankar. Naturally they are not getting the reward of Simran that was their due.

Divine masters tell us about the most appropriate Simran as under:

**SUMIRIN KI SUDH YUN KARO, JYON GAGAR PANIHAR;
HALE DOLE SURAT MEIN, KAHE KABIR VICHAR.**

Women fetch water from the well. They fill their vessels with water and carry them home. We do not advise the vessel to be kept there (at the well) itself so that it does not get shaken and the water does not get split. This will defeat the very purpose. The vessel has been filled with water for carrying home, for quenching thirst. That is why the lady puts the vessel on her head. She carries another vessel under her arm. Carrying the vessels, she walks towards her house. On the way she finds the level of the ground uneven. She also talks to the other women (carrying water the same way). In this way they are all doing their job, performing their action and at the same time they are mentally concentrating on the vessels full of water they carry. They put their steps forward in such a way that they do not allow the vessels to shake. The mind of the devotee is also like this. He performs all actions but his mind, his thoughts are all the time with God.

It is not only the tongue of the devotee that recites the name of God. God is there throughout the body. This is what the divine masters say about those who recite the name of God just for the show of it:

**KABIR JAPNI KAATH KI, KYA DIKHLAWE LOYE;
HRIDAY RAM NA CHETAYEE, EY JAPNI KYA HOYE.**

It is said that man is not going to gain any thing if his heart is not in alliance with God, if his mind is unclean, harsh and if he is repeating the name of God with his tongue only. In fact, a person who is a saint, a devotee, remembers God with heart and soul, all the time, every moment. He continues to feel the presence of God in his mind while he walks, while he does any work.

When God Almighty is there in mind all the time, there is no reason why feelings like jealousy should arise, why man should make discrimination against others, treat some as his own and others as strangers, why he should be proud. In this way man comes closer to man. He realises that God dwells in every human being and everybody is God's own image. This state of mind is achieved only when the human mind is united with God and the name of God is recited by heart and soul. Such Simran has no relationship with telling beads. Here in this context, it is not the beads in the rosary that roll, it is the beads of the mind :

**MALA PHERAT JUG GAYA, GAYA NA MAN KA PHER;
KARKA MANAKA DAAL DE, MAN KA MANAKA PHER.
MALA TO KAR MEIN PHIRE, JEEBH PHIRE MUKH MAHIN;
MANVA TO DAS DIS PHIRE, YEH TO SUMIRIN NAHIN.**

A man who always thinks of this God-Nirankar and recites its name receives calm and happiness and all his troubles are over. Thereafter the life is full of joys. That is why spiritual masters have said:

**BHAJO GOVIND, BHOOL MAT JAO;
MANUSH JANM KA YE HI LAHO.**

Do not forget this Govind, the Almighty, because it is only to remember it and seek integration with it that God has granted this human life. Now that we have got this human body, we should never forget it. The man who remembers God, his condition is:

TUDH CHIT AWE MAHA ANANDA

It means, so long as the mind thinks of you (God), we are happy all the time. We receive the joy which is not found even in the worldly materials all put together. It has no parallel. That is why it has been said:

**FIKR KAREIN SO BAWRE, ZIKR KAREIN SO SADH;
UTH FARIDA ZIKR KAR, FIKR KAREGA AAP.**

Simran is such a cover that keeps the lamp of God-Knowledge burning (it does not allow it to extinguish). The saints give Simran a place in their hearts so that this lamp of divine knowledge keeps burning. This is the lamp that gives light and renders the path of life smooth. There is, however, another thing. The lamp may be very much there, but if we close our own eyes, we are likely to stumble. The lamp is burning. There is light. Even then the essential requirement is that we must open our eyes. If the lamp is lit, but we put a bandage on our eyes, we shut our eyes, we have the darkness all around. If we want that our eyes remain open and we receive all kinds of joys in life taking full advantage of the divine light, we must attend the congregation (Satsang), do service to others (Sewa) and praise God (Simran):

**SIMR SIMR SIMR SUKH PAO,
KAL KLESH TAN MAHIN MITAO;
UTHAT BAITHAT HAR BHAJO, SAHDU SANG PREET,
NANAK DURMAT CHHUT GAYEE, PARBRAHM BASE CHEET.**

Only Simran produces joy. It puts an end to tension and discord. When there is recitation of the name of God all the time, there is the company of saints, bad intentions disappear and this God-Nirankar enters gradually. This Simran, this love towards saints, their company, all these make devotion fruitful. The devotee continues to remain spiritually enlightened.

