

Guru Granth Sahib A Supreme Treasure

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GURU GRANTH SAHIB A SUPREME TREASURE

The eternal Guru Granth Sahib (holy scriptures) is an invaluable gift of the Timeless One for the all around welfare of human beings. It is a treasure of precious, immaculate jewels, a repository of sacred thoughts. It came into being in the year 1604 A.D. through the clairvoyance of Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth Preceptor. According to him this sacred scripture is the '*Pothi parmasher Ka Thaan*' meaning 'Lord's dwelling place'. For a Sikh, Sri Guru Granth Sahib is a WORDY rendering of God Himself. In it are enshrined the teachings and instructions of thirty six holymen who hailed from different parts of India, professed different religions, followed different creeds and modes of thoughts and flourished at different times spanning from 12th century to 17th century A.D. They gave their sermons to the people dwelling in the various parts of India, meditated on God Almighty and in sheer selflessness rendered the practical message of peace, brotherhood, unity, equality, humility, tenderness, social service and divine remembrance to all mankind and persuaded all who came in contact with them to follow the true path of religion.

As far as the composition of Guru Granth Sahib is concerned, it contains 5874 hymns set to 31 *ragas* (musical measures). The major contribution is of Guru Arjan Dev who composed in all 2218 *shabads* (hymns). The briefest rendering on the other hand is of Bhagat Surdas comprising half a couplet. Among '*Bhaktas*', Kabir has the honour to be the greatest contributor whose 541 *shabads* duly find place in the Holy Granth. Almost whole of the '*Bani*' i.e. scripture is in poetic form and being in simple language and style, is easily intelligible and understandable to all.

One of the main reasons for the compilation of the Holy Granth was **to convey the divine knowledge to the common masses in the common parlance**. The general approach in the country before the compilation of this Holy Granth was to

write the spiritual sermons only in Sanskrit, as it was considered the sacred language of the religious scholars and of men exalted. When '*Gurbani*' (sacred hymns) began to be read and sung in Panjabi, the *pandits* (Hindu priests) started opposing it on the ground that the spiritual consciousness recorded in a corrupt or oriental native language like Panjabi, devaluates the Truth Divine. Even such complaints were made to Guru Arjan Dev that Kashmiri pandits did not allow the people to read '*Gurbani*' as the same is not written in a holy language called, Sanskrit. Bhai Madho Das Sodhi requested the Guru to forbid the pandits airing such feelings. Guru expressed that he himself respected and valued Sanskrit language but the writings of the Sanskrit are like the water of the deep well which involves great efforts to draw it out and can quench the thirst of very few. Now the well-water can't serve all the needs of all the peoples; so they need the water of the flowing stream which generally is abundant in quantity and is easily available too. The '*bani*' written in the common man's language studded with day to day used maxims and idioms of the common men and their mode of thought is like the water of a running stream, which can satiate the thirst and cause spiritual blossoming in every heart. The Guru further said that as Sanskrit is dear to the pandits, the **word-Guru** is dear to the Sikhs. He also told Madho Sodhi that if any one puts pure *ghee* (butter oil) in an earthen pot or a silver wore, it won't make any difference in its virtue or quality. Therefore, whether the knowledge divine is available in Sanskrit or in the usual, common parlance, it remains pious in either case and at the same time in the case of latter it is easily accessible and intelligible to all. Therefore, composition of Guru Granth Sahib in Panjabi language would be more useful and meaningful. Guru also told Madho that pandits too explain Sanskrit sermons to the masses in their ordinarily spoken languages, as the latter do not understand Sanskrit. Hence, the argument of the pandits not to defile the spiritual thoughts by using ordinary language like Panjabi, stands defeated and therefore carries no weight

(Ref. the book '*Sikhan Di Bhagat Mala*' by Trilochan Singh Bedi). Guru Arjan, the True Preceptor thus honoured the language of the masses to divert the human mind through Guru Granth Sahib, from history to realisation and from realisation to spiritual light. Guru Granth Sahib, because of its spiritual richness and that too in easily understandable language, started appealing every person, whatever be his religious, social or cultural background and faith. It transformed him from the earthly or mundane sphere to spiritual regions. For the Panjabees, Guru Granth Sahib bears parental importance, for Gurbani especially stirred their spirit in previous times, and it stirs them even today and would continue doing so in future too. Gurbani, because of its spiritual richness, provides peace of mind and gives a special upward beat to the human life. It helps those who go through it or even listen to it. It overpowers all the entanglements of life and does not let the seekers deviate or go astray from the true, spiritual path. Guru Granth Sahib through its sublime teachings, awakens in the votary the awareness of his rights as well as duties. This holy Granth is replete with social and moral virtues and consciousness too. On this account it is rightly considered the Scripture of the total humanity and so is indispensable.

It is true that the main language of the *Adi Granth* is Panjabi barring the few hymns of some Bhaktas. As these holymen come from different regions, their hymns naturally are influenced by their native dialects and for that reason the whole 'Gurbani' looks like a beautiful bouquet of languages and emits sweet fragrance, displays a matchless glow and immaculate impression. Owing to this multiplicity of languages, all Indians regard Guru Granth Sahib as their own scripture in their respective ways.

The second important reason for the compilation of Guru Granth Sahib was to save the *Bani* (sacred hymns) from the nefarious designs of mischievous and selfish people who were

keenly interested in making interpolations in the Lore-Divine. To put to halt to their malicious thinking, the revered 5th Guru seriously thought to compile the Scripture as revealed, and it be saved from any alloy or impurity so that it continues guiding the people in its original form for all times to come.

Guru Nanak Dev wanted to make the gift of '*Shabad Guru*' (Word-Divine) to the human race for its multifaceted development even though a person may repose his faith in any philosophic mould. With this aim in mind, he even dialogued with SIDHAS and some ascetics. And wherever he went, he collected the hymns of saints and devotees of high order and at the time of his passing away, he handed over, in all humility and regard the collected '*bani*' alongwith his own '*bani*' to Guru Angad Dev, the second preceptor so that the process of evolution of the *Shabad-Guru* continues, till its completion in the time of the Fifth Guru. Through such far-sighted efforts of the Gurus and especially of Guru Arjan Dev, the mankind was blessed with this perennial and divine Guru, enriched with universal thoughts.

By incorporating the sermons and preachings of various saintly figures in the Holy Granth, the revered Guru wanted to offer mankind a scripture wholly acceptable to it. The idea behind was to widen the outlook of the people and make them totally exempt from all geographical, social and spiritual restraints so as to be rightly called the offspring of the Timeless One who is protector and sustainer of us all. **This holy Granth, because of its contents and composition, would promote mutual affection and cooperation, common reflection and association, harmony and Good will, homogenous thoughts and feelings of fraternity and destroy all malice and ill-will. It would encourage homogeneity and abolish all distance and alienation whatsoever.**

Among the thirty six holymen whose hymns are included

in the Holy Granth, six are the Sikh Gurus, 15 the votaries of different religions, 4 are the devotees of the Gurus' philosophy, and 11 are Brahmin Bhats of high erudition. It seems as though all these godly personages have convened a Parliament from the podium of which they are delivering spiritual sermons, conducive to human well-being and thereby showering the blessings of spiritual elevation and moral firmness upon the humankind with a notion to providing the inmates perpetual bliss and solace. Everyone, the inhabitant of any country, professing any religion, will certainly find a befitting answer to his every query in the pages of Guru Granth Sahib—the everlasting Guru of the human race, because this 'bani' is absolutely capable of covering and codifying every anxiety of the human heart and rendering an easy solution. The concept of co-existence and pluralism, which find suitable mention in Gurbani prove that humans of every type can live together and that even the so-called low castes can look pleasing and appealing to others. In Guru Granth Sahib, Baba Farid instructs to offer (i) 'Nimaz' i.e. a Muslim prayer five times a day and reminds that the persons shall be (ii) laid in their graves after their death; while a Sikh as per his rites and rituals does not offer any 'nimaz' in his life nor is buried in the grave after his death but he still loves and respects this idea of Baba Farid and thereby strengthens the ideal of co-existence possessed in the Holy Granth. The tolerance or the beauty of tolerating the views of others is a no less remarkable boon of Guru Granth Sahib to the world community. This is an open-eyed knowledge that takes the entire humanity within its fold:

ਫਰੀਦਾ ਬੇ ਨਿਵਾਜਾ ਕੁਤਿਆ ਏਹ ਨ ਭਲੀ ਗੀਤਿ ॥

ਕਬ ਹੀ ਚਲਿ ਨ ਆਇਆ ਪੰਜੇ ਵਖਤ ਮਸੀਤਿ ॥

ਅੰਗ-1381

**Farid, though shameless truant from prayer,
worthless is thy life's tenor:**

**Never hast thou come to the House of God
to pray five times a day**

*Pg-1381

**In whole of this book, the page mentioned on the right hand corner of a Gurbani verse, is the page of Guru Granth Sahib where that particular verse is available.*

Another characteristic of the '*bani*' of Guru Granth Sahib is that it has dawned upon the earth through the medium of those great personages who ever kept themselves immaculate and sublime in every situation of life and who even enduring extreme kinds of tortures in the cause of human rights and justice, did not stumble and in emergent situations did not hesitate even to lay down their own lives as well as the lives of their families, nor did they lament and made any complaint to God, the Timeless One. Every moment of their being had been replete with goodness of conduct and character. They sincerely believed in human equality i.e. 'God is our common Father, we all are His children.' They believed in and even preached this principle that **'We have befriended all, we are friends of all'**. They preached these noble ideals from place to place as well as persuaded their followers to act upon them and worship God with love and affection. This was the quintessence of their life. Doing good deeds, sharing one's earnings with others and rendering sincere worship to God was such an easy formula which they taught others in different ways and manners; and they were ever enthusiastic to keep the social and moral atmosphere quite clean and refined by condemning and abolishing false misgivings and superstitions, whims and caprices, irrational rituals and practices. **'The light in all of us is Divine Light; and all other lights owe their origin and source to the Light Divine'**, were the thoughts they impressed upon the minds of all with firmness and breaking the chains of the caste-system taught mankind mental freedom and the importance of good and honest earning in their economic life. All this went against adopting the life of renunciation or '*sanyas*' and encouraged the people to lead household (*grahsthi*) life on the basis of equality. Thus with the gracious role of Gurbani, spirituality and dynamism won a place of dominance in the life mundane.

For the sake of brevity we can only say that the whole '*bani*' of Guru Granth Sahib dwells most beautifully on those

invaluable virtues which bring coolness to the hearts of the readers and the listeners. The spiritual hymns bless and inspire them to develop enterprising, enthusiastic, morally refined and philanthropic life:

ਜਿਨ ਸਬਦਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਸੁਣਿ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਤਿਨ ਮਨਿ ਧਿਆਇਆ ਹਰਿ ਸੋਇ ॥
ਅਨਦਿਨੁ ਭਗਤੀ ਰਤਿਆ ਮਨੁ ਤਨੁ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਅੰਗ-27/28

**Those listening to the Master's Word, putting in it faith—
Are truly absorbed in Him.**

Day and night are they dyed in devotion—

Their mind and body rendered pure. Pg-27/28

By making a brief mention of the manifold benefactions of Guru Granth Sahib in the pages that follow, an humble attempt would be made to convey the richness which it holds for the all round well-being of the entire humankind.

Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism, while initiating in man, numerous other virtues, especially laid stress on the inculcation of three basic values, viz:

- a) Meditating and worshipping the Name Divine so that mortal being continues maintaining loving relations with Almighty God.
- b) Making an honest earning so that he be able to lead the life of a respectable citizen.
- c) Sharing his hard earned earnings with the needies to foster the fraternal spirit amongst mankind and encourage mutual cordial dealings. The man who possesses these three virtues, will be, in the Preceptor's view, active and enthusiastic, industrious and honest earner. He would be possessed of fortitude and would be philanthropic, courteous and polite in nature. He would surely be, believer in human equality and would be conscious of his own rights as well as the rights of others; he would be the one who lovingly endeavours to secure the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

It is impossible to make a detailed study of the beauties of Guru Granth Sahib and its collective teachings in a small booklet like the present one, still an effort is being made to throw some light on its conspicuous teachings that contribute to the all-round development of the humankind. On the bases of the virtues enshrined in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, it can be rightly said that the devotion or even slavery of Guru Granth Sahib provides highest liberation of mind, body and soul.

WORSHIP THE NAME DIVINE

Recitation of the Name Divine is the essence of Guru Granth Sahib which forms the basis of a Sikh's life and without this virtue all other acts pale into insignificance. Contemplating on His 'Naam' means to eulogize God, to sing hymns in His praise and to live under His divine command and establish a permanent rapport with Him.

ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਨਿਧਾਨੁ ਹੈ ਮਿਲਿ ਪੀਵਹੁ ਭਾਈ ॥

ਜਿਸੁ ਸਿਮਰਤ ਸੁਖੁ ਪਾਈਐ ਸਭ ਤਿਖਾ ਬੁਝਾਈ ॥

ਅੰਗ-318

**The Name Divine is store of *amrita*—
Brethren! in holy company quaff it.
Its contemplation is bringer of joy,
And quencher of all thirst.**

Pg-318

The *Waheguru*, whose Name we worship, is the preserver of all; He is benevolent, truth-incarnate and maintains the dignity and self-respect of His votary and is omnipotent. All happens as He wills and everything depends entirely on Him.

ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਸਗਲੇ ਜੰਤ ॥ ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਖੰਡ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੰਡ ॥

ਅੰਗ-284

**All beings by the might of the Name are sustained.
By the might of the Name are sustained
continents and universes.**

Pg-284

This sublime name is the name of the things unknown; a store of all spiritual achievements and perfections: the source of all satisfactions and accomplishments. This name is an invaluable diamond, an ethereal and supernatural miracle; an immaculate

capital. It creates adequate utility and blesses with righteous conduct, therefore quaff it as much is possible:

ਸਾਥਿ ਨ ਚਾਲੈ ਬਿਨੁ ਭਜਨ ਬਿਖਿਆ ਸਗਲੀ ਛਾਰੁ ॥
ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਮਾਵਨਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਇਹੁ ਧਨੁ ਸਾਰੁ ॥

ਅੰਗ-288

**Other than devotion nothing shall accompany
man in death—**

All Maya-poison is as ashes.

**Saith Nanak: Behoves it man on the Name of Divine
to meditate—**

This alone is true wealth.

Pg-288

A good man ought to live in the world under Divine Command, do good deeds and give priority to the Name Divine. This is the aim of a successful life.

ਤੇਰਾ ਏਕੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਤਾਰੇ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ॥ ਮੈ ਏਹਾ ਆਸ ਏਹੋ ਆਧਾਰੁ ॥

ਅੰਗ-24

**Thy Name alone to the whole world brings liberation.
In that lies my hope; this my prop.**

Pg-24

PERSUASION FOR AN ENTERPRISING (INDUSTRIOUS) FAMILY LIFE

Great importance has been laid on industrious life in the Holy Granth so that a person while becoming a good family man should make a good and positive contribution to his family, his country, his society and his religion. According to Gurbani, hard and honest labour tampered with enterprising nature, makes the mind free from impurities, the heart becomes cool and tranquil and one gets mental satisfaction and pleasure. **'Industry brings happiness and joy: as divine remembrance brings comfort and peace.'** Man has to earn his living with the sweat of his brow, such earning brings all possible comforts. Considering wealth as essential for our maintenance, we are not to abandon all patience and contentment for its achievement; for the unending pursuit of wealth, the peace of mind vanishes and our craving for it increases; and thus a well-balanced life is disturbed. Only that earning is acceptable which is obtained through virtuous

means. Gurbani discards blind desire which instigates for blind and unprincipled materialism. Thus Gurbani puts a check on unnecessary temptations and lustful desires, and thereby the tendency to observe patience and fortitude gets fillip.

ਉਦਮੁ ਕਰੇਦਿਆ ਜੀਉ ਤੂੰ ਕਮਾਵਦਿਆ ਸੁਖ ਭੁੰਚੁ ॥

ਧਿਆਇਦਿਆ ਤੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਮਿਲੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਉਤਰੀ ਚਿੰਤ ॥

ਅੰਗ-522

**My self! in joy abide by endeavouring
and working in the way of God.**

By meditation obtained union with the Lord:

Thus, saith Nanak, shall thy anxiety be removed.

Pg-522

CO-SHARING ONE'S EARNINGS

In the basic preachings of Guru Nanak Dev, due weightage is given on divine worship and honest earnings. Alongwith these, the emphasis has been laid on co-sharing one's earnings with others. It promotes mutual sympathy and love; adds genorsity and gracefulness through which mutual behaviour gets refined. These virtues are the basic essentials of Sikh religion. **The person who shares his earnings with others becomes a liberal and kind-hearted gentleman; he does not believe in earning money avariciously and hoarding it uselessly in coffers and treasuries. Gurbani in a way develops charitable tendency.**

ਘਾਲਿ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥਹੁ ਦੇਇ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹੁ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ ਸੋਇ ॥

ਅੰਗ-1245

**Those that eat the bread of their labour and
give away something in charity,**

Saith Nanak, truly recognise the way.

Pg-1245

This sentiment of co-sharing promotes multi-dimensional love and brings invaluable blessings.

ਖਾਵਹਿ ਖਰਚਹਿ ਰਲਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਭਾਈ ॥

ਤੋਟਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਵਧਦੋ ਜਾਈ ॥

ਅੰਗ-186

**Brother! this wealth let all consume
and spend together;
Decrease in it shall not occur;
ever shall it increase.**

Pg-186

The individual who inculcates in him such liberal approach can well control and subdue his unnecessary avarice for wealth. In this way by making contentment and fortitude the bases of his life, a person refrains from committing fraudulent deeds, accepting bribes, cheating, swindling and doing unworthy nefarious acts. He also abstains himself from all unholy scams and remains absorbed in humanitarian practices. Because of his study of Gurbani, he knows that wealth can't be accumulated without doing sinful deeds and it does not accompany a person after his death.

ਇਸੁ ਜਰ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਘਣੀ ਵਿਗੁਤੀ ਇਨਿ ਜਰ ਘਣੀ ਖੁਆਈ ॥
ਪਾਪਾਂ ਬਾਝਹੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਮੁਇਆ ਸਾਥ ਨ ਜਾਈ ॥

ਅੰਗ-417

**For wealth are vast multitudes dishonoured;
Many for this are strayed;
This without evil-doing comes not,
in death it accompanies not man.**

Pg-417

TO SEEK WELFARE UNTO ALL

In the wish to seek welfare of all lies our own well-being too. According to Gurbani all human beings are the children of the same God, therefore, practising discrimination among them is openly demonstrating a tendency of narrow-mindedness. A Guru's Sikh won't allow such blemish to come near him.

ਅਵਲਿ ਅਲਹ ਨੂਰੁ ਉਪਾਇਆ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਕੇ ਸਭ ਬੰਦੇ ॥
ਏਕ ਨੂਰ ਤੇ ਸਭੁ ਜਗੁ ਉਪਜਿਆ ਕਉਨ ਭਲੇ ਕੋ ਮੰਦੇ ॥

ਅੰਗ-1349

**God first created Light;
all else to His might subject.
Since from one Light is the whole world created—
who is noble, who inferior?**

Pg-1349

Gurbani enthralls us all with the sermon of mutual love and sincerity and thereby helps create the atmosphere of liberalism, unity and human sympathy. The command in this respect is :

ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਮੀਤੁ ਹਮ ਆਪਨ ਕੀਨਾ ਹਮ ਸਭਨਾ ਕੇ ਸਾਜਨ ॥ ਅੰਗ-671

**All have we made our loving friends,
Friend of all are we grown.** Pg-671

The man who lives as ordained in Gurbani is benevolent, merciful, sympathetic and virtuous. To do good to others is his nature and is not a mere show. It is an invaluable and rare virtue in itself.

ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰ ਨਿਤ ਚਿਤਵਤੇ ਨਾਹੀ ਕਛੁ ਪੋਚ (ਦਿਖਾਵਾ)॥ ਅੰਗ-816

**Benevolence is an intrinsic virtue
and not a mere show with them.** Pg-816

Regarding the welfare unto all, Baba Farid goes so far as to say that the one who seeks universal welfare will have to seek the good even of an evil-doer. Such a noble action provides the evil-doer an inducement to do good; and such magnanimous welwisher does not burn in the fire of anger or revenge and thus leads a healthy and blissful life.

ਫਰੀਦਾ ਬੁਰੇ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ ਕਰਿ ਗੁਸਾ ਮਨਿ ਨ ਹਢਾਇ ॥
ਦੇਹੀ ਰੋਗੁ ਨ ਲਗਾਈ ਪਲੈ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਪਾਇ ॥ ਅੰਗ-1381/82

**Farid, return thou good for evil,
in thy heart bear no revenge,
Thus will thy body be free of maladies,
And thy life have all blessings.** Pg-1381/82

Gurbani confirms in the mind of the votary the unique virtues of tenderness, humility, politeness, sympathy, tolerance, benevolence etc. and he takes pride in showing maximum regard for the feeling of others. Gurbani further lends its valuable support to the altruistic and humanitarian sentiments which a seeker and lover of Gurbani must possess.

ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਉਚਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਨੀਚੁ ਨ ਦੀਸੈ ਕੋਇ ॥
ਇਕਨੈ ਭਾਂਡੇ ਸਾਜਿਐ ਇਕੁ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਤਿਹੁ ਲੋਇ ॥ ਅੰਗ-62

All creatures are noble, none low.

One sole Maker has all vessels fashioned;

In all three worlds is manifest the same Light. Pg-62

When God has fashioned all vessels Himself and the same Divine Light is manifest in all of them, then how can one vessel be good, the other inferior? When 'all utter the Rama Nama and nothing but Rama Nama', how can then we make any discriminatory distinction among them? For the votary of Gurbani therefore, none can be categorised as an enemy and none an alien. This is the sentiment so acutely needed by the world to-day.

ਨਾ ਕੋ ਬੈਰੀ ਨਹੀ ਬਿਗਾਨਾ ਸਗਲ ਸੰਗਿ ਹਮ ਕਉ ਬਨਿ ਆਈ ॥ ਅੰਗ-1299

None is our foe, none a stranger—

With all are we in accord.

Pg-1299

TO PURIFY ONE'S HANDS WITH SELFLESS DEVOTED SERVICE

In Gurbani and Sikh history selfless devoted social service i.e. *seva* carries great importance. The second, the third and the fourth Gurus had through the medium of selfless service, earned the honour of sitting on the most exalted divine seat. Selfless service is an important prop in the life of a general Sikh, this selfless devoted service and divine meditation are integrally related to each other too. A Sikh is to worship and remember God and meditate on the Timeless One and at the same time render service to His Creation. To digest the food of '*simran*'; i.e. meditation, selfless service (*seva*) acts as a compulsory exercise. **This pious service is a sort of practical ascetic discipline which destroys ego, removes mist and fills a person both within and without with pure divine effulgence. The body adorned with service lives less for itself and more for others.** For performing genuine selfless service, we definitely need the virtues of forbearance, fortitude, sympathy, good will, renunciation and human love — and these can be had through lofty character and a vibrant, buoyant spirit i.e. *charhdi kala*.

The fruit of selfless service, too, is very special.

ਵਿਚਿ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਸੇਵ ਕਮਾਈਐ ॥ ਤਾ ਦਰਗਹ ਬੈਸਣੁ ਪਾਈਐ ॥
ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਬਾਹ ਲਡਾਈਐ ॥

ਅੰਗ-26

**By devotion in this world,
Shall ye get a place at the Divine Portal
Then, says Nanak, in joy may you gambol.**

Pg-26

Gurbani even goes so far as to say that the home which lacks enthusiasm to serve human beings, holymen and the Lord God does not deserve to be called a dwelling, but on the contrary is a haunt of evil spirits, or a cremation ground.

ਕਬੀਰ ਜਾ ਘਰ ਸਾਧ ਨ ਸੇਵੀਅਹਿ ਹਰਿ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਨਾਹਿ ॥
ਤੇ ਘਰ ਮਰਹਟ ਸਾਰਖੇ ਭੂਤ ਬਸਹਿ ਤਿਨ ਮਾਹਿ ॥

ਅੰਗ-1374

**Saith Kabir! A home in which
the holy are not served,
And service to the Lord is not rendered,
Is like the cremation ground,
Wherein goblins abide.**

Pg-1374

Hence, the body which does not render devoted service is condemnable, worthless and superfluous. Bhai Gurdas in this respect observes:

ਵਿਣ ਸੇਵਾ ਧ੍ਰਿਗ ਹਥ ਪੈਰ, ਹੋਰ ਨਿਹਫਲ ਕਰਨੀ ॥

***Without service cursed are our hands and feet,
and fruitless all our actions.***

Bhai Gurdas

TO OBEY DIVINE WILL AND SURRENDER BEFORE IT

The Timeless One is omnipotent. His command works in all directions; none can cause any obstruction to it. All live under His sway, His will and command. He can do as well as undo in a moment; raise the humble and the lowly to great elevations and make 'sultans' (kings) lick the dust. His powers and influences are limitless. So it behoves mankind to accept the Divine Command with a beaming countenance and resign implicitly to His Will. Peace and contentment lie in so doing.

ਮਾਨੈ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਸੋਹੈ ਦਰਿ ਸਾਚੈ

ਆਕੀ (ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣ) ਮਰਹਿ ਅਫਾਰੀ (ਆਫਰ ਕੇ)॥

ਅੰਗ-992

Out of these, such alone, as obey God's will,

at the Eternal Portal shall shine:

The arrogant and the intransigent

in transmigration shall be caught.

Pg-992

A bit careful reflection will reveal that the whole Gurbani is a multi-faceted explanation and elucidation of the glory and grandeur of the Command Divine. It is interspersed with such teachings and counsels here and there. It carries useful prescriptions enabling one to follow the path of righteousness, to adopt apt methods to acquire mental poise, adhere to pleasing counsels to follow the code of conduct and the path of self-discipline. It is replete with categorical warnings and prohibitions against toxic and evil living. It holds good persuasions for encouraging love-divine and diving deep into it. **In other words, there are directives in Guru Granth Sahib to caution a seeker to remain alert in the world spiritually; strong and firm-footed morally; vibrant and agile mentally; useful and helpful socially; honest bread-earner economically and so on.** By following these advices in day-to-day life, the path of life becomes smooth and culminates gracefully in spiritual calmness. As such the votary becomes eligible to have a seat of honour in the Court Divine:

ਹੁਕਮੇ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਹੁਕਮੇ ਨਰਕਾ ॥ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਸੈਸਾਰੀ ਹੁਕਮੇ ਭਗਤਾ ॥

ਹੁਕਮੇ ਹੋਛਾ ਹੁਕਮੇ ਦਾਨਾ ॥ ਦੂਜਾ ਨਾਹੀ ਅਵਰੁ ਧੜਾ ॥

ਅੰਗ-1081

By the Divine Will comes liberation,

by the Will is one cast into hell,

By the Divine Will is one made householder,

by the Will devotee.

