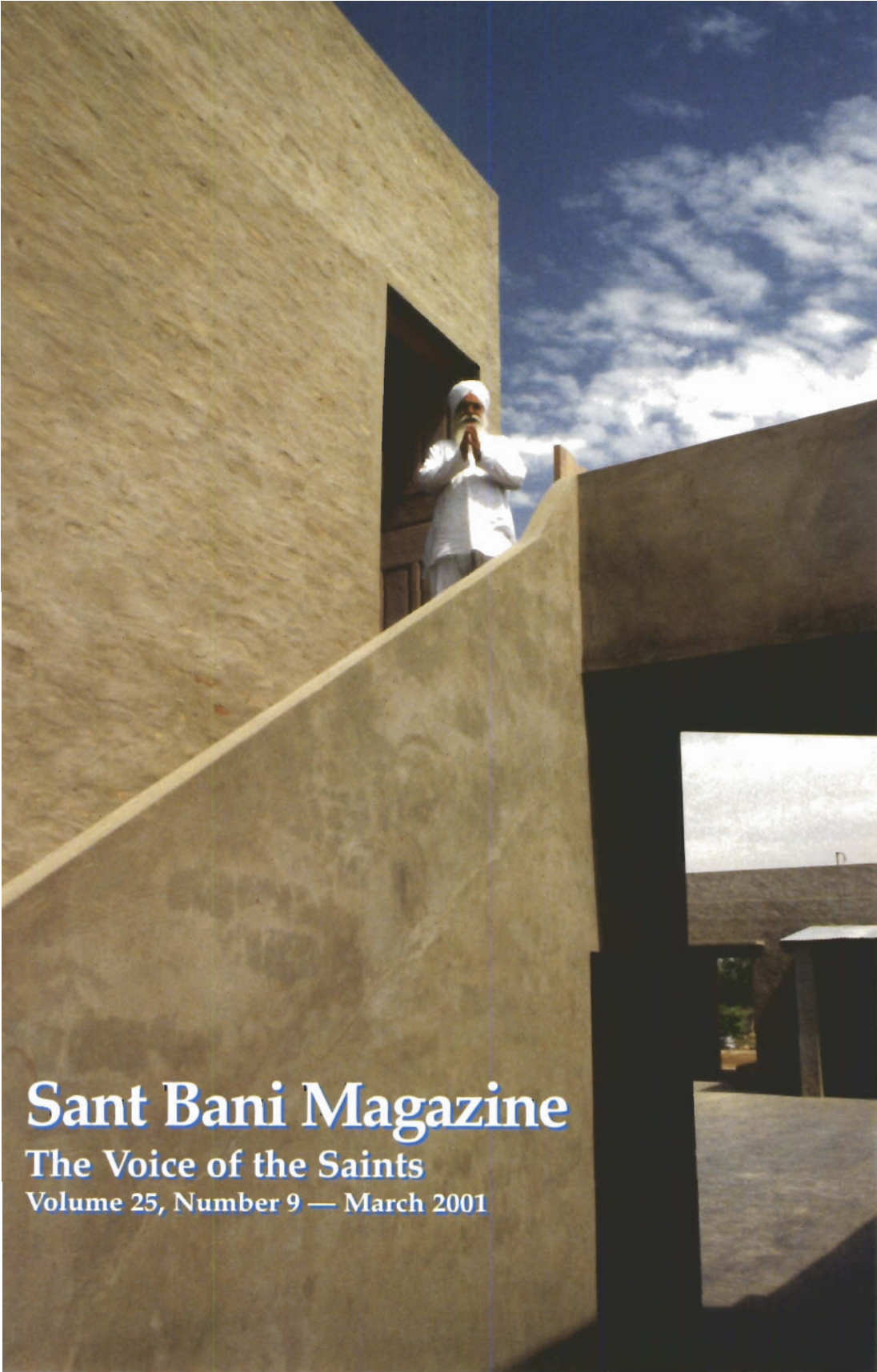

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questions and answers,
January 8, 1994
Bombay, India

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Who is the Real Pundit?

Sant Ajaib Singh Ji

With your mouth you read (the scripture) with its explanation, but in your heart you do not have the Lord, and your living also is not good.

This bani of Guru Arjan Dev Ji Maharaj is presented to you. It is a brief hymn. In this bani Guru Arjan Dev Ji Maharaj lovingly opens the Path of the Masters to us. He tells us what our condition is and what path we are following. Saints and Mahatmas do not come into this world to attach us to any religion or society, nor do They break us away from any religion or society. They don't attach us to any religious books either.

After coming into this world, Saints and Mahatmas neither tell us that we can achieve liberation by reading the holy books, nor do They tell us to criticize the scriptures. We cannot get liberation, we cannot swim across this ocean of the world, by reading the holy scriptures or by criticizing them. Because in the Court of the Lord, in the Home of the Lord, all the Saints are One, and all the Saints Who have come into this world all have the same teachings. It doesn't matter if a Saint came into this world two thousand years ago or if a Saint just recently came into this world. The teachings of all the Saints are the same. The Saints are all One since They all come from the same plane.

Their teachings say that as there is color in the leaves, and as there is fragrance in the flowers, in the same way God Almighty is present within you. But we can realize God Almighty only by going in the within, and we can go in the within only with the help of some competent Master Who Himself has gone in the within. There is no other way of going in the within and realizing God other than going to the Master and seeking refuge at His Feet. The Mahatma Who has gone in the within has realized God, and for such Mahatmas I often say that when such a Mahatma closes His eyes He goes to the Real Home, and when He opens His eyes He is in the world. With such a Mahatma, one foot is in this world and the other foot is in Sach Khand. Such a Ma-

This Satsang was given October 31, 1986, at Sant Bani Ashram, Village 16PS, Rajasthan, India.

hatma has done the meditation and through His devotion He has pleased God Almighty, He has tied God Almighty in the chains of love.

Master Sawan Singh Ji did not say that learning is bad, nor did He say that being illiterate is bad. To explain to us, He used to give an example, saying, "If a Mahatma has done a lot of learning and reading of the world it is like a garland of flowers around His neck." Because by reading and learning one gets the awareness of the world. And such a Mahatma who also has the worldly knowledge can explain things in a much better way, giving many parables and examples.

But Guru Nanak Sahib says, "Call that learned man a foolish one who, after getting a lot of knowledge, still has greed, attachment and egoism."

Tulsi Sahib says, "As long as there is the mind of lust, anger, greed, attachment and egoism in your within, it doesn't matter whether you are learned or illiterate. Both the learned and illiterate are the same."

Guru Nanak Dev Ji says "The illiterate Sadhu cannot be punished in the place of a learned sinner."

Baba Bishan Das used to say, "What is the use of studying and reading if one has not lived according to what one has studied? What is the use of bowing down your head if you have not given up your bad habits?"

We read from the books and then we argue over the things which are written in the books. The Masters ask what is the use of reading in that way. Masters say, "Read the scriptures written by the Masters. In those holy books and scriptures the benefit of receiving the Naam and the benefit of doing the repetition of Naam is written. Live up to the words of the Masters written in the books and improve your life."

In the beginning, when I went to Delhi, many people who were very learned came to see me, and since I had come from Rajasthan and I was illiterate also, they thought that I was someone from the jungle and that I would not know anything of the books. So they quoted from books. They said, "In *Godman* this thing is written, and in another book this thing is written." So they went on giving references from the books. I told them lovingly, "Look here, I have read the book which is six feet tall. I have read the book of my body; I have gone in the within. Such a Mahatma who has read the book of His body does not need to read any other outer book, because all the books, all the holy scriptures, have come out from this human body."

I told them that such a Mahatma does not criticize any holy book or scripture, and He does not say that any book or scripture is wrong, because He knows that the holy books written by the Masters are the ex-

periences of those Masters Who left Their physical bodies, Who went up, and Who united Themselves with God Almighty. He knows that the holy books are the accounts of the experiences of those Mahatmas.