With God-knowledge, the mind is enlightened. Once the lamp is lit, we put our hands over it to protect it from the wind blowing from any side. We provide it a cover of our palms so that it does not extinguish because of the wind. Similarly, the lamp of spiritual enlightenment, the divine light that is lit with the blessings of the True Master is also required to be protected and not to be allowed to be extinguished. How? This is to be done with the help of congregation (Satsang), service (Sewa) and the praise of God (Simran). Satsang stabilizes it, Sewa exalts it and Simran makes it ever lasting.

(IX)

What is adoration?

What is the base for divine love?

How to have eternal bliss?

This universe with all its objects - animate and inanimate, is the creation of God. It is just like the creation or production of a portrait by an artist. It is said that 'God created man in His own image'. Obviously, God must have wanted that human beings should love one another. Whether the great spiritual masters belonged to the Golden Age, Silver, Bronze or Iron Age, whether we refer to Lord Rama, Lord Krishna, Hazrat Mohammad, Lord Jesus Christ, from Guru Nanak Dev ji Maharaj to Guru Gobind Singh ji Maharaj, who lived in this world, or we take the saints like Sant Tukaram, Sant Eknath or the large number of other saints who lived in the various parts of this vast country, or we mention Sri Tanna Ji and Sri Manna Ji from Andhra Pradesh, Sri Panchsakha, a renowned saint of Orissa whose Vani (literature) is read with lot of faith, when we go through what has been written by all these divine masters, we listen to it, we find the same feeling expressed by them all. They said we must love this God, love its creation, the human beings, welcome them and not condemn them.

When we want to please a mother, win her heart or make a place for ourselves in her mind, we are required to love her child. But in case we hurt the child and then go to the mother and tell her that she is merciful, she is very kind, her face is radiant with a sublime glow, we may use any number of words in her praise, convey them to her, we must give up the hope, leave the thought that the mother is going to be pleased. She will say, "There you bruise my child, you kick my son and here you praise me, flatter me." She can never be happy with such a person. On the other hand if that person picks up the child and embraces him, loves him, uses sweet words while the mother is watching from a distance, he will win the heart of the mother even if he does not go to her, does not use all those words of praise for her. Similarly, if we want to please God, we will have to love all.

We perform the various acts of purification. We recite the divine name. We worship God. We sit in penance, apply sweet scented substances. We give alms. We have 'holy' dip. We show charity and so on. Somebody may ask us as to why do we do all this. The answer is: we want to please God. Will God be pleased with all these things? No. You will not win the pleasure of God unless you love the men of God. Just as the mother is not pleased with the man who kicks her child, God is also not happy with the man who discriminates against fellow human beings. God just cannot be pleased to find man behaving in ignorance, not realising that all human beings are the creation of God and the invisible form of God (the soul) is there in each and every heart. There is no place for discrimination in the divine law. Discrimination, the sense of high and low is not a principle of divine adoration. Devotion rests on the foundation of love for God from the core of one's heart.

Where does the feeling of love come from? Love blossoms only in the life of a person who integrates himself with this Almighty Nirankar. We cannot hope to get the coolness of love from the life of a person who is not united with God, his behaviour towards us is always harsh.

A person who is deprived of the divine name or God-knowledge, who does not possess the nectar of love, cannot provide coolness or happiness to us. In order to acquire the feeling of love, it is essential to establish union with the source of this divine quality i.e. God. Every human being must get united with God. Only then will sprout the divine love in his life.

Saints are not fascinated by Maya. They do not love the worldly wealth. They are in love with God. Love requires ego to be given up, the very mind to be surrendered. Man does not achieve anything so long as he has ego, he is proud. When this "I" is converted into 'You', one begins to see God all around:

**TUN TUN KARTA TUN BHAYA, MUJH MEIN RAHI NA HUN;
AAPA PARKA MIT GAYA, JIT DEKHAN TIT TUN.**

It is only after reaching such a state of mind that one gets real happiness. The devotee dissolves himself in divine love, ends his identity, his existence as such:

