

A GREAT MASTER

Baba Gurbachan Singh was born on December 10, 1930 in Peshawar, now in Pakistan. He received boundless love and affection from his parents. Baba Avtar Singh and Jagat Mata Budhwanti as also from the True Master, Baba Buta Singh, then residing with the family.

Right from his infancy, the child Gurbachan manifested rare and remarkable qualities. These qualities comprised sensitiveness to human sorrow and suffering, sympathy for the afflicted, avoidance of all disputes and discords and malice as also appreciation of fine traits in others. All this could well be corroborated by numerous instances of his childhood. On return from school, when he received from his usual pocket money, he would persuade him to oblige his companions as well. Thus, his mind was free from the sense of duality and discrimination. While messing together, his friends would quickly grab all dainty dishes, leaving this simple child rather hungry at times. On inquiry by the mother, he would, however, never complain but simply smile. His generous disposition would not permit him to malign anyone. Unlike the common run of boys, he would never make any demand. On the contrary, he enjoyed sharing things with others.

CHILDHOOD

Gurbachan was a shining student. After doing his Middle from Peshawar, he 'matriculated' from the Khalsa School, Rawalpindi, He could not pursue his studies further, because of the turmoil following the Partition of India. He, However, acquired rich and rare experience of practical life by his wisdom and intelligence. Like savants and great men, he would think more and speak less.

PARTITION

During the turbulent days preceding the Partition, everybody wished to be relieved of his pressing parental responsibilities speedily. Accordingly, on April 22, 1947, Bhai Manna Singh solemnized the marriage of his daughter, Kulwant Kaur, with Gurbachan Singh at a simple ceremony. Kulwant kaur who subsequently became popular as Nirankari Rajmata, marched shoulder to shoulder with her husband. she proved to be an ideal wife and lifemate. Surely, the couple had been united by the Almighty for the well being of humanity.

During the ongoing massacre following the Partition, the Hindus and Muslims forgot their centuries-old co-existence and amity. Leaving their hearths and homes, they migrated to India or Pakistan. Forced by the circumstances even the Nirankari devotees, who believed in universal brotherhood, had to migrate to India. The two Governments had made arrangements for transporting people from one country to the other. Those rescued from villages and towns, were given shelter in various refugee camps, under military protection. For the migrants of the Rawalpindi area, a camp was set up at Wah. Baba Avtar Singh sent his own family and those of the Nirankari devotees to the aforesaid Camp and himself stayed back for a few days more in Rawalpindi. The adverse circumstances, however, soon forced him to migrate to Delhi by a plane. In the Wah camp Baba Gurbachan Singh himself assumed responsibility of looking after the refugee devotees. Baba Buta Singh and Baba Avtar Singh had already instilled in him the spirit of selfless service and self-sacrifice.

The camp officer entrusted to the young Gurbachan Singh the job of looking after the inmates of the Camp. This step had a deeper significance. It was actually a test of his spirit of selfless service, self-sacrifice and justice. This spirit was displayed by him admirably in distribution of rations to the inmates of the Camp. Usually, everyone has a soft corner for his friends and relatives. However, he made it clear to his near and dear ones that they would not get any ration from the Camp till they consumed what they already had with them. Babaji's spirit of selfless service and equal vision inspired all with love and faith in him. Thus he served the inmates for many days, with all dedication.

One day it was announced on behalf of the Government that those desirous of migrating to India, could do so by aeroplanes, then available. But the devotees in the Camp were reluctant to do so, without taking their belongings with them. They were still in a dilemma, when Gurbachan announced that they must migrate to India by any available transport leaving their belongings to his care. This noble gesture and bold decision was quite a surprise-dispatching all the devotees, including his newly-wedded wife, to India and himself staying back and assuming responsibility of transporting their house hold effects during those terrible days! Everyone was highly impressed by his public spirit. All the devotees accordingly left for India, leaving Baba Gurbachan Singh and his father-in-law alone in the Camp,

devotees in a goods train and reached India. After halting for some time in Jullundur, he joined his father, Baba Avtar Singh, at Delhi.

STRUGGLE IN DELHI

All the members of Babaji's family and their relations gradually settled down in Delhi. Just after his arrival in India, Baba Avtar Singh resumed his missionary activities and congregations. Baba Gurbachan Singh, on his own, assumed the responsibility of supporting the family. This was indeed an ordeal in a new place without financial resources. Those who trust in God Almighty, are not, however, deterred by such adversities. Wisely and discreetly, Babaji was able to tackle this problem. While a student of eighth class in Rawalpindi, he had acquired some experience and interest in the auto-parts business. Unmindful of his comfortable living in Pakistan, Babaji plunged into this business with the little money left with him. He would purchase and sell auto-parts riding on a bike, braving the sun, rain and cold. Who could imagine that this young Gurbachan would one day rule the hearts of millions and become an emancipator of mankind.

After sometime, Babaji succeeded in acquiring a small shop near Mori Gate and his business picked up. His reputation for honesty, his sweet disposition and humility, attracted more and more customers. Shortly thereafter, he rented another shop at Kashmiri Gate, the main market of auto-parts. In order to provide adequate living for the large family, he entered into a partnership. But a small shop had naturally a limited scope of feeding a large family. Another shop had, therefore, to be acquired. By and by, Babaji set up four shops in Delhi, employing a number of fellow-devotees. With the expansion of his business, he also opened an office in Bombay. He also setup a shop at Jullundur, but nobody was willing to leave Delhi and go there. As desired by Baba Avtar Singh, Baba Gurbachan Singh himself assumed this responsibility, as a true and obedient devotee. The shop at Jullunder had two partners and one employee. Again, as per the wishes of Baba Avtar Singh, the True Master, he shared his partnership with the employee. This demonstrated his spirit of surrender and obedience to the True master. Meanwhile. He also secured an import and export license. Thus, his business was firmly established and yielded a handsome income. Because of his simplicity, straight-forwardness and large-heartedness, all addressed him as "Bholaji" (innocent one) or "Sethji" (a rich person).-

In 1950, Baba Gurbachan Singh shifted to Delhi. This gave him ample opportunity of serving his father, Baba Avtar Singh. He always regarded and served his father, Baba Avtar Singh, as the True Master. He considered this as the prime object of his life. After returning from the shop, he would devote his maximum time to serve the True Master. He drove his car and attended to him and the devotees. However, he never interfered in the organizational affairs of the Mission.

NOMINATION AS HEAD

Addressing a congregation on December 3, 1962, on the eve of his departure for Bombay, Baba Avtar Singh said, "Henceforth, Gurbachan Singh will be addressed as Baba Ji and not as "Seth Ji" or "Bhapa Ji". He should be revered as I am". However, he was formally appointed as Head of the Mission on November 5, 1963. This was a total surprise for the young Gurbachan Singh, for he always considered himself just a humble devotee, not competent enough to shoulder such a stupendous responsibility. His maiden address to the congregation reflected this very sentiment.

Strange are the ways of God. He alone knows the secret of His will. A True Master is; he is not made. He manifests himself whenever, wherever and in whatever manner God wills. Earlier known as "Sethji" and "Bholaji" Gurbachan Singh was now the True Master. Significantly enough, Baba Avtar Singh chose to live as a devotee of Baba Gurbachan Singh for the rest of his life, for about seven years. The latter, however, continued to revere and serve Baba Avtar Singh as True Master, as before.

FIRST MUSSOORIE CONFERENCE

Immediately after his nominations the True Master, Baba Gurbachan Singh speeded up the tempo of preachings, thus attracting large numbers to the Mission. The resultant increase necessitated some organizational reforms. For this purpose, Babaji convened a conference of the organizers and the preachers of the Mission at Mussoorie.

At the First Mussoorie Conference, held on July 17&18, 1965, a number of important decisions were taken to accelerate the pace of preachings. To this end, the country was divided into several zones and mukhis (unit heads), Parmukhs (area Heads) and Zonal Incharges were nominated. As suggested

By the devotees from foreign countries, it was also decided to undertake missionary tours abroad.

This Conference proved very fruitful and its results were evident very soon. The organization functioned more efficiently and the missionary activities picked up considerable momentum.

WORLD-WIDE TOURS

Through world-wide tours of Babaji and his missionaries, the message of the Mission spread all over the globe. In this way, the campaign for human redemption and spiritual enlightenment hitherto confined to the boundaries of India, acquired global dimensions. It is not an easy task to propagate one's message among the foreigners owing to difficulties of language and other kindred constraints. But disregarding all such difficulties, Babaji vigorously pursued his missionary activities in distant countries. Thus a series of foreign tours for regeneration of mankind were undertaken from 1967 to 1977.

Babaji's spiritual preachings aimed at all-round development of human personality. He guided the people in all matters, domestic, social and economic, besides ethical, moral and spiritual. Thereby he proved that spirituality makes one a responsible, cultured, civilized and ideal citizen, not an escapist.

MULTIFACETED GENIUS

Babaji had his own peculiar style of working. Generally, people spend a long time in firming detailed plans and projects. However, Babaji believed in prompt implementation. That is why, he was able to turn the apparently impossible into the possible.

A little ahead of the Sant Nirankari Colony, the Mission had a large piece of wasteland. In 1965, when the country was facing a severe shortage of food grains, Babaji thought of contributing his mite in this direction by bringing the said wasteland under cultivation. The poor and arid condition of the soil did not, however, permit its cultivation. According to all the neighboring cultivators, accumulated salinity had rendered it unfit for cultivation. The experts of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi too

considered the land unproductive by such pessimistic verdicts, the enterprising and innovative Baba took up the challenge.

A little away from the land in question, the Government had set up a Water Treatment plant. The effluent from this plant made the surrounding area quite unhygienic. To kill two birds with one stone, Babaji chalked out a project to divert the effluent to this barren land. Thousands of devotees, men, women and children, and Babaji himself and the members of the family, worked day and night for digging a long drains to direct the flow of this effluent from the plant to this land. Ultimately, the effluent served as good manure for the fields. Sometime later, part of the wasteland was cleared of pebbles and boulders. It was leveled up, ploughed and sown with the best available seed. Gradually, the seed started sprouting into leaves. In due course, the wasteland was transformed into a lush green field. The neighboring farmers were amazed. The officials of the Indian Agriculture Research Institute too were wonder struck when invited to see the wasteland yield a rich crop. They remarked that it was indeed a miracle, Babaji, however, said that even an impossible task could be accomplished, given dedication, firm faith and hard work. The Baba distributed the quality seed produced in this piece of land among his farmer devotees to enable them to step up production. Incidentally, the following year was proclaimed as the year of “ Green Revolution”. The land in question topped in production of food grains in the neighboring area.

Likewise, keeping in view the scarcity of petrol facing the country, Babaji with a knack for innovation, minimized its consumption by dieseling the vehicles of the Mission. It was a message to the world that hard work and sincerity of purpose were the master key to achievement.

BABA AVTAR SINGH DEPARTS

On September 17,1969, Baba Avtar Singh left for his heavenly abode. By then, the Mission had become a worldwide movement. As such, many devotees wished that his cremation should be a spectacular affair and a befitting monument be also raised in his memory. Baba Gurbachan Singh, however, apprehended that the masses would again become victims of the Personality-cult and idolatry of which he wished to rid them. Another risk was that they would forget the message of Truth and would make capital out of his (Baba Avtar Singh's) name. Babaji also wished to rid the society of the evil of show and ostentation. Accordingly the dead body of Baba Avtar

Singh was solemnly cremated at the Electric Crematorium Mahatama Gandhi Road, Delhi in the forenoon of 19th September, 1969. A massive memorial congregation was held in the same afternoon, at which glowing tributes were paid to Baba Avtar Singh by the devotees and many others. With this concluded and important glorious chapter in the history of the Mission.

Contrary to convention, no special importance is given to 17th September, the day when Baba Avtar Singh passed away. Instead, 15th August is observed every year as Mukti Parva (Salvation Day) to pay homage to Baba Avtar Singh as well as to other devotees of the Mission and to draw inspiration from their lives. Thus Baba Gurbachan Singh did not follow the beaten track. He was so dynamic and radical.

After his father's demise, Baba Gurbachan Singh devoted himself day and night to propagating the message of Truth and human redemption. Every day he would address congregations in two or three towns and/or villages.

Keeping in view the growing popularity of the Mission, Babaji decided to construct Satsang Bhawans (places of congregation) at several places. Such Bhawans were accordingly built in many (important) towns and villages. Though not a qualified architect or engineer, Babaji himself conceived and designed the plans of the Bhawans. This is a testimony to his genius. The imposing hall at the first floor of the Nirankari Satsang Bhawan in Sant Nirankari Colony, Delhi, is an example of his architectural skill. Dispensaries and schools were also set up in various Bhawans. Building of two Senior Secondary Schools in Delhi and a Degree College at Sohna, Distt. Gurgaon, Haryana were also constructed to diffuse all round education.

SILVER JUBILEE SAMAGAM

The 25th Annual Sant Samagam in 1972 was celebrated as the Silver Jubilee Samagam. To express their faith and devotion in their True Master, Baba Gurbachan Singh, the devotees weighed Babaji and his consort, Rev. Mata Kulwant Kaur, against currency notes, on the occasion. The spectacle was watched ecstatically by lacs of devotees. While appreciating this rare gesture of devotion and dedication, Babaji announced, "Not a single penny out of this amount would be spent for the personal use of any member of my family; all the money would be used for public welfare. Earned by the sweat

of brow of the devotees the money would bestow happiness and bliss for whatever noble cause it is utilized”.

Baba Ji's inspiring sermons and practical life attracted to the Mission thousands of people, particularly victims of religious orthodoxy and social taboos. They were impressed by the simple teachings of the Mission and its message of love, selfless service and integration with God. For inculcating greater discipline and duty-consciousness, it was felt necessary to frame a code of conduct for the missionary and the devotees.

SECOND MUSSORRIE CONFERENCE

Accordingly, Babaji convened the second Mussoorie Conference on May 14-16, 1973. About 500 delegates from India and abroad participated in it. In his opening address, Babaji desired that everyone should express his/her views freely and frankly and without any inhibition. The Conference was a watershed in the history of the Mission as it resulted in formulating a code of conduct for the devotees and the missionaries.