By the Divine Will is one shallow, by the Will wise—

No other category is there.

Pg-1081

DISCIPLINED LIFE IS SPIRITUAL IN NATURE

Those who share their earnings with others, strengthen the bonds of love with humanity. This is the first lesson of spiritual living. Spirituality therefore is not a distant virtue, a Gurbani lover is out and out a spiritual being provided he lives as ordained in Gurbani. He acts nobly and enjoys true peace.

ਕਰਿ ਆਚਾਰੁ ਸਚੁ ਸੁਖੁ ਹੋਈ ॥

ਅੰਕ-931

Doing pious deeds is achieved true solace SGG-931

A balanced and positive attitude of life takes a seeker to the realm of disciplined life which vanishes from him depression, odd moods, egoistic tendencies and anguishing behaviour. Such disciplined person is God's servant and he submits to His will, thereby enjoys contented life.

ਹੁਕਮੁ ਪਛਾਨੈ ਸੁ ਏਕੋ ਜਾਨੈ ਬੰਦਾ ਕਹੀਐ ਸੋਈ ॥

ਅੰਕ-931

**whoever His Ordinance realises,
and knows Him to be Sole,**

Alone deserves to be called God's servant. SGG-1350

THE KNACK OF INVOCATION AND PRAYER

'Not order or command, only prayer and entreaty can work with God'. The man who conducts himself in the light of this dictum of Gurbani, promotes divine love in his own heart as well as in the hearts of others. In prayer and entreaty, it is better to beg for the capacity for noble, virtuous deeds than to seek for material goods and comforts of life:

ਮੇਲਿ ਲੈਹੁ ਦਇਆਲ ਢਹਿ ਪਏ ਦੁਆਰਿਆ ॥

ਰਖਿ ਲੇਵਹੁ ਦੀਨ ਦਇਆਲ ਭ੍ਰਮਤ ਬਹੁ ਹਾਰਿਆ ॥

ਅੰਗ-709

**Compassionate Lord! to Yourself unite me,
fallen at Your door.**

Lord compassionate to the humble!

with much wandering am I exhausted.

Pg-709

Such prayer or invocation disallows egotism or hauteur to grow

and flourish; and the person by virtue of his humility and submissiveness, remains ever exempt from tension. He regards his existence as entirely insignificant and also feels more comfortable and secure to live in divine refuge. He also realises that his life is successful only because of this characteristic in him. God's shelter is great.

ਹਰਿ ਜੀਉ ਸਦਾ ਤੇਰੀ ਸਰਣਾਈ ॥

ਜਿਉ ਭਾਵੈ ਤਿਉ ਰਾਖਹੁ ਮੇਰੇ ਸੁਵਾਮੀ ਏਹ ਤੇਰੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ ॥ ਅੰਗ-1333

Lord! Ever seek I Thy shelter:

Save me, Lord! as in Thy Will may lie—

In Thy grace shall this be.

Pg-1333

GUIDELINES FOR GOOD AND DECENT CONDUCT

Gurbani aims to make a seeker blooming spiritually, tranquil mentally and perfect morally. Truth is God's own virtue, that is why a life based on truth is accepted as a right sort of life; but far above that is considered the life based on righteous conduct and character :

ਸਚਹੁ ਓਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਆਚਾਰੁ ॥

ਅੰਗ-62

Realisation of Truth is higher than all else —

Higher still is truthful living.

Pg-62

As nothing is above the truthful living, therefore, one ought to make it the basis of life; the other characteristics then would automatically enter into it. It is especially stated in Gurbani that those votaries who have made truth their sacred fast, contentment and fortitude their place of pilgrimage, prudence in life and divine remembrance their holy bath, mercy and benevolence their deity and forgiveness their rosary— are the men of good refined conduct, excellent and sublime characteristics :

ਸਚੁ ਵਰਤੁ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਤੀਰਥੁ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ॥

ਦਇਆ ਦੇਵਤਾ ਖਿਮਾ ਜਪਮਾਲੀ ਤੇ ਮਾਣਸ ਪਰਧਾਨੁ ॥

ਅੰਗ-1245

Those adopting the fast of truth, holy pilgrimage, of content and bath of illumination and meditation;

**Making compassion their deity,
forgiveness their rosary,
Are pre-eminent among men.**

Pg-1245

Men of good conduct and truthful living, never glance lustfully the wealth and honour of others.

ਲੋਭਾਦਿ ਦ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਪਰਗ੍ਰਿਹੰ ਜਦਿ ਬਿਧਿ ਆਚਰਣੰ ॥

ਤਜਿ ਸਕਲ ਦੁਗ੍ਰਿਹਤ ਦੁਰਮਤੀ ਭਜੁ ਚਕ੍ਰਧਰ ਸਰਣੰ ॥

ਅੰਗ-526

**Whoever wishes good deeds to perform,
Must discard looking with avarice and eyes full of lust;
Must also discard all evil-doing and evil-thinking,
And seek shelter with the Lord of the Disc.** Pg-526

A person of good conduct for his obedience to Gurbani, fully realises that he is to show full respect for every woman, and not to cast on any a lewd glance; for whosoever indulges in such wrong doing even in a clandestine manner, can't escape the eye of God and meets with ignominy and shame.

ਦੇਇ ਕਿਵਾੜ ਅਨਿਕ ਪੜਦੇ ਮਹਿ ਪਰ ਦਾਰਾ ਸੰਗਿ ਫਾਕੈ ॥

ਚਿਤ੍ਰੁ ਗੁਪਤੁ ਜਬ ਲੇਖਾ ਮਾਗਹਿ ਤਬ ਕਉਣੁ ਪੜਦਾ ਤੇਰਾ ਢਾਕੈ ॥ ਅੰਗ-616

**Behind closed door and numerous screens
man with another's woman has indulgence.**

**When the celestial Reckoners call thy reckoning,
Who then shall give thee cover?**

Pg-616

The man who abstains from the use of other women and shuns others' wealth, is most agreeable to God. God resides in every limb and pore of such a being:

ਪਰ ਧਨ ਪਰ ਦਾਰਾ ਪਰਹਰੀ (ਤਿਆਗੀ)

ਤਾ ਕੈ ਨਿਕਟਿ ਬਸੈ ਨਰਹਰੀ (ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ) ॥

ਅੰਗ-1163

**Who ever has discarded others' wealth
and others' woman folk,**

The Lord Puissant by his side abides.

Pg-1163

The men of upright conduct do not resort to any drugs, as they know that drugs and intoxicants cause all sorts of maladies in life. In this context Gurbani gives explicit advice :

ਜਿਤੁ ਪੀਤੈ ਮਤਿ ਦੂਰਿ ਹੋਇ ਬਰਲੁ ਪਵੈ ਵਿਚਿ ਆਇ ॥
ਆਪਣਾ ਪਰਾਇਆ ਨ ਪਛਾਣਈ ਖਸਮਹੁ ਧਕੇ ਖਾਇ ॥
ਜਿਤੁ ਪੀਤੈ ਖਸਮੁ ਵਿਸਰੈ ਦਰਗਹ ਮਿਲੈ ਸਜਾਇ ॥
ਬੁਠਾ ਮਦੁ ਮੂਲਿ ਨ ਪੀਚਈ ਜੇ ਕਾ ਪਾਰਿ ਵਸਾਇ ॥

ਅੰਗ-554

**One brought in a flask full of wine.
Another a cup filled with that,
drinking of which takes away sense,
And dementia results.
Man then distinguishes not between what is
right and what wrong.
And so from the Lord is pushed away.
Its drinking, of the Lord makes one forgetful,
And at the Divine Portal brings chastisement.
As far as lies in your power
drink not this false wine.**

Pg-554

A good person is he who follows the precepts of the true Preceptor and thus adds virtues to his life:

ਮੇਰੇ ਮਨ ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਸਿਖ ਸੁਣੀਜੈ ॥

ਹਰਿ ਕਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਸਦਾ ਸੁਖਦਾਤਾ ਸਹਜੇ ਹਰਿ ਰਸੁ ਪੀਜੈ ॥

ਅੰਗ-1334

**My self ! to the Master's teaching be attentive.
From the Lord's Name comes joy everlasting:
By this spontaneously quaff joy in the Lord.** Pg-1334

Gurbani persuades everyone to earn his living with the sweat of his brow. An ill-gotten wealth for a Hindu is as forbidden as the blood of a cow and for a Mohammedan as foul, impious as the flesh of a pig. As for the Sikh, the life of high morality and up right conduct is the beauty of his existence. The true Guru has created a Sikh for the realisation of high and immaculate aims and objectives. He is a friendly hero in the eyes of the world, the saintly soldier of the Timeless One, a man exempt from the meshes of transmigration. He is the one whose hands ever remain engaged in honest doings and heart absorbed in his Creator. He is passionately inclined in doing good, virtuous deeds, even though he may lose his life in the attempt. He is pledged to seek and accomplish the well-being of all and heroically and

vibrantly pursue the greatest happiness of the greatest number in the world. He is a treasure of devoted service and divine remembrance; a defender and saviour of his country and nation, ever-ready to make sacrifices and is a fervent protagonist of friendship, happiness and peace in the world. The path of an aspirant who has based his life on Gurbani, is not just a narrow pathway, but is a broadway. Being tinged in the tinge of Gurbani, he develops his respectable identity, distinction and a special reputation. He has a proud and glorious heritage filled with splendid traditions and practices, proved by the Gurus. A Sikh of the Guru is contented with his spirit of contentment. Despite getting his limbs chopped off and his body sawn in twain, he bows his head in reverence before the will Divine without bringing any word of complaint on his lips. Every one who has explored the motives of life of such a Sikh of the Preceptor, and carefully examined the acts of martyrdom found written in the letters of gold on the pages of history, has instantly uttered words of appreciation and praise for the high morality, capacity for hard toil and all-round endeavour of the Sikhs.

Qazi Noor Mohammed, an historian, who accompanied invader Ahmed Shah Abdali, when saw with his own eyes the virtues and valours of the Sikhs, could not help writing that Sikhs are the lions of the battlefield. They possess unmatched high sense of morality and character, they have not learnt how to steal. While following in the foot steps of their preceptors, they readily and cheerfully provide help to every person in his need; they never attack the run aways, old people, women and children; never malign the honour of a woman rather show full regard for her and out of respect, call her *buddhi* (an old respectable lady) and treat her like a mother. In battlefield they may be as brave as lions but in peace times none is more generous and server than them. (ref the book '*Sikhi Mahan*', of this writer, 16th edition, page 48-52)

Historian Kenneth Marcus while dwelling on the traits of the character of the Sikhs and their mode of living, writes that

the Sikhs while pursuing the path laid down by their preceptors, are most faithful in the whole world. They are observant of discipline, and are of loving disposition. Gurbani has taught and made them such.

ਆਪਿ ਤਰਿਆ ਕੁਟੰਬ ਸਭਿ ਤਾਰੇ ॥ ਸਭਾ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਛਡਾਵੈ ॥ ਅੰਗ-960

**Such a man saves himself and
his whole family,**

And to all creation liberation brings, Pg-960

While leading their life according to the teachings of Gurbani, the Sikhs elevated their character to such a great height that the British commander General Broadwood was obliged to write about the Sikhs that he had not the least hesitation to place his wife and his young daughter under the guard of a Sikh soldier for he knows fully well that they would be absolutely safe and secure in the hands of a Sikh soldier (Reference *Gurmat Parkash*, SGPC monthly Magazine, February 1997).

There are countless such hymns in Gurbani as fully guide a person on every aspect of life and any person, whatever is his creed, can benefit from these. Some such couplets are given below.

ABOUT FOOD

ਬਾਬਾ ਹੋਰੁ ਖਾਣਾ ਖੁਸੀ ਖੁਆਰੁ ॥

ਜਿਤੁ ਖਾਯੈ ਤਨੁ ਪੀੜੀਐ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਚਲਹਿ ਵਿਕਾਰੁ ॥ ਅੰਗ-16

**Friend ! to taste of other than these
is to ruin bliss—**

**Such gourmandizing as produces torment to the body,
And fills with foul thinking, the mind.** Pg-16

ABOUT HONESTY

ਜੇ ਰਤੁ ਲਗੈ ਕਪੜੈ ਜਾਮਾ ਹੋਇ ਪਲੀਤੁ ॥

ਜੇ ਰਤੁ ਪੀਵਹਿ ਮਾਣਸਾ ਤਿਨ ਕਿਉ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਚੀਤੁ ॥ ਅੰਗ-140

**Should cloth be reckoned impure if blood-stained,
How may minds of such be deemed pure,
As blood of mankind suck?**

Pg-140

Guru Granth Sahib therefore exhorts everyone to remain honest

in every situation of life. It is written in history that when Ahmed Shah Abdali demolished Harmandar Sahib and converted it into debris, the Sikhs began their efforts to raise it again to the same splendid position. Nine *lac* rupees were collected (including rupees one *lac* of Bhai Desa the resident of village Sur Singh). It was decided that Bhai Desa should take the reconstruction work in his own hands and complete the construction of Harmandar Sahib under his personal supervision. One day his wife told him that there was a crack in a wall at home, if he permits, she would pick up a handful of lime and mortar from the material being used for the construction of Harmandar and fill that crack. Bhai Das Raj Desa flew into rage to hear it and asked how did she dare think like that. Gurbani condemns dishonesty and such pilfering and she was showing greed for using mortar belonging to the Harmandar Sahib in her own house? The wife tendered her apology. At it, Bhai Sahib said, 'You should grind the lime to the whole day long for a full month and thus make penitence for this sin'. The wife did as he had directed. Such is the example of honesty which is preached by Gurbani. How far are we acting according to the teachings of Gurbani, to-day, we all know about it. The above example certainly draws our attention towards the situations we are facing in religious places here and there. Indeed, our well-being lies in obeying the dictates of Gurbani in a practical manner.