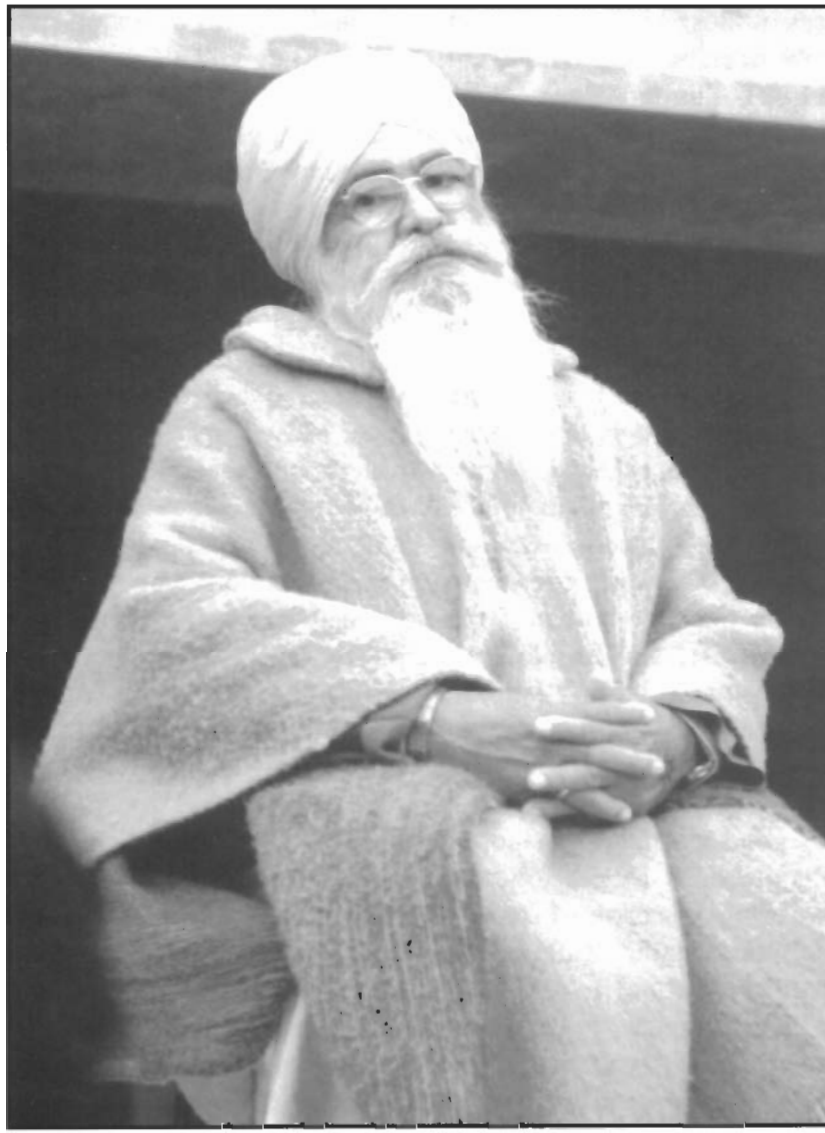
Once Guru Nanak Sahib went to the place called Kurukshetra. Kurukshetra is the place where in the Copper Age the Kauravas and Pandavas fought a battle. It is a place of pilgrimage, and people from all over India go there, especially when there are eclipses. They bathe in the water there. That place has no other importance. The water over there is no better than the water of the other rivers or streams in India.

Guru Nanak Sahib thought, "This is a very good opportunity to explain things to the people," because in those days there were not so many good means of transportation. People used to get together only on certain occasions. From far and near they would walk many, many miles to come to the holy places of pilgrimage. It was very difficult to collect that many people at one place, so Guru Nanak thought, "Now that the people have come here, it is a very good opportunity to explain things to them."

As God is fearless and as He is present within all, whether they are low or high, in the same way, the Saints and the Masters also are fearless and They do not hesitate to go to any place. When I went on the first tour, some dear ones came to me and they tried to stop me from going. They said, "Outside there are many learned people, and You are taking Pappu with You who does not know very good English. He will not be able to explain things to the people, and there are many learned people over there, so it will be difficult for You."

I told them, "Look here, whom should I obey? Should I obey the inner Master Who is giving me the orders, or should I listen to you?" So with the grace of the Master, when I went on the tour whatever I tried to explain to people was explained and nobody made any remarks. Everybody understood, and with the grace of the Master they were able to receive His grace. Now those learned people, who at that time warned me, repent and now they realize that whatever they said was a mistake.

So Kurukshetra, the place where Guru Nanak Sahib went, is one of the oldest places of pilgrimage in India. Usually in the Hindu religions the pundits read the holy scriptures, which also have a commentary or explanation. So on that occasion many people had come together in the pilgrimage of Kurukshetra. They were all reading from their holy scriptures and Guru Nanak Sahib thought, "If I do something opposite, if I do something wrong, only then can I attract the attention of the people. If I do the same things which these people are



SANT BANI ASHRAM, 16 PS, RAJASTHAN, JANUARY 1989

doing, nobody will pay attention to me." At that time all the people were looking toward the East and they were offering water toward the sun, and so that is why Guru Nanak Sahib faced toward the West and He was offering water in that direction.

When the people saw Him doing that, they came to Him and they asked Him, "Tell us, are you a Hindu? If you are a Hindu, then why aren't you doing the rites and rituals as we are doing? If you are not a Hindu, then why did you come and bathe in this holy water?" Guru

Nanak Sahib replied, "I am a Hindu, but I do not know what to do because no one told me." They told Guru Nanak Sahib that they were offering water to their ancestors, to their fathers and forefathers who had left their bodies and who were supposed to be in the heavens. Guru Nanak asked them, "Can you tell me how far away the heavens are and how far your fathers and forefathers are from this place?" They said, "We do not have any idea how many millions of miles the heavens are from this place, but it is a practice that if we offer water facing the sun, it reaches our forefathers in the heavens."

So Guru Nanak Sahib said, "I was sending water to my farm in Kartarpur, which is west from here. Before I came I sowed the seeds and it is possible that they did not get enough water and they might have dried up. So that is why I was trying to keep them green by sending water from here." When the pundits heard that, they said, "How is that possible? How can you send water three hundred miles from this place?" So Guru Nanak Sahib replied, "Just as you are able to send water to the heavens, even though you do not know how many millions of miles the heavens are from this place, if your water can reach there, why can't my water reach Kartarpur?"

This was one of the ways in which Guru Nanak Sahib explained to them that what they were doing had no practical meaning. After that the pundits argued with Guru Nanak Sahib a lot. They debated with Him and they said, "You see, we are Hindus and when we worship, when we do our practices, we sit in a place which is very clean and very pure, and with all our purity we do the devotion of the Lord." They said, "We always have the *tilak* mark on our forehead, we always bathe in the holy waters, and we sit with all our purity in a very clean, very pure place."

Regarding that, Guru Nanak Sahib composed a hymn: "You are sitting in the so-called pure place to do the devotion of Lord, but you have the dirt of greed in that area of worship. The anger which you have and use against the other people is [unclean], like that sweeper who is in your area of worship. How can you say that your area of worship is very clean and pure? You always go on eating the dead bodies — because the criticism which you are doing of other religions, of the other people, is just like eating the dead bodies. So while you are doing your worship, while you are doing your devotion, at that time you are not free from greed, you are not free from anger, you are not free from criticism, which are all very dirty things. How can you say that you are doing the devotion with all your purity?"

All the scriptures, all the holy

books, are written by the perfect Masters and They have done so only after going in the within. Whatever obstacles came in Their way, and the way in which They removed those obstacles, are written down in the holy scriptures. Lord Krishna wrote the Gita only after going in the within and only after seeing all the things in His within. That is why He said that unless you rise above the three gunas, or attributes, you cannot understand the teachings of the Gita, because all the four Vedas only describe the materials and things of the planes which are below the three gunas. So unless you rise above them you cannot understand the Gita.

At present, all the commentaries on the holy scriptures which are available are done by those people who have never gone in the within, so how can they know what the Master really meant if they have not gone to the place from where the Master came, or if they have not gone to the place about which the Master has written in the book? Take the example of Guru Nanak Sahib. I have read many commentaries on the Guru Granth Sahib, and those people who have not gone in the within, those who do not know from where Guru Nanak Sahib came, how could they explain the teachings of Guru Nanak? They can only be misleading.

So here Guru Nanak Sahib said, "Look here, O Dear One: with your mouth you read the scriptures and the commentaries on the scriptures, but your conduct is not the same as the conduct of the Beloveds of God. You are talking about Ram, but do you have Ram in your within?"

In this group I received a letter from a dear one who is very learned, and he has written that all the Saints and Masters have talked about God Almighty, but no one talks about the Mother of God. I replied to him lovingly, saying that God does not have any equal, He does not have any mother who has given birth to Him. He came into existence by Himself.

This is why Saints and Mahatmas lovingly explain to us what kind of devotee he is who does not have God with him. That is why you should go to such a devotee who has manifested God Almighty within Him, who has God with Him — because only such a devotee will be able to tell you, "Look here, O Dear Ones, you should rise above the organs of senses and you should do the devotion of God. Unless you do the real devotion of God and unless you manifest God within yourself, no material of this world will be able to give you the real happiness and peace."

Such Saints do not only tell us to meditate. They do not want us to go on moving like the bull of the mill all our lifelong. They tell us that we should do our meditation

with all our sincerity and honesty. We should understand how we are to do it; we should do it perfectly; and you will see that in a few days you will be able to see your progress. But we people are not ready to give up lust, anger and the other passions, and also we are not ready to work hard and meditate properly. But we can write letters to the Master, saying that we have not seen anything or that we have not made any progress. We also say, "Master, You will say that I should meditate, but I cannot do that." So just imagine — how can you progress if you do not want to give up the passions and if you do not want to meditate properly?