**RANJHA RANJHA KARDI NI MAIN AAP VI RANJHA HOYEE;
SADDO NI RANJHA MAINOO, HEER NA AAKHO KOYEE.**

It is said that Heer lost herself in love for Ranjha so acutely that she lost her own identity, her own existence and there remained only Ranjha. Similarly, there is a story about Guru Nanak Dev Ji. In Modikhana he was weighing (the corn) and keeping the count. When he reached thirteen (Tehra), he started saying Tera - Tera (Yours i.e. God's) and forgot the count, forgot himself, was lost in the divine thought. Similarly, there is a story about the love of Gopis (mild-women) with Lord Krishna. They are reported to have said;

**UDHO,MAN NA BHAYE DAS BEES;
EK HUTO SO GAYO SHYAM SANG,
KO ARADHE ISH?**

It means our mind (the only one we had) has gone with Lord Krishna (and there is no other mind that could now worship God). In other words, as one surrenders to God, one goes on rising (in life). This surrender is essential. For example, when we want to get a cloth dyed, we have to carry it to the dyer and leave it with him. If the cloth is lying at home and we expect that it will get automatically dyed, this is just not possible. Similarly, in order to get our mind dyed (in the divine colour), we will have to surrender it to Satguru (The True Master), give up all kinds of ego and pride. Whosoever does this, his mind is dyed in the divine colour.

Suppose a man gets into a stream or a pool. We can understand that he is receiving the coolness. If however, another person who is sitting in the sun outside the water declares that the former is telling a lie because he himself is feeling hot and does not find any coolness, he is also right, for he himself has not come into contact with the water and, therefore, he cannot feel the coolness. Only the man who has entered the water can experience the state of coolness. Similarly, those who march on the path of devotion, they derive happiness by dint of Sewa, Satsang and Simran but those who do not do so, cannot have the experience of the ecstasy (the bliss) that flows from the spirit of surrender. It's only the person in love who is familiar with the bliss it brings.

All our acts of purification are hollow if they are not accompanied by love. A man who loves God, is the highest devotee. It is said also:

**POTHI PADH PADH JAG MUA, PANDIT BHAYA NA KOYE,
DHAI AAKHAR PREM KE, PADHE SO PANDIT HOYE.**

It means that if we have not learnt the two and a half letters of the word Prem (love), if the feeling of love is not awakened in our mind, we are not going to be welcomed in the kingdom of God. No matter if we get up early in the morning, have a bath, apply sandal and we put on the rosary, show all kinds of charity, but at the same time we discard man, we do not possess the feeling of love, there is nothing significant about us. Why so we burn Ravana? Why do we have no respect for him in our minds? After all, he was also a great scholar. If these qualifications, the knowledge of scriptures, were required for a man to become Pandit (wise), then Ravana should also have attained salvation. He should also have been given importance, treated to be great, worshipped like any other saint. But this did not happen. In spite of having the knowledge of scriptures, he suffered from pride. That is why he is not found to deserve admiration, adoration.

This is the reason why spiritual masters declare:

DHAI AKSHAR PREM KE PADHE SO PANDIT HOYE.

Only he is Pandit, the wise man, who has made his mind a dwelling place for love. If we learn the language of love, we have become Pandit, we are enlightened, we are a saint, we are a devotee. If, however, we have not studied love or learnt it, we just cannot become a saint, we cannot be called Pandit, we cannot be called enlightened.

Love is a heart's affair. Love gets related to conversation, discussion, reading, writing and so on, only if the feeling is there in the heart. In the unenlightened world we find that high

sounding words are used by the tongue, while the heart is at something else. Baba Gurbachan Singh Ji also said often that we find such people using big words in the welcome of the guests. They would say, "We will have a nice day to-day. We will enjoy." But when the host goes to the other room to tell his wife to prepare some food for the guest, he describes the latter as a curse, because it would mean an expenditure of 10-15 rupees. This is what is happening in the unenlightened world. The tongue utters high sounding words of devotion, expresses lot of goodwill, but the mind is overwhelming with pain, with hatred, instead of love.

We have to bear this in mind and understand thoroughly that if we want to please God, we will have to love its creation, the mankind, irrespective of the fact that they may speak any language, they may belong to any state, they may have any dress, they may come from any country or belong to any part of the world. This is what has always been taught by spiritual masters. To-day if we refer to Lord Jesus Christ, we find that he said, "At the end only those will get salvation, will be found closest to me, who offered me water when I was thirsty, who lifted me when I fell down." The people listening to him were astonished. They said, "We never came near you. We were never in direct contact with you. Moreover, it is just not possible that all human beings who are there in the world may find it feasible to reach you personally. How can each and every person meet you? How can it be possible that whenever you feel thirsty, we all rush to offer water to you? This is just not possible. In that case we will all stand condemned and deserve to be sent to the hell. Since we did not lift you when you fell down, most of us will have to go the hell."