APPRECIATION FOR OTHERS' ASPIRATIONS

ਇਕੁ ਫਿਕਾ ਨ ਗਾਲਾਇ ਸਭਨਾ ਮੈ ਸਚਾ ਧਣੀ (ਮਾਲਕ)॥

ਗਿਆਉ (ਗਿਰਦਾ) ਨ ਕੈਗੀ ਠਾਹਿ (ਤੋੜੇ) ਮਾਣਕ ਸਭ ਅਮੋਲਵੇ ॥ ਅੰਗ-1384

**Speak never a rude word to any—
the Lord Eternal in all abides:**

**Break no heart—know, each being is a priceless jewel,
Each heart is a jewel ; evil it is to break any. Pg-1384**

TO LAY DOWN LIFE IN DEFENCE OF FAITH

ਸੁਰਾ ਸੋ ਪਹਿਚਾਨੀਐ ਜੁ ਲਰੈ ਦੀਨ ਕੇ ਹੇਤ ॥

ਪੁਰਜਾ ਪੁਰਜਾ ਕਟਿ ਮਰੈ ਕਬਹੂ ਨ ਛਾਡੈ ਖੇਤੁ ॥

ਅੰਗ-1105

**True hero is one, who fights in defence of the faith;
Is cut limb after limb, and flees not the field. Pg-1105**

REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE OF TRUTHFULNESS

ਆਵਣੁ ਜਾਣੁ ਨ ਸੁਝਈ ਭੀੜੀ ਗਲੀ ਫਹੀ ॥

ਕੂੜ ਨਿਖੁਟੇ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਓੜਕਿ ਸਚਿ ਰਹੀ ॥

ਅੰਗ-953

**And trapped in blind alley,
they will know not the exit thereof.**

Saith Nanak: Falsehood must be destroyed;

Truth in the end shall prevail,

Pg-953

Gurbani gives message of righteousness and truthfulness and urges us to pursue it in practice. It begins with truth and ends in truth. Ultimately the truth prevails.

ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ, ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ, ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ, ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ।

ਅੰਗ-1

He was true in the beginning prior to all ages;

He is true even to-day,

Saith Nanak: He would be True ever in the future.

Pg-1

EULOGY OF CONGREGATION

1. ਕਾਮ ਕ੍ਰੋਧ ਲੋਭ ਮਦ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਸਾਧਸੰਗਿ ਮਿਟਿਆ ਅਭਿਮਾਨ ॥ ਅੰਗ-1151

In holy company are effaced lust, wrath,

intoxication of avarice, calumny and pride. Pg-1151

2. ਸਤ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਕੀ ਧੂਰਿ ਪਰੀ ਉਡਿ ਨੇੜੀ

ਸਭ ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਮੈਲੁ ਗਵਾਈ ॥

ਅੰਗ-1263

As flying dust of the holy concourse into our eyes fell,

Shed is all our impurity of foul understanding. Pg-1263

THE FRUIT OF CONTENTMENT

ਅਨਿਕ ਭੋਗ ਬਿਖਿਆ ਕੇ ਕਰੈ ॥ ਨਹ ਤ੍ਰਿਪਤਾਵੈ ਖਪਿ ਖਪਿ ਮਰੈ ॥

ਬਿਨਾ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਨਹੀ ਕੋਊ ਰਾਜੈ ॥ ਸੁਪਨ ਮਨੋਰਥ ਬਿਥੇ ਸਭ ਕਾਜੈ ॥ ਅੰਗ-279

Should man enjoy in numerable poison-delights,

He still is unsatisfied, and after these dies hankering.

In contentment alone lies satisfaction—

All other actions are worthless as resolves
and actions in dream.

Pg-279

ON AVOIDING IRRELEVANCIES

ਫਰੀਦਾ ਜਿਨ੍ਹੀ ਕੰਮੀ ਨਾਹਿ ਗੁਣ ਤੇ ਕੰਮੜੇ ਵਿਸਾਰਿ ॥

ਮਤੁ ਸਰਮਿੰਦਾ ਬੀਵਹੀ (ਹੋਵੇਂ) ਸਾਂਈ ਦੇ ਦਰਬਾਰਿ ॥

ਅੰਗ-1381

Farid ! give up what brings thee no merit,

Lest thou be disgraced at the Court Divine.

Pg-1381

CONDEMNATION OF CASTE SYSTEM

(1) ਖੜੀ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਸੂਦ ਵੈਸ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ਚਹੁ ਵਰਨਾ ਕਉ ਸਾਝਾ ॥

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪੈ ਉਧਰੈ ਸੋ

ਕਲਿ ਮਹਿ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਮਾਝਾ ॥

ਅੰਗ-747/48

One common spiritual message for Khattris, Brahmins,
Shudras and Vaishyas is meant.

Liberation shall be whoever by the Master's guidance
the holy Name utters;

That, Saith Nanak, in *Kali Yuga* in each being

he realises as pervasive,

Pg-747/48

(2) ਅਗੈ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਜੋਰੁ ਹੈ ਅਗੈ ਜੀਉ ਨਵੈ ॥

ਜਿਨ੍ਹ ਕੀ ਲੇਖੈ ਪਤਿ ਪਵੈ ਚੰਗੇ ਸੇਈ ਕੇਇ ॥

ਅੰਗ-469

In the hereafter is valued neither caste nor power—

There a new species of creation abides:

Only those whose devotion in God's reckoning
is entered,

Shall be considered pure. (good or holy)

Pg-469

(3) ਜਾਤਿ ਕਾ ਗਰਬੁ ਨ ਕਰਿ ਮੂਰਖ ਗਵਾਰਾ ॥

ਇਸੁ ਗਰਬ ਤੇ ਚਲਹਿ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਵਿਕਾਰਾ ॥

ਅੰਗ-1128

Thou ignorant fool, entertain not pride of caste !

By such pride manifold mischiefs arise.

Pg-1128

Those who divide mankind and segregate the people from one another on the basis of caste-system, create disturbance in the laws of God and so, are not his true devotees, true worshippers and even lovers of the Divine Lord God. The

Timeless One doesn't approve of separation or disruption; He doesn't recognise any distance; He believes only in love and appreciates selfless service. If a divine votary of the so-called low caste loves God from the core of his heart, God's eye of grace certainly falls on him and he attains a high rank of honour.

ਨੀਚ ਜਾਤਿ ਹਰਿ ਜਪਤਿਆ ਉਤਮ ਪਦਵੀ ਪਾਇ॥

ਅੰਗ-733

**One of low caste, by contemplation of God,
high state obtains.**

Pg-733

UPLIFTMENT OF SOCIETY AND ITS POWERFULNESS

The revered preceptor was fully aware that the proper place to live in for a worldly person is not the forests and wildernesses but a strong and well-organised society because by dwelling therein, a person becomes a good social being and can lead his life in a right, meaningful manner. For the creation of such a strong and well-organised society, the sense of unity and equality is indispensable, so as no one develops an inferiority complex and lags behind others. There are countless verses and injunctions in Gurbani which express and foster this sense of unity and equality in various ways. It has been said that God Almighty first created light, next created all inmates with His power and strength. When the whole world is manifested from one light, who then is good and who is bad or inferior ?

ਅਵਲਿ ਅਲਹ ਨੂਰੁ ਉਪਾਇਆ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਕੇ ਸਭ ਬੰਦੇ॥

ਏਕ ਨੂਰ ਤੇ ਸਭੁ ਜਗੁ ਉਪਜਿਆ ਕਉਨ ਭਲੇ ਕੋ ਮੰਦੇ॥

ਅੰਗ-1349

**God-first created Light; all else to His might subject.
Since from one Light is the whole world created—
who is noble, who inferior?**

Pg-1349

The whole world (creation) has been created by the Potter-like God with the clay of the same quality, therefore, all these animate 'pots' are alike and none of them is fine and superior and none is of medium, inferior or low quality.

ਮਾਟੀ ਏਕ ਸਗਲ ਸੰਸਾਰਾ॥ ਬਹੁ ਬਿਧਿ ਭਾਂਡੇ ਘੜੈ ਕੁਮਾਰਾ॥

ਅੰਗ-1128

The whole universe from the same clay has appeared:

**The Potter however, in numerous forms
makes the vessels.**

Pg-1128

Further confirming this sense of social equality, the contributors of God bestowed-Gurbani, propagated this conception through the hymns of Guru Granth Sahib that all constituents of the society are equal and the conception of inequality is simply ridiculous and unnecessary:

ਜੋ ਤੂੰ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣੀ ਜਾਇਆ ॥

ਤਉ ਆਨ ਬਾਟ (ਰਸਤੇ) ਕਾਚੇ ਨਹੀ ਆਇਆ ॥

ਅੰਗ-324

**If thou dost claim to be a Brahmin by thy birth
from a Brahmin woman,**

Why was thy birth not from a different source? Pg-324

How satirically and mockingly the concept of human inequality based on birth alone has been discarded. Gurbani says, 'O man, if simply by taking birth from the womb of a Brahmin woman one considers oneself higher than other people, then instead of making use of the womb some other way should have been used, because birth from womb is the universal method for all'. Carrying on the argument, the Gurbani says further 'How are you alone a Brahmin and all others Sudras and inferior to you, when the same blood flows in your veins that flows in ours, milk doesn't flow in your veins nor water in ours.

ਤੁਮ ਕਤ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਹਮ ਕਤ ਸੂਦ ॥

ਹਮ ਕਤ ਲੋਹੂ ਤੁਮ ਕਤ ਦੂਧ ॥

ਅੰਗ-324

**How are you Brahmins and we Sudras?
How were we made of mere blood
and you of milk?**

Pg-324

Gurbani regards the followers of other religions as equal and feels pleased to preach equality among them.

ਹਿੰਦੂ ਤੁਰਕ ਦੁਹੂੰ ਮਹਿ ਏਕੈ ਕਰੈ ਕਬੀਰ ਪੁਕਾਰੀ ॥

ਅੰਗ-483

**Thus proclaims Kabir; In Hindus and
Muslims abide one Sole God.**

Pg-483

This might be considered true of the present day society but

in the medieval times the members of the ruling class considered themselves quite superior to the members of other classes, and took pride in depriving them of several rights. During the Mughal rule they had issued orders that no non-Muslim citizen could ride on a horse and carry any weapon nor could he claim any equality in matters of worship. Sikh religious preceptors and Gurbani did not pay any heed to such impious orders and firmly awakened in the human brotherhood the consciousness of human equality; and at the time of the creation of the Khalsa, the great Preceptor Guru Gobind Singh liberated his Khalsa of all restraints and tinged his Sikh into the Khalsa hue, where, at every step the beauty of co-existence, equality, freedom and broad-mindedness displayed itself. **'Remember, all humans belong to the same class.'** Making this point more clear and explicit, Gurbani lays down the Divine commandment as follows:

ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਹੈ ਸੋਇ ॥

ਤਿਸ ਦੈ ਚਾਨਣਿ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਹੋਇ ॥

ਅੰਗ-13

**In all creation shines Thy effulgence—
Thou who art light.**

In Thy light shines all that exists.

Pg-13

In such Gurbani-lighted-ideal society, which predominantly is based on the principles of human equality; a person is expected to make an honest earning and therewith support himself and also lay by something for the needies and the helpless in order to create a worryless society in which healthiness flourishes and reigns supreme. Worry incapacitates a person in his physical, material, social and spiritual pursuits and renders the society afflicted and weak. The affluent people are most seriously caught in the grip of this unnecessary tension.

ਵਡੇ ਵਡੇ ਜੋ ਦੀਸਹਿ ਲੋਗ ॥ ਤਿਨ ਕਉ ਬਿਆਪੈ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਰੋਗ ॥ ਅੰਗ-188

**People that appear to be so important,
Are all by malady of anxiety, gripped.**

Pg-188

To get rid of this worry, a seeker ought to realise that all lies

in the hands of the Creator, then why to worry?

ਹਰਿ ਬਿਨੁ ਕੋਈ ਮਾਰਿ ਜੀਵਾਲਿ ਨ ਸਕੈ
ਮਨ ਹੋਇ ਨਿਚਿੰਦ ਨਿਸਲੁ ਹੋਇ ਰਹੀਐ ॥

ਅੰਗ-594

**None but the Lord has power
to bring death or grant life—**

My self! free thyself therefore, from all anxiety. Pg-594

Therefore, O man, to lead a decent social life '**Shake off all worries and become worryless; moreover, lie at the feet divine, says Nanak**'. By seeking shelter in God alone, one can only get rid of worries.

ਨਾ ਕਰਿ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਹੈ ਕਰਤੇ ॥
ਹਰਿ ਦੇਵੈ ਜਲਿ ਥਲਿ ਜੰਤਾ ਸਭਤੇ ॥

ਅੰਗ-1070

**Bear no anxiety— to the Creator belongs
all our anxiety.**

**For all creatures in water and on land,
provision He makes.**

Pg-1070

Those who are dyed in the tinge divine, overcome all their worries and thus, can make laudable contribution in forming a strong, vibrant society.