Teaching the people, you
make them determined,
But you do not practice what
you teach.

They teach the people, and they themselves do not do it. Read the newspapers and you will find that just as people advertise to sell their goods, they advertise spirituality in the same way. They say, "Come, we will show you the Light, we will connect you with the Sound." So here Guru Nanak Sahib says that they teach other people, but they themselves do not do what they teach. They tell people to become pure, but they themselves do not give up lust, anger, and the other passions.

O Pundit, think upon the
Vedas,
Give up the anger of mind, O
Pundit.

Now Guru Nanak Sahib is telling that pundit, "Look here, read the Vedas, and in the Vedas also you will find how lust, anger, and the other passions are condemned, how they are called as the bad ones. And out of the five passions, lust and anger are very serious and they are condemned very much." Guru Nanak Sahib told that pundit, "I have not come here to insult you, I have not come here to affect your business. I have just come to explain to you the facts, what is written in the Vedas." Guru Nanak Sahib sent the pundits a cup full of milk on which He had also put a small flower, which floated on the surface of the milk, just to explain that He had come as a flower without affecting the milk. So He meant that He had not come there to affect their business or anything like that. He had come there just to explain the reality to them.

In front of you, you have kept
Saligram (the idol of God),
But your mind wanders in all
the ten directions.

And then He says, "I am very sorry to say that in front of you you have the idol of God, but your mind is wandering all over in the ten direc-

tions. Has your mind stilled in your within [even] a little bit?"

You put on the tilak and make the people touch your feet.
You are blind and you are preaching to people (making them blind.)

He says, "You put the tilak on your forehead as it is on the forehead of Saligram, the idol of God, and in this way you try to convince the people. But your convincing the people will not do any good to you unless you go within and see the facts with your own eyes."

About eighteen or nineteen years ago I used to live in a village called Maniawala, in which Hindus used to live. The Hindus invited me to go there to do the Satsang, so I went there and after the Satsang the pundits came and they wanted to ask me many questions. Out of those pundits, one very respected pundit came to me. He had the tilak on his forehead as well as on both of his ears, and he asked me, "What do you say about the tilaks? Is this something which was started by the Mahatmas? Is there something wrong in that?" I told him, "All the Vedas, Shastras, and religious scriptures, and all the Masters have talked about the Eye Center, the Tisra Til. The tilak or the sign which you have in the center of your forehead represents that, and the tilaks on both your ears mean that you have to repent, catching your ears, saying that now you will not make any mistakes and you will pray to Almighty God, going to the Eye Center."

You go to the people's homes and everyday you read the scriptures and do the six karmas and asanas.
You move the rosary and apply the ashes (to your body.) But, O Friend, no one gets liberated like this.
He who earns the Shabda and crosses the three gunas is the Pundit.
All the four Vedas sing the Name of the Lord. Nanak seeks the refuge (of Him who lives up to them.)

Guru Nanak Sahib says, "I do not criticize any pundit; I do not criticize any sect. I am just telling you what is written in the Vedas. All the Vedas also talk about the meditation of Shabd Naam. He who goes in the within and catches that Shabd Naam is the real pundit."

Guru Nanak and His Teachings

Sant Kirpal Singh Ji

GURU NANAK is not the sole monopoly of the Sikhs nor of India alone. He belongs to all mankind. He belongs to the world and the world belongs to him. He bore witness to the glory of one God, one brotherhood, one law, the law of human fellowship and love. He came to reconcile all religions and all faiths. He came to harmonize all the scriptures of the world. He came to announce the ancient truth in the common man's language, the one wisdom that is so eloquent in the teachings of all the prophets, the apostles, the sages and the seers; and to show that one flame of love shone in all the temples and shrines and sacraments of man.

The love of God and the love of man were the very core of the message of Guru Nanak. We need to learn to serve the poor gently, quietly, unostentatiously, and to have reverence for all the saints of the past. This is the first great teaching of the Guru. When he went to Multan, the land of pirs and fakirs, the latter sent him a bowl brimming over with milk, implying that the place was already full of saintly souls and there was hardly any room for more. Nanak, who knew the implication in the offer made, just took a jasmine flower and placing it on the surface of the milk returned the bowl, meaning thereby that he would float as lightly as the flower and give fragrance to all of them. The true saints, as a rule, have no quarrel with anybody. They talk gently and work quietly in the service of God and man.

He traveled far and wide unlike any other prophet who trod the earth before him. He undertook four long and arduous journeys on foot, each extending over a number of years: one, to the north into and across the snow-capped Himalayas where he met the Lamas, the Sidhas and the Naths, the Tibetans and the Chinese; the second, eastward into the modern states of United Provinces, Bengal and Burma; the third, to the South as far as Sangla Dwip or the modern Ceylon; and the fourth, to the middle-east countries of Baluchistan, Afghanistan, Persia, Arabia as far as Mecca, and Jerusalem, Turkistan, Egypt, Turkey; all these journeys covering well nigh 30 years in times when there were no satisfactory communications and transport worth the name.

Guru Nanak's teachings revolutionized people in diverse ways. His teachings are of great interest today as they were in his own time. The nascent Republic of India needs his inspiration in the task of rebuilding the nation on a

This article was written by the Master at the request of the Indian Government on the five hundredth anniversary of Guru Nanak's birth, and originally appeared in newspapers and magazines all over India.

sound footing, for India is still bristling with many problems and its freedom is yet far from complete.

Guru Nanak came at a crucial time in the history of India. The country, torn as it was by factional fights, was fast slipping into the hands of the Mughals. We get a glimpse of the chaotic conditions prevailing at the time from the words of no less an authority than the Guru himself: "Kings are butchers. They treat their subjects with gruesome cruelty. The sense of duty has taken wings and vanished. Falsehood is rampant over the land as a thick veil of darkness, darkness darker than the darkest night, hiding the face of the moon of Truth." The Hindus and the Muslims were bitterly opposed to one another. The very semblance of religion had degenerated into formalism, and the spirit in man was stifled and suffocated by rites and rituals and by creeds and ceremonies. Too much importance was attached to the outer husk and shell at the cost of the kernel within. Casteism and untouchability were waxing like anything. The people were losing faith in themselves. The political and the social conditions in the country had reached the lowest ebb. The chaotic conditions could not be more chaotic. In the blessed name of religion, all kinds of atrocities were being perpetrated by those in power, swayed as they were by incontinence, greed, lust and immorality. Mistrust and hatred were the order of the day. Both the rulers and the ruled had lost all sense of shame and decorum.

In such a dark hour of history, Nanak appeared to set the house in order and to shape the destiny of millions of Indians. He went about preaching in the name of God, asking nothing for himself, but anxious only to serve the people and save them from degradation and downright damnation.

Nanak saw the deep tragedy that was menacing the country. He saw the world caught in the pernicious web of suffering and woe. Moved by the piteous cries of the helpless and the afflicted people in their deep agony, he prayed for the grace of God: "O Lord, the whole world is being consumed in the invisible flames of fire. O save the world in this hour of darkness. Raise all unto Thee. Raise them in whatever and however a way Thou mayest."

On coming in contact with Babar, the Mughal king requested the Guru to ask for some favor. He politely and yet firmly declined the offer saying: "Hear O King! Foolish would be the fakir who would beg of kings, for God is the only giver munificent beyond all measure;" significantly adding: "Nanak hungers for God alone and he asks for naught."

Babar had great respect for all men of piety. Once, when he came to know that Nanak had been put behind bars, he ordered his immediate release. On request from the king, the Guru gave his advice, called *Nasihat Nama*, in which he counseled the king to worship God everyday and to be just and kind to everyone. He told him that the NAAM, the *Sat Naam*, the holy Word of God or the *Kalma*, was a panacea for all ills of life, here and in the hereafter. It was *Kalam-e-kadim*, the most ancient song of God, singing in the heart of all, and could be heard only by the pure ones. "Be pure," said the Guru, "and Truth would reveal itself to thee. Have

love of God uppermost in thy heart and hurt not the feelings of His creatures."

Once, this great soul, great in humility and love of God, asked a school teacher: "Sir, what have you learned?" The school teacher replied: "I am proficient in all branches of knowledge I have read the sacred lore of all the religions. I know quite a lot of everything." Then Nanak humbly inquired of the school master what he had actually gained thereby. In a passage of exquisite beauty and wisdom, Nanak sang of the secret of true education:

Burn worldly thoughts and their ashes rub,
And of these ashes make thine ink,
And let the paper on which ye write,
Be the paper of faith;
And write thou the Name of God.

When put to school, he told Gopal Pandhe, his teacher to "make the heart your pen, and with the pen of love write again and again the Name of the Lord."