Lord Jesus Christ said, "O Man! All these human beings are my own image. In case you discarded any of them, its direct meaning is that you discarded me. In case you allowed any one of them to die for want of water, it means you tried to kill me of thirst. And if you showed love to them, you showed love to me."

Adoration or dedication with love means only the spirit of submission. Only a person who surrenders himself in terms of body, mind and materials to this God, the Formless, gets merged into the divine name, can be said to have the true spirit of devotion.

It is just like the spirit of love between the child and the mother. The mother is by nature fond of the child. She feeds him, looks after him day and night not because she would like to seek some reward for it or because the child, when he grows up, is likely to open huge bank accounts in her name. She never loves her child because of such desires, such ambitions. Her love is pure, simple and unconditional. She is devoted to the child in such a way that she lives for him, she breathes for him. The same is true of love between a saint and the Almighty. It is all the more glorified, when the love is mutual. In the un-enlightened world, love everywhere is found to be unilateral. There are many instances. Even the love of Chakor (the red- legged partridge) for the moon is unilateral. The Chakor is mad to please the moon. It jumps, it dances. But the moon remains unmoved. Similar is the love of Bhanwra (black bee) with the flower, of moth with the light. The moth hovers over the lamp and gets itself killed. But all this is of no use, nothing gets achieved. Similarly, whatever example of love we find in the unenlightened world, it is that of unilateral love only.

The spiritual love is always mutual and bilateral. It is, therefore, said that where there is a mention of the Formless, there is reference to someone with form also. When this love is unconditional, unstinted and free from self interest, it makes us happy throughout, blissful in all respects. Whatever the modes of worship the unenlightened men may like to adopt, each one in his own way, it may probably fetch some worldly materials. It will not be possible to find true happiness, the lasting bliss.

In love there is no motive, no self interest. A poet says:

GHARZ DIAN BUNIADAN TE JO TIKYA AE OH PYAR NAHIN.

In the world to-day, love is shown only for a motive. Love is shown with some purpose, with some aim or objective. Someone wants to come in power, so he flatters others. Somebody wants to sell an article, get a good price, so he shows as much regard to the customer as possible. Mentally, people may be fed up with each other, may wish for each other's ruin, but

outwardly they show love to each other. This is the behaviour of the world to-day. People here are misled. Anybody can be taken in. The outward attraction, the show off may mislead anybody, but not in the case where the love is real, from the heart. Those who believe in outward display, in social formalities, they cannot be held in highest esteem in the kingdom of God. One must make people happy, please them, but not with artificiality. The devotion which is the same from outside and inside, is in fact based on love. Not that some selected people may say that so and so is a big devotee, a perfect servant (Sewadar), a humble person. This does never happen in the matter of devotion. The heart should speak, the heart should display the spirit that we are the same from outside and inside. This God, Formless wants the same spirit to prevail outside and inside. Those who are one and the same in regard to their thought, action and speech, they really receive the praise, their name is glorified. The devotion of a devotee is not there to show to the world, because it does not require any certificate or testimonial from the people. Even if a certificate is there, it is not going to pay in divine kingdom. What is going to count has already been seen by the Almighty. God has never been absent from anywhere. God is there everywhere.

God is there on this side of the wall and it is there on the other side of the wall. If there is any lack of uniformity between the love from inside and outside, if there is hatred, shortcomings inside but outwardly one is seen worshipping just for the show of it, such a deceitful action cannot escape the observation of the Almighty. Thus a person who succeeds in practicing his love for the Almighty, who surrenders to the divine will, who realises the presence of God while speaking or doing anything, who realises that God dwells in each and every human being, he enjoys the pleasure of his devotion; his devotion bears fruit.

If a man is carrying a fragrant flower in his hand, it does not give fragrance to the holder only. A person who happens to stand by his side also enjoys it. Similarly, a person who carries the spirit of love in his mind, who talks sweet, soothing to the hearts of others, is not happy himself alone, he pleases everybody who comes near him.