SOCIAL REFORMS

At this conference, two important decisions on social reforms were also taken. One was on abstinence from the consumption of liquor and narcotics. It, however, did not entail any change in the relevant tenet or our attitude on diet and drink. The idea was to shun what was harmful, wasteful or led to conflicts and clashes and impeded the propagation of the Mission. The other was simple marriages and avoidable of pomp and show and display of dowry on marriages. Likewise, discrimination of caste, community and religion in matrimonial alliances had to be shunned. Babaji gave a clarion call to the youth to implement the decisions. He also exhorted them to come to the fore for propagating the Mission vigorously and combating the social evils. He also advised the older generation to give full encouragement to the youth in this direction, failing which they would not only themselves lag behind but also hamper the progress of the Mission. Babaji himself entrusted to his son (Baba Hardev Singh) the task of organizing the youth and promoting the spirit of service among them. His son and daughters, Niranjana, Jagit, Mohini and Swaran also joined the ranks of the Sewa Dal and engaged actively in selfless service.

REVERENCE FOR WOMANHOOD

Babaji inspired women to play an active role in religious as well as social spheres. He warned that the society would degenerate if women were not given due recognition and reverence. He accordingly made his wife and equal partner in propagating the Mission. Thus, he not only boosted the morale of women devotees but also demonstrated their parity with men. Rev. Mata Kulwant Kaur too showed by her dynamic life that the active cooperation of women is indispensable for social advancement.

VIOLENT OPPOSITION

After the Mussoorie Conference, the Mission became a Mission of the masses. The misguided elements, who apprehended a set-back to their vested interests, could not tolerate the growing popularity of the Mission. They, accordingly, planned to wreck it under the smoke-screen of religion. They, maligned the Mission by leveling baseless and imaginary charges, but failed to suppress it. On the contrary, their opposition added to the Mission's popularity. Consequently, they were unhinged. Like desperate gamblers, they attacked the Mission's congregations at many places. The devotees, however, acted with exemplary restraint and did not deviate from Babaji's teachings of forbearance and love. Babaji himself was attacked at Pathankot and Ghuman (in Punjab). Their failure made them crazy.

AMRITSAR INCIDENT

On 13th April, 1978, Baba Gurbachan Singh was to address the Baisakhi Samagam at Amritsar. However, before he reached the venue, the congregation was attacked by about 200 fanatics, armed with lethal weapons. As a result, 18 precious lives were lost. When somebody asked Babaji as to how many of them belonged to 'him' and how many to his opponents, he remarked, 'they were all mine, because I do not consider any body as my enemy'.

The incident was followed by false criminal proceedings against sixty Missionaries. Ultimately it was judicially proved that the allegations against Nirankaris, including Baba Gurbachan Singh, were false and fabricated and all of them were acquitted honorably. Meanwhile the Mission received considerable setback but Babaji continued his crusade for truth. He saw to it that the followers of the Mission did not leave the path of love, tolerance and

non-violence even in the face of provocations. He wanted them to work dauntlessly, without any fear, because truth was on their side. He advised them to pray for those who considered themselves as their opponents, because the true devotees of God have no enemies. He kept Nirankaris united, and endowed with firm faith in God and treated opposition as the normal lot of those who preached the truth.

FATAL ATTACK

The fanatics, however, did not understand Babaji, his Mission and the gestures of non-vengeance. They made Babaji as the target of their violence. They attacked him in Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh and later near Durg in Madhya Pradesh, but did not succeed. Finally, however, Babaji fell to their bullets in Delhi, on 24th April, 1980.

The assassination of Baba Gurbachan Singh stunned and shocked the whole humanity. There was hardly anyone who was not moved or did not shed tears. “An Apostle of God’s glory, a Messiah of human unity and a true social reformer, had prey to religious intolerance”, commented newspapers and the intellectuals. It was another blot on human history. And the peace-loving humanism felt that humanism had been ravaged.

GENETAL APPRAISAL

Baba Gurbachan Singh was indeed a superman. He was verily a mission, a powerful thought-current. He was an ideal for the society as also an inspiration for pious living. A dynamic personage, a matchless treasure of divine knowledge, an exemplary householder, a perfect personality.

He influenced every phase of life. He imparted social and spiritual consciousness to the country and made a special contribution in purifying life in all fields. By diffusing God-knowledge, he elevated and redeemed mankind and enabled the aspirants to attain real peace, bliss and happiness. That explains why he had countless admirers from all classes. They comprised the backward and petty workmen as well as the progressive and prosperous sections of the society, illiterate, rustics as also smart citizens, scholars, intellectuals and national leaders, regardless of their religion, caste or community. He loved everyone so intensely that the latter felt Babaji to be closest to him.

For seventeen years, this superman and colossus spread the Mission of Truth so speedily and zealously that no parallel would be found in history. He launched several projects at the same time and successfully accomplished them all. Without achieving the prescribed target he would not rest even for a moment. The most amazing thing is that he solved all the problems through God-consciousness. He demonstrated that one is able to resolve easily every tangle provided one knows and perceives the Supreme Father, identifies himself with Him and is God-conscious, every moment.

Baba Gurbachan Singh established by personal example that by understanding and following the true essence of religion in our everyday conduct, we can make our domestic, social, economic and political life so happy and blissful.

Would that the selfish and jealous folk understood this reality well in time following the ideals set by the Great Masters, they can certainly ennoble and sublimate their lives. They should also realize that they cannot destroy the values of holy seers like Babaji by opposing or liquidating them.

Baba Gurbachan Singh may not be in our midst in the physical frame today. Yet his divine utterances and priceless teachings are very much alive even today and would endure forever.

ETERNAL TRUTH

SPIRIT –THE REAL SELF

No building can stand without a solid foundation. Spiritualism is, in fact, the foundation on which the splendid edifice of science and civilization stands. The sight of a splendid building like the Taj and its loveliness fascinate us so much that we forget all about its foundation, a hard fact. Likewise, man has been so much dazzled by scientific inventions that the soul the ground reality, fails to attract his attention. The mind of atheist is always simmering. His spirit is anxious to know who created him and the universe. Who is managing all this cosmos?

Along with science, social and economic development too has brought about substantial social, cultural and economic changes in human thought pattern. Yet man's inner upheaval has not subsided for want of spiritual development.

The summit of life can be reached only by identifying the spirit. We cannot achieve peace and serenity without knowing the spirit. An apt illustration. A passenger bound for Bombay comes across many big railway stations on the way equipped with all amenities. He pauses there for taking water, tea, etc. But he feels no relief until he reaches Bombay, his ultimate destination. Likewise, man is seeking to know and comprehend his real 'self', his destination.

Even all-scientific progress is, ultimately, the outcome of spiritual ferment. In other words, the search and realization of 'self' is the basis of entire evolution. Hence, scientific development instead of being an impediment in the path of spiritual enlightenment, is an aid to it. In sum, both materials and mystic evolution is indispensable.

GOAL OF LIFE

Human incarnation is hard to attain. Hence, it is our prime duty to realize God, the most precious treasure and target in this very life. We are very lucky if we are able to do so. Only then we become entitled to be called humans and can attain greatness and peace and progress. On the other hand, if we get involved in extraneous matters and miss the real goal of life, all such pursuits are useless. Suppose a master deposes his employee to collect some money from a particular person in Bombay. Instead of doing the needful, the employee spends his time in sightseeing, meeting friends and relatives and visiting entertainment centers. On return, when he tells his master what he has been doing, he is bound to be censured or even punished by the latter. It is immaterial if the employee is an efficient and intelligent person. The master would, naturally, tell him that he does not need such an irresponsible and disobedient employee, who misses his target i.e. the job assigned to him.

MOST PROXIMATE

No seer, prophet or a holy personage ever said that God is afar. They affirmed that He is immanent in every object and vitally close to us. He is all-pervasive. Generally, the masses consider God to be stationed distantly and seek Him far and near. They knock about from pillar to post in search of God, as if he were residing in a particular city or station. God is not, however, a distant destination to be reached on foot, as is popularly

presumed. Such a delusion is indeed the cause of all human distress. It is the screen of ignorance shrouding his vision that precludes man from close perception of God. Our eyes, if bandaged, cannot behold the outside light. We then just grope about and stumble in darkness. Removal of the bandage ushers in light all around. Not from anywhere outside. For, the light is already 'present'. Likewise, when the True Master removes the mask of our ignorance, we perceive God all around.

The spiritual stalwarts of all ages shared similar views. None of them believed God to be far or apart. All the seers, sages, whom we glorify, worshipped the all-pervasive God. Lord Rama sought enlightenment (of God), from his True Master, sage Vashishth, and made him the support of his life. The popular belief that the divine enlightenment can be attained only in solitude, in hills or caves or in wilderness, is erroneous. When Arjuna, under the impact of attachment thought that he was the doer and would be the killer of his relatives in the battlefield, he was perturbed. Perceiving his predicament, Lord Krishna revealed to him his cosmic form and explained that actually Arjuna was not the doer or killer. The power to save or kill or do any deed in the universe, ultimately vests in the Almighty God. The world, however, overlooks this omnipotent cosmic power and looks to other forces.

Lord Krishna bestowed the vision of omnipresent God upon Arjuna. But today the portraits of Lord Krishna with an open mouth are displayed to show that he revealed the cosmic form in his mouth. In fact, the Lord revealed the Almighty by the word of mouth. Pointing to the cosmic form, Lord Krishna told Arjuna that his (Lord's) visible body was not his real self. For, the body had a form and is perishable, whereas his real, self, the spirit, is formless and eternal. The sun, the moon, the stars and all the creation stood embodied in him. Lord Krishna was not referring then to his own physical frame, but to the all-pervading God. A parallel may be found in a proclamation of the President, addressed to the nation. It may be read by a Governor, Secretary or a Deputy Commissioner, but it would, nevertheless, remain a proclamation of the President. Likewise, the divine knowledge though unfolded by different seers and prophets from time to time, is/was basically the same. All the great masters expounded and dispelled the illusions of the masses. Freed from illusions, they became devotees. After knowing God, they became ardent devouts, discarding all rites, rituals and ostentation.

NO CONJECTURES

All sages speak from their personal and pragmatic experience. Their teachings, therefore, cannot be falsified. They believe in God, only after seeing and knowing Him. The common folk do so because they have heard of God from their ancestors or priests or scriptures. But we cannot know God or imbibe Him merely by hearing and reading about Him. For example, the name of a particular city enables us to conceive its picture, which may be quite different from its actual layout. Our conception of the city, its buildings, its gardens, its roads and its streets, cannot be necessarily correct. The correct position is known to us only after actual visit. Likewise, our ideas and conjectures about God, based on hearsay and books, can be erroneous.

RECOVERY OF VISION

Divine knowledge is the light that imparts immunity from pleasure and pain. A blind man fumbles around over some object or the other and is agitated at every step. After recovery of vision, however, that person traverses the same path smoothly, in spite of all the intervening hurdles and stinking sewers. Even the sweet smell of a garden does not hold him up. Similarly, an enlightened person is immune to the impact of worldly pains and pleasures. He leads his life peacefully by assigning proper place to the primal impulses of lust, anger, greed, attachment and pride. He does not get involved in the maze of rituals, traditions etc. He knows that such things do not matter at all.

The divine enlightenment saves us from going astray and helps us achieve the goal i.e. redemption.

It is only the veil of ignorance that distances us from God. For seeking God we need not go elsewhere. All that we have to do is to remove the veil of ignorance through a True Master. We are then able to behold God in closest proximity.

GOD AND SOUL

Modern man wishes to mould God according to his peculiar own fancy and imagination, far from the Truth. Different persons believe God to be dwelling in different places, viz. Shrines, hills, the sun, the stars, the earth, idols, images, holy books, etc. We keep vacillating, because we bank on

vacillating objects. The real prop of our soul is God, who is formless, invulnerable, incombustible, unruffled and all-pervasive. Our soul too is without any form or color. It is invisible even to scientists, doctors and intellectuals. When the soul departs from the body, it cannot be seen even with a microscope. We consider the material acquisitions the anchor of the formless soul. Its real abode is, however, the formless God, its real self, wherein it ultimately merges, just as water mingles with an ocean. The soul is pacified only when it realizes the Super Soul, the infinite God. Religion or devotion actually begins with such realization alone.

THE SOURCE

The elements (components of the body) merge in their respective sources. Every element is pacified by merging in its source, otherwise it is agitated and knocks about here and there. Water has its ultimate focus in the ocean. The swift movement of water in rivers and streams is just its frantic endeavor to seek its source. Similarly, air shut up in a tube merges in its source (open air) even through a tiny hole. In case the source of the soul were the human body itself made up of the five elements, why the soul should forsake it? Why should it feel restive by staying in the body after the last breath? Obviously, the human frame is not the real source or focus of the soul. The soul is conscious, while the body is inert. The soul is pure, the body impure. The soul is formless, the body has a form. Their attributes are not kindred. The body is composed of the five elements. The source of the soul is actually the Super Soul i.e. God. Thus the formless soul attains peace only on merging in the formless God. It continues to stumble until it attains its source i.e. the Almighty Till then it is caught up in the cycle of eighty four lakhs incarnations.

MERGER-KEY TO LIBERATION

One, who invokes the True Master and realizes God, is liberated from the cycle of repeated births and deaths. His soul is like the drop that loses its identity on merging in the ocean. In that state, nobody can isolate it from the ocean. Likewise, when, by the grace of the True Master, the human soul merges in the Supreme Soul, nobody can alienate it from God.

LIBERATION

We attain the human frame after 'eighty-four lakhs' incarnations. Redemption is all round liberation. We can seek release from such worldly chains only when our soul realizes God and gets integrated with Him. But our attachment to worldly possessions, sensuous pleasures and physical embellishments persist even after death. Consequently, our soul is caught up into the web of repeated births, according to our yearnings.

SCIENCE AND SPIRIT

Today the popular view is that the concepts relation to the spirit (soul) and God are simply brainwaves of the idealists and indolent folk. Soul and God are deemed as non-existent or an opiate for the layman and stumbling blocks in material advancement. Such a view is sheer ignorance and illusion, because of lack of true knowledge of soul and God. Doubtless, currently, the scientists have made miraculous discoveries and inventions. Consequently, man has to do little manual work. Everything is done by machines just with the switch of a button. Yet, with all such facilities at his disposal, man suffers from tension and turbulence. He should have enjoyed all-round bliss, in case material amenities could give him relief. Why?