The current system of education in India ignores the vital injunction "make the heart your pen," and "make an ink of the worldly intellect." Worldly attainments, of whatever type, are not sufficient in themselves, if one does not know God. We need a system of education which includes in its curriculum the eternal values of life. We have instead a commercialized course of cramming books and texts-made-easy, just for securing diplomas and degrees and getting jobs. The number of schools, colleges and universities has increased in India and elsewhere but the moral fiber of the so-called educated people has not grown by a millimeter. "What does it profit a man if he gains possession of the Whole world and loses his own soul?"

Democracies have failed, but a democracy can live, survive and triumph when two conditions are fulfilled: (1) When sectarianism and fanaticism perish; and (2) when States bow in reverence to a superior law, the law of fellowship and human sympathy, and above all to the Infinite whose Voice rings from end to end "Children of the Earth, ye all are one!" Nanak came to proclaim this twofold truth.

The real and lasting freedom cannot be achieved without faith in solidarity and freedom of humanity. How? By: (1) Faith more than mere knowledge of books; (2) Solidarity more than schemes of reform; (3) Service of humanity more than anything else.

Guru Nanak found the basic remedy for true solidarity and the integration of man in the love of God and in the love and service of God-in-man. Once when he came out of a trance in the water, he explained: "There is no Hindu and no Musalman," meaning thereby that there was no basic difference between the two.

God made man with the same privileges all the world over. All are born equal. They come into the world in the same way after a fixed period of gestation. All men have the same outer and inner construction in the matter of limbs and various instruments and organs like hands and feet, lungs, liver and stomach and the like. Everyday the human machinery throws filth out of the body. One is first man and then takes on the

outer badge of one or the other specific social order or formation in which he is born and brought up and these he accepts and adopts as his own — Hinduism, Sikhism, Islam or Christianity; Buddhism or Jainism, or any other "ism" — and tries to solve the mystery of life, each in his own way.

A man is man first and man last, besides anything else in between. He belongs to the universal religion of God with the hall-mark of man based on birth and surroundings. The entire mankind consists of embodied beings like so many beads on the string of a rosary. All, being equal in the sight of God, enjoy God's gifts equally and freely. None is high or low by birth alone. Further, he is soul, a conscious entity which enlivens the whole body. This soul, a drop of the ocean of all-consciousness, is of the same essence as that of God. As such we are all brothers and sisters in God, irrespective of our social badges. And then the same power, the NAAM or Word or *Kalma*, keeps in order the entirely disparate constituents of the body and then the soul; the one material and the other ethereal. On account of this controlling power, we cannot run out of the wonderful house of the body in which we live, however hard we may try. The outgoing breath is pushed back and cannot remain outside for any length of time. Our body works as long as the life-principle runs in the body. This process goes on as long as the controlling power keeps the body and the life-principle together. When that is withdrawn, the spirit in us has perforce to leave the body. So the whole machinery of the body is being run by the indwelling spirit that we are. If we could learn to withdraw at will from the body, while remaining in the body, we can then know the nature of our real self, the animating life-impulse in us. This has been the teachings of all the rishis and munis of yore and the spiritual teachers of the East and the West. It is all a matter of practical self-analysis. And it can be experienced directly and immediately with the active help and guidance of an adept or a Master of *Para-Vidya* or the knowledge of the beyond — the knowledge that lies beyond the senses, mind and intellect. It is a regular science of soul, knowing which, everything else becomes known and nothing remains to be known. We can then become a master in our own house, able to direct it as we like.

The same NAAM, the *Sat Naam*, the Word or the God-into-Expression Power is keeping the whole creation under its control. When this is withdrawn, the result is dissolution or grand dissolution as the case may be.

This body is verily the temple of God in which we reside and in which God also dwells. The whole universe is the abode of God and God dwells there in. All this can be experienced at the level of the spirit with the grace of a competent spiritual guide or mentor.

As long as we do not perceive this unity of man, physically, mentally and spiritually and by the same controlling power within all of us, there can be no true integration and solidarity of human-kind.

A Great Preacher of Peace and Harmony:

One day, the Guru went into the

river Ravi for a bath. A voice came to him from the music of the waters saying, "O Nanak! I am with thee. I have given thee my Name. To this Name be thou dedicated. Repeat my Name — *Sat Naam*. Mingle thou with men uncontaminated by the world. Worship my spirit and power. Meditate on my glory. And serve the poor and the needy as thyself."

No sooner had he the call, he, like Buddha and Mahavira, left his hearth and home to bring men nearer to God so that they might enjoy in fullness the ecstatic bliss lying untapped within. People wondered why he was forsaking his wife and children. To their taunts the Guru replied: "I am leaving them to the care of Him who cares for all of us. The world is in the grip of deadly flames, and I go to extinguish the invisible fire which is enveloping all mankind."

If we look critically with the eye illumined by the Master, we will find that we are living in the holy hill of God. All places of worship have been made on the pattern of the human body, the God-made temple for our worship. The Hindu temples are dome-shaped at the top in the likeness of the human head. The mosques besides the central and side domes have arches in the shape of forehead. The churches and synagogues have steeples, tapering upward in the formation of a nose. Again, the faithful in the various religions believe that God is Light and Sound. The symbols of this inner Light and Sound adorn all our places of worship in imitation of the Reality within. But the true worship lies in opening the inward eye, the single eye or *Shiv-netre* to see the divine light and in unstopping the inner ears to hear the divine music, the *Akash Bani* or the *Bang-e-Ilahi*. The outer performances, without having a glimpse of the Spirit and Power of God (the Light and Sound principle), are just like a blind man saying, "God is Light," though he has never known what Light is. The manifestation of the *Jyoti* or *Noor* within is a vision of God, or having a *darshan*, as it is called. All this and much more comes through the grace of a competent Master. With this right perception and right understanding there follow right speech and right actions all on their own. The Kingdom of God for which we so fervently pray, day in and day out, will then actually come on the earth-plane. "It comes not by observation, Lo! it is within thee," say all the sages and seers.

Guru Nanak wanted to reform religion — to lift it from the formal and conventional to the simple and the practical. Etymologically the term "religion" comes from the roots, *re* (back) and *ligio* or *ligore* (to bind). Religion then is something that binds and unites the soul to Oversoul or God. When Masters come, those who meet them and come into their close contact, derive the maximum benefit of getting their souls linked with the manifested Light and Sound of God. The social religions come into being after the Masters pass away. They are made, no doubt, with a noble purpose, the purpose of keeping the teachings of their Founders alive. As long as practical men remain in the social orders, the followers continue to get the benefit as before. Later on, for want of such practical men, these social orders acquire

rigid formations and the very institutions set up with the noblest of intentions and the best of motives, become iron-clad prison houses and begin to stagnate and stink with hair-splitting polemics in which the spirit gets lost under the mass of dead verbiage.

The purpose of religious education is to draw out the best in man and make him an integrated whole, physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually. That religion is the best which turns out more and more ideal persons with a harmonious development in all their parts. The highest objective of Sikh religion is to turn out *Khalsas*. A Khalsa is one who witnesses within him the *Pooran Jyoti* (the supreme Light of God in full effulgence). Similarly, a Hindu is one who makes manifest in him the *Jyoti* of Ishvara and listens to the unending and unstruck music of the soul (*Anhad* and *Anhat Nad*), the symbols of which he adores and worships outside in his temples and shrines by lighting candles and striking bells. A true Muslim is one who sees the *Noor* of Allah, or the Light of God and hears the *Kalam-e-Kadim* (the Voice of God, the most ancient music or song ceaselessly going on within him). A true Christian likewise is one who bears testimony to the Light of God and hears the Sound of God which transforms him into an awakened spirit at the mount of transfiguration.

Nanak put great emphasis on direct experience of the divinity that lies within us; for mere reading of the scriptures and observing the rites and rituals of worship, cannot take the place of the Reality. These are the elementary steps but not enough in themselves. Nanak was a poet-saint and a bard of the open secret, a preacher of the Spirit and Power of God enlivening the humankind. He went from place to place, chanting the sacred "Name" and preaching the love of God. He visited Hindu places of pilgrimages, the Muslim shrines, and other holy places. "Closer is He than the very life breath and nearer than the hands and feet." As Laotse said: "Without going out of doors, we may yet know (the essence) of the world." This essence is called the NAAM, the *Sat Naam*, the eternal Word. His life was dedicated to preaching the practice of the holy Word. He taught the people that in the holy Word was hidden a great healing power which healed all the ills of life.