ਬਿਸਰੀ ਚਿੰਤ ਨਾਮਿ ਰੰਗੁ ਲਾਗਾ ॥

ਅੰਗ-1148

**As love for the Name is formed,
gone is anxiety.**

Pg-1148

THE LABORIOUS SOCIETY IS AN INDUSTRIOUS SOCIETY

All those holymen whose hymns find place in Guru Granth Sahib were the men who pursued some callings. Guru Nanak Dev has given a prominent place to work. It is through hard work or industry that the wheel of economy moves forward smoothly and adds prosperity and dignity. Gurbani has linked even spirituality with the means of earning one's livelihood honestly and founded one's spiritual growth on one's honest earning. Honest earning is the basis of life for every votary of the Guru. No follower of Gurbani can live on begging. It has been severely condemned. Begging develops inferiority complex in a person,

kills his conscience, retards his progress and increases in him lassitude and creates in him a constant fear of insult or disgrace. The beggar is considered worse than dead.

ਜੇ ਘਰਿ ਘਰਿ ਹੰਢੈ ਮੰਗਦਾ ਧਿਗੁ ਜੀਵਣੁ ਧਿਗੁ ਵੇਸੁ ॥ ਅੰਗ-550

**Cursed in the life, cursed the garb of one
that wanders begging from door to door.** Pg-550

Gurbani condemns even those *yogis, pirs* and mendicants who live on begging because such people are a burden on the society and encourage indolence. They feel no shame in begging from door to door and this shamelessness accompanies them throughout the life. It, by any means, is not a respectable living. A Gurbani lover is always on the giving end and not at all at the receiving end. The man who wears ochre-coloured clothes and goes to the doors of the householders and shamelessly begs for alms, causes discomfort to the society, loses his respect and undermines the social structure by his shoddy behaviour.

ਮਨਹਠਿ ਜਿਸ ਤੇ ਮੰਗਣਾ ਲੈਣਾ ਦੁਖੁ ਮਨਾਇ ॥
ਇਸੁ ਭੇਖੈ ਬਾਵਹੁ ਗਿਰਹੋ (ਗਿ੍ਸਤੀ) ਭਲਾ ਜਿਬਹੁ ਕੋ ਵਰਸਾਇ ॥ ਅੰਗ-587

**To desire from stubborn egoism is to inflict suffering.
Better than the ascetic pose is the householder's life.
Wherein is practised charity.** Pg-587

Gurbani warns that such idlers that are a mere burden on society will have to answer for their conduct at the time of reckoning and face the consequences.

ਜੋਗੀ ਹੋਵਾ ਜਗਿ ਭਵਾ ਘਰਿ ਘਰਿ ਭੀਖਿਆ ਲੇਉ ॥
ਦਰਗਹ ਲੇਖਾ ਮੰਗੀਐ ਕਿਸੁ ਕਿਸੁ ਉਤਰੁ ਦੇਉ ॥ ਅੰਗ-1089

**Should I turn Yogi, wander the world over,
And beg alms at each door—
When at the Portal my reckoning is called,
What answer shall I make?** Pg-1089

Condemning this tendency of begging and to develop a healthy society, Gurbani allows no leniency at all for such a social evil.

These *faqirs*, mendicants, *yogis* must realise that he who has cordially linked and absorbed himself with God is a man of respect, a companion of the Timeless One; then how can he bear to live on disgraceful begging?

ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰਿ ਜੋ ਰਹੈ ਸਮਾਇ ॥ ਕਾਹੇ ਭੀਖਿਆ ਮੰਗਣਿ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਅੰਗ-953

Should man in the formless Supreme be absorbed

Why should he go about begging?

Pg-953

AN ENDEAVOUR TO RAISE A ROBUST SOCIETY

In Gurbani stress has been laid in the initiation and inculcation of virtues like tenderness, humbleness, good-will, and will to work. By dint of these virtues, the society becomes generous, benevolent and altruistic. In Gurbani impetus has also been laid on leading a fearless and self-respecting life so that no invader and marander with his atrocious misdeeds or violent and aggressive tendencies, damage the society. Guru Nanak Dev has given an explicit directive opposing this tendency vehemently.

ਜੇ ਜੀਵੈ ਪਤਿ ਲਬੀ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਸਭੁ ਹਰਾਮੁ ਜੇਤਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਖਾਇ ॥ ਅੰਗ-142

Such a one, if alive, in ignominy lives;

All his gains, illegitimate.

Pg-142

Gurbani provides right direction and gives useful counseling of 'live and let others live', in order to create a healthy society.

ਭੈ ਕਾਹੂ ਕਉ ਦੇਤ ਨਹਿ ਨਹਿ ਭੈ ਮਾਨਤ ਆਨ ॥

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨਿ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਤਾਹਿ ਬਖਾਨਿ ॥

ਅੰਗ-1427

One that strikes not terror in others,

Nor of others stands in fear—

Saith Nanak : Listen my self,

Know such a one to be liberated,

Pg-1427

To give this thought further strength and to safe-guard the social structure from the whirl winds of barbarities and injustice, Guru Gobind Singh has also given his Sikhs a guideline that when

for the preservation of one's rights and justice all other means and resources fail, then it is quite reasonable and just to lay one's hand upon the hilt of the sword:

ਚੂੰ ਕਾਰ ਅਜ਼ ਹਮਾ ਹੀਲਤੇ ਦਰ ਗੁਜ਼ਸ਼ਤ ॥
ਹਲਾਲ ਅਸਤ ਬੁਰਦਨ ਬ-ਸ਼ਮਸ਼ੀਰ ਦਸਤ ॥ ਜ਼ਫ਼ਰਨਾਮਾ-ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ

**When an affair is past beyond all other means,
It is just and righteous to draw the sword. 10th Guru**

It was by virtue of this bold message that the Sikhs of the Guru made the Indian society and culture very strong and by breaking asunder the chains of slavery, set the country on the path of freedom and thus bestowed upon her a unique honour. Before the creation of Khalsa, the Non-Muslim Indians who constantly lived in dread were openly airing their timidness. Their plight was as is given in the following couplet.

ਹਮ ਤੋਂ ਤੋਲਨ ਜਾਨਤ ਤਕੜੀ, ਨੰਗੀ ਕਰਦ ਕਭੀ ਨਾ ਪਕੜੀ।
ਚਿੜੀ ਉੜੇ ਤੋਂ ਹਮ ਡਰ ਜਾਏਂ, ਮੁਗਲੋਂ ਸੇ ਕੈਸੇ ਲੜ ਪਾਏਂ।

***we only know how to wield a scale;
have never handled a naked blade of a dagger
If even a sparrow flutters, we feel scared.
How can we fight against the mighty Mughals?***

Now after sipping the nectar of Guru Gobind Singh's double edged sword, the same Indians became so strong and robust that a single Sikh became bold enough to test the steel of over a lac of Mughal troops. These very brave sons of the Guru hard pressed the foreign maranders to the extent that despot like Nadir Shah was compelled to admit that the Sikhs had an inexhaustible capacity to fight for their honour, valour and rights. Their unique and unparalleled magnanimity and valour smack of regality in them and the day is not far off, when by dint of their strength of the muscles, and their multidimensional heroism, they would snatch from them their country. Admiring the Sikhs' social, ethical and moral virtues, Arnold Toynbee is pleased to call them most powerful, traditional people. But despite all

this the man who moves about in a society based on Gurbani is exempt from ego. He, by virtue of the preachings of Gurbani, quite earnestly endeavours to convert this egotistic society into an unegoistic one. In other words such a man is a godly person and the favourite Sikh of his preceptor. He follows his Guru's words and puts them into practice faithfully. He boldly rejects all doubts and suspicions and remains lost wholly and solely in the service of the Holy.

Despite possessing limitless energy and dynamism, a Sikh of the Guru is the source of strength for the weak, the helpless, and the shelterless and is ever prepared to solve any problem of the needy people because he is the true server of humanity. Being guided by Gurbani-based-thoughtful approach, he traces out greed and avarice, hauteur and vanity and reduces them to ashes. He keeps his heart cool while moving about in this materialistic world and makes an honest and pious earnings. He remains immune from the allurements of the phenomenal world and its unwanted grasp. Reposing his trust in the message divine, he discharges his mundane duties quite sincerely. He never grudges in obeying the Will Divine, for he is duty-bound to be a faithful votary of his preceptor. The words of such a faithful follower of the preceptor are true, weighty and pious, his dealings righteous, his mind tranquil and his soul's inclination soaked in the bliss of the Holy *Naam*. On account of these virtues, he is free from the agony of death in the end.

ਦਿਨੁ ਬਿਧਿ ਪਾਸਾ ਢਾਲਹੁ (ਸ਼ਤਰੰਜ ਖੇਡੋ) ਬੀਰ ॥

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਹੁ ਦਿਨੁ ਰਾਤੀ ਅੰਤ ਕਾਲਿ ਨਹ ਲਾਗੈ ਪੀਰ ॥ ਅੰਗ-1185

**And by the Master's guidance spread the dice-cloth,
Brother, thus make your throw.**

**Day and night by the Master's guidance
the holy, Name utter;**

**Thereby in the last moment
shall you feel no torment.**

Pg-1185

In the Sikh society countless Sikhs have flourished of *Gurmukh*

calibre. They, by dint of their industry, deeds, pledges and sacrifices have fully concretised the virtues and symbols of true *gurmukhs* and thus making their contribution to the process of transformation of an ideal society, have lent this earth the grace and dignity of a paradisiac world in which all humans are equal, where none is superior and none inferior, and none occupies the third rank status. Gurbani envisages a society in which salvation is attained while being alive.

STATUS OF WOMEN ACCORDING TO GURBANI

According to Gurbani only God has not taken His birth from the womb of a woman, otherwise all other hustles and bustles of the world, its growth and progress, adornment and gaiety, owe their existence mainly to the spirit of renunciation, sacrifices and kindnesses of womanfolk.

ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੀ ਭੰਡੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਝੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਏਕੋ ਸਚਾ ਸੋਇ ॥

ਅੰਗ-473

**From woman is born woman,
no human being without woman is born.**

Saith Nanak: The holy Eternal alone

with woman can dispense.

Pg-473

But if we cast a glance at the world history, we find deep scars of cruelties and barbarities perpetrated against women. It was Guru Nanak Dev who first of all raised his voice in his *bani* for the melioration of woman—the mother of mankind, who unfortunately had been trampled under the feet and discarded for centuries. He admonished manhood for talking ill of women, exploiting, insulting and condemning them for his selfish motives and aggrandisement. Men have proved selfish to the extent that they did not mind trivializing the stark reality that women gave birth to them, brought them up and kept them growing and flourishing. Women as per their tender nature, relinquished all their pleasures for the well-being of menfolk. To utter indecorous

words and express unpleasant sentiments against such a goddess-like woman is sheer ungratefulness. Whole of the visible and invisible activity of this world cannot move even for a moment without the assistance of the women. If we go in molesting the woman-folk, and indulge in the evil-practice of female foeticide, we shall go to rock and before long the human species will be exterminated. A woman who gives birth to kings and emperors, brave heroes and exalted saints is worthy of our respect and homage and not tortures, insults and barbarities.

ਭੰਡਿ ਜੰਮੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਨਿੰਮੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਮੰਗਣੁ ਵੀਆਹੁ ॥

ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਭੰਡਹੁ ਚਲੈ ਰਾਹੁ ॥

ਭੰਡੁ ਮੁਆ ਭੰਡੁ ਭਾਲੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਬੰਧਾਨੁ ॥

ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨੁ ॥

ਅੰਗ-473

**From woman is man born, inside her he is conceived;
To woman is man engaged, and woman he marries.**

With woman is man's companionship.

From women originate new generations.

Should woman die, is another sought;

By woman's help is man kept in restraint.

Why revile her of whom are born

great ones (kings) of the earth?

Pg-473

It is usually seen that the family in which there are four or five sons and no daughter, is generally considered a rough family, because of the absence of a girl, but if in that house there is a daughter also, then the same dwelling will become cultured and civilised, regulated by the code of conduct. Therefore, the presence of a girl in a family is a symbol of etiquettes; it will lend dignity to the family and confirm its noble conventions and practices.

Because of the caste-system and other social abuses, the Indian woman could not enjoy equality in society; the range of her freedom was also quite narrow and limited to the four walls of the house. In case her husband passed away, she, too, had to reduce herself to ashes by performing the practice

of 'Suttee' on his funeral pyre even against her will. If she was to go out of the home, she had to cover her whole self most cautiously and even go about in veil. Gurbani vehemently opposed these excesses and labelled these cruel practices as great injustice against women. Gurbani also explained the true meaning of 'sutteehood' in the following words:

ਸਤੀਆ ਏਹਿ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਨਿ ਜੋ ਮੜਿਆ ਲਗਿ ਜਲੰਨਿ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤੀਆ ਜਾਣੀਅਨਿ ਜਿ ਬਿਰਹੇ ਚੋਟ ਮਰੰਨਿ ॥

ਭੀ ਸੋ ਸਤੀਆ ਜਾਣੀਅਨਿ ਸੀਲ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਰਹੰਨਿ ॥

ਸੇਵਨਿ ਸਾਈ ਆਪਣਾ ਨਿਤ ਉਠਿ ਸੰਮ੍ਰਾਲੰਨਿ ॥

ਅੰਗ-787

Not those are the true *suttees* that perish on their husbands' funeral pyres:

Saith Nanak: Those are true *suttees* who suffer agony of separation.

Such too, are known as *suttees* as pass life in noble conduct and content,

Serve their lord and rising each day, remember him.