Scientific progress seems to be driving man towards death and destruction. Atom bombs, hydrogen bombs nitrogen bombs and poisonous gases are all agents of that is why man has been terrified and perplexed by scientific advancement

It, however, does not mean that scientific progress and inventions should be stopped. Nor that science should be opposed and deprecated. What is needed is that human and spiritual values too should bloom and blossom. But for these values, scientific development would be futile. The aforesaid values can be acquired only by the knowledge of God and soul. These values embrace spirit of brotherhood, love and humanism. With the dawn of consciousness of human brotherhood, the whole mankind would be deemed to be our own family. Man would not then misutilise science for destruction, but use it for constructive and benevolent purposes.

Even the spiritual lore is a science. The science of God and soul necessitates the guidance by a specialist (an illumined seer) as any field of human activity.

UNCHANGABLE

Truth is always one and the same, just as two and two always make four. We can verify the truth of the above axiom by reference to the holy books of any age-Treta (Silver Age), Dwaper (Bronze Age) or the present Kali (Iron Age). Even in Satyuga (Golden Age) and Treata, You won't find that two and two ever made three or five. For truth is eternally same, unchangeable. Likewise, in voiced by Lord Rama, Lord Krishna, Lord Jesus Christ, Prophet Mohammed and Guru Nanak, has undergone no change. The prophets have always given the message of human unity. Their followers, however, got divided into compartments. It is well known that Lord Rama owned Bhilni (of the so-called low caste) and revered her as a saint. That is why Bhilni is now glorified. Lord Rama did not attach any importance to one's clan or status but exalted devotees like Hanuman, who belonged to a tribe living in jungles.

Likewise, Lord Krishna owned and revered Vidur-son of a maidservant. The love shown by apostles for the devotees is lauded even today. Similarly, Guru Nanak, though born in a Hindu family, befriended Muslims like Mardana and treated them on equal footing with his Hindu devotees like Bala.

TRIUMPH

In a conflict between falsehood and truth, it is truth which ultimately triumphs. In the first instance, falsehood may seem to win, but truth triumphs in the long run. The world recognizes how great and powerful Truth is. The devotees are constantly guarded by the omnipresent gracious lord, who protects them even in the most terrible situations.

We observe that the source of father today becomes the cause of suffering anxiety tomorrow. This is the way of the world. God alone is our eternal and unfailing prop and is ever present all around us.

TRANSMIGRATION

A person occupying a house on rent generally remains tense. Tenants in big cities very well know the agony they have undergo to shifting. A tenant, who has constructed his own house, however, can occupy it, and is saved all suffering. A tenant without a house if his own has frequently to search out a

new house and put up even in a very dirty one. Similar is the fate of human soul that is embodied for a short span. In case the soul has 'located' its real home i.e. God, it immediately migrates directly to it on relinquishing its physical frame. Otherwise, it is perplexed and has to accept the body it is assigned on merits. After the prescribed time, the soul is required to shed even that body. Thus, it has to pass through various births, facing untold agonies.

During his visit to a new cities, a person, who does not have his own house or shelter there, has to put up with a friend , acquaintance or the human soul, after giving up its body, finding itself forlorn, is compelled to seek shelter in the new tenement. In the absence of a home, it is forced to seek one according to the reaction of its action and aspiration. In consequence of deeds, the human soul is embodied as an elephant, a camel a crow, a dog or any other from of bird or animal. But it has not to knock about, if it has got a 'home' of its own. It straightaway enters its real home i.e. God smoothly.

ALEXANDER'S REPENTANCE

History testifies that Alexander, the great, who wanted to conquer the world (and had actually conquered half) and possessed infinite wealth, when at death bed, he asked his minister to pack up for him all riches and valuables. The latter said, ' your Majesty, nothing can be carried to the next world by anybody'. During the King's lifetime, the minister would, however, ask him to conquer this and that country and plunder its wealth. But now, the same minister told him that not a penny out of his vast riches could accompany him during the last journey. This irked the King. He ordered the minister to be flogged publicly for his failure to disclose this momentous truth to him earlier. Alexander remarked poignantly that he would not have robbed so much wealth by brute force in case the minister had tendered him this sound advice earlier. He, however, ordered all his riches to be collected and placed before him to enable the world to see that the massive wealth plundered by him so cruelly was of no use to him and that none should indulge in tyranny and plunder in future and disturb the world peace for the sake of riches. The devotees very well know that ultimately only God is their real companion, not wealth. Hence, only God should be the focus of our love. But the worldlings regard themselves as masters; of all material wealth and, consequently, suffer like Alexander.

THE CRAZE

Currently, the prevalent view is that one has achieved one's goal, if one has got children and has at one's disposal all the amenities of life. Accumulation of wealth and material objects is popularly regarded as the ultimate goal of life as also the blessing of God. One forgets, however, that material objects are transitory and may slip from hands any moment. Sheer pursuit of materialism and alienation from God, surely, throw man off the rails.

It must be conceded that our country lacks adequate wealth and amenities of life. But the question is whether the people of affluent countries like America and Canada, and have to do little manual work, are really contented. Are they free from mutual hatred? Don't they lose temper? Visitors to those countries know full well that the people over there, too, suffer from a lot of mental tension. They cannot put up with even a slight irritant. There even a little friction between husband and wife keeps them under acute stress. The citizens of the affluent countries would apparently be very happy if their feelings of hatred, hostility, and mental turmoil could be ended by material possessions. But this is not so. These countries top in suicides and brutal homicides. Obviously, therefore, material objects cannot impart joy to human life without God-realization. They complicate our life instead of bestowing contentment and love. Thus, we make a mess of our life and never achieve our target. Our mind continues to be agitated and we fail to realize spiritual solace.

SUSTENANCE

God-consciousness immanent in the mind of a devotee. Is his greatest sustenance. This perception instills in him full, firm and unwavering faith. We do not let anyone forcibly remove a golden necklace from our neck. We stake even our life to safeguard it, regardless of its cost.

The necklace of God-consciousness is priceless. The devotee preserves it with utmost care and reverence. One would not mind gifting away an artificial necklace of small value to anybody. None, however, throws away a costly thing nor gifts it away. Likewise, we must never part with the necklace of God-consciousness. It is a boon and grace bestowed on us which we must keep embedded in our hearts. God-consciousness, like a necklace, holds fast in the hearts of devotees.

Even a single gust of wind can scatter or sweep away a big heap of flowers. However, if threaded in a necklace, these flowers cannot, be scattered even by a strong wind. Similarly, if we are bound together in the chord of God-consciousness no storm, how-so-ever fierce, can sweep or drag us away. Likewise, our mind and faith too would stand steadfast forever. At times, our own mind plays a hostile role. It grows fickle and weak, a state we must avoid. The light bestowed by the True Master makes the devotee wary of material delusions He uses material objects, no doubt, but does not let them overpower him.

UNITY

Only God is without a peer. In order to maintain His creation, God has created various beings, with different traits and tastes. The concept of converting them into one and the same entity is meaningless. How can trees and stones be identical? How can water and fire be identical? God forbid, if all this diversity is changed into uniformity, the result will be chaos in nature. Their separate identities are a must for the existence. This is true of mankind, as well. Uniformity of the entire mankind in thought, language, culture and civilization would definitely arrest the evolution of mankind. Such uniformity is unnatural, uncommon and against the law of nature.

This explains the futility of all endeavors to achieve such a unity. What is, actually, required is that we must strive for the blossoming of our variegated ideals, languages, cultures and civilizations. Aspiration for the progress of all these assets can and would integrate them and bring about unity.

The need of the hour is not to forcibly weld different types of people in unity but to promote their interaction, mutual tolerance and understanding. To bring about dead uniformity, we shall have to impose our ideas on them. But by doing so, we would be hampering their intellectual development and inciting vindictiveness. Thus, the proper course is to bear with the others' ideas, show them regard and refrain from asserting ourselves. This would, automatically, promote among them love, intimacy and unity.

GOD REALISATION

SEEING IS BELIEVING

Books, pictures and films can give us information about a place such as Bombay. But we don't feel fully confident about our knowledge of Bombay, unless we ourselves have seen God face to face, we cannot develop full faith in Him, even if we pay Him reverence, participate in the congregation and chant His glory. Such faith pulsates in every tissue of the Nirankaris, because they know and see God from the closet quarters.

THE RIGHT WAY

The worldlings generally seek God by performing various rites and rituals. Certain persons donate lavishly and spend a lot on worship and holy recitations, may be after earning lakhs through fraudulent and dark deals. Such persons are generally acknowledged as great devout because they have made liberal gifts for charitable purposes and holy Yajnas (oblations). Such acts can delude the world but not the all-knowing Almighty. Actually, these are not the paths to God-Realization. One, who has perceived God and acts with the consciousness of His presence all-around and is proximate to Him, is a real seer. He is capable of changing the destiny of the world. One, who simply relates stories, cannot change either his own destiny or that of others. He is just like a pauper telling futile tales of earning fortunes. A person possessing adequate means and will alone can extend material assistance to other needy persons.

Mere tales of rich people cannot enrich anyone. A millionaire can donate thousands. How can a have-not give anything to anybody? Likewise, only a devotee can enlighten others on devotion. One, who himself has seen God, can endow others with God-vision. Nobody, however rich or physically strong, scholarly and talented, can realize God except by the grace of a God-realized seer or True Master. Only the latter can integrate an individual soul with the Supreme Soul. When this is accomplished, every action is a source of peace and bliss for the person concerned.

RIGHT NOW

Many people say that childhood is meant for play, youth for merry-making and old age for God-realization, prayer and devotion. But would we be capable of realizing God in old age, when our limbs are shady, our intellect is failing and the body infirm? Otherwise too, it is hardly certain that death

would not overtake us in childhood itself. There is no knowing when death strikes. Hence, the imperative necessity of realizing God right now and achieving the prime goal of life.

THE LAMP IS LIT

Everything becomes visible the moment the lamp is lit. Likewise, the glow of knowledge is a must to remove the gloom of ignorance by the grace of an illumined and God-realized seer. It is just like an extinguished lamp regaining light by touching a live lamp. Again, nothing can be seen if the eye-lens is obstructed. But the skill of a competent surgeon who performs the requisite operation, imparts sight to the eye again. All things then become visible. We don't fumble and stumble, and complete our journey comfortably. But we face darkness all around until the crust on the eye is removed. Likewise, the veil of ignorance is removed by the True Master and one is able to discern and discriminate between the true and the false. One automatically starts loving the Ultimate Truth i.e. God. But one, who has not seen or known God, cannot love Him by mere flight of fancy. An apt analogy is that of a lovely name in her lap. In case she is asked to love it warmly asked and look after it, she would turn round and say: How can I in the absence of the child when she is actually blessed with one. Likewise, after God-realization, divine devotion dawns on us inevitably.

SOURCE OF DEVOTION

Devotion comes from God-knowledge, which can be bestowed only by a knower of God. One can become a true devotee only after the True Master reveals God. The world has not yet grasped this simple truth. Matrimonial guides can impart some knowledge about the traits of a bride, but she cannot enjoy conjugal felicity unless she is united in a wedlock to her husband. Similarly, the holy books describe the attributes of God and devotees. We cannot, however, become devotees until we shed ego and surrender to the True Master. Devotion consists in serving the True Master and realizing God, devotion also means belief in the One, perception of the One and faith in the One.

SOURCE OF JOY

Suppose, a child is witnessing a fair. He is all joy, so long as he is holding his father's finger. Every sight brightens his face. He enjoys eating sweets,

seeing the circus and tableaux. But engrossed in some scene, in case the child gets apart from his father, he feels quite forlorn and helpless. He becomes restless and cries bitterly. All the color and glamour of the fair fall flat on him. He feels as if the animals in the circus are out to swallow him. Likewise, a devotee, linked with the lord, and relying on Him, relishes all the activities of the world as pleasant experiences. Apparently, he is totally absorbed in them, but actually this is not so. He is very wide-awake from within. He is very God conscious. He is tied fast to the apron-strings of his True Master. At no cost, he is willing to break this link. Those who disintegrate themselves from Father-God and are lured by the glamour of the fair (world), however, go astray. They are lost souls. For them, life is verily a hell. Every object of the world is a source of suffering for them.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

The devotees always before us personal and practical experiences of their life, as also those of their ancient counterparts. They also unfold the transformation in their own lives. Personal experience and transformation are very significant in the domain of devotion. We feel satisfied, when we have seen an object personally. We hear a lot about God in various congregations and religious discoursed. We, however, acquire steadfast faith in God only when, with the benevolence of True Master, we realize God as immediately proximate to us. Faith without actual knowledge is blind and wavering Steadfastness comes only after attaining God-knowledge.

PEACE AND HAPPINESS

Rich people and rich countries would have attained abundant peace and happiness if material objects could confer the same. But it is not so. The only way to experience peace and bliss is to integrate ourselves with the Almighty, the reservoir of these boons. When we link ourselves with the Lord, the entire humanity becomes our own. This automatically generates the spirit of brotherhood and fellow-feeling.

UNION VS SEPARATION

Hatred can never foster faith and unity-it always divides. Love, however, can unite and stabilize us. It can enable us to enchant the whole world and attain all-round happiness.

Union means merger after drenching oneself in love. Here, merger refers to merger of an individual soul with the supreme soul i.e. God. When the two are apart, love is out of question. Love develops by the merger of an individual soul with the supreme soul. Thereafter it permeates our lives, so much so that even after extinction of the body, love does not vanish, but endures. The reason is that such ethereal love is imperishable. The body composed of flesh and bones is, however, perishable. Thus, the love of a God-realized soul is eternal.

When the individual soul is alienated from the supreme soul, it knows no solace. It is in distress. It is just like a lady who loses her husband or is separated from him. Her joys and pleasures vanish. Fine garments no longer impart charm or appeal to her. After separation from her husband, all the color and glow of the world have no meaning for the bride. Separation, in fact, symbolizes suffering. Union, however, is synonymous with bliss. Realization of the desired object brings us joy, be it of wealth, wife or son, and the like. The crux of the matter is that realization and deprivation cause us weal and woe respectively, though for a limited period. All this drama is enacted by God, perhaps for enlightening us about the reality. Our soul remains restless on account its 'separation' from the Supreme Soul, just as we experience tension due to deprivation into fulfillment, in order to ensure abiding bliss. But for such a step, all material objects and wealth are not capable of affording us genuine blessedness.

GRACE

Grace is grace. It does not hang on any deed. It is not the fruit of a particular action. It descends automatically, spontaneously, without any exertion or endeavor. One, who surrenders and entrusts himself to the gracious God, is blessed with divine grace imperceptibly.