He loved the Hindus and the Muslims alike. Speaking to the Hindus, he said: "Praise and glorify God five times, as the Muslims offer prayers to Allah five times a day." Speaking to the Muslims he said: "Make the will of Allah your rosary. Be ye a real Musalman after renouncing your little self." At this, quite a few Muslims involuntarily cried aloud: "God is speaking to us in Nanak." Even when in Mecca he taught the doctrine of strict monism or the unity of Godhead. Interpreting the wisdom of the prophet, he uttered the name "Allah" with the same reverence as he did the name of "Hari." On seeing him, Shaikh Farid greeted Nanak with the words: *Allah Hu* or "Thou art Allah." The Guru replied: "Allah is the only aim of my life, O Farid! Allah is the very essence of my being." All call on the one God by different names, may be *Ram, Rahim, Allah, Wah-e-guru* and the like.

There are many lovers of God, and He is the life-giving force to all of them. Although bearing the badge of different religion, all have the same ideal before them — to worship the indwelling spirit called by so many names.

"There is no caste," said the Guru, "for we claim brotherhood with all." Each one of his followers was lovingly addressed as a *Bhai* or a brother. All are "Bhais" (brethren), whether kings or slaves, the rich or the poor. "No caste and creed counts in the court of the Lord. He who worships Him is dear unto Him," said the Guru. He mingled freely with the poor, the down-trodden, the outcaste and the neglected. He accepted the invitations from the poor in preference to those of the rich, who, he knew, invited him for self-glorification, and whose earnings were anything but righteous.

He considered that there was no sin greater than the spirit of separateness which went against the solidarity of life in the brotherhood of man and worked for disruption in society. This prophet of unity and oneness saw the higher harmony in all the faiths in the Religion of Man — the worship of God and the service of God-in-man. He wanted the followers of all faiths to sit together as seekers after Truth, seeking communion with the Almighty. The highest religion teaches us to reverently study and experience in full consciousness the living presence of God, as like-minded students in a class. When questioned at Mecca as to whether he was a Hindu or a Muslim, he frankly and fearlessly declared that he was neither the one nor the other in particular because he discerned the spirit of God in both. When asked which of the two religions, Hinduism or Islam, was superior, he said: "Without good acts, the professors of both the religions shall perish." In one of his hymns, he says: "To him whose delusion of the mind is gone, Hindu and Muslim are alike." At Baghdad, the people questioned him as to which sect he belonged; he replied, "I have renounced all sects. I only know the one True God, the Supreme Being who is on the earth, in the heaven and in between, and in all directions." On being further pressed as to who he actually was, he replied: "This body, compounded as it is of the five elements, is being illumined by the Light of God and is just addressed as Nanak."

Again and again, he warned his disciples against the sin of separateness. In a beautiful passage he declared: "Numberless are Thy worshipers and numberless Thy lovers, numberless Thy *Bhaktas* and saints, who lovingly fix their thoughts on Thee. Numberless the musical instruments and the sound thereof and so are Thy musicians."

In the course of his travels, he had with him two attendants, one a Hindu and the other a Muslim: Bhai Bala and Bhai Mardana. He poured his love to all, setting at naught all conventions, creeds, castes, and color bars. He was a brother of the poor, the criminal and the persecuted. His socialism was vibrant with love born of God and not atheistic in character. Growing out of a vision of God's love, it flowed into the hearts of men as brothers in God.

A new Indian nation can be built even now, but not in blind imitation of the West. We must accept the vital message of the seers, the prophets and the

saints of the East who are well conversant with the conditions of our society, and have a rich spiritual heritage behind them.

Guru Nanak — God-intoxicated:

From a very early age, Nanak was fond of meditation. He would go to a forest and for long hours sit there in rapt silence. He would meditate on the great mystery of life — a mystifying mystery indeed. Where does life come from? How does it work in us? How does the great Controlling Power sustain us from day to day? Is it possible to contact this Power? These were the vital questions that he posited for himself. Nanak's father tended to regard his son as insane. One day he called a physician to attend upon him. As the latter felt the pulse Nanak said, "O physician! I am not mad. I am only smitten with the pangs of love for God. They call me mad, but I am not. I am simply God-intoxicated."

Nanak was overflowing with the love and glory of God. He radiated love of God to all who came in contact with him. He was verily Word-made-flesh and dwelt amongst us. He opened the inner eye of those who came to him and enabled them to witness the light of God within them. He was the light of the world as long as he remained in the world.

The light manifested itself in him and he guided the tottering humanity with that light. This light never vanishes but always remains in each one of us. We have to break the stone walls of our passions and prejudices, of separateness and sectarianism, in order to have a vision of the divine light in full splendor. The Guru, like all other Masters, advised: "Kindle the light which is within you. Ye are the children of light. Be ye lamps unto yourselves." India and all other countries of the world need heaven's light for their guidance. This was the universal call of Nanak to the whole humanity.

He offered the water of life and the bread of life (the light and the *Nad*) as food to the starving souls of the people, having which, nothing else remained to be had. God is love, and love is God, and the way back to God is also through love. He was love personified, and inspired love in everyone. He always sang:

Teach me how to live immersed
in Thy meditation, day and
night.
Grant, O Lord, that I may never
think of aught save Thee,
And that I may sing of Thee ever
and evermore.

Again:

O my heart! Love God as the
lotus loves the water,
The more it is beaten by the
waves, the more its love en-
kindles:
Having received its life from wa-
ter, it dieth without water,
O my heart! Love God as the
chatrik loves the rain drops.
Who even when fountains are full
and the land green,
Is not satisfied as long as it can-
not get a drop of rain.

And again:

Whichever side I cast mine eyes,
there Thou art!
Parted from Thee, I crack and
die.

To reach God, teaches Guru Nanak, one must walk the way of love. Love God alone, and if you love others — your children and friends and relatives, love them for His sake. Yearn for Him. Develop within you an intense longing for Him. And when you feel restless for Him, know that it will not be long before He will reveal Himself to you.

He was the prophet of the "inner life," and urged that the inner should be expressed, not in creeds and dogmas, rites and rituals, but in humble service of the poor and the lowly. And this service must be inspired by the love of God and NAAM — the Spirit and Power of God. Nanak says:

O Man! How canst thou be free
without love?
For the Word of God — the
Naam
Will reveal to thee the Lord with-
in thee,
And grant thee the treasure of
love,
Love-filled, let the seeker become
the Bridegroom's bride!
Filled with Bhakti, the disciple
be dyed in the true color of
love.
Such a bride shall never be a
widow!
For she abideth in the Satguru.
On her free head is the jewel of
love!
And except the Bridegroom she
knoweth none.
Awake! Awake, O seeker,
Awake!
Renounce the little wisdom of the
"ego."
Love-filled, think ever of His
Lotus feet!
Do as He biddeth thee to do,
Surrender thy body and thy soul
to Him!
Surrender thyself, so mayest thou
meet thy Lord!

Guru Nanak was a true mystic, in communion with God, and perceiving His all-pervading munificent grace. He exclaimed "Nanak sees the Lord in all His glory." Intoxicated with the love of the Lord, he remained in a state of perpetual ecstasy.

Once Babar offered Nanak a cup of hemp. The Guru politely declined, saying: "O Emperor, the intoxication of this substance is just of an ephemeral nature, but I am ever in a state of divine inebriation under the powerful influence of the Holy Naam."

For meditation, Nanak prescribed a regular course of spiritual discipline for without it one could not progress on the path. The first is the devotion to Naam. In the opening lines of *Jap Ji*, the daily morning prayer of the Sikhs, the God-power is termed as *Sat Naam*, or the Eternal Truth. It is in the Name that the life of religion is rooted. "Sow the Name. Now is the season to throw away all doubts and misgivings. Burn to ashes all your silk and velvet fineries, if they take you away from the Name of the Lord."

The Guru then sums up the quali-

ties required of a devotee on the spiritual path. Purity of thought, speech and deed is the first prerequisite for the dawn of higher Life. Christ too said: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Purity is verily the key that unlocks the door of meditation, leading to the mansion of the Lord.

Secondly, one must develop patience and perseverance to bear cheerfully whatever good or evil may befall, as a reaction to our actions.

Thirdly, one must have control over one's thoughts, casting away all desires so as to ensure equilibrium of the mind.

Fourthly, a steady practice every day of the presence of the Living God by communion with the Word in full faith in the Master Power above.

Fifthly, one must live in holy awe of His presence, stimulating one to untiring effort to achieve ultimate union with Him.

And above all, one must love God with such an intensity as may burn up all dross in us, leaving us free to proceed unhampered to His Kingdom.

An Ideal Farmer:

A lover of freedom, Guru Nanak spent his early days in the freedom of the farm and the open air of the countryside. As he grew older, he travelled far and wide, exhorting the people to free their minds of conventional thoughts and convivialities of life.

On his return from his far flung travels, he settled down at Kartarpur as a farmer. He was a true son of the soil, a passionate peasant who had cultivated much harder things than earth — the mind and the intellect, etc. After "man-making" and "man-service," he engaged himself in land-service, for to grow a blade of grass and to raise a stalk bearing an ear of grain was to him much better than the work of a mere priest or a preacher. He set an example of hard labor by bringing under cultivation the barren lands of Kartarpur for feeding the poor and the needy on the produce thereof.