Pg-787

The liberal sense of this Gurbani *shabad* is something like this: the '*Suttees*' should not be considered those ladies who die along with their dead husbands and reduce themselves to ashes along with their corpses but are the women who languish in the sweet remembrance of their deceased partners, and lead a life of fortitude after their death and look after their families keeping in view the tragedy as a divinely willed occurrence and ever keep the Timeless One in their minds. If under the impact of prevalent social customs and practices, some women indulge to preform '*suttee*', these are condemned in Gurbani in the strong words. It negates their action as totally baseless and worse than suicide, and it has been observed in explicit words that these women should not suppose that they are doing a pious deed but because of this suicidal act, they would remain involved in the process of transmigration for long and take birth after birth as a matter of punishment.

ਦੇਖਾ ਦੇਖੀ ਮਨ ਹਠਿ ਜਲਿ ਜਾਈਐ ॥
ਪ੍ਰਿਅ ਸੰਗੁ ਨ ਪਾਵੈ ਬਹੁ ਜੋਨਿ ਭਵਾਈਐ ॥

ਅੰਗ-185

**The woman, that to keep a convention,
by stubbornness of will burns herself,
Finds no union with her beloved husband;
In numerous births she whirls about.**

Pg-185

Alongwith condemning the practice of *suttee*, the third Preceptor, Guru Amar Dass keeping in view the respectable living of women, started the practice of their second marriage after the death of their spouses, and brought into vogue, the ceremony of 'Anand Karja' 'a blissful marriage'. The idea of second marriage was to provide to such widowed women another opportunity to lead a respectable life by marrying again and making a valuable contribution in shaping a healthy and strong society. **Gurbani bestows upon a married woman the most respectable position in society and in her own family and in this context it advises that those married men and women, who, after their marriage, only sit together or live together under the one roof, cannot be called wedded couples in the real sense, unless they become one soul in two frames.** Gurbani advocates and appreciates only such type of lofty and pious conjugal relationship.

ਧਨ (ਪਤਨੀ) ਪਿਰੁ ਏਹਿ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਨਿ ਬਹਨਿ ਇਕਠੇ ਹੋਇ ॥
ਏਕ ਜੋਤਿ ਦੁਇ ਮੂਰਤੀ ਧਨ ਪਿਰੁ ਕਹੀਐ ਸੋਇ ॥

ਅੰਗ-788

**Not those be the true wedded couples
that with each other consort;
Truly wedded are those that in two frames,
are as one light.**

Pg-788

This is the height of respect shown for a woman in the Sikh society which should be worthy of emulation by all others.

THE MESSAGE OF COEXISTENCE AND FRATERNITY

Gurbani considers all mankind the offspring of the same Timeless One. Therefore all humans though they may be cut off from one another by long distances and may be living in

quite remote corners from one another, are intimately related to one another. They all are the children of one Father, and the same Divine Being is enshrined in each heart and expresses Himself through it.

ਕਹੋ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਿ ਖੋਏ ਭਰਮ ॥ ਏਕੋ ਅਲਹੁ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ॥ ਅੰਗ-897

**Saith Nanak; the Master my illusion
has shattered;
Identical are Allah and Par-Brahm**

Pg-897

God resides in all, therefore, every individual is linked to the other by the ties of mutual cooperation and coexistence.

ਸਭੇ ਸਾਝੀਵਾਲ ਸਦਾਇਨਿ ਤੂੰ ਕਿਸੈ ਨ ਦਿਸਹਿ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਜੀਉ ॥ ਅੰਗ-97

**In Thee are all sharers;
to none dost Thou appear alien.**

Pg-97

In the presence of such a beautiful mode of thought, all divisions, human exploitations and aggressions seem highly unjustified. Gurbani seeks human goodness; and this may be achieved through any just means and any religious ideology. The votary of Gurbani will cheerfully accept it. His approach is as follows:

ਜਗਤੁ ਜਲੰਦਾ ਰਖਿ ਲੈ ਆਪਣੀ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਧਾਰਿ ॥

ਜਿਤੁ ਦੁਆਰੈ ਉਬਰੈ ਤਿਤੇ ਲੇਹੁ ਉਬਾਰਿ ॥

ਅੰਗ-853

**Save by Thy grace, the world in flames;
Save it at whatever portal it may be saved.**

Pg-853

The adherent of Gurbani regards all humans as his kith and kin and even if he prays for some relief or comfort, it is for all mankind and not for his individual self. The language of separation and selfishness he has not learnt at all.

ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਿ ਕੈ ਸੁਨਹੁ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਸਭ ਜਗ ਮਹਿ ਵਰਸੈ ਮੇਹੁ ॥

ਅੰਗ-652

Lord, listen in Thy grace:

May plentiful rain fall over the whole world.

Pg-652

Considering God as the Father of all, he admires His inexhaustible stores which are meant for all.

ਤੂੰ ਸਾਝਾ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਬਾਪੁ ਹਮਾਰਾ ॥ ਨਉ ਨਿਧਿ ਤੇਰੈ ਅਖੁਟ ਭੰਡਾਰਾ ॥ ਅੰਗ-97

Thou Lord of all, our father;

In Thy possession lie unending stores.

Pg-97

Led by this philanthropic approach, a votary of the Preceptors and Gurbani invokes divine blessings for all; he prays that all have financial security and ease, all have enough to eat and drink and none exploit others. If this thinking gains power in the world, the world can be made most beautiful and enjoyable place to live in.

ਸਭੇ ਜੀਅ ਸਮਾਲਿ (ਪ੍ਰਿਤਪਾਲਨਾ ਕਰ) ਅਪਣੀ ਮਿਹਰ ਕਰੁ ॥

ਅੰਨੁ ਪਾਣੀ ਮੁਚੁ ਉਪਾਇ ਦੁਖ ਦਾਲਦੁ ਭੰਨਿ (ਤੋੜ) ਤਰੁ ॥ ਅੰਗ-1251

Lord ! all beings pray cherish; show Thy grace.

**Let grain and water be in plenty; shattering
suffering and penury, save us.**

Pg-1251

In order to create this sense of universal well being, Gurbani lays stress on the virtues of forgiveness, mutual affection and a life based on righteousness. These are the virtues that can solve all problems in a healthy and cordial environment.

ਖਿਮਾ ਗਰੀ (ਗ੍ਰਹਿਣ ਕੀਤੀ) ਸਚੁ ਸੰਚਿਓ ਖਾਇਓ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁਨਾਮ ॥

ਖਰੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਭਈ ਅਨਦ ਸੁਖ ਬਿਸ੍ਰਾਮ ॥ ਅੰਗ-261

**Forgiveness of all have I adopted and garnered truth,
And the name ambrosial consumed.**

**By fullness of divine grace have I now found bliss,
joy and poise—**

Pg-261

How nicely is the method of co-existence propounded and mutual affection preached which if practised sincerely, allows no human distinctions, no territorial and national barriers, no religious or ritual discrepancies in fostering the spirit of humanism or universalism which Gurbani bestows upon us as a boon and thereby shows us the right path. This mutual love and affection is ever blissful.

ਖਾਵਹਿ ਖਰਚਹਿ ਰਲਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਭਾਈ ॥

ਤੋਟਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਵਧਦੋ ਜਾਈ ॥

ਅੰਗ-186

**Brother! this wealth let all consume and spend together
Decrease in it shall not occur;
ever shall it increase.**

Pg-186

Confirming this good-will and universal spirit, Guru Granth Sahib highlights the importance of seeking the good of all and wishing ill to none. A Gurbani lover does not contemplate evil of others. Not to speak of doing evil to others, such contemplation is not acceptable even in dreams. By following such a philanthropic policy, we get rid of all sufferings.

ਪਰ ਕਾ ਬੁਰਾ ਨ ਰਾਖਹੁ ਚੀਤ ॥ ਤੁਮ ਕਉ ਦੁਖੁ ਨਹੀਂ ਭਾਈ ਮੀਤ ॥ ਅੰਗ-386

Contemplate not evil of others.

Thus, brother, friend, shall no suffering. Pg-386

According to Gurbani, if some one even harms you, you should, in return, do him good and overlook his fault. Such broadmindedness brings purity and sheen in social dealings:

ਫਰੀਦਾ ਬੁਰੇ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ ਕਰਿ ਗੁਸਾ ਮਨਿ ਨ ਹਢਾਇ ॥

ਦੇਹੀ ਰੋਗੁ ਨ ਲਗਈ ਪਲੈ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਪਾਇ ॥

ਅੰਗ-1381

**Farid, return thou good for evil;
in thy heart bear no revenge.**

**Thus will thy body be free of all maladies,
And thy life have all blessings.**

Pg-1381

It is very hard to practise it, but not difficult for a Guru's Sikh, for he derives his support and succour from Gurbani which affectionately preaches friendliness and cordiality:

ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਮੀਤੁ ਹਮ ਆਪਨ ਕੀਨਾ ਹਮ ਸਭਨਾ ਕੇ ਸਾਜਨ ॥

ਅੰਗ-671

**All have we made our loving friends,
friend of all are we grown.**

Pg-671

A Guru's disciple who loves Gurbani has been taught that he is not to bear any animosity with a bad person but is only to oppose the evil in him, and after sublimating his enmity to clasp him to heart. The examples of Bhumia swindler and Kauda *rakshash* 'demon' are before us. The true Preceptor destroyed viciousness from them and then clasped them to his heart and gave them full love.

FORMATION OF A BROADMINDED PERSONALITY

Gurbani makes us liberal and broadminded. Our practice

of community kitchen (*langar*) sitting in a row (*pangat*) while taking our meal, and holding congregation (*sangat*) for worshipping is based on the concept of human equality, our 'Aarti' i.e. invocation to the Timeless One is as vast as heaven itself and every person and every thing can be included in it without discrimination. Our holy places are open to all and there is no scope for any partiality and discrimination for the visitors. Guru Granth Sahib, the preceptor of all mankind, reveals divine liberality, as it includes not only the hymns of six Sikh preceptors, but also the scriptures of fifteen *Bhaktas*, four selfless servers and followers of the Gurus, and eleven godly Bhattas. Of these fifteen *Bhagatas*, some are Hindus, some are Mohammedans, and some are holymen from other so-called high and low castes who hail from different parts of India and express their thoughts in their regional dialects. This vast diversity has been converted into sublime unity through the medium and blessings of Guru Granth Sahib so that every body, whatever be his creed or religious affiliation, is able to derive the maximum benefit out of it. This sacred '*Bani*' is the universal preceptor, a Word-Divine-Preceptor which in the true sense of the word is the path enlightener of all.

ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਬਾਣੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸਾਰੇ ॥
ਗੁਰੁ ਬਾਣੀ ਕਹੈ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਜਨੁ ਮਾਨੈ ਪਰਤਖਿ ਗੁਰੁ ਨਿਸਤਾਰੇ ॥ ਅੰਗ-982

**The Holy word is the true Master,
the Master's image the holy Word.
In the holy word is pervasive *amrita* (Nectar).
What the Master's Word teaches,
in that the devotee puts faith;
Thus manifestly the Master liberation grants. Pg-982**

INTER FAITH MESSAGE

Gurbani exhibits such a glorious far-sightedness in conveying its inter-faith message that every seeker gets true guidance and inspiration to pursue the right path. Sadhu Viswani

categorises Guru Granth Sahib as the **'World Scripture'** which **'rolled out, out of World Soul'**. After enjoying its universal message of well being of humanity, Arnold Toynbee suggested emphatically that **this Granth should be brought within the direct reach of as many people as possible**. Bitten Court goes a step further when he says that it gives a **'healing outlook on life.'** The interfaith message and approach of Guru Granth Sahib comes apparent when one feels that it breaks the geographical barriers and the barriers of fanaticism, prejudices and denounces the attitude of hostility and enmity among different religions, cultures and social setups and also does not tolerate and accept racial or regional discriminations and treats all as equal in the eyes of God as well as in the eyes of human beings. It awakens inter-religious understanding and strengthens it in many ways. It strongly pleads love with each other. Those who love God, hate none, but love everyone.

ਜੋ ਰਤੇ ਸਹਿ ਆਪਣੇ ਤਿਨ ਭਾਵੈ ਸਭ ਕੋਇ ॥

ਅੰਗ-557

**Those dyed in love of the Beloved,
for all creation, feel love.**

Pg-557

The tenets of Guru Granth Sahib propagate liberation of humanity from all avarices; social, political, religious and economic exploitations as well. To bring humanity closer to each other, the Holy Granth totally discards futile fundamental chauvinism and frivolous opportunism. According to it, mere ostantaneous ceremonies, theoretical doctrines, inapplicable theories have no religious bearings whatsoever and these simply retard the process of God realisation. **Gurbani categorises such useless approaches as 'impure thinkings'**. **The right path to realise God or attain salvation even while living a normal domestic life is to remember God, meditate on His true Name, indulge in virtuous deeds, noble actions, practise good conduct, toil honestly for genuine earnings and to perform familial and social obligations as a true householder and communicate with fellow beings to judge the**

realities of life more judiciously and dispassionately. It advises the followers of the various religions to live upto the spirit of their religions.