A poor orphan may not be able to gain riches or social status, in spite of all his aspirations and enterprises. However, in the event of his adoption by a wealthy person, he becomes master of millions in a moment, besides attaining a prominent social status. Similarly, after being blessed by God, a person becomes great regardless of his merits. All happiness is at his beck and call. This is precisely known as a grace.

Suppose a poor neighbor of ours has a diligent, honest and capable son. Unable to continue his studies because of poverty, the son may humbly

solicit our help. In case we finance his education, we would keep a note of it. He would feel extremely grateful, even if he returns our money. As against this, we keep no account of the huge amount spent on upbringing and education of our own son, even if he is poor in studies and is ungrateful. He may not even feel indebted or thankful to us. Nevertheless, we feel delighted to invest money in his education, etc. And the son too feels satisfied. Likewise, God fulfils the needs of all and sundry. Those, who regard God as good as their father, evince all gratitude to Him. But those, who consider God as their very Father, feel immune from such a burden. They are recipients of His grace.

We must not bear any grievance against God. No matter, if we don't have shoes, we do have feet all right. What could we possibly do, if we had been deprived even of feet? We must be ever grateful to God in all circumstances and submit to His will. For, God showers His grace only on contented folk, who bow to His will.

KNOW AND WORSHIP

The question is whether we know the God we worship and do follow His will. Our God-worship can commence and be consummated only when we know him and follow the Master's word. Some complain that God-knowledge has not proved fruitful for them. But the fruit comes from living up to God-knowledge i.e. by practice and not by lip-service. For example, a bus is shown to someone and he is told that it runs and carries passengers, easily, from one station to another. But he would be benefited only if he, actually, travels by it. Similarly, mere God-knowledge would not do. We have got to repose faith in Him, rely on Him and make Him a part and parcel of our every day life. Only then we develop divine attributed and shed malice and hostility towards others. we become true devotees only after we imbibe the spirit of brotherhood, fellow-feeling and universal love and translate it in our every day dealings.

REMOVE EGOISM

A question often crops up: Why the masses do not adopt life of love, amity and unity and, consequently, enjoy bliss and beatitude? Why do people prefer a life of conflict, malice and hatred? The reason is obvious. Out of egoism, everyone considers that his style of life is supreme. He does not like to forsake it. It is like an ant carrying filth in his mouth, rendered incapable

of relishing anything sweet. It, however, regains the relish after removal of the filth from its mouth. Similarly, an arrogant person cannot appreciate and experience the sentiments fail to bestow bliss without the spirit of humility. The concepts planted by the world for our emulation are of superiority complex, egoism, riches and power. Thus, under the impact of egoism, we are driven towards malice, hatred and jealousy. Scramble for riches, name and fame, out of sheer ignorance, has divided mankind.

Egoism is erased only by the light of the supreme and universal power i.e. God. Enlightened persons perceive the same spark of divinity pulsating in everyone. Consequently, they do not clash with one another, but live together amicably.

MAKES IMMORTAL

Every person born must face death one day. But one, who has been blessed by the True Master with God-knowledge, knows no death. He attains immortality.

STUDENT AND TEACHER

A student desirous of acquiring knowledge, must regard his teacher as more capable than himself. He shall have to bow before the teacher. Only then, would knowledge permeate his mind. The student, who considers himself at par with the teacher, cannot imbibe knowledge. Likewise, God-knowledge can be attained only after we shed our ego and humbly invoke the True Master.

COLOURED GLASSES

At times, our vision, though quite normal, is tainted by the color of the glasses we wear. This is not the fault of our vision but is due to the color of our glasses. Likewise, when we put on the egoistic glasses, everything becomes topsy truvy. We shall have to remove these glasses to perceive the reality, i.e. realize God.

TRUE MASTER

FAITH AND DEVOTION

Full faith in the True Master has been acknowledged as supreme by all sages and devotees. Such faith coupled with devotion fosters divine traits and discipline in every aspect of life. It also promotes unity and peace besides imparting steadfastness to us. Devilish impulses like jealousy and malice are replaced by mutual love and co-operation. We also imbibe endurance to face suffering and get rid of narrow-mindedness through broad vision. Transcending the limiting barriers of castes and countries, the cosmic concept of the prosperity of others and feel contented with our lot.

KNOWS THE TRUTH

One cannot find happiness without the realization of God; and God-realization is not possible without the benevolence of the True Master. But who is the True Master? The popular notion is that a True master is a supernatural being. This is incorrect. One, who possesses and imparts the knowledge of God or Truth, is a True Master. Knowledge of God, exposes the unreality of the material world and makes one tranquil and serene.

NO. RITUALS

The True Master does not involve us in penance and rituals. Such ritualistic practices do not impart solace to the soul but simply accentuate arrogance. On the other hand, one goes on sinking ceaselessly in the mire of materialism, as arrogance increases. The True Master, however, liberates us of such chains.

ONLY MEANS

Message of the True Master is the same supreme and immutable from time immemorial. His word of love and light dispels all illusions and delusions. Similar luminous word was communicated by the Sage Ashtavakra to King Janak in olden days. Thus the king was illumined with God-knowledge and was able to discriminate between truth and falsehood. Such a word from the True Master is indeed grand. For, it transforms and streamlines our impulses, our destinies and our lives. The world, however, infuses anger and hatred in us and alienates us from one another. custodians of religion profess to practice religious values but actually inject malice, hostility and ego. The True Master, however, teaches us to be humble loving. The devotees consecrate their body, brain and belongings to the True Master. This generates in them the spirit of service, humility and devotion. Thus, they are

blessed with the fruit of God-knowledge. The worldlings, however, first want the fruit. They would pay homage to the True Master afterwards. This never happens. First of all, we have to sow the seed. Thereafter it sprouts. Then the plant grows and fructifies. A seed has first to be sown, nourished and nurtured before it yields us fruit. Today people wish to attain the fruit through arrogance and pride. This is not possible. The grace of the True master is the only means for attaining the fruit of God-knowledge.

NO ANTECEDENTS

The True Master never assesses the antecedents of an aspirant. He straightaway embraces the seeker and blesses him with God-knowledge. This is, indeed the hallmark of a True Master. The function of a physician is to cure the ailing person and not probe into his profession or his antecedents. A healthy person would not approach a physician. The physician is primarily meant to relieve suffering. Likewise, the True Master manifests himself in the world to redeem suffering and guide the people to righteousness.

The popular notion concerning the True Master is that he does not entertain the sinners for this reason, the sinners and vagrants should not be introduced to him. Actually, this view is incorrect, none of the prophets and Great masters shunned even the social outcasts. On the contrary, they embraced even those who were hated by their own kinsmen and treated them as equals. Many such instances are found in the scriptures: Balmiki, the dacoit, and Bhilini, a low used to plunder others, turned a new leaf, after his contact with True Master, and came to be known as a great sage. He even composed numerous classics. History does not disclose Bhilini as a very religious lady. Shi was, however, an ardent devotee of Lord Rama who on learning of her miserable plight as outcast, took compassion and blessed her. Thus, despite her low caste, she is revered more than many high caste saints and sages. This is not because of her virtues, but because of her total dedication, humility and self-surrender. That is why the gracious Lord exalted her.

CHARACTERISTICS

A True Master is not to be identified by his appearance or attire. Dispelling all our illusions and delusions he integrates us with the Almighty regardless of our merit and demerit. He brings home to us that though man is the crown of creation, God is his overlord. He also teaches us that we should be divine devotees because without God-realization and God-devotion human life is

worthless. Lack of God-consciousness is an indication of egoism that blocks spiritual bliss. Everything tastes bitter to person suffering from fever. Likewise one who inflated by egoism, can never 'relish' God-knowledge. We can be enlightened only after shedding our ego. It is only then that we become devotees. Egoism alienates us from God. God-realization is possible only by the grace of the True master after shedding our ego.

Emancipation means 'merger' with the Maker. It is popularly believed that for attaining emancipation, one has to give up one's (physical) body, which harbors impulses like avarice, ego, lust, attachment and anger. This is not so. What is actually required is not shedding of the body but shedding of ignoble impulses. Shedding here does not mean destroying but bridling and harnessing.

As we know emancipation was achieved by devotees, while living and not after death. They affirmed during their life-time that they had been redeemed. Such an abiding consummation can be attained only by the grace of the True Master.

A SAVIOUR AND LIBERATOR

We cannot escape the consequences of our actions good or bad. The True Master can, however, forgive and save us from the consequences of our deeds.

This concept is often countered on the ground that the wheel of Karma (Causation) is inexorable. The sinner can in no case escape the consequences of his sins. Such a concept is sheer ignorance and delusion.

A murderer is generally sentenced to death if proved guilty. Even his appeal to a higher court is dismissed, because justice warrants such a penalty for murder. The culprit cannot escape this fate under the law. But, it, after having been disappointed at all levels, he files a mercy petition to the President or the highest authority, he may be pardoned. No body can question such a pardon.

Likewise, the sinners can be saved and forgiven by the True Master. For, the latter is the image of God Almighty. The sinners, like the culprit, may, however, humbly invoke his forgiveness and grace by making a clean confession of his sin, feeling sorry for it, pledging to refrain from similar

lapses and begging for mercy. In case the sinner, like the criminal, sincerely seeks forgiveness in this spirit, he may be forgiven because the True Master is the reservoir of compassion. The pardon is granted by him without diluting the sanctity of the Karmic Law (Law of Cause and Effect). The sanctity of the law stands in tact. It is recited in scriptures that such and such sinner was pardoned, such and such sinner transformed in to a seer, an devil redeemed.

HIS WORD

The word of the True Master imparts divine enlightenment i.e. God-realization. One derives happiness form an object, only by knowing and appreciating it. Without proper knowledge, we cannot derive benefit from anything we possess. Wealth buried in our home cannot remove our dire poverty. We become prosperous only when such wealth comes to light and reaches our hands. Likewise, the divine treasure is just around us and proximate. But we can enjoy its bliss only when the word of the True Master imparts God-knowledge to us. The enlightened saints enjoy immunity from the chains of birth and death.

In a jail one comes across culprits as well as officers. The formers are in chains and humiliated. The latter, however, are free and respected. Similarly, the world comprises both enlightened and unenlightened folk. The enlightened ones are glorified. The latter are condemned to the bondage of repeated births. We have been blessed with God-knowledge by the grace of the True Master. God, the Great Giver, always stands by us. He is also our guard. Hence, we must go on disseminating God's message of Truth in the world dauntlessly.

CLEANS THE MIND

Supposing a mother, after giving bath to her child and clothing him in a fine dress, sends him out to play. By playing in mud, the child, however, soon soils himself badly in a few minutes. Consequently, it may be hard to even identify the child. But will the mother not be able to identify her child? She shall certainly be able to. Likewise, man 'steps' into the world, originally, as a clean and pure being. But he is so deeply coated in material and sectarian coatings that he loses his identity. The True Master, however, knows and identifies him. He uplifts him, divests him of religious crusts and coatings, and makes him a clean and pure human again. This is exactly what the

devotees are doing. They are bringing man closer to man and God. Washing off the dirt from the body of the child, annoys him, no doubt. He cries bitterly. The mother, however, knows that it is most imperative. She does not, therefore, bother about the cries of the child. Similarly, when the True master removes religious, communal and malicious mud from the human minds, this touches them. But when they realize their real self, ere long they are all joy.

TRUE BARGAIN

The achievements of the true masters are eternal. For instance, the service rendered by Guru Nanak to saints, though limited to rupees twenty only, endures forever. It is extolled even today as symbolizing true bargain (Sacha Sauda). It is universally acknowledged that Guru Nanak was really a great saint. He served the saints and dedicated his entire life to humanism.

Surely, Guru Nanak's age was not lacking in men of riches, who must have donated lakhs in charity. Yet their names are missing from history. They could not command reference and glory equal to a disciple of Guru Nanak, let alone the Guru himself. They aimed at a wrong target i.e. showmanship. Guru Nanak earned infinite glory, because he spent rupees twenty for a true cause.

TRANSFORMATION

Guru Nanak's mission of salvation was not limited to good people. He inspired more of the outcasts and explained to them that all their sins would be washed if they sought refuge in God. He transformed them in this manner and not by rites and rituals, or recitation of scriptures or by holy baths and idol worship. History tells us the type of people encountered by Guru Nanak. One of them was Sajjan, the swindler. By his radiant countenance and tidy dress, he took Guru Nanak to be a rich person. He demanded money of the Guru who remarked that the 'wealth' he possessed could not be grabbed unless he (Guru Nanak) himself gave it. On inquiry, the Guru explained that he possessed the treasure of divine wealth, which he bestowed upon Sajjan. He blessed him with God-knowledge. He also told him that neither his wife nor children nor friends, for whom he was committing the crimes, would stand by him. Thus, Sajjan, the swindler, turned a great devotee and a legendary figure. The moral is that we cannot become devotee by our own efforts or by prayers and worship without the grace of a True Master.

HE AND HIS DEVOTEES

Even the companions of enlightened saints are redeemed. The person so liberated, are never caught up in the round of births and deaths. They transcend all tensions and turmoils. Imbibing the message of the True Master in mind actually means inculcation of God-consciousness and unwavering faith in God. Such a devotee becomes as good as the True Master. One who imbibes the message of the True Master and is firmly integrated with him actually symbolizes him.

An encounter with such a devotee is as fruitful as that with the True master. The lamp that is connected with the power house, (be it far or near), sheds light, But the disconnected one fails to emit light, even if located in the premises of power house. The utterance of one, dedicated to True master and God, imparts bliss to the listeners like that of the True master himself. Even our association with those who have who have alienated themselves from the congregation, the True Master and God, threatens to rupture our ties with the congregation. Hence, we must shun such heretics and disregard their words. We must strengthen our relations with the devotees who are welded with the True Master and assembly of saints.

WHAT PLEASES HIM

The True Master does not expect service in terms of money or material. Nor is flattery of the True Master the road to greatness. The true Master assesses the merit of the disciples by their success in overcoming egoism. This is the sole yardstick of the True Master. Everyone serves the True Master according to his capacity and resources. The story goes that a certain disciple a king offered two gold coins to the True Master as a token of his devotion. A poor man, however, offered only two pies. It was the offering of the poor man that was greatly praised by the True master. On inquiry, the King admitted that he had lakhs of such gold coins with him. The poor man had, however, offered his all to the True Master. This was indeed the basis of the appreciation by the True Master is certainly not impressed by the amount of offering of a disciple. What really matters is the sentiment of the disciple. When Baba Avtar Singh, who had taken the entire responsibility of maintaining him, would object. Baba Buta Singh one day said to Baba Avtar Singh, “Do you wish to grab the entire reward yourself? Does none else need it? By inducing the disciples to serve, I simply teach them to sow the

seed in order to reap the fruit. The True Master is a bestower, not a beggar. I wish to see everybody happy and prosperous. That is why I exhort them to serve.” Service must be based on such a faith, free from all tensions and hypocrisy.