He also set up at Kartarpur the institution of *langar* or a system of free community feeding, where both bread and broth were distributed freely to all according to the needs of each. "Bread was the Lord," the Guru declared, and "the bread which the Lord gave was His *prashad* (God-given)." "Bread and water belong to the Guru," echoed the followers. And the Guru said that the Beloved was in the people.

His disciples came from far-off places like Baluchistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia and included, among others, the Brahmins and the Sufis, the high-caste Kshatriyas and the low-caste Chandalas, the Sidhas and the Naths. Thus his following was a conglomeration of all sorts of people, knit together in the bonds of loving devotion to the holy cause and vying with each other in the labor of love for the fallen and the down-trodden. Nanak, their spiritual Father, now advanced in age, moved on foot every day, laboring in the farms and singing hymns of Naam and breathing the benediction of love. The Guru was a picture of humility, and his followers in a spirit of dedication worked as humble servants of the Lord, worshiping God without any pomp and show, in the stillness of Nature.

From Kartarpur spread the fire of the love of God and love of man, all

over the Punjab. Guru Nanak's face shone with the simplicity and serenity born of the saintliness in him. He was a laborer, a tiller of the soil, a servant of the poor and lowly. The life at Kartarpur was a blend of willing work and worship, love and labor, silence and song.

On being asked by his father as to what was real farming, Nanak replied: "The body is the field, the mind is the ploughshare, and modesty is the life-giving water for the field. I sow the seed of the Divine Name in the field of the body, leveled and furrowed by contentment, after pulverizing the encrusted clods of pride into true humility. In a soil prepared like this, the seed of love will prosper and seated in the abode of Truth, I behold the glory of God in the rich harvest before me. Oh Father! Mammon accompanies no man. The world is just deluded by the glamour of riches. It is just a few who escape the delusion with the aid of discriminating wisdom."

Guru Nanak had a deep-rooted penchant for silence. He frequently merged himself in the silence of God, the Sat Naam, the Eternal Word; in the silence of Nature, the silence that shines in the starry sky and dwells in the lonely hillside and murmurs in the flowing waters; and in the silence of *Sangat seva* or unostentatious service of the community of the faithful and of the *sevadars* (servers) alike, who stayed with the Guru and whom he always addressed as *Bhais* (brothers).

The Way of Life:

He prescribed a methodology for achieving success in life. Absorbed in the Lord of Love the disciple grows in the seva of *Sadh Sangat*, the selfless and loving service of all. In such supreme and selfless service, many a *Koda Rakhshas* and *Sajjan thug* were redeemed during his ministry.

He exhorted the people to earn their living through honest and fair means. This was a rule not for the disciples and the laity only, but even for real teachers and preachers. He went to the length of saying: "Bow not unto him who, claiming to be a Godman, lives on the charity of others. He who earns his living with the sweat of his brow and shares it with all, can know the way to God."

That which belongs to another is not to be wished and craved for, much less grabbed, for it is as odious and noxious as pork is to a Muslim and beef to a Hindu.

He forbade people from encroaching upon the rights of others. Those who thrive on ill-gotten gains can never have a pure heart.

Time and again he stressed the purity of heart through virtuous deeds performed in the love of the Lord. It is only the deeds that count and not the religious hallmarks that one may bear.

The chanting of the Name of the Lord was a necessity but with a pure heart and a clean tongue for without these all our prayers, however loud and long, would never bear any fruit. "It is the deeds alone that are weighed in the divine scales and determine one's place in relation to God." It is with the alchemy of God's love that one can transform hardened criminals into men of piety.

Nanak never advocated ostentatious

renunciation as a means of God-realization. He taught that salvation was possible for a householder, as for any other person; through proper rendering of his duties and obligations with faith in God. He believed in the efficacy of prayers not only for all mankind but for animals, birds and all other creatures. He himself always prayed for peace unto all the world under the Divine Will.

Nanak emphasized developing the life of the Spirit for all true men and women. Such persons live not for themselves alone but for others.

To live for others is the highest norm,
He alone liveth who liveth for others.

He defined a truly great man as one who renounced all his desires and cared not for the fruits of his actions.

The seeker after God was enjoined to cultivate purity of heart above anything else. "He who is so much identified with the body and is engrossed head and ears in the lusts of the flesh, could never be picked up by the Lord as His own."

He who blesses others is blessed in return. A seeker after happiness must make others happy.

The Guru stressed the need of prayer. Where all human efforts fail, there prayer succeeds. Sit in silence each day and pray to God or God manifested in man, to draw you nearer to Him from day to day and grant you the company of those who are dear to Him.

Last Days:

The day came when Nanak was about to depart. In humility and love Nanak bowed to his devoted disciple Angad, who had by now become a very part of his being, as the name indicates. The latter was one in spirit with his Master and the two were blended together in Him. The Guru then asked for his blessings and he sang a song of *vijay* or victory at the hour of his departure, asking all who were around him to join him in the chorus.

Sing ye my comrades! sing ye all!
Sing now my wedding song.
Sing ye the song of His praise.
May I be a sacrifice to Him — the Beloved.
The blessed day hath dawned,
The hour of consummation draweth nigh.
Come ye, my comrades, come!
And consecrate me with your blessings.
Behold ye the Bride uniting with the Bridegroom.

Many of the disciples shed bitter tears of sorrow and grief. With deep agony in their hearts, they inquired: "Leaving us, you go! What rites should we perform? Shall we light the customary earthen lamp when you depart? Should we cast your ashes and charred bones in the sacred waters of the Ganges, according to the prevailing custom?"

To all these queries, the Guru characteristically replied:

Yes, light ye the lamp!
The Lamp of the Name of God.
Let my funeral rites be the remembrance of the Name of God.
Know ye that He, the Lord above, is my support, here and in the hereafter.
Sing ye the Name of God!
That shall be my Ganga and my Kashi.
Let my soul bathe in the water of His Name!
For that alone is the true bath.
And offer unto me the grace of God,
And sing ye the glory of God, night and day.

The Hindu disciples asked, "Shall we cremate your body?" And the Muslim disciples: "Shall we bury your body?" The Guru replied, "Quarrel not over my remains. Let Hindus and Muslims bring flowers and place them on each side of my body. And then let each do what they like. But see that the flowers remain fresh and green." The Guru was indifferent to ceremonial disposal of the body either by cremation or burial. He only asked that the flowers should remain fresh and fragrant. What then were these flowers? The flowers of faith and love.

It is in vain that the people look for the Guru in a tomb or on the cremation ground. The Living Guru is ever in the hearts of those who keep the flowers of faith and love fresh and fragrant. He came for all. He lived for all. His teachings remain for all.

He founded no new sect. He revered all religions. He respected the saints of all times and places. He taught no new creed. He preached love, faith and noble deeds. For him all the people were of God. In the Hindus and in the Muslims, he saw the Vision of God in Man. In all the nations of the world, he beheld an endless procession of the race of man. To all countries and to all people; he sang the song of NAAM or the Holy Word.

Nanak was the prophet of peace and good will, harmony and unity. He was the prophet of Light and gave Light to all for seventy long years (1469-1539). His work of loving service to humankind, as manifestation of the Unmanifest, was carried on vigorously by his successors. Guru Arjan, the fifth in the line of succession to Nanak, compiled the sayings of the Gurus in the Holy Granth, the Bible of the Sikhs; including therein the sayings of several other saints of other religions as well as could easily be collected for the purpose. Thus in the holy book, he laid the foundation of a great banquet hall and offered therein choice and dainty dishes of divine wisdom coming down through the ages. This in a way serves as a model for the World Fellowship of Religions.

Love knows no reward. It is a reward in itself. Service and sacrifice characterize love. The last two Gurus — Guru Teg Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh — sacrificed their all in the service of mankind for the love of God.

They Give Us So Much Grace

Sant Ajaib Singh Ji

Sant Ji, a number of people have been interested to know why the langar is set up like it is: why we should not touch the people who serve, why we should eat all the food on our own plate, and why we should not share with others. Would You please address these issues?

WELL, THE SAME QUESTION was put to me previously also, and I responded to that. Maybe it has been published in the *Sant Bani Magazine* and some dear ones may have read that. But since this question has been put to me again, I will reply; please pay attention to the answer.

You should know that the countries which are very advanced now have not been like that from the very beginning. They might have been poor in the past, and now they have progressed very much. The countries which are poor now were very advanced in the olden days, and now that time has passed they have become poor.

There was a time when India also had progressed a lot, and even in the field of science it was very advanced. But when the Mahabharata battle was fought, in which the Kaurava and Pandava cousins fought with each other, that hurt the backbone of India, and because of that war, India still has not become like it was before.