A TRUE MOHAMMEDAN

The Mohammedans that formed the ruling class in those days have also been given good counsels by Gurbani. It says that it is very difficult to be called a good Muslim, for true Muslim is he who shows an affectionate regard for the religion of the worshippers of God and scraps out his pride of wealth from his mind; becomes indifferent to the whims and caprices concerning life and death and keeps aloof from them. He ought to submit himself most faithfully to the Will Divine, meditate on Him and extend his sympathy, kindness and benevolence to all living beings:

ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਕਹਾਵਣੁ ਮੁਸਕਲੁ ਜਾ ਹੋਇ ਤਾ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ ॥
 ਅਵਲਿ ਅਉਲਿ (ਫਕੀਰ) ਦੀਨੁ ਕਰਿ ਮਿਠਾ
 ਮਸਕਲ ਮਾਨਾ ਮਾਲੁ ਮੁਸਾਵੈ (ਲੁਟਾ ਦੇਵੇ) ॥
 ਹੋਇ ਮੁਸਲਿਮੁ ਦੀਨ ਮੁਹਾਣੈ (ਆਗੂ) ਮਰਣ ਜੀਵਣ ਕਾ ਭਰਮੁ ਚੁਕਾਵੈ ॥
 ਰਬ ਕੀ ਰਜਾਇ ਮੰਨੇ ਸਿਰ ਉਪਰਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਮੰਨੇ ਆਪੁ ਗਵਾਵੈ ॥
 ਤਉ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਰਬ ਜੀਆ ਮਿਹਰੰਮਤਿ (ਦਇਆ ਕਰੇ)
 ਹੋਇ ਤ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ ॥

ਅੰਗ-141

**Hard it is to deserve the name of Mussalman—
 Only one truly so, may such be called.
 First, must he hold in love the way of the Holy;
 Like iron on grindstone
 should he cast off his possessions.
 In the way of the Preceptor should he have faith,
 And banish illusion of death and life.
 To the Lord's will should he be obedient:
 With faith in the Creator as compassionate
 he becomes.
 May he be called a Mussalman.**

Pg-141

Gurbani is dauntless enough to point out discrepancies or deviations in the accepted preachings of a particular religion

and it is in record that it suggested rectifications even to help the seeker to tread the path rightly and reach the goal of life. For the Muslims there are many more advices available which impress upon them to follow the code of conduct to live a chaste life as directed in their faith. Just note the following:

ਮਿਹਰ ਮਸੀਤਿ ਸਿਦਕੁ ਮੁਸਲਾ ਹਕੁ ਹਲਾਲੁ ਕੁਰਾਣੁ ॥

ਸਰਮ ਸੁਨੈਤਿ ਸੀਲੁ ਰੋਜਾ ਹੋਹੁ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ॥.....

ਅੰਗ-140

Make thy mosque, of compassion;

thy prayer-mat of the sincerity;

Koranic Scripture of honest and legitimate earning.

Be modesty thy circumcision,

noble conduct thy Ramdan fast—

Such a Mussalman shouldst thou be.....

Pg-140

In simple words it means that for a true Muslim his mosque is the element of mercy in him and sincerity of faith is his prayer mat sitting on which he offers his '*Namaz*' (prayer), regard for righteousness, justice and worthy intentions should be his sacred '*Quran*'; gentleness and goodness of heart should be his true '*Sunit*', i.e. circumcision and honest and righteous business dealings should be his sacred fasts, his '*rozas*'. His good deeds act for him as *Kaaba*, good actions his *Kalima* (prayer) and *Namaz*. He should make his rosary what pleases God. If any one puts all these characteristics into practice, he is definitely a Mohammedan in the real sense of the word whose honour before God is vindicated.

A GOOD HINDU

A good Hindu is also one who sheds off all false whims and superstitions and devotes himself to divine meditation. He should abstain performing futile rituals as a means of securing happiness and well-being and should worship God alone.

In '*Aasa di vaar*' there is a good advice about wearing the *janaeu* i.e. sacred thread. It contains counsels of highest order and a good Hindu ought to wear the sacred thread as

explained in Gurbani :

ਦਇਆ ਕਪਾਹ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਸੂਤੁ ਜਤੁ ਗੰਢੀ ਸਤੁ ਵਟੁ ॥
ਏਹੁ ਜਨੇਊ ਜੀਅ ਕਾ ਹਈ ਤ ਪਾਡੇ ਘਤੁ (ਪਾ ਲੈ) ॥
ਨਾ ਏਹੁ ਤੁਟੈ ਨ ਮਲੁ (ਮੈਲ) ਲਗੈ ਨਾ ਏਹੁ ਜਲੈ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥
ਧੰਨੁ ਸੁ ਮਾਣਸ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਜੋ ਗਲਿ ਚਲੇ ਪਾਇ ॥

ਅੰਗ-471

**Make compassion the cotton, contentment the yarn;
Continence the knot and purity the twist;
Such is the true sacred thread of the self.
Thou Brahmin priest ! put this on me, shouldst
thou have it.
This thread neither snaps nor is soiled;
Neither burnt nor lost.
Saith Nanak, blessed are the beings
that around their neck put it.**

Pg-471

When at Mecca Guru Nanak Dev was asked kindly to tell whether Hindus are better or the Mohammedans, then true preceptor observed in quite clear terms that without doing good deeds both would be worthless; they would rue and repent for not having done virtuous deeds.

AN ADVICE TO YOGIS AND PIRS

To those *Yogis* and mendicants who endeavour to realise God through *Yogic*, ascetical practices and move about naked with their bodies besmeared with ashes and shouting *Alakh ! alakh*, gurbani advises that '*Yog*' (asceticism) can't be achieved by wearing a mendicant's cloak or coffin or by holding a staff in the hand; it is not possible even by getting one's ears pierced for wearing big earrings nor by shearing off the hair. By blowing a trumpet or by making the pronouncement of '*Alakh! Alakh*, one can't take to the path divine; nor will begging from door to door for alms do; for all these are mere ostentations and are futile acts. On the other hand, if they can live in this phenomenal world like normal householders, going through all the joys and sorrows of life with equanimity and at the same time develop an attitude of absolute indifference towards pleasures and pains

of life, then it can be said that they have discovered the path leading to *Yoga*. Through mere verbal quibbles one can't attain *Yoga*. The true *Yogi* i.e. ascetic can be one who casts a loving, considerate glance at all without discrimination and bears bitterness or malice towards none. In this respect Gurbani states:

ਜੋਗੁ ਨਾ ਖਿੰਥਾ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਡੰਡੈ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਭਸਮ ਚੜਾਈਐ ॥
 ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਮੁੰਦੀ ਮੂੰਡਿ ਮੁਡਾਇਐ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਸਿੰਢੀ ਵਾਈਐ ॥
 ਅੰਜਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨਿ ਰਹੀਐ ਜੋਗੁ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਇਵ ਪਾਈਐ ॥
 ਗਲੀ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥
 ਏਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟਿ ਕਰਿ ਸਮਸਰਿ ਜਾਣੈ ਜੋਗੀ ਕਹੀਐ ਸੋਈ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
 ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਮੜੀ ਮਸਾਣੀ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਤਾੜੀ ਲਾਈਐ ॥
 ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਦੇਸਿ ਦਿਸੰਤਰਿ ਭਵਿਐ ਜੋਗੁ ਨ ਤੀਰਥਿ ਨਾਈਐ ॥
 ਅੰਜਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨਿ ਰਹੀਐ ਜੋਗੁ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਇਵ ਪਾਈਐ ॥

ਅੰਗ-730

**Yoga lies not in the patched quilt,
 not in carrying a staff;
 Yoga lies not in either rubbing ashes over the limbs;
 Yoga lies not in earrings,
 nor in close-cropping the head;
 Nor in blowing the horn.
 To abide undefiled amid Maya-defilement,
 Is the true way to attain success in Yoga-praxis.
 Yoga by mere chatter is not practised.
 To regard all alike with undifferentiating sight
 Entitles one a true Yogi to be called.
 Yoga lies not in frequenting wild places,
 tombs and cremation grounds.
 Nor in absorption in samadhi,
 Yoga lies not in wandering over lands and regions,
 nor in bathing at holy spots.
 To abide undefiled amid Maya-defilement
 Is the true way to attain success in Yoga-praxis.**

Pg-730

A COUNSEL FOR BRAHMINS

Among the four castes prevalent in India, the Brahmin is considered the most exalted class. The Brahmin performs

worship, and is regarded as a counsellor of kings or emperors. On the basis of this distinct position, he tries to keep all the three other castes under his authority and influence and dominates them all. It is considered that his actions are most pious. Gurbani does not accept such a Brahmanic authority and offers a challenge to it. According to Gurbani, if Brahmin is superior to all others, he should have taken birth in a different way, unlike the usual one. But it is not so.

ਜੋ ਤੂੰ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੁ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੀ ਜਾਇਆ ॥

ਤਉ ਆਨ ਬਾਟ (ਗਸਤੋ) ਕਾਚੇ ਨਹੀ ਆਇਆ ॥

ਅੰਗ-324

**If thou dost claim to be a Brahmin
by thy birth from a Brahmin woman,
Why then was thy birth
not from a different source?**

Pg-324

When guru Gobind Singh raised the Khalsa, he instilled in all his Singhs the characteristics of all the four castes. At the time of making wise plans, the Khalsa is a *Brahmin*; while showing valour and fighting for the protection of his mother land or for the cause of his rights and justice, he is a '*Kashatriyaa*'; for earning his living through honest means, he is a '*Vaisha*'; and while rendering selfless service with a smiling countenance, he is a *shudra* or '*Harijan*', the beloved of *Hari* (God). Therefore, none is a Brahmin in a distinct, exclusive sense, and none is purely a Kashatriya or anything else. Condemning these class distinctions categorically, Gurbani pronounces equality of all in the eyes of Lord God and the message of Gurbani is common to all the four castes and the people residing in the four directions of the world. Even on the contrary it is hinted in Guru Granth Sahib that in many cases a Brahmin may be worse than a Shudra if his actions are bad. Caste won't deliver the goods, rather our deeds play the decisive role and determine our height or depth:

ਸਾ ਜਾਤਿ ਸਾ ਖਤਿ ਹੈ ਜੇਹੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਇ ॥

ਜਨਮ ਮਰਨ ਦੁਖੁ ਕਾਟੀਐ ਨਾਨਕ ਛੁਟਸਿ ਨਾਇ ॥

ਅੰਗ-1330

**With the eternal abode is not asked
caste or birth— know this;
caste and honour by deeds come.**

Pg-1330

Even in the world 'hereafter', none would bother about a person's caste or class, only one's actions, good or bad, would determine one's fate.

ਆਰੈ ਜਾਤਿ ਰੂਪੁ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਤੇਹਾ ਹੋਵੈ ਜੇਹੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਇ ॥ ਅੰਗ-363

**Neither pride of caste
nor looks shall go with man in the Hereafter:
Man shall be judged as are his deeds.**

Pg-363

All these references of Gurbani prove that Gurbani is not meant for one particular community or tribe but transcends all religious and cultural barriers and enriches all mankind with the boon of truthfulness, the feelings of brotherhood, equality and liberty.

A SERMON FOR THE JAINS

The followers of Jain religion lead a very simple, chaste and disciplined life. They walk bare-footed lest any tiny living creature be trampled under their feet. They are so merciful that they even do not mind rummaging their excreta in a bid to save the life of the worms creeping in it, if any. They shun every type of violence. In Gurbani there is a counsel for a good Jain, also called '*digambra*'. It runs as follows :-

ਆਸ ਨਿਰਾਸੀ ਤਉ ਸੰਨਿਆਸੀ ॥ ਜਾਂ ਜਤੁ ਜੋਗੀ ਤਾਂ ਕਾਇਆ ਭੋਗੀ ॥
ਦਇਆ ਦਿਗੰਬਰੁ ਦੇਹ ਬੀਚਾਰੀ ॥ ਆਪਿ ਮਰੈ ਅਵਰਾ ਨਹ ਮਾਰੀ ॥
ਏਕੁ ਤੂ ਹੋਰਿ ਵੇਸ ਬਹੁਤੇਰੇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਜਾਣੈ ਚੋਜ ਨ ਤੇਰੇ ॥ ਅੰਗ-356

**One, renouncing desire, is the true *Sanyasi*!
From continence comes true joy of living in the body.
One contemplating to subdue the flesh is the truly
compassionate Jain ascetic.
Such a one subduing the self,
forbears harming others.
Thou Lord, art one and Sole. Many thy forms—
The manifold play beyond Nanak's comprehension**

Pg-356

Similarly there are many teachings and advices interspersed here and there in Gurbani, which persuade the followers of any religion to become a good honest person; a good peasant, a good Judge, a good writer, a good servant, a good hero, a good businessman, a good life companion, a good friend, a good disciple and a genuinely good human. Such unique light, which brightens every one's path of destiny, is found in abundance from every page of Gurbani. It does not acknowledge any falsehood or deceitfulness however closely it is related to any aspect of life. It supports truth and confirms every one to live a life based on truthfulness and righteousness. A good person has to pursue good and honest calling, he is to share his earnings with others and meditate 'Naam' i.e. Name Divine and express his gratitude to the Timeless One in every matter:

ਰੈਣਿ ਦਿਨਸੁ ਪਰਭਾਤਿ ਤੂਹੈ ਹੀ ਗਾਵਣਾ ॥
 ਜੀਅ ਜੰਤ ਸਰਬਤ ਨਾਉ ਤੇਰਾ ਧਿਆਵਣਾ ॥
 ਤੂ ਦਾਤਾ ਦਾਤਾਰੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਦਿਤਾ ਖਾਵਣਾ ॥
 ਭਗਤ ਜਨਾ ਕੈ ਸੰਗਿ ਪਾਪ ਗਵਾਵਣਾ ॥
 ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਦ ਬਲਿਹਾਰੈ ਬਲਿ ਬਲਿ ਜਾਵਣਾ ॥

ਅੰਗ-652

**Each night, day and dawn Thee do I sing.
 All creation to Thy Name is devoted.
 Thou the Supreme Bestower—
 by Thy bounty are we sustained.
 In holy company are sins cast off.
 Nanak, servant of God,
 Ever to the Lord is a sacrifice—
 A sacrifice ever.**

Pg-652

RESPECT FOR NATURAL RESOURCES

In the starting pages of Guru Granth, importance is given to vital natural resources which come to us as bounties from Lord God free of any charge and which require our utmost care to use them very judiciously. Air, water, heat, earth, space are invaluable for human living. Without air, the human existence

can't sustain for more than a minute; without water and the sun entity of human life cannot be contemplated at all. So is the case with earth. Keeping their vital role in human sustenance, Gurbani values 'Air' as a 'Guru', the 'Water' is eulogised as the 'father' and the 'Earth' occupies the holy place of 'mother'; day and night are the nurses in whose laps the whole creation fondles.

ਪਵਣੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਪਾਣੀ ਪਿਤਾ ਮਾਤਾ ਧਰਤਿ ਮਹਤੁ ॥

ਦਿਵਸੁ ਰਾਤਿ ਦੁਇ ਦਾਈ ਦਾਇਆ ਖੇਲੈ ਸਗਲ ਜਗਤੁ ॥

ਅੰਗ-8

Air is the vital force; Water the Progenitor;

The vast Earth, the Mother of all;

Day and Night are nurses,

fondling all creation in their lap.

Pg-8

Realising that air and water give us life and help the growth process of every vegetation and inmate living, we should be very careful in utilising these important resources wisely and optimally; and avoid polluting them for our personal gains and vested interests. At present the people throughout the world are not very serious in using these bounties carefully. If the present speed of exploiting these resources continues unchecked, by the year 2025, world habitat would be facing total famine of usable water which normally is less than one percent of total water available on this earth. When every activity of the world is directly regulated with air, water, sun and land, then we should be considerate to exploit these rare resources and save them for progeny. Gurbani clearly mentions time and again in this context:

ਦੁਧ ਬਿਨੁ ਧਨੁ ਪੰਖ ਬਿਨੁ ਪੰਖੀ ਜਲ ਬਿਨੁ ਉਤਭੁਜ ਕਾਮਿ ਨਾਹੀ ॥ ਅੰਗ-354

**As the cow without milk, the bird without wings
are worthless:**

**So the vegetation without water
is of little worth**

Pg-354

In another place on page 472 of Guru Granth Sahib, it is clearly mentioned that the water is the foremost important ingredient to sustain life:

ਪਹਿਲਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਜੀਉ ਹੈ ਜਿਤੁ ਹਰਿਆ ਸਭੁ ਕੋਇ ॥

ਅੰਗ-472

**The first of living things is water,
Whereby is each object sustained.**

Pg-472

God is merciful who cares to maintain the vital supplies for us and sends us water in the form of rain. It is therefore imperative on our part not to pollute and misuse these otherwise expensive natural resources:

ਚਾਰੇ ਕੁੰਡਾ ਝੋਕਿ ਵਰਸਦਾ ਬੂੰਦ ਪਵੈ ਸਹਜਿ ਸੁਭਾਇ ॥

ਜਲ ਹੀ ਤੇ ਸਭ ਉਪਜੈ ਬਿਨੁ ਜਲ ਪਿਆਸ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥

ਅੰਗ-1420

**From the eternal Regions is the cloud by the
Lord sent under the holy command—
Raining by grace, in heavy showers.**

**Sustenance of everything depends on water
and without the water, the thirst quenches not.** Pg-1420

Gurbani therefore reminds us to take care of rare gifts of nature in their use. Their misuse invites annihilation.

By virtue of these peerless qualities briefly mentioned above, Guru Granth Sahib ought to be accepted as a universal, omnipresent Light by the whole mankind. It would definitely be in the best interests of humanity. After the perusal of this great Scripture, world famous scholars and historians have expressed their opinions about it, which are in every respect pre-eminent. We record here the extracts of some of these statements:

Dr. Dharam Pal Maini. 'Is it of less importance that there are solutions to all problems which we face in life and light has been thrown on every existing issue in its own peculiar manner by Guru Granth Sahib. Guru Granth Sahib kindles the spark of spirituality in our mundane life'.

Doctor Roshan Lal Ahuja expresses his views on Guru Granth Sahib as under: The seed of co-existence and socialism can be clearly seen sprouting in Guru Granth Sahib. It has the courage to present the enemies of religion, nation, ethics and

humanity in their true colour.

ਪਾਪ ਕੀ ਜੰਵ ਲੈ ਕਾਬਲਹੁ ਧਾਇਆ ਜੋਰੀ ਮੰਗੈ ਦਾਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੋ ॥ ਅੰਗ-722

Babar with the wedding party of sin

from Kabul rushed down.

And forcibly demanded

surrender of Indian womanhood.

Pg-722

Guru Granth Sahib is a spring of such a cool, sweet and clean water which flows continuously. By drinking this water, millions of troubled souls got peace, solace and tranquillity... To respect and hold in reverence such a unique, eminent and great scripture is our cultural, literary and human duty and turning one's back to it is like turning one's back to the Indian civilisation. This is sheer foolishness and stupidity.

According to **Duncan Greenlees**, Guru Granth Sahib is **the cream of Indian thought**. The more I studied Guru Granth Sahib, the greater and more confirmed became my love for this sacred scripture. The inspiration and emotional charm which can be had from Guru Granth Sahib is hardly attainable from any other religious scriptures.

The American Nobel Prize winner Ms. **Pearl S. Buck** writes expressing her views about Guru Granth Sahib in the following words: The Hymns in Guru Granth Sahib are an expression of man's loneliness, his longings and aspirations and his yearning to become one with that Being. I have read the religious scriptures of other great religions but I haven't found in them that force and strength to stir the mind and stimulate the heart which I have felt in Guru Granth Sahib. This writing, despite its length is very coherent and concise; it brings into lime light the best and the holiest concept of God and is quite congenial to the practical requirements of the human frame. Its sayings exhibit a surprisingly high degree of modernity.

Ikhlaq Hussain Delhvi while expressing his impressions about Guru Granth Sahib remarks: **The holy Granth is not only the revered scripture of the Sikh religion but also the**

premier secular scripture of India..... From Guru Granth Sahib we obtain the invaluable boon of self-realisation as well as divine realisation and also extreme spiritual ecstasy. It transforms one into an human; otherwise, it is not easy for a person to become an human in the real sense.

Doctor Mohammed Yussuf Abbasi thinks that Guru Granth Sahib is a treasure of world knowledge and Gurbani is a vast ocean from which every spiritual explorer can obtain jewels, gems and pearls to his heart's desire. The world today needs to be united to one axis and this axis is our own conscience by heeding which we can triumph over all the problems facing us. Gurbani shows us the way in this direction.

In the words of a renowned American sociologist and historian **Mr. Arnold Toynbee**, Guru Granth Sahib is the common spiritual treasure of the mankind, it is important that it should be brought within the direct reach of as many people as possible. Of all known scriptures, this book is the most highly venerated. Guru Granth Sahib is much more important for the Sikhs than the Quran is to the Muslims, the Bible is to the Christians, the Torah is to the Jews, for, Guru Granth Sahib is the eternal preceptor of the Sikhs—their ever lasting spiritual guide. Toynbee adds: the religious future of mankind is obscure; still one thing can be noticed and that is that all exalted religions are coming closer to one another. In all religious discussions of the future, there is something essentially important and precious in Sikh religion and the Holy Granth that will have something of special value to say to rest of the world.

Shree Thakar Des Raj pays his tribute to Guru Granth Sahib in this way: From Guru Granth Sahib every man from the lowest of the low up to a Brahmin, has obtained peace of mind. Not only this, even thousands of Mohammedans have faithfully followed Guru Nanak Dev's teachings and benefited from them. For the northern Indian society which is fast deteriorating morally and spiritually, Guru Granth Sahib has

proved, to be a 'Sanjivani buti' i.e. the plant of life.'.....Through Guru Granth Sahib, a great step has been taken to bestow upon India a boon of one religion, one community and one mind.

A great Sikh scholar and writer **Professor Puran Singh** puts Guru Granth Sahib's sublimity and grandeur on record in the following words: The entire manifest world goes on as per the word in the Guru Granth Sahib. There is no mendicant in flesh and blood who is not deeply impressed by the spiritual height of Gurbani. But the Sikh votaries of the Guru do not perceive Gurbani in its simple literary sense; the sacred blood of Guru Granth Sahib is flowing in their hearts and veins and helps their hearts throb. They have been created by this *bani* that is, Gurbani; it is their Creator : (All the references, given above have been culled from this writer's book titled 'ਗੈਰ-ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਮਾਨ: ਸਿੱਖੀ ਮਹਾਨ', edition 14th and from page 215-220).

The thoughts expressed above by the writers and scholars of other religions of the various parts of the world on the different aspects of Guru Granth, automatically draw our attention towards this holy scripture. We ought to make these ideas our basis of approach towards all peoples of the world so that the inmates of this burning world be persuaded to accept the message of happiness and peace, friendship and mutual love enshrined in the holy Granth Sahib in a practical way and thereby mitigate the violence blood-shed and mutual hatred which is so glaringly rampant in the world. Let all this be superseded by generosity and human sympathy, good-will and universal well-being. In this context, it is our sheer good luck that we are celebrating two centenaries concerning Guru Granth Sahib in the years 2004 and 2008. It becomes morally incumbent upon us to make the best possible use of these two special celebrations. It can be a great, rather invaluable achievement to introduce Guru Granth Sahib as a universal repository of goodness and spiritual bliss to the mankind. Being true votaries of the Holy Granth, it becomes our foremost duty to bring into

limelight the matchless philosophy, messages and sermons propounded therein and disseminate them to the world habitat; mould our life according to the guidelines provided in the Holy Granth and become true devotees in word and deed. Let the glow of the sermons of Gurbani be eminently perceptible in our deeds and daily routine. We should, first of all, make a good use of the invaluable doctrines of the Holy Granth in our own places and thereby make our dwellings, the ideal homes.

We should make our children to gain the spirit of Guru Granth Sahib and fill their coffers with the precious jewels of its teachings. On the world level we are passing through a very critical period inspite being in possession of a big spiritual treasure of the Holy Granth. Therefore, it is our foremost duty to reduce the impact of the great famine of moral and spiritual values that has griped the whole world by disbursing the unique treasure possessed in Guru Granth Sahib. Every votary of Gurbani can make some contributions in this field and thereby show his true loyalty towards his Preceptor. Therefore, besides mobilising all other resources we should also prepare *Gurmet literature of the highest order along with literature based on Sikh tenents in all prominent languages of the world and distribute it to every nook and corner of the world free of cost on the eve of these memorable centenaries (2004 and 2008), so that in the light of teachings of Guru Granth Sahib, the bond of brotherhood is strengthened the world over.*

Alag Shabad Yug, International Charitable Trust, Registered, Ludhiana-141010, at present, with the blessings of *Satguru* and with the help of the '*Sangat*', is publishing in total 55 publications of high standard in Panjabi, Hindi, English and Bengali languages and is distributing them free of any charge. Of these, 17 publications exhibit only the multi-dimensional importance of Guru Granth Sahib. Some publications out of these have been printed for more than fifty times. The process of publishing these books on a large scale is in full swing even

to-day and by the grace of *Waheguru*, will continue in future too. **With the blessings of SatGuru ji we had chalked out a plan to distribute one million (ten lakh) copies of this book in Panjabi, Hindi and English by the year 2008 AD.** The distribution process of this book is at its peak. We are trying to bring out its one deluxe edition almost daily. Delhi Gurdwara Management Committee too has started distributing this book of its own and they wish to publish its 2 lakh copies for free distribution in the near future. **If every votary and admirer of Sri Guru Granth Sahib sends to the Trust 1/10th of his earnings (*Daswand*) at its Ludhiana address, his service will be highly appreciated and full respect will be shown for the wishes of the donor by spending every penny of the fund so accumulated in highlighting the salient and universal tenets of Guru Granth Sahib, The true Preceptor will certainly shower his manifold blessings upon such votaries and enrich their lives spiritually. The address of Alag Shabad Yug CharitableTrust, Ludhiana-141010, its E-mail and Website addresses have been given on the starting pages of this booklet.**

In the end, keeping in view the universal popularity of the eternally true Guru Granth Sahib, we may say briefly that this Granth is the obliterator of all discriminations and promotor of virtue of co-existence. It arouses the feelings for the spiritual well-being of the people. It can easily remove the chagrin of the life of one who reposes full faith in this Word-Divine. This sacred and sublime Granth is a Bliss-Divine for God's creation collectively and by the grace of the preceptor is in a Word-Form of the Lord, disseminating in the world, the radiance of true devotion and dynamism. Let us seek refuge with this great Preceptor and make our lives fruitful. Even a moment's loss in this respect will be improper.

ਅਵਰਿ ਕਾਜ ਤੇਰੈ ਕਿਤੇ ਨ ਕਾਮ॥

ਅੰਗ-12

Nothing else shall avail thee.

Pg-12

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- (54) ਪਰਮ ਨਿਧਾਨ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ
- (55) ਕੇਸ ਪਰਸੰਗ

ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਪੜ੍ਹੋ ਅਤੇ
ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ
ਜਿਸ ਚੀਜ਼ ਤੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਲਿਖੀ ਹੋਵੇ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਟਰੈਬ ਨਾ ਕਰੋ
ਅਤੇ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਸਹਿਣ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਸੰਸਕਾਰ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ



S. Gurdeep Singh Gujral is honouring Dr. Alag in a special function held at S. G.S. Chatwal's place in London. S. Piara Singh Aulakh and S. Mohan Singh Nayyer are sitting among the distinguished guests, facing the camera.



In the above mentioned function, the meritorious services of S. G.S. Chatwal are being commended by Dr. Alag. S. Jagjiwan Singh is also seen sitting.



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