A teacher is besides himself with joy at the success and achievement of his pupil. He extols the brilliant performance of his pupils. This does not confer any material gain on him. Yet he feels jubilant that his teachings have been imbibed by the disciples. The teacher also feels confident that his pupil would be ranked as a scholar and bring luster to his name. Similarly, the True Master rejoices on finding that his disciples abide by his teachings. He showers his blessings on them and glorifies them.

TRUE RELIGION

NON-SECTARIAN

God is one and common for all, not related to any particular religion or sect. God does not belong to any particular caste or brotherhood either. Like God Himself, His devotees too are above any division into particular castes, creeds or sects. Actually, true religion does not teach malice or hatred at all. It does not segregate, but integrates us. It gives the message of universal love and affection.

SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION

Currently, religion is being mistaken by the world as spirituality. Religion is related to a particular type of culture, worship, thought or creed, bound in narrow tracks. Human soul gets choked up in these narrow shackles and longs for liberation. Consequently, mistaking religion for spiritualism, man even denies the existence of spirit and turns an atheist. In fact, spiritualism is universal. Religion is parochial. Spirituality links us with the Supreme Power, i.e. God and endows us with universal vision. As against this, religion binds us into barriers and makes us narrow-minded.

Our prophets, seers and great personages, invariably, exhorted us to become spiritual, universal and humanist by integrating ourselves with the one Almighty. Their message is common for the entire world, not for a particular sect or community. Those who claim to be the followers, however, divide the people in the name of prophets and the great spiritual personages, into

different religious labels. Actually, so-called religions are not based on spiritual teachings of the prophets. Their followers hardly imbibe the truthful message expounded by the prophets. They simply create divisions among mankind. In fact, they alienate the people from spiritualism and God. No man would deny the existence of God and soul, if some illumined seer educates us properly about the real significance of spiritualism. On enlightenment, knowing God and soul, even material and scientific develop the vision to view the whole humanity as our one family and sacrifice anything for it. We would not then make any destructive and lethal weapons either.

You, who have understood this mystic truth, have to diffuse the resultant happiness in the world. The light and truth attained by you is not to be limited to yourself, but should be transmitted to every home. Only then, the rest of the world, after being illumined with Truth, would be able to enjoy this life and be redeemed.

THE ONLY TECHNIQUE

Consciousness of our emergence from the same light and our descent from the same Father God should destroy all discord. We cannot be brothers if we have different fathers. This is, however, possible if we regard Rama, Allah, God and Waheguru as one and the same Father. In that case, the feelings of malice and malevolence surging in our hearts, would be replaced by those of love and union. This is the only technique of merging ourselves into one entity. None other.

Mere penance, prayer and worship cannot transform our lives, nor bestow bliss on us, as long as we are mired in materialism. Realization and consciousness of God and integration with Him, coupled with enforcement of His injunctions, would, however, saturate our life with solace, bliss and beatitude.

HUMANISM

Religious preachers and those claiming to be the custodians of religion are involved in hollow ritualism. They have alienated the masses from one another, in order to consolidate their own prestige. Prophets have never practiced such discrimination. Their only distinctive feature was that a seer, born in Arabia or India, upheld the culture and civilization of his native

country. Such petty differences notwithstanding, the basic essence of all religions is one and the same. All religions inspire us to become humans first of all. We shall be entitled to be called true Hindus, Muslims or Sikhs only when we uphold human values. Without this basic trait, we cannot be either true humans or true devout.

ONENESS OF MANKIND

Undaunted by the risk to his life, Lord Christ preached the message of god (Truth) for the redemption of mankind. His entire life was devoted to teaching love, humility and spirituality. The sole underlying philosophy of his teachings was oneness of mankind and oneness of our origin, i.e., God. Like Jesus, all seers realized and worshipped the omnipresent God and dedicated all their life to this cause. After God-realization, their message was one of humanism.

NO CONFLICT

No sage or saint has ever accorded superiority to a particular religion, caste or brotherhood. All of them eliminated casteism. Their target was establishment of Kingdom of God. Hindu spiritual annals gave the pride of place to Lord Rama and Lord Krishna. Bhilni and Hanuman could not be reckoned as eminent devotees if Lord Rama believed in casteism. Lord Krishna had many big personalities as his friends and relations. But he preferred to share simple meals with Vidur-the son of a maidservant. He deemed it a privilege to stay with him.

Likewise, Prophet Mohammad's biography reveals that he embraced every aspirant and visitor. Lord Jesus Christ too inspired us on the same lines. His tenets teach us to ignore all distinctions and discriminations. Guru Nanak's career is replete with similar values. Present day society would prefer to condemn, Sajjan the swindler, than reform him. Guru Nanak, however, transformed him into a devout. In view of his numerous ignoble deeds, Guru Nanak should, normally, have disowned him. All the Great Masters, however, carry the message of brotherhood and compassion. They rise above the considerations of caste and status, and treat everyone alike. These are precisely the tenets of the Nirankari Mission.

EQUAL RESPECT

All great masters and saints are free from the feelings of discrimination. Despite professing to be their followers, our hearts, however, are hotbeds of discrimination. Actually, we do not abide by a single teaching of theirs. We could claim to be their followers if we were to adopt even one percent of their teachings. It is an open secret that today, even the holy places, constructed for propagating Truth, have been divided by us into sectarian compartments. And even after creating so many divisions, we think we are serving the cause of religion. In this manner, religion is being degraded, mutual discord is mounting and love is vanishing. Love abides only among the devotees who see God face to face. They know no discrimination; rather they have equal respect and regard for all.

SCRIPTURES

All religious books have been composed for us. They contain precious prescriptions and valuable secrets. It is our duty to show them due reverence. But it is wrong to think that they would reveal God. Construction of a bungalow first necessitates preparation of its plan. But the plan by itself cannot solve our problem of accommodation. Our scriptures too are mere plans. They simply reveal particulars about God, his nature, His location, his complexion and ways and means of realizing Him. God is an entity entirely different and distinct. Yet like the plan of the house, we have to take care of the scriptures and keep them safely. We cannot reside in a house existing only in a plan. Nor can such a house protect us from heat and cold. Likewise, we must look after our scriptures properly with full reverence. Without, however, realizing God, mentioned therein, we cannot get rid of worries and woes nor redeem ourselves.

RITUALS

Experiences of ancient seers stand recorded in holy books. It is our bounden duty to act on them. It is a sin and blasphemy to dub any of these acts as futile or worthless. Indiscriminate use of any article or tenet can, however, be harmful. We may also go wrong in case we perform these acts without grasping the spirit behind them. Even use of elixirs like milk and ghee can, at times, prove fatal. Hence it is important to understand the spirit underlying all actions.

Certain actions inspire us to realize God. They promote our religious aptitude. But most of our actions concern our social, cultural, financial and political life, not our soul. Without rhyme or reason, we correlate them with religion and God. This entails risk of loss instead of gain. For instance, fasts, havans (sacrificial fire), cow-protection, holy recitations, pilgrimages, etc. have, actually, little to do with our soul. Knowledge of rules of health, clean atmosphere, harvests, of history and geography is essential for our life. The Nirankari Mission does not require one to give up these activities. It teaches us to comprehend their reality before practicing them.

It is good to have appetite. But it can prove fatal if not satisfied. Hence, it is essential both to stimulate and satisfy the appetite.

Congregations and readings from holy books should foster a craving and inspiration in human mind for God-realization, and help in diverting it towards righteousness. Hence their necessity. But want of God-realization and integration of the individual soul with the Universal soul for long would erode our dedication. Consequently, we would suffer.

Currently, the speedy and massive growth in the number of atheists is due to the abnormal surge in the unfulfilled aspiration for God-realization. Hence, it is important to satisfy such mounting aspiration speedily.

Food is essential for satisfying hunger and raw materials are essential for preparing meals. But one, who remains preoccupied simply with collecting raw material and preparing meals, cannot live long without eating. Thus, after preparing a meal, it is imperative to eat it. Our aim should not, therefore, be confined to involvement in routine religious activities. We must imbibe their real objective. The goal of all rituals is God-realization. Hence, we must rid our selves of the web of rituals and realize God as soon as possible.

Ritualistic pursuits by themselves, generally, generate arrogance. Even if years of performance of rituals do not yield the fruit of God realization, but only intensify craving for God, then too, the person concerned deserves congratulations for such pursuits. For, it may enhance his fervor and aspiration for God-realization. To this end, he would exert himself more

vigorously and seek an illumined seer. He would, thus, develop a keen yearning for and faith in hearing and imbibing the luminous message.

Then he would take refuge with a True master or illumined seer. Thus, his yearning for God-realization would certainly be fulfilled. Appreciation of the spirit underlying rituals and a sincere craving for realizing God cultivate humility and faith.

RITUALS AND SUPERSTITIONS

It is a human frailty that we do not pay even a little fraction of our attention to benevolent pursuits and God-realization, as we do to worldly affairs. We blindly go on pursuing conventional rituals. This cannot, however, yield spiritual solace. Rituals would multiply tensions.

All the seers, prophets and enlightened souls have affirmed that rituals concern the physical environment, not the spirit or soul. Rituals can develop in us mundane skills, no doubt, but thereby we cannot attain spiritual peace and redemption. However, such practitioners of rituals say they are following in the footsteps of their ancestors and need not do anything else. In worldly affairs, however, they seldom emulate their forefathers. On the contrary, they consider it necessary to ensure that all their enterprises should be profitable. But in religious pursuits, they blindly follow their forefathers. They never pause to think about the gain or loss of adopting such customs.

An illustration. At the time of the entry of a bride in the husband's house, a cat came in the sight. The mother-in-law regarded it as an ill-omen and hid under a basket. The bride, who was watching, thought that this was the traditional custom of the family connected with the arrival of a bride. In course of the time, when her own son got married, she thought that non-observance of custom of concealing the cat, would amount to a bad omen. She too did likewise.

Blind beliefs develop in this manner. Even today such superstitions abound in the world. We have ourselves improvised such bondages and rituals for us, arbitrarily. They have nothing to do with divine enlightenment or devotion. What is needed is that the right spirit of religious venture undertaken by us, be first well understood by us lest we should fall a prey to such superstitions.

RECITE AND PRACTISE

A true devotee reposes faith in and practises the message of the great master and prophets. Suppose, a son receives a letter from his father, intimating that he is reaching

Delhi by such time and by such train. The son conveys the news to his friends and acquaintances, but neither himself goes nor deposes anyone else to receive his father. Consequently, the father is displeased with him. The son is seriously mistaken, if he thinks that by simply displaying and publicising the letter or taking reverential care of the same, he will be appreciated by the father. On the other hand, if father reading the letter even once, he receives the son at the railway station, the latter would surely be highly pleased with him.

Similarly, repeated reading of the holy books, would be us no good, unless we act upon their teaching. Mere reading and studying the holy books is futile. Likewise, hearing, reading and even spilling out the meaning of the holy book is vain unless we make their message a part and parcel of our life.

MAN-MADE DIFFERENCES

It has been affirmed by the ancient sages of all countries that truth is one and unchangeable. But dazed by the materialistic glamour of some countries and communities, we set up for ourselves numerous dividing barriers. We regard our faith superior to that of others. Such notions are the product of narrow-mindedness. Saints and sages rise above the distinctions of countries, communities, as nations and languages. They look upon all humans as equal, regardless of their country, nationalities and language.

Our notion that the divine knowledge unfolded in the Gita is different from that of the Quran is erroneous. All holy books speak of one and the same God. Actually, the attainment of the divine knowledge means identification of Brahman or the Absolute. This is the verdict of all ancient saints and seers. It is a different matter that their style of life, dress and languages, varied with the place of their birth. Their technique of unfolding the divine knowledge too might be different. But the basic mystic knowledge bestowed by them was essentially the same.

EGOISM

Today, the bulk of mankind is inflated with ego. Everybody claims himself to be superior to others. Such an attitude cannot possibly unite. Ego generates superiority complex as also tensions and tears in every home. The Hindus consider their religion pristine and supreme and their culture matchless. Similarly, the Muslims regard their religious concept and culture as unique. Likewise, the Sikhs and the Christians talk tall of their culture and faith. Nobody, however, bothers, to reflect on his own plight, though everyone takes pride in the past Gurus or prophets. Merely recalling past glory is futile.

Doubtless, no saints or seer in the past preached malice, jealousy and divisive sentiments among the people. Lord Rama, Krishna and Christ, prophet Mohammad and Guru Nanak, all preached the message of truth, love, unity, peace and humanism. But today we are out to create discord and disruption in the name of religion and the Great Master, who believed in the oneness of humanity and strove to uplift all. Ironically, the so-called followers of one particular Prophet and Great Master regard themselves superior and others inferior. This is the pervasive sickening scenario all around that generates hatred. The Nirankari Mission, however, inspires the people towards humanism, true devotion and guides them to the right path. The Nirankari devotees are proud of their devotion to God and the True Master, not too material objects.

God is far from the minds of those who are arrogant because of their worldly pelf and power. A utensil already full to the brim leaves no scope for addition of anything else. Similarly, a mind replete with ego of its intelligence, wealth or physical prowess has no room for God consciousness. Hence, renunciation of egoism and sense of “doership” is a must for God-realization. The devout always believe that all their talents are gifts from God. This is their basic ethos.

PLACES OF WORSHIP

The worship and devotion currently practiced is by and large money-oriented. The rich, who can spend a lot can manage to be regarded as great devouts. Their liberal charitable donations would lead people to credit them as highly virtuous persons. Just possible, such people might have amassed money through frauds, yet, apparently, they do attain the status of righteous

persons in society. On the other hand, the poor people are not acknowledged as devotees by anybody nor accorded any importance. They cannot serve others lavishly as rich people do, nor perform sacrifices or organize big congregations. They do not, however, usurp others' money and are clean in their dealings. They may not ever be permitted to enter certain holy places. A rich person, however, can gain entrance in any holy place, even at midnight. All this is mere fake devotion. This is worship of money, not of God.