There was a time when India was called the Golden Bird. But since foreigners attacked and plundered this country again and again, they cut the wings of this Golden Bird and made her poor. But this has been the country of the Rishis and Munis, and from the very beginning there has been much spirituality in this country, because in this land many great Saints and Mahatmas did a lot of devotion. They sacrificed a lot and did Their meditation.

In the olden days, the Saints and Mahatmas used to preach the Shabd Naam by traveling from one place to another. There were only a few deras or ashrams. So usually They would just go from one place to another, preaching the Naam. And in those days the Saints and Mahatmas did not make as many arrangements as are available now. Whenever those desiring spirituali-

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ty, whenever the sangat would come to Them, because They didn't have any plates or anything like that, They used to give them food with Their own hands, and the sangat would use their hands as plates and eat there. Later on, when things progressed, They started using the leaves of certain trees as plates. And later on, as time went by, They used plates and things like that. In the beginning, there wasn't anything to sit on, but later on the Mahatmas started providing rugs on which the dear ones could sit. And when the Mahatmas started making ashrams, all these things were provided.

Usually, from their very childhood most Indians have the habit of sitting in the position that I am sitting in, the cross-legged position, because it is a very comfortable position for those who know how to sit in it. So that is why they have the habit of doing many things while sitting in this position. They sit like this when they eat, and they can have the rugs under them or they can just sit on the ground. They don't have the habit of eating while sitting in chairs as most of the Westerners have. For the Westerners, it is difficult for them to sit in the cross-legged position and do things. And just as it is difficult for the Westerners to sit in the cross-legged position and do certain things, so it is difficult for the Indians to stand and do certain things. And when thousands of people come in the sangat, it is very difficult to arrange modern facilities with tables and chairs. So that is why this practice was started of sitting on the ground to eat.

If we have tables and chairs for some people and we do not provide the same facilities for other people, then the others will not feel good. They will say, "The Saint does not understand us to be as good as the other people, because He is giving us just a carpet to sit on, whereas He is providing the other people with chairs and tables to eat at." So when we sit on the floor like we sit here, we get a chance to become humble. Because when we all sit together, we all sit alike. The poor people get a chance to sit with the rich people, and the rich people get a chance to get the humility; they come to know that we are all children of the same Father.

In India Emperor Akbar was a very powerful king among the Mogul emperors, and when he went to have Guru Amardas' darshan, Guru Amardas said, "You can come to see me only after eating in the langar." So Emperor Akbar sat down with the other people and had his lunch in the langar. Then he went to have the darshan of Guru Amardas. Emperor Akbar was so humble that he didn't mind sitting with the other people, and even now people remember him eating there.

Many ministers of the Rajasthan

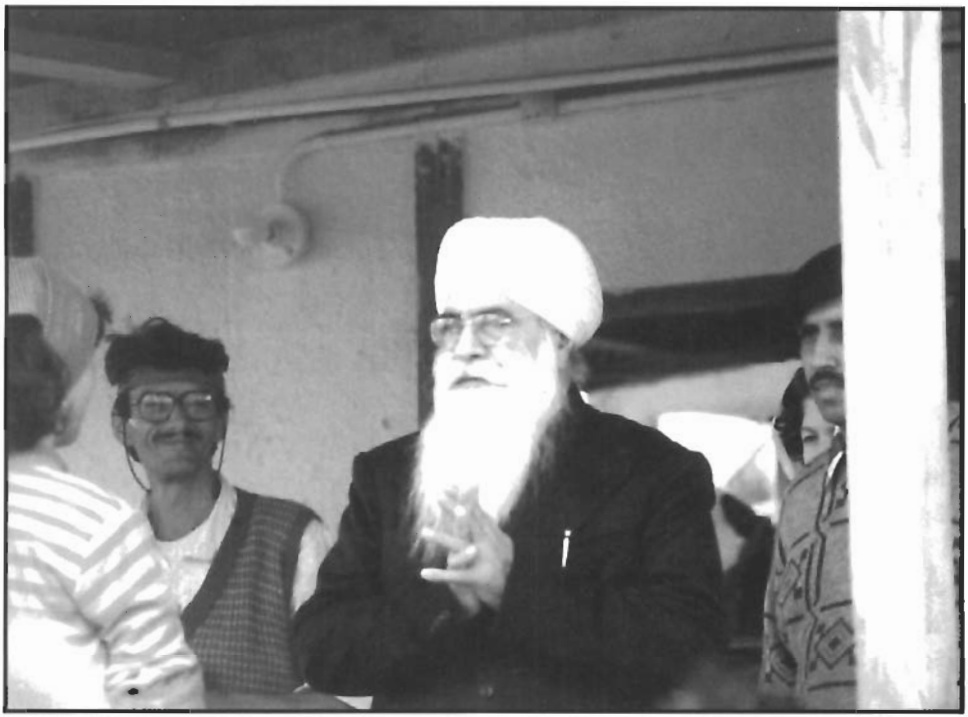
government come to see me, and when we give them chairs they don't like to sit on them; they like to sit on the floor in the langar and eat the food from the langar.

Even ministers and kings understand the food of the langar as the best food, because they know that the Saints have showered Their gracious sight on the food. When the Saints give us food, They also give us so much grace in that food. So it is not a good thing to throw that food away. We should finish all the food on our plate, understanding it as parshad.

Now regarding eating food from other people's plates, or sharing food with other people, if you will eat food from the plate of a person who has bad thoughts, you will definitely get affected by those negative thoughts. In the same way, if you will eat food from the plate of a person who has done meditation, you will definitely get affected by his meditation. You will definitely get the benefit of some of his meditation. That is why people who meditate don't let others share food with them, and they don't let other people eat from their plate.

When Swami Ji Maharaj, the founder of this Holy Path, was living in Agra, many worldly people would come just to eat in the langar which the dear ones had prepared very lovingly. Since Agra was a very big city, many worldly people would come and finish up all the food. So the sangat was concerned about that. The worldly people would eat from the langar, and then they would also make remarks about the food, saying, "These people are not able to provide food for everybody who comes" — because the dear ones would not get enough food to eat since those worldly people had come to finish it all up. In order to remove those worldly people, those flies, Swami Ji Maharaj once took some water in His mouth and to discourage those worldly people, He spat that water from His mouth onto the food. The dear ones were very grateful to have that, because they knew that now Master had made all the food as parshad. But the worldly people made a face, saying, "This Saint has spat on the food and He has made all the food bad, so we should not eat this food," and they all left. So from that time onward, still people in Agra and many people say, "The Saints of the Radhasoami Faith are such that before They give food to Their disciples, first They spit on the food. We should not go and eat that food."

In the same way, once when Master Sawan Singh Ji was doing Satsang, some Akali gentlemen came there and Master Sawan Singh said, "Well, if you want to talk with me about anything, I will stop the Satsang." They replied, "No, You can conclude Your Satsang." Master Sawan Singh continued the Sat-



SUBACHOQUE, COLOMBIA, MAY 1988

sang. When He finished, the dear ones brought some parshad, and when they offered it to those Akali gentlemen, they asked if the food which the dear ones were serving as parshad was contaminated or not. Master Sawan Singh said, "Well, it is both contaminated and it is not contaminated." The Akalis said, "How is that possible?" Master Sawan Singh Ji replied, "Well, listen, when you bring some food and you want to make it parshad, you remember Sat Purush, or the Name of God, or Almighty God, and you say, 'O Lord, may You eat some food from this and make the rest of it parshad for us.' If God hears your prayer and He eats some food from the same plate, giving the rest to you to eat, it means that He has contaminated that food for you. If He has not heard your prayer, if He has not contaminated it, it means that it has not become parshad." Those people had this misunderstanding, that the Radhasoami Masters spit [on the food] in the langar. So Master Sawan Singh said, "You can ask the sangat if I have ever done that." He also said, "You can ask my sons. I never let them eat from my plate. All my life I have said that you should not eat from others' plates and you should not let other people eat from your plate."

In Rajasthan, when new people

come, first of all they hesitate to eat food from the langar. And when the other dear ones who are already initiated ask them why they are not eating, they reply, "I know that if I eat the food of the sangat, I will have to take Naam Initiation — because I know that Master Kirpal has given some part of the herb which used to be put in His langar to Sant Ji also, and He is also using the same herb in the food. And if I eat that food then I will also have to take Initiation."

People have created this misunderstanding, and many people always carry this burden of illusion and they do not want to transcend it. Saints are very wise people. Can They ever spit in the langar, or contaminate others' food? You will see that I never do it here. The only thing which the Saints do with the food which They serve to the dear ones is that They give Their grace so that Their disciples may get the benefit.

When the [skeptical] people come to the Satsang, attend the Satsang for a couple of days, and understand the Satsang, then later on they also become the devoted ones, and they also get the Initiation.