Hatred is an antidote to the feeling of love. As hatred rises in the mind, man moves farther and farther from love. As we go on discarding human beings, we render ourselves away from the kingdom of God. A poet has rightly said :

**KYA KAREGA PYAR WO IMAN SE,
KYA KAREGA PYAR WO BHAGWAN SE,
JANM LEKAR GOD MEIN INSAN KE,
KAR NA PAYA PYAR JO INSAN SE.**

Since we are born to human beings, we must love the mankind. Once we have loved humanity, we have loved God. Such a feeling of love based on surrender to the will of God is aroused in the hearts of those who receive God-knowledge with blessings of Satguru or the True Master.

Those who are blessed by Satguru would never give up the spirit of love. When a person receives God-knowledge, gets aligned with this Almighty, comes to know God, he realises that his body, his mind, his wealth, everything belongs to God. But an unenlightened person considers himself to be the master, the owner of his worldly assets. Saints have always recognised this Almighty as the real owner. They lead the life based on complete surrender to the will of God. This lesson has come from those spiritual masters who merged themselves with this Almighty, those who won praise for serving others while leading normal life. There are very few saints who possess the spirit of love based on God-knowledge. There are numerous trees in the forest, but all of them are not Sandal trees. The Sandal trees lend their fragrance to the air which carries it further to other objects. Similarly, there are very few saints in the world who spread the message of divine truth, the message of the spirit of humanity, and glorify the name of God.

Love is pure only when it has no selfish motive attached to it. Whenever a true saint has shown devotion to God, he has done it with the spirit of selflessness. In fact it is the spirit of selflessness that is pure love. The man who surrenders himself to God, praises it, shows devotion to it, gets his mind in the same degree influenced by Godly qualities. He sheds the

feeling of discrimination. Thus God and the saint tend to become one, a kind of similarity starts developing. A poet says:

TERA PATA MILA TO PHIR APNA PATA KAHAN

In love the sense of discrimination is no more there. That is why, it has been said here that when I came to know about you, I forgot about myself. Then, where was my identity left? Where did I belong to? I became your own image. This is the condition of those who sacrifice themselves for the Supreme Power in terms of body, mind and materials, those who hold back nothing in their mind, those who treat all their assets as really belonging to God, those who do not feel proud if something comes and do not regret if something goes, since they understand that all these assets belong to the Almighty.

The structure of divine adoration can stay on the foundation of God-knowledge only. It is essential for a devotee to assimilate the divine name into his heart. Once God enters one's mind, one's life, only love flows therefrom. And the one who is deprived of this association with God, is deprived of love also. A man came running and jumped into a tank from a bridge suddenly and started crying. People assembled and found that he was hurt badly. He had broken some bones also. The reason was that there was no water in the tank. The man had struck against the ground. Similarly if we do not find the water of divine name, we are bound to be hurt, feel the pain and be humiliated.

The holy bible says : Love thy neighbour. Probably it is taken to mean that you may love only your nearest neighbours. For spiritual masters, however, the entire world is their neighbours. It is such a chain, a continuous order, a series that goes all around and ends at self. It is from this angle that we have to see 'our neighbours'. From this viewpoint who can be described as far off? Who is a stranger? Who is not our own? Guided by this spirit, our love will take every human being into its fold. About perfect love the wise man say:

JYON JAL PYARA MACHHRI, LOBHI PYARA DAM; MA PYARA JYON BALKA, BHAKT PYARE RAM.

Just as water is everything to the fish, money to the greedy, child to the mother, this God is everything to a devotee. Everybody knows the relationship of a fish with water. If it is separated from water, it starts fluttering, it dies. Similar are the feelings of a devotee. His mind becomes restless like the fish, if he is isolated from God, if he is made to forget, the Almighty. He always endeavours to keep his mind united with God. He would like to remember God all the time.

SUPNE JO BARRAYE KE MUKH SON KAHYE RAM; USKE PAG KI PANHI, KABIRA TAN DO CHAM.

Devotees have always remembered this God. They have realised its presence all the time. They have considered it essential, as essential as breathing itself and found the feeling a destroyer of pains.

Devotees are recognised from the feeling of love they possess. Once a king asked a wise man the way to find out devotees of God in his kingdom, the method to call them and see them. The wise man said; "I am able to think of only one way. You may announce that those who are devotees of God, those who worship God, will not be required to pay any tax hereafter." The king did so. The result was that by next morning devotees appeared all over. The king saw this and said to the wise man, "You gave me a good suggestion. I find all are inclined towards devotion to God. This has removed my disappointment of many days." The wise man replied, "No, Sir. This is only one part of the proposal. Now, you announce that you want to extract some oil from the bodies of the devotees of God and use the same in a religious ceremony (Havan)." This announcement was also made. The devotees having the spirit of dedication were called upon. When it was a matter of tax exemption, devotees could be seen all around. Now that there was this new announcement, everybody removed the auspicious mark (Tilak) from the forehead hurriedly. Even the Sandal applied on bodies started disappearing. Everybody started denying that he

was a devotee of a God. There was only one exception. Only one devotee came forward and surrendered himself, presented himself for the sacrifice. He did not hide himself. Thus it was found that there was only one devotee of God in the entire kingdom.