The saints and devotees do not attach any importance to such devotion. They perceive the inner spirit of a person, not his outward attire or wealth. In their eyes, even a poor laborer with an affectionate heart, integrated with the Almighty, is a great devotee. Saints do not believe in devotion of display. They look to the spirit of the devotion.

CASTEISM

There is no dearth of people who hate to be touched by a low caste person and would take a bath, if so touched. They say that they would even defer their meals until they purify themselves again after a wash. They do not realize that no person has the right to hate another. Ever the target of our hatred, has, after all, been created by the same Supreme Father. By hating His children, how can we gain the love of the Father?

TOYS OF SUGAR

During festivals, skilled sweet-meat vendors prepare toys of sugar. They mould them into various shapes viz., of elephants, horses, camels, etc. When a person brings home such toys of sugar, his children clash with one another to grab a particular toy. He, however, knows very well that in substance, the toys are essentially the same. Yet, out of sheer ignorance, the children wrangle.

Currently, humanity is sailing in the same boat. All humans, created by God, are Identical. Nevertheless, some of them claim to belong to Bengal, some to Bihar themselves variously as Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians. There are others who give different surnames to themselves. The illumined seers, however, know the secret that they are all the handiwork of the same artist(Maker), made of the same material. An Indian or African has identical veins and blood-stream. Their composition is not different in any manner.

Their composition is not different in any manner. Their mutual religious and sectarian disputes are the outcome of sheer ignorance.

We find the world divided on the basis of castes and sects. The devotees integrate these different groups together. The narrow-minded wordings, however, confine themselves into separate narrow compartments and circumscribe others accordingly. In this manner the devotees and the wordings go on following divergent tracks.

WHY SUFFERINGS?

In America, a journalist put me the question: Why is starvation and poverty rampant in our country in spite of the fact that the people have faith in God, glorify Him round the clock, hold congregations, devotional vigils and prayers? He also wanted to know. Why is our country target of so many natural calamities in spite of pervasive God worship? I told him how I wished my countrymen turned true devotees and worshipped God after knowing Him. Then, they would certainly enjoy all round bliss.

DEVOTION

HIGH VALUES

Saints imbibe high values, not automatically, but by true devotion to God. Different views are prevalent about true devotion and how to imbibe it. We have not to make an issue of this point. But we must assimilate high values from every quarter. Firm faith in God and complete dedication to Him, constitute devotion. The latter also comprise selfless service, conviction, spiritual knowledge and matching action.

These values are imbibed by the grace of the True master. Devotion matures by sincere discipleship of the True Master. A true devotee is identified by his devotion to every word of the True Master. One who violates the direction of the True Master, cannot be called a disciple.

A disciple need not be a great scholar, a good singer or an eloquent speaker. Such traits are neither imperative nor impediments for a disciple. The idea is that nobody can be a true disciple if he does not act upto the teachings of the Master. The greatness of devotion lies in obeying the word of the Master. One, who disobeys the True Master, has no faith in him and renders

no service, is not in his good books. He is not entitled to be called a devotee even though he may praise the True Master. This principle operates everywhere. A good son must be obedient to his father. The son may be skilled in many jobs, may command a fine personality and popular esteem, but he cannot be called a good son if he is disobedient. Likewise, a true devotee acts on the teachings of his True Master and moulds his life accordingly, on devotion.

Devotion is based on submission to the divine will and righteous conduct. Submission to the divine will does not mean that we should praise God in prosperity but censure Him in adversity. This is not the way of a devotee. He accepts all divine decrees with a smile. He firmly believes that his gracious Lord can never err. Whatever He does is for his welfare. The devotee is not overjoyed and inflated when praised. Nor does he feel aggrieved when maligned. He accepts either of the situations, cheerfully and maintains poise and peace of mind. At times, we apprehend that someone is determined to injure and harm us. But no action is potentially conducive to our happiness. We, however, get impatient and restless. We wish to attain bliss instantly. Such a wish is not fulfilled immediately. It takes time. For example, a fruit tree sheds off all its leaves in autumn. This does not, however, spell its destruction. Actually, the tree is drawing full strength for its roots, from the soil in that season. Apparently, it looks that its leaves have gone forever, but after a few days new leaves and buds start sprouting. And the tree blossoms and becomes more fruitful than before. Likewise, the devotee is not anguished in a crisis. He knows that even a crisis is a mode of manifestation of God's grace. God is omniscient. How can we, with inadequate understanding, possibly know His ways? All doings of God are for our ultimate welfare.

SELF-EFFACEMENT

The devotees regard themselves as bonded slaves of their Master. In olden times, people used to buy slaves, who served their masters simply in lieu of bald bread. They were helpless and had no option but to serve their masters, even against their wishes. A true devotee, however, does not suffer from such a disability. Shedding all pride of body, brain and belongings, he voluntarily and humbly serves the True Master. This makes him joyful. He literally takes every word of the master as a gospel truth. But those, who do not repose full faith in the True Master, cannot gain anything. Lehna, the devotee of Guru Nanak, believed that even a Kikar tree would yield fruit.

History confirms that this actually happened. Lehna's faith elevated him to the status of the True Master (Guru Angad). But Guru Nanak's sons did not share similar faith and said, "This old man has gone off his head. Is it possible for a Kikar tree to yield fruit?" faith proved a boon for Lehna, but Guru's sons, who lacked it, lost.

A devotee believes that only the True Master is his sheet-anchor. And being always 'close' to him, the master invariably guards him. No power on earth can shake the devotee's faith. People take pride in their wealth, physical powers or beauty, but the devotee's sole prop and pride is his True Master. But for the True Master and God, the devotee has no other abiding staff. All worldly resources are perishable. Like clouds, they impart but only momentary shade, which gives way ere long by the heat of the sun. money, relations and political power, are but passing shadows. Only God's prop is steadfast and reliable. It bestows bliss here and hereafter.

A devotee firmly believes that the Almighty God can turn a prince in to pauper and vice-versa. If He so wills. But only those, who seek the refuge of the True master, place their reliance on God. Those who do not do so, are always in distress and anguish. The devotees, who have faith in the True master, feel happy even in suffering. Even a death in their family does not perturb them. They take it as the will of God and continue to congregate. Their faith in God is unshakable, regardless of the caustic comments of the society. Their suffering does not pinch them, as they take it as God's blessing in disguise. One, who takes refuge in the True Master, learns the art of surrendering to the divine decree.

It may be borne in mind that worldly crafts do not pay in the domain of devotion. Some persons want to impress the True master by their knowledge. But the Master is all-knowing. One, who serves the True Master, humbly, calmly and mutely, wins his love readily.

BENEVOLENT AND SERENE

The heads and hearts of the devotees are ever drenched in divine devotion. They have no friend or foe. They look upon all as equals. They invoke God's grace and light to redeem even their tormentors, because the latter do not know what they do. Even if persecutors, the devotees never wish ill or anguish of their persecutors. They wish well of one and all. They rejoice at the artistry of the Almighty, and focus the intensity of their love on Him.

They firmly believe that God is capable of enacting and miracle. That is why they accord the highest primacy to the artist, rather than to the art.

But the mankind, by and large, regards the material world as supreme and thus suffers. Despite enjoying plenty, the people admit that they are in distress, and cannot even sleep without consuming pills. The reason is that they worship mammon, which is ever changing and therefor, incapable of giving abiding happiness. The devotees of God, on the other hand, are immune to suffering, because their Lord, the reservoir of abiding bliss, is eternally stable. The state of a devotee is similar to that a loyal wife, the sole source of whose happiness is her lord (husband). The devotee is not enamoured of God's creation but of the Creator Himself. God is all for him. One, whose faith vacillates with the amount of available possessions, is not a true devotee. He is a devotee of mammon, not of God. He is not worthy of emulation. We must be devotee of God, the source of all bliss and joy and plenty.

The devotees are accustomed to lead a serene life. They do not set any conditions for their worship and devotion. Their faith in God is not subject to the fulfillment of any particular aspiration of theirs. Their approach is just like that of a devoted wife. Her husband does all he can to provide her the requisite amenities and happiness. But the wife never disowns him on his failure to purchase a saree for her. Saree or no saree, her husband does not lose for her the status and affection of a husband. Similarly, the devotees never disown God. Even if their wishes are not fulfilled.

REAL GIVER

A disciple invokes the protection of only the True Master and God, and not of anybody else. For, he knows that the real giver in the universe is God. Any assistance rendered even by friends, relations or others, is regarded by the devotee as a gesture of grace from God Himself. An apt analogy is that of a devotee, who gets meals or refreshments prepared, for the entire congregation. Though financed by a particular person, yet the same may other quarter would be distributed by others. It would be a mistake to infer that these have been provided by the latter. Likewise, we receiver God's help in various ways and through countless hands, from time to time. Nevertheless, the devotees rightly believe that the real giver is none but God.

GOD IN EVERYONE

A true devotee, in fact is one who submits to the divine will. He beholds the same supernal God in all, loves and reveres all as His images. Such a devotee is always surcharged with nobility. Perceiving God closet to him, he shuns evil and never hurts anybody's feelings.

The devotee's thoughts, words and deeds, harmonize. There is no dichotomy between his utterance and action. His words act a cooling balm for everyone.

FAITH

A devotee regards himself inferior to his fellow-devotees. He believes that he possesses no merit and that all his achievements are attributable to God's grace. He is also convinced that God, who is all powerful, is his only prop.

This is illustrated by an ancient tale. Once the Master directed his devotee to go to the river and wash clothes as the day had dawned. The devotee obeyed. Actually, it was midnight, not dawn. The devotee knew this alright. Mindless of the prevailing darkness, the devotee, however, went to the river and returned after washing the clothes. The Master said, "It was hardly necessary to go so early, as it was yet midnight." All that the devotee said, "Master, you yourself make day and night. I am hardly concerned with all that. At your behest dawns my day or comes my night."

Thus, the devotee takes the word of the True Master as a gospel truth. Regardless of his great riches, he regards himself as the dust of the True master's feet. In spite of possessing all possible authority, he regards himself as the humblest being.

MAINSTAY AND RELIANCE

God is the mainstay of the devotees. Those who rely on different supports, waver and suffer. Such people are never decisive as to whose support they should invoke. One, relies exclusively on God, however, stays steadfast. Being anchored in the omnipotent Creator, his mind is always steady.

Take the case of a pet dog. He is not worried about his food. He knows that he shall get his meals from his master. Even if the meals are delayed, he is not depressed. On the contrary, stray dogs knock about here and there and

try to eat every dirty thing. Their hunger is never satisfied with any amount of food. Even after having their fill, they would like to taste filth. They lack contentment, and a master. But a pet dog seldom feels the pangs of hunger.

Likewise, if we bank only on the gracious God. We shall be immune from material appetites. Forgetting God, we cannot satisfy any need. Hence, we must stay happy and contented with divine dispensation. God gives more and more to a contented person. He fulfils his heart-left prayers. But we can get nothing by being anxious and restless. Reliance on God meets all our wants.

Hence, we must not erroneously believe that some power other than God would protect us or rich and powerful people would help and protect us. The devotees never commit such a mistake. They trust in God and are always provided. They are certain that even help from any other quarter would be forthcoming only by the command of God and only upto the measure willed by Him and no more. Hence, the devotees always take refuge in God and band in Him alone.

Reliance on the eternal Supreme Power, God, resolves all our tangles and tensions. If we rely on perishable things, instead of God, we are bound to suffer. Worldly goods are not stable. With change in our material props, we too waver. We feel terrified lest some other power should ruin us. Such thoughts would simply lead us astray from the righteous path. All seers and scriptures say that God is the cause of all causes His decrees are overriding. Man would not let others live, in case he were omnipotent. God himself is the master of primal power. We must, therefore, pin our complete faith in Him. Reliance on God refines and strengthens us supremely. Ego, however, derails us from our real goal and entangles us in vicious worldly webs.

SAVIOUR

The devotees who have integrated themselves with the Almighty and made Him their sheetanchor, are saved. Those, who disintegrate themselves are destroyed. This is just like the grains perched beside the axle of the grindstones of a mill. They are not crushed like other grains but remain in tact.

Communion with the Almighty obviously means knowledge and perception of the all-pervasive God as also practice of God remembrance, congregation

and prayer. We need not then knock about here and there. Quite often, alienation from God makes us apprehensive of pervasive afflictions and agonies. But God consciousness serves as a shield. It boosts our morale to face all misfortunes.

Lately, during our visits to England and America, we witnessed a morale boosting exhibition. People, young or old, are seated in a special train which traverses very frightful (but fictitious) scenes. Timid children and even adults weep and shriek out of fear. When they are told that all this is a fake show without any reality, they are pacified. The most cowardly fold are then no longer ruffles even by more horrible scenes. They understand that all this shamshow, because fake images cannot harm them. Thus, even an ordinary person becomes bold as soon as his cowardly impulses are dispelled. Likewise, even frightful situations faced in life by the devotees do not unnerve them. All the calamities and clamor of the world are unreal for them. God, the Supreme Father, is the real doer without whose will nothing can happen. The devotees are fully conscious of this fact. Nothing vests in the human hand. Rest assured, that nobody can do you any wrong. All this 'drama' is enacted by the Almighty just to fortify our willpower and make us dauntless. We need not be unnerved by fictitious and frightening episodes of life.

DIVINE DECREE

The devotees never dub any incident as unnatural. They are fully confident that every divine decree and action is designed for their welfare. The performance of saints looks more luminous after every crisis. It is all a divine drama and play of providence.

A drama contains a variety of scenes some scaring, some hilarious. Those who know that all this is merely a stage-show, are always cheerful. Likewise, the devotees rejoice at every development as handiwork of God.

Saints teach us that we must abide by the will of God, bank on Him exclusively, rely on the True Master and serve all. By owning God, the True Master, saints and devotees, we imbibe immense faith and strength and become great. The energy imparted to our bodies by foods such as milk and ghee is inferior to that of the divine word. The latter is supreme. The devotees do not rely on other powers but on the power of God. The wordings, however, bank on their physical powers, which they display

publicly. A devotee does not acknowledge such worldly powers, but regards the divine power as supreme. That is why, he is considered great. A devotee, who attaches no importance to mundane powers, enjoys abiding God-intoxication and bliss.