Mahatmas say, "We don't know what magic is being played at the door of the Mahatma. Those who go and stand there, they do not come back. At the place of the Mahatma, all the disputes of the religions and communities come to an end, and the dear one gets the Beloved. What can the villains do there?"

I will tell you one very amusing thing — because I have had the opportunity to see many dear ones' wedding pictures and wedding albums, and I have even talked to Pappu about this many times. I have seen that many dear ones feed each other and they even take pictures of that. This is to express their love. But later on, when they do not get along with each other and they start fighting and even come to the point when they think about getting a divorce, then they don't remember how much love they had in the beginning. So I say that just by sharing food with other people you cannot have more love.

Also, when we are eating we should not talk. We should always have all our attention on the food. We should eat every single morsel with the repetition of Simran so that every morsel we eat becomes Simran, goes in our within, and has a very good effect on our body.

Always remember the Form of the Master and do the Simran with every single morsel you eat. And with every single sip of water, always remember the Master and do the Simran, so that you may know, you may feel, that you are eating the food and drinking the water for the sake of Satguru. If we will eat and drink with these thoughts and with remembrance of the Master, it

will definitely have a very good effect on us.

If anybody else wants, he may ask another question regarding this matter.

Sant Ji, in the West quite often there are situations when we have to eat in restaurants with other people, and we eat in a place where a lot of other people have eaten. Is there anything we can do to help us from taking on bad thoughts and bad effects?

Well, I asked if anybody wanted to ask a question regarding this matter of eating over here in India. [Pappu explains: Sant Ji wanted to know if anybody has a question in the context of the question which was just answered.]

[*No one volunteers, so Sant Ji goes on to answer the new question.*]

Regarding the question which you just heard: When you have to go and eat at restaurants, you should always be very careful in choosing the restaurant. Now vegetarian restaurants are very widespread, so you should try to go there. You should go to places which are very clean and pure.

You know that I have gone around the world, and when you get on a plane, if you request a vegetarian meal, you can get it. But if you don't get one, then you should be patient.

Could Sant Ji tell us something about the purpose of the bhajans that we sing and how they relate to the spiritual path?

Guru Nanak has called singing in groups *bhajan mungli*, and in the bhajans the yearning and the longing for Master has been nurtured.

When we sing these bhajans our mind gets a lot of help in becoming still, and our mind gets many reasons to rely on our Master and to have faith in Him. We sing in the bhajan, "I don't have any knowledge, I don't have any understanding, and I cannot comprehend Your greatness, but I know that Nanak says that Satguru is the greatest of all Who has saved my honor in this Iron Age." So when we sing bhajans like this, we come to realize Who has saved our honor in this Iron Age, and Who is the Power Who is going to help us. That is the Master. So when we sing such bhajans before meditation or before attending the Satsang, our mind gets this understanding, and we can give more attention and more concentration in meditation and in the Satsang.

We should always sing the bhajans written by the Param Sants, the Masters Who have done the meditation, because behind the words of those bhajans the charging of the Masters Who have written them is working.

This is because if we sit by a fire, the air which is coming from the fire brings heat to us, and if we sit by the ice or some cool place, then the air will be cold. So if the bhajans which we sing are written by the Param Sants — Those Who are very pure in Their hearts, Those Who have manifested God within Them — then we will get the same fragrance or the same effect by singing those bhajans or reading Their work. But if we read or sing the poetry or writings of those people who have not manifested God within them, those who have the fire of lust and anger always going on in their within, we will definitely get that effect also.

If we sing a bhajan understanding its every single word and applying every single word and every single line to ourselves, then definitely we will get the longing and yearning for the Master. So that is why whenever you sing a bhajan, you should sing it with longing and yearning, after understanding what the bhajan says.

I have sung many bhajans to my Master, and it is a fact that they all were the voice of my soul. And this is also true — that Master Kirpal Singh Ji used to become very pleased hearing those bhajans.

It is a very fine, very important thing to sing the bhajans before Satsang, and if we can sing one bhajan before sitting for meditation, that also proves very beneficial.

[*This last question and Sant Ji's answer to it were previously published in the June 1982 issue.*]

Sant Ji, I've just read your talks on marriage and the family, and have a question pertaining to that. You told a story about your parents, and how your mother gave and gave and served your father, and your father abused your mother, didn't appreciate her, and called her names. Now the question I have is: I see this as very common in the United States, and I hear that in India too, where the woman is really working for the family, a lot of the men, because they are being served, continue their laziness in not helping and sharing. And I wonder if it's in the best interest of the man for the woman not to say anything and not to try to motivate and encourage him to also share in the glory of service.

You know that for Saints, both men and women are alike. Since the women are soft-hearted and very gracious, that is why they serve the man; they even suffer the arrogance of the man. But the poor men do not have any patience. When we get married, we take this vow that we will help each other and will share the pains and happiness. It is the duty of the woman to help and serve the man; in the same way, it is the duty and responsibility of the man also to do the same thing for the woman. If the wife has to say something, then the husband

should appreciate that and not get upset; he should understand that. It is not good that the husband should go on abusing and calling the woman bad names, and that the wife should just keep quiet and bear that. The wife also has a right to respond to that, and the husband should appreciate it, understand it, and accept it. That home where both husband and wife get along with each other and where they understand each other's feelings, and each other's work, that home becomes heaven.

In *Sant Bani Magazine*, a letter was published which I wrote to a couple who were having some problems in their married life. They even came to the point where they were going to get a divorce, and out of their sadness and suffering, they both wrote me letters. When I replied to them, I told them what things would make their marriage successful. And when both of them understood that and did what I told them, and came to know the important things about married life, they obeyed my words and they were able to make their married life successful. Now also, they are living happily. For the benefit of other dear ones, they sent my letter to the Sant Bani people, and it was published in the magazine. So you people should read that and should also get benefit from it. [*The letter is reprinted at the end of this talk.*]

Today I will tell you one more incident of my parents. Once it so happened that my father got sick, and we had to take him to the hospital. There my mother stayed up all night, and gave a massage to my father. But my father did not appreciate that, and instead of becoming grateful, he just went on abusing and saying bad words to my mother. In the same hospital there was another woman who saw that, and she said to my father, "Well, you are married to this saintly, holy woman, and that is why you are able to rebuke her and she does not mind; she is still serving you. If you were married to me, then I would have shown you. You would have done all the things for me; you would be giving me a massage as now your wife is giving you a massage!" So in some cases, the wife becomes so strong that the woman has to do all the things. I come across many dear ones who have this problem: where the wife is very strong, stronger than the man, so that the woman has to take care of him and she complains that she gets tired of doing it.

But to the question that was just asked, I would like to respond in this way: *Both the husband and wife should put shoulder to shoulder, and they should work together.* Their bodies may be different, but in them is the same Light, the same Spirit.

Guru Nanak Sahib says, "Don't call them as husband and wife who just sit together. Those who are one Light in two different bodies are called the true husband and wife."

We should always use patience. The promises or vows which we took at our wedding — it is part of the duty of the man to keep those promises, and in the same way, it is the duty of the woman also to keep those promises.

* * *

The following letter, referred to by the Master in the above talk, is reprinted from Streams in the Desert, *pp. 106-07.*

April 19,1977

My Satguru Kirpal's Beloved Dear — : I have received three letters from — and feel very sorry for him. In this letter I would like to tell you some things which might help dear — and you in your present sorrowful condition. We are all Beloved Hazur Kirpal's children. He has united the separated dear ones. Now His children should not go away from their fellow companions. If they have some misunderstanding or if one of them makes any mistake, the other should always keep a big heart and forgive him. Now your husband is confessing his guilt and is asking for forgiveness, so you should give the proof of your big heart by forgiving him. I hope to visit your place in July. I wish to see both of you in loving relation. I want to see you sitting together with love.

Married life is a vehicle which is running on the two wheels of love and respect. The two wheels are fixed in the axle of *duty*. Husband and wife both are two companions who give the power to run the vehicle. If both the companions agree with each other and lead the vehicle well, they can reach their goal easily. If both of them go in different directions, the vehicle cannot run even for a yard. The root of a good household is love, and humility is the flower which grows on the plant of that household. Without a flower, a tree does not bear any fruit. And the tree without fruit is useless. Only the fruit is happiness; otherwise, all other things are thorns — pain-giving. The tree which bears much fruit bends down. If it doesn't bend or lower itself, it breaks its branch. The same thing applies to household life. Both husband and wife should be cool-hearted and patient. Unless one has patience he cannot achieve happiness. Peace is a cool iron which cuts the hot iron of anger. So an atmosphere of peace and love should be created in the home for a successful marriage.

My dear —, I hope in our dear Father's love, you will think over this letter and will try to put it into practice. Our Beloved Father is not happy when we are unhappy. He is happy in our happiness. He is our Real Father.

In Beloved Kirpal's Love, much, much Love to you,

Yours affectionately,
AJAIB SINGH