Saints! What we mean to say is that a devotee does not retrace his steps, whatever the circumstances. He remains firm and stable both in pleasure and in pain. He does not stumble. He always remains devoted to God, a devotee. If we look at the life of Kabir Ji or Meera, we find that they were also guided by the spirit of devotion to God based on dedication. A devotee feels happy to feed others. He respects others and feels as if the honour is being done to him. In this he sees his own welfare. This kind of thinking, this kind of feeling brings glory to the devotee. This is the sign of a true devotee.

The spiritually enlightened person love even those who hate them. Once a divine master (Guru Amardas ji Maharaj) was sitting. A person suffering from jealousy (Datt) came and hit him in his back with his foot. An ordinary person will think that he must have caught his leg, twisted it and thrown him on the ground. But look at the greatness of the divine master! No doubt he caught him by foot, but he started fondling the same. He said, "There is hardly any flesh on my body. There are bones only. May be you have hurt your delicate foot. You might have felt the pain." If we are followers of such divine masters, we must also have such life, adopt such feelings. We must do good to others. Lord Christ also says that there is nothing special if you love those who love you. Even murderers, thieves and robbers may do this to each other. Two criminals may have mutual love based on mutual interest. What is unusual or special about it? Distinction goes to the saints, the devotees of God, who extend love to and pray for the well being of even those who possess ill will for them, who treat them as their enemies. It is the devotee who receives honour in the kingdom of God-Nirankar.

A devotee of God sacrifices everything saying, "O God the Almighty! This youth, these ornaments, these are all a false glamour of the futile world. If they go, let them go, but let your love, your devotion stay."

**GALIYAN CHIKKAR DOOR GHAR
MERA NAAL PYARE NEH,
CHALAN TAN BHIJJE KAMBLEE
RAHAN TAN TUTE NEH.**

If I go in the rain, my blanket will get wet. But if I care for the blanket and stay back, it will violate my love. Man has to think for himself. He himself has to decide whether he is to save the blanket from drenching or care decision and he who fulfils love, wins praise, receives all kinds of delight. Even history tells us that those who loved God, the devotees of God, did never care for the world:

**IZZAT HUKUMAT LOK LAJJA PREMI SAB KUJH TAJDE,
UNHAN PREMI KI AKHWANA JO IZZAT WAL BHAJDE.**

Those who run after false prestige and disintegrate themselves from this God, those who prefer to care for the world, can never become true (divine) lovers or devotees.

Lord Christ has said, "Love is God," because only love is the gateway to devotion and the eternal bliss. Those who have hatred in mind, who have ego, can never find this gateway.

What is the feeling of adoration? It is the feeling of owning the beloved God, filling the mind with its love and distributing the same not only to the members of one's family but taking it to the entire world.

In fact all spiritual masters have always recognised this Formless God to be the fountain-head of love. All other sources have been treated as meaningless. Man may consider worldly materials as signs of prosperity from the worldly point of view, but they are all treated as meaningless, as thorns, without the divine name, without God:

KABIR MAN NIRMAL BHAYA JAISE HANHA NEER,

PACHHE PACHHE HAR PHIRE KAHT KABIR KABIR.

The mind of a person who thinks of God becomes clean, pure. He attracts the attention of God. God gets praise showered on such devotees. God looks after them.

Love is not an ordinary bargain. Pure love that blossoms from pure feelings, pure heart, cannot be found from any other source. Whenever we receive love, it is found only by shedding ego:

PREM NA KHETI UPJE, PREM NA HAAT BIKAYE, RAJA PARJA JEH RUCHAI, SEES DEY LE JAYE.

This love does not grow in fields. Neither it can be bought with wealth. It can also not be acquired by obliging someone. By these means, love does not enter the heart. It can be found only by this means:

PREM PYALA JO PIYE SHEESH DAKSHINA DE, LOBHI SHEESH NA DE SAKE NAAM PREM KA LE.