UNITES WITH GRATIOUS FATHER

God-consciousness leads even the intuitively blind to the goal. It is widely believed that one who has committed even a little sin and hardly performs rituals, a petty sinner who has no faith in God, cannot this view. They affirm that even such a person can be enlightened and redeemed by saints, despite all his vices and shortcomings. He too can become a devotee of God.

Vain and accursed are the diet, drink and dress of one, who has forgotten the gracious God and is embroiled in materialism. Our mind knows no peace if we disregard our father in his old age. He has looked after us since birth, brought us up and educated us. Our conscience will often accuse us of ingratitude and selfishness for neglecting our gracious father. We would also become target of censure of the society. All the comforts and amenities of life would not soothe our agitated minds. Likewise, one brushes experience bliss, if instead of loving God, one brushes Him aside or lacks sense of gratitude and faith in Him. All pleasures are fleeting like dreams. In case a married girl gets entirely involved and lost in material comforts and embellishments provided by the husband but does not care for him, she cannot possibly enjoy conjugal bliss. Likewise, one who is not dedicated to the Lord, seldom gains praise and happiness.

NOT ESSENTIAL

There are different types of (so-called) devotees in the world. Some wear a sacred mark on their foreheads, some are clad in coloured robes, some go naked even. All this is an eternal façade. A true devotee is hard to find. Currently, a particular semblance, form or dress alone is regarded as a symbol of a devotee. As a matter of fact, such things have no relevance to God-devotion. for instance, even a person clad in Khadi (handspun cloth), after getting coaching from a professor of English may become a scholar of this language. Khadi clothes do not stand in the way of this language. Nor do coat and pants necessarily help one to learn English. Today devotees are, generally, acknowledged as such, by virtue only of their dress or external appearance. They are not, however, true saints and devotees.

It is generally believed that practices such as hygienic living, bathing and worship, enable us to become devotees. Certain persons give the pride of place to prayers and penance. This view is, however, refuted by the teachings of ancient sages. Their lives illustrate that devotion comes from enlightenment. True devotees are those who identify God. Look at Arjuna. He did not accept every utterance of Lord Krishna as a gospel truth. Not was he originally an ardent devotee of the Lord. On the contrary, he utilized Lord's services as if the latter were a common man. However, Arjuna would consult Lord Krishna in temporal matters because of his statesmanship and expertise in warfare. But on the outbreak of the Mahabharata War, Arjuna was swayed by attachment. He visualised that in case he took up arms, his own kinsmen would be killed. His mind was in a dilemma. Lord Krishna, however, enlightened him. Arjuna was not then asked to undergo any penance or perform any ritual. This was not even possible in the battlefield.

All that the Lord did was to impart to Arjuna God-knowledge, since he had surrendered to him. The Lord revealed to him his Real Self or cosmic form. It was then that Arjuna was transformed into a true devotee and he vowed to the Lord. Wherefrom did devotion sprout in Arjuna in a minute? It was simply from divine enlightenment.

EXTERNAL APPEARANCE

External appearance and robes so not make one a devotee. A person clad in the uniform of superintendent of police does not actually become so. Even though, he may be mistaken as one, yet he will have to face the music when he is exposed.

Today, external appearance is generally accepted as the mark of a saint or devotee. But when forbearance and love, humility and humanism are lacking, the outward appearance is only a sham show. One who lives up to the teachings of the True Master, is a true devotee. It is such a devotee who proves to be a comfort and blessing to his family and the society. We must evolve as such ideal devotees.

DEVOTEES GUARDED AND GLORIFIED

Devotees are focused in God-consciousness. Thus like God, they too achieve immortality. Others, enamoured of wealth attain but temporary fame. One gets molded according to the focus of one's attention.

The devotees are anchored in God. They are, therefore, aided and graded by Him every moment. Unlike the wordings, who rely on Government or others, the devotees regard only God and the True Master as their sheet-anchors. No other power commands so much trust. The devotees enjoy the protective umbrella of God, round the clock. God Himself fulfils the desires of the devotees, everywhere, through some agency or the other. By various ways and means, God guards his devotees. A person, who banks on his own powers, is not protected. Draupadi first relied, vainly, on her own physical strength. But when she invoked the protection of the True Master, Lord Krishna, her honor was saved. Our wisdom and strength fail to protect us. God and the Master, however, positively protect us when we entrust ourselves to them. The distinguishing feature between a devotee and a wording is that the former perceives God as most proximate to him. The latter, however, deems God as a distant entity. That is why, God manifests Himself instantly and protects His devotees forthwith. On the other hand, those who consider the Almighty far apart, are looked after by Him, leisurely. The layman, who believes God to be stationed far above in the sky, is laboring under a delusion.

The devotees always glorify God, the True Master and the saints. This purifies their mind and heart and imparts them abiding happiness. It sublimates their lives. Thus, they too gain glory.

Saints and devotees have commanded reverence since the dawn of creation and would continue to do so. Prophets like Mohammad, Lord Rama, Lord Krishna, Lord Jeaus Christ and Guru Nanak are even today remembered with love and devotion. they had very rich and powerful contemporaries who, however, failed to evoke any admiration. We do not remember with love and reverence any scholar or any rich and powerful personage, as we invoke those who loved God, relied on Him and were dedicated to the True Master. Devotees even of low caste e.g. Bhiline and Sajjan, the Swindler and the like, gained boundless glory. In sum, the devotees, regardless of their worldly status, are adored.

THEY SERVE SELFLESSLY

It is worth remembering that a devotee serves not with an eye on any reward. He attends the congregation without any motive. His sole mission is to learn and serve selflessly. Thus, he goes on sowing the seed of good deeds, and reaps the reward automatically by the grace of the Lord. God Himself fills the coffers of his devotees and sorts out their problems. We too, must, serve selflessly, just as the parents serve their children without expectation of reward. The parents do not think for a moment that the children would repay them. They serve them out of love and the sense of duty, but do not keep any account thereof. The children, accordingly, learn to serve their parents, spontaneously, when they grow up. Service rendered with the expectation of fruit or reward is not true service. Any service worth the name must be selfless. The expectation of any reward is out of tune with the spirit of devotion. The wordings are usually motivated by calculations and accounts. But the devotees serve selflessly and silently, as a matter of course. That is why God bestows on them all possible bounties and blessings.

BRINGS BLISS

The bride, who fails to dedicate herself to her husband after marriage, cannot enjoy marital bliss. Similarly, the devotee who does not rid himself of arrogance and egoism even after attaining Divine Enlightenment, and does not consecrate himself to God completely, misses the supreme bliss.

Bowing at the feet of a saint or seer is the peak of devotion. All religions and holy books enjoin utmost humility and prostration at the feet of sages. Thereby one's heart is steeped in spiritualism. One, who serves all in a humble spirit and is free from any trace of egoism, achieves greatness. Disparity between our profession and practice alienates us from the assembly of saints.

In the event of any sorrow, suffering or tension, a devotee always invokes the help of his True Master and banks on God. He never solicits assistance or relief from the world at large.

MOTIVE

Very few approach the saints without any motive. They are not inspired by faith and love of God. Those, who engage in self-less devotion and serve the saints without any motive, have their wishes fulfilled by the benevolent God.

CONGREGATION

THE NEED

Certain devotees smugly think that after attaining divine illumination, they need not attend the daily congregation. They say that participation in Samagams and attending the congregations only at Babaji's visit would suffice. They also feel that status or standard and comprises mainly the multitude carrying on petty professions and belonging to lower castes. It is, however, blunder to think on these lines. For, the congregation is an assembly of saints. The presiding saint is verily an image of the Master. The members of the congregation invariably chant the glories of God and the True Master. Hence the necessity of attending the congregation. Considerations of status or false public prestige are untenable for avoiding or hesitating in participating in congregations. Attending congregation is a must.

Then love, reverence and good behavior, particularly towards fellow-devotees too, is must. Double-dealing and cunning are unwholesome practices. In case we fail to imbibe and practice the message of the True Master, even after enlightenment, we cannot attain felicity and evolve in devotion. A passenger, possessing a railway ticket is not disturbed by the arrival of the Travelling Ticket Examiner. He reaches his destination smoothly. But if he misbehaves with fellow-passengers, he can be ousted from the railway train. Even enlightenment cannot justify bad conduct, just as a railway ticket cannot grant immunity from the penalty of misconduct. This is true in the spiritual field as well. In case, after divine illumination, one misbehaves, quarrels with, cheats and trespasses on, others' rights, one is not treading the devotional path. Hence, we must remain wide-awake, refrain from evil and live like true devotees.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

Every country has a different language. For instance, 'Malaria' is designated differently in different countries. But the doctor, who can diagnose 'Malaria' (may he be speaking any language), would at once diagnose the ailment and prescribe the appropriate medicine. It would not be possible to cure the patient if the doctor gets bogged down in nomenclatures of the ailment, without knowing its reality. Today, the world is caught up in various

denominational tangles. This generates countless conflicts, sufferings and agonies. Without identifying the basic unity i.e. Absolute Truth, it is not possible to get rid of such conflicts and attain peace and harmony. The devotees of the Mission, speak different languages and follow different cultures. Yet they love each other. They are not blood-relations. Some hail from the Punjab, others from States. Their diet, dress, language and customs, are not common. Then what is the bond of unity among them? Even members of the same family do not see eye to eye with one another. Each (member) has his own peculiar style and outlook on life, at times, sharply conflicting with those of others. It is important to appreciate, therefore, the power of love and affinity, that has drawn these strangers to this common forum. The visitors are impressed, at the outset, by the spirit of deep love and harmony the devotees. When they come closer, they are blessed with practice of true knowledge and light. This enlightens them that, as humans, they are all one, carrying the same divine effulgence that has created and embellished them all. Thus, their delusion of diversity is dissolved.

DELIGHT

The devotees feel jubilant and joyous on meeting one another. They are knit together in the bonds of love and union. Whenever a devotee happens to see a fellow-devotee in a street or a bus, and does not get an opportunity of touching the latter's feet, his eyes nevertheless, exude love and greetings. Heartfelt affection manifests itself on their faces. Contact between the two devotees fosters true love. Love flowing out of touching of one another's feet, makes an impact on the onlookers. They are spontaneously fascinated by the love, reverence and humility of the devotees.

NO DISTINCTION

It is customary with saints to be nobly motivated towards every one. Only petty minds are swayed by small distinctions like casteism. Since God, our Creator, is casteless, it is irrelevant to talk of our caste. Hence, the Mission does not believe in casteism and other differences. It views everyone as a human being. Regardless of caste, religion and dress. For this reason, the Nirankaris, coming from different states of India, embrace one another and enjoy the congregations blissfully. This gathering can well be likened to a lovely garden of different flowers. Everybody relishes the spot made fragrant by a variety of flowers. This grand gathering is surcharged with the sweet scent of love and devotion. One who hates others, can never be happy.

It is the prime duty of a divine devotee to love everyone and cherish humanism truly. He must share the weal and woe of fellow-humans, without discrimination.

CHANGE

Our disposition is changed by congregations. We also imbibe the glow of divine love through congregation. The company of saints and devotees rids us of our bad habits and demerits such as hatred and slander.

SAINTS AND THEIR LIFE STYLE

IDEAL LIFE

A person residing in a palace and enjoying luxuries, does not necessarily lead an ideal life. This is not to condemn a life of luxuries. However, a saint or a divine devotee engaged in glorifying God, in a hut or palace, surely enjoys an ideal life. On the other hand one, who is devoid of divine devotion is also devoid of peace regardless of the place where he lives and the rank he holds. A person with an agitated mind cannot be joyful even admits all material affluence. One who is serene and has a contented mind, is worthy of worship, everywhere. The reason is that he possesses edifying human values. A man with a seething mind is, however, haunted by agonies and anxieties. With all the resources at his command, he is greeted all around with irritants. Thus anybody who contacts him is also perturbed.

A saint or a devotee householder earns money but by fair means and with benevolent motives. It is not his aim of hoard money for its own sake. For humanitarian pursuits, a saint too does need material resources. When such resources are endowed on him by God, he prays, "You are the donor of all these bounties. O Lord, be gracious and teach me how to use these gifts rightly without any tinge of egoism". The great ones taught simple living and high thinking, not pride and arrogance. A devotee prays to God to bless him with the wisdom to utilize his riches, powers and faculties, for the welfare of entire mankind. This is the characteristic of a devotee.

Those, who misuse the powers bestowed on them, may be able to agonize the people for a short while. But, ultimately, their powers prove to be their doom. Men commit many lapses. They are not, however, forgiven invariably. Such a course would encourage and aggravate lapses. The law of

nature never forgives one who misuse his powers persistently. Nature too is a beneficent protector of mankind. The fate of kings, Hiranyakashapa, Ravana, Kansa and of Duryodhana, is patent before us. On kings, who commanded all resources. They, however, abode by the divine law. Consequently, they were successful in sorting out all problems of life smoothly.

To the saints, dress and appearance are immaterial. The criteria of saintliness and piety is not the color of one's robes, nor revolving of the rosary. It is a blunder to identify a seer merely by his dress. The true mark of a saint is that he perceives and feels the presence of God all around. He submits totally to His will. He attributes his success to the grace of God, to whom he always expresses his gratitude. He reposes full faith in the omnipotence of God. He believes that all is for the best. This is the teaching of the ancient saints. An example, an elderly rider horse had four legs. The questioner wondered at the ignorance of the rider. The latter explained that God, who was omnipotent, could increase or decrease the number of legs, if He so willed. He is capable of doing anything; such is overriding faith, the saints and devotees repose in God.

Saints and seers are not parasites or beggars. They should not be a burden on the society. They are the torchbearers, who guide the world on the right track. If they are not self-reliant themselves, what guidance would they impart to others? The mark of their character is their moral, social and financial impeccability. Only then, the householders can repose faith in them. The saints must carry good image and should be self-reliant. The people should not hesitate to interact with them. Rather, the saints should inspire the masses to achieve the goal of life, i.e. divine enlightenment.

The world, at large, suffers from a serious delusion concerning saints. It does not hesitate to hail even dacoits as saints if they don saintly robes, paint their foreheads, and carry a rosary. They may even deliver long and captivating sermons, but such acts cannot exalt them. It is just like a person dressed as a doctor with lots of medicines in his clinic and putting up the signboard of a doctor, but lacking in medical knowledge. We cannot call him a doctor, because he is not competent to treat patients. There are numerous holy places, equipped with all religious paraphernalia, but sans divine enlightenment. We lay the foundation of religion on exhibitionism, but thereby we cannot attain God-knowledge. The latter can be bestowed only by a

True Master. He alone can teach the right technique of worship and devotion.