Pure love stays in the heart of a person who gives away his head (Sheesh), gives up his pride, his ego, and surrenders all his wisdom. It is he who loves. It is he who surrenders everything, sacrifices self. The man who is greedy, narrow-minded and self-centred, can never part with anything. And so long as he does not surrender himself, his love will also be artificial, outward.

Just as a lover gives the top position in his mind to the beloved, the devotees of God also give the highest place to God. If man gives the lowest place to the one who deserves the highest, where can love there be? We arrange things systematically. We do not place the table on the plate and then some other things on it. It is not the horse that puts the saddle on us and rides. Wherever we find such adverse system or arrangement, there will be problems, trouble. Man will continue to stay where he is. That is why man is advised to give the highest place to this God, the divine name. If you give importance to insignificant, perishable things and place God behind everything else, where can you find the pleasure, where can you find peace? Lust, anger, greed etc, vitiate love, spoil devotion.

The one who loves God is emancipated from the cycle of birth and death. He rises above ambitions. When the mind is engrossed in desires, man cannot show devotion to God. There can be no devotion to God, if his mind suffers from casteism and there are walls of high and low. He is far from the very sense of devotion, because devotion to God can be perfect only when man behaves like man, when he realises that he himself is not superior and none else is inferior, when he appreciates that his own caste is not high and no other caste is low. In fact what kind of castes have we created? If we had really accepted caste system, Lord Rama should also have endorsed the contemporary ritualism. He should have accepted their attitude towards Bhilani (Shabri), who had been condemned and laughed at by them. But this did not happen. He gave honour to the same Bhilani. He showed respect to her. Who can display such a sense of devotion? Who can rise above the consideration of caste and creed and live like a human being, realise that his own body is not composed of 10-20 elements and others do not possess less and then understand that all human bodies are made of five elements alike? When there is only one Supreme Power that commands and controls even the slightest movement, where can man be high or low? Those who love God do not treat someone as high or low on account of the family he is born to.

Only the man who is humble at heart belongs to a high family. He is great, he deserves reverence. Only such a person has been accepted as Pandit (learned) who has understood two and a half letters of the word Prem (Love). In reality only he can be considered to have love for Vedas and Shastras, who gives place to the feeling of love in his heart. O Man! If you do not have the feeling of mercy, the feeling of love, your devotion to God is not real, it is just a show of it. If you want to be known as a real devotee, enter the category of saints, you must possess the feeling of love, the sense of equality, the attitude of liberal

mindfulness. How can this be possible? This can be achieved only when you meet saints, you love saints.

This state arrives when you find the company of saints. Kabir Ji has gone to the extent of saying that with the company of saints, he became God (Ram), he attained the same attributes as God. Spiritual masters speak of a devotee having the same qualities as of God. When does this happen? It is possible when one finds the company of saints. The bushes that grow near Sandal, also get the same fragrance. Paras (touch-stone) comes into contact with iron and converts it into gold. Similarly, a person who seeks the company of saints, becomes a saint, becomes a devotee of God.

Those who are devotees, they never worship God with the hope that when they put in their body, mind and wealth, God will bless them with all kinds of materials. Saints have never remembered this God Nirankar with such a feeling in mind. They show their devotion to this God with the spirit of selflessness:

**GURSIKH NOON NAHIN ICHHA PHAL DI,
KARM SADA NISHKKAM KARE.**

A disciple of the True Master does not have the desire for the fruit or reward at all. He goes on performing his duties without any such ambition. If action is done keeping the reward in view and the eyes are all the time on the fruit, the real concentration is transferred from devotion to the fruit. A mother looks after the child. She provides all comforts to the child at the cost of her own. Sometimes she has to keep awake throughout the night. She has to face many difficulties. Her love is, however, absolutely unconditional. This is the true kind of love that devotees have for God.

Love is always based on faith. A devotee will never give up faith in this Almighty. And the love established once, is fulfilled till the last breath:

**RAHMAN DHAGA PREM KA, MAT TORO CHATKAYE;
TUTE SE PHIR NA JURE, JURE GANTH PAR JAYE.**

The thread that breaks is reconnected by a knot. But this knot becomes quite noticeable to the eye and looks odd. It disturbs the smoothness of the thread. Similar is the example of a torn garment. The cloths we wear are sometimes torn. When we get them repaired or stitched, the patch looks odd and it disturbs the eye. What we mean to say is that the love of devotees is pure and constant. It does not have a knot.