Selfless service purifies human heart. This is not feasible by any other activity like holy baths, pilgrimages, etc. All the ancient great men served the saints and sages and thus became great. By the grace of the True Master, they too attained the stature of a Master. This has been the rule throughout: service is the royal road to greatness. Mere empty talk is of no avail. There are plenty of orators and writers in the world. They are not, however, recognised by the saints, even though lauded by the world. The reason is that their utterances are meant simply for the consumption of others. Their personal conduct does not match their utterances. The saints, on the other hand, lead a life dedicated to selfless service.

DIVINE TRAITS

Once a sage, accompanied by his friends, came across some ants. The latter were not, however, sucking candy, though so sweet and tasteful. On inquiry by his friends, the sage looked at the ants minutely and found their mouth full of filth. He removed the filth. All the ants then immediately seized the candy. Likewise, an aspirant realises Truth when the True Master removes the filth of his ego. After being purged of egoism, he realises the sweet elixir of Truth. He earns the title of a devotee. Consequently, he develops divine traits like humility, benevolence and compassion. Those, who come in contact with such an enlightenment personage, also realise Truth. They do not turn arrogant but behave humbly and affectionately, in spite of all the worldly pelf and power at their command.

Such saints are revered and worshipped, and are entitled to attain liberation. Conversely, ego-centric persons have to face agony in this world as well as in the next. For a devotee, however, every object of the world is a boon. The devotee who, who rid their mind of evil, sanctify it by invoking the grace of the True master and saints. They look upon the whole mankind as their own family. Who would then quarrel with whom? Even though someone abuses, insults and attacks a devotee, yet the latter treats him as his kinsman and prays to God to reform him.

Sometimes, however, it may be necessary to handle an aggressive person roughly. If a limb of our body is infected, we get it operated upon. This does not indicate our 'enmity' towards that limb. A hostile attitude towards such

an organ would mean losing it altogether. Its infection may permeate and destroy our entire body. What is needed is proper treatment of the diseased organ. Likewise, we would like to 'cure' an unhinged member of our family, at any cost and by any means. On getting well, such a person would love every member of the family as before and forget the past.

Similarly, the devotees regard the entire mankind as their family. They believe that love would 'cure' the indiscretions and misconceptions of their estranged brethren and that after being cured of their mental aberration, they would become their faithful allies. Today out of the vast gathering of humanity seen by you, majority of them, say about seventy-five percent, have been attracted here not by the lofty teaching of the Mission, but by its criticism. They came with the idea of tearing away the devotees from the Mission and were out to malign them. But even such malicious folk too became followers of this mission. The classic technique of the saints is to conquer the world with love and devotion.

History testifies that saints and seers were opposed by the vested elements, in their mission of fostering awareness of truth among mankind. But they were not depressed by hostile postures of the world. Imaginary accusations and false persecutions of saints, simply made them more steadfast in their devotion to duty and faith. They prayed to God to be gracious even to the tyrants and enlighten them. Their thoughts, actions and utterances are all concordant. They are not ruffled by episodes pleasant or painful. They never speak bitterly nor hurt anybody. They strive to retrieve and regenerate the misguided by their righteous and humble disposition and conduct

HARMONY

Words and deeds cannot be isolated. Their harmony fosters love, faith and devotion. It inspires us to greatness. Without such harmony, long discourses and stylish write-ups may entertain and impress us, but only for a short while. They do not, actually, leave a lasting impact on us, for want of harmony between words and deeds. Lives of sages are more impressive because of the harmony between utterances and action. We revere the ancient sages not owing to their high scholarship. We do so, as they lived up to the pledges given to their True Masters, even at the cost of their life. We bow our head, whenever their names are mentioned. The sages owe their greatness to the aforesaid harmony between their words and conduct. Certain persons possess a very bitter tongue, but they are righteously. This

does not make them great. Intemperate language is irritating and even mars our noble conduct. It is just like a dish of milk and rice, with coating of ashes. Similarly, even sweet tongue, without matching action is futile. Our lip service promising to entertain someone with delicious dishes of no avail, if we actually serve him burnt and stale loaves. Concordance between words and deeds confer happiness. Devotees do not say anything That is wanting in their conduct. They always speak and act discreetly.

It is but natural that the devotees too, at times, are influenced by the pervasive environment. But Such an impact is not abiding. We must harmonize our profession and practice. The identity between the utterances and actions of the sages manifests the grandeur of personality. It is not meant to harm or humiliate anyone.

REAL HOMAGE

Enlightened seers do not confine themselves simply to paying homage to past sages or to delivering discourses on their lives. They know full well that mere speeches and verbal homages are not worthwhile. Real homage means drawing inspiration from their lives and emulating their sublime deeds, e. g., selfless service, God remembrance and congregation. Such practical devotees are worshipped by the world. Those, whose actions and utterances are divergent, never achieve greatness. They cannot elevate themselves, unless they act up to their professions. Their repeated verbal discourses couched in dazzling diction, their imaginative flights and commentaries are of no avail. Persons, whose words and deeds do not harmonize, are simply disregarded. It is the actual conduct of devout saints that speaks and is cherished for centuries. All their actions are rightly motivated, free from any fraud.

OUTLOOK

The physical frame, as also the blood, veins and constitution of saints, are identical with those of others, all made up of five elements. The pattern of thinking of saints is, however, different. Despite similar vision, people view things from different angles. Likewise, the saints too apparently look just like other humans, but their perspective is unique. At the sight of dew drops, an anguished person says that even nature is in tears. A happy heart, however, reacts that lovely pearls of nature lie scattered in these drops. Such a difference in their reaction is caused by their different perceptions.

The colour of our glasses transforms the color of environment for us. Blue and red glasses make our vision blue and red, respectively. The devotees wear spectacles of the divine hue. Hence, they view the entire world as dyed in the divine hue. They are free from the vice of double-dealing and cunning. They neither hate nor wish ill of anybody. Communal and fake religious outlook, however, breeds egoism and hatred. Such people wish ill of others. This is the difference between saints and religious fanatics.

ABODES OF SAINTS

A place where saints once resided is considered holy. People have been visiting and worshipping such abodes with full faith and devotion. subsequently, these become places of pilgrimage worthy of reverence. Such places are regarded as living biographies of the saints. They owe their sanctity to the sages and saints, who graced them.

By itself no spot carries any importance by itself. There have been many mighty kings in the world, possessing many massive forts and fortunes. We visit such forts and fortunes. We visit such forts simply for slight-seeing. These do not evoke any devotion in us. The utmost we would do is to say that such and such king had a fancy for architecture and built many grand edifices during his regime. We would, no doubt, admire the king from the worldly standpoint, but without the faith and devotion meant for the sages and seers. A royal palace cannot touch our heart as a small mud hut of a saint or a devotee. The site trodden by a saint is acknowledged as holy. A mere look at such a site evokes and enhances our faith and devotion, and homage.

A saint or devotee sanctifies every spot that he visits. It bestows on us peace, joy and bliss. This experience is identical to the one we gain during our visit to the house of a living devotee. It inspires us to God adoration and enables us to hear the utterances of saints and their views on faith, reverence and love. There we do not come across unwholesome clamour about miseries and unfair deals done to the people and their retaliatory tactics. The saints are surcharged with admiration for everyone and dedication to the True Master. The abode of a saint is believed to be blissful, because it imparts bliss and joy. It is just like visiting a garden of fragrant flowers like roses and jasmines, exuding sweet scent all around. The company of the vicious

people, however, is so 'stinking'. Hence, we are delighted in the society of saints and try to flee from the company of the wicked.

PRACTICAL

A saint or devotee is happy in every circumstance, taking it as a divine decree. The life-style of a saint is an index of his faith, steadfastness and greatness. He believes in doing, not in merely talking. There is no dearth of top speakers and writers, but they are not appreciated for want of matching conduct.

Penmanship is valued only when the author's life speaks for itself. Such a writing becomes eternal and is a source of light for others. "Avtar Bani" is a testimony to the actual life of Baba Avtar Singh. The work may not be high poetry. Poetic calibre is meritorious but bald poetry carries little value without truthful life. Many talented scholars, writers and poets are there in the world. Their compositions, however, prove futile in the absence of an upright life.

HUMBLE

A True devotee is one who regards himself as inferior and a humble servant of humanity, and does not entertain any superiority complex. One, who is flushed with anger over trifles and terrifies the world, is not a devotee. Contact with a devotee drives away sufferings and ushers in happiness. On the contrary, one is not entitled to be called a devotee if he imports misfortunes. Humility and the spirit of service are the peculiar embellishments of a devotee. Such a devotee is supreme and sublime. The holy books and lives of ancient saints and devotees are torch bearers for us even today. We faithfully revere devotees and saints like Kabir and Ravidas.

Numerous rich persons, contemporaries of the eminent saints, possessing all power and pelf, did not, however, evoke any reverential faith. Their names stand conveniently classed as common clay. We have before us two types of persons 'Rama' and 'Ravana'. We invoke Lord Rama with affectionate faith, as his life was surcharged with devotion and humanism. King Ravana was very powerful and learned, but he was arrogant. No; body now wishes to name his child as 'Ravana' because he has forfeited the faith of the masses. Obviously, one who misused his powers is not loved. It is the humble devotee who is worshipped. Humility evokes by living up to the

teachings of the True Master. One, who loves and relies on the True Master and God, faithfully and humbly prays, “Yours consciousness, O Lord, endows me with indeed great and talented. He imbibes high values from all. Superiority complex does not enable one to do so.

THEIR MISSION

What turbulence, turmoil and bloodshed are being caused by false pride and ambition for ephemeral applause and power? But the devotees have a different attitude. From ancient ages, the devotees and missionaries had to face hardships. Their contemporaries did not stand by them. Some persons always tried to humiliate them. They, however, were never deterred by such factors. They never forsook their mission of humanism and non-violence. Mindless of grim misfortunes, the saints and devotees always keep divine values embedded in their hearts. They do not wish ill even of their persecutors. On the contrary, they pray to God to be gracious enough to root out the spirit of jealousy, hostility and hatred of their opponents, and thus impart peace to them and mankind. And attempt to quell fire with fire would spell total destruction, instead of ushering in peace and bliss. None has succeeded so far in cleansing filth with filth. This is done only by clean water. The malicious cannot be cured by malice, but by love. Similarly, the slime of jealousy and malice can be purged by love and compassion. In fact, this is the saintly path. We are committed to follow this path and eliminate the spirit of discord.

ENDURANCE

It is remarkable that in a crisis, saints and devotees repose greater faith in God and the True Master. On his part, the gracious God too instills in them greater endurance, firmness and divine traits. Even in terrible moments, saints and devotees do not vacillate, because they take shelter of God Almighty in all circumstances. The unenlightened folk, however, regard themselves as superior and powerful. That is why they are not integrated personalities and fall foul of one another. The saints and devotees, on the other hand, vie with one another in extending reverence. They consider others superior to themselves.

BENEVOLENT

Those who love God, whose thoughts, words and deeds are harmonious, who practice universal love and selfless service and are not hostile towards anyone, are the True devotees. They are worshipped. Every action of theirs is benevolent. They are broad-minded, wish well of everyone and act accordingly. They are always cautious lest they should injure anyone's feelings by their word, thought or deed, in any manner. That is why their hearts are beneficent, their words sweet and their actions noble.

They are neither jealous of nor hateful towards anyone. They avoid using ungraceful words. They never malign others even unconsciously nor interfere in their lives. Light has simply to manifest its glow. Darkness then vanishes automatically. All seers and prophets of the world acted likewise. They were steadfast in their mission. They imparted right guidance to the delinquents. Saint Kabir and Guru Gobind Singh, at times, even used harsh words. But even such words were positively reformatory and universally benevolent. They bore malice towards none. Nor did they want to criticise anyone or thrust their ideology on others. All their utterances were spontaneous and breathed benevolent sentiments.

HONEST EARNINGS

Wealth, if used for the cause of Truth, imparts bliss and bloom in life. Suppose a master awards rupees ten thousand to his servant. The latter makes merry and entertains his relations and friends. He is hailed by all. He candidly tells them that the master has given him a reward of rupees ten thousand. But another servant, who obtains rupees ten thousand from his master by cheating or by stealing, can neither disclose this fact, nor command respect among his friends. On the contrary, the fear of being caught always haunts him. A slight knock at his door alarms him. Even his sleep is disturbed by the dream that he is standing in the court as a culprit, awaiting a sentence. He is always obsessed by such apprehensions. Conversely, something endowed by the master, graciously and fairly, thrills the servant. The best way to obtain any bounty from God is to dedicate oneself to Him, the Supreme Donor, and surrender to His will serenely. Such an attitude will surcharge life with endless delights, nor shall we suffer from lack of any material resources. Wealth earned by sins and frauds is surely a source of suffering. Like a water bubble, it is visible when expanding but vanishes as long. Hence, we must not amass wealth and money by fraudulent deals and exploitation. On the prophets in earning our living by the sweat of our brow. This is consonant with the saintly tradition. The saints

are never a burden on others. They contribute to human welfare. Sainly life alone can earn us admiration and ecstasy.

TRANSFORMATION

Transformation in the personality and life of the devotee takes place when his egoism is erased by the grace of the True Master. The devotee renounces all arrogance relating to his body, mind and wealth. He dies to himself. A dead body is immobile in all respects. A devotee lives according to the behest of the True Master. He, accordingly, sheds all his wit and ego. This does not, however, mean that the devotee is a fool or a coward. In his worldly life, he is fully awake. He makes use of his intellect and energy fully, but rates love and humility as supreme. If somebody takes his humility as an index of fear, he is mistaken. The devotees are never cowed down. They are ever animated by the spirit that they have no enemy in the worldly. In fact, they regard the world as their own family.

THE MISSION AND THE MISSIONARIES

NO CONVERSION

The Nirankari Mission is not for a change of religion. It simply exhorts us to maintain our real and basic identity i.e. humanism. By imbibing this trait, we would grasp the correct implication and truth of all religions. Currently, the masses give priority to labeling themselves as the Hindus, the Muslims, the Sikhs, the Christians, but become humans afterwards. Our external religious symbols are surely no aids to humanism. The reason is that we do not identify and accept Reality, the real entity. At the outset, we must acknowledge that we are humans. Thereafter, we may adopt any name, faith and symbols.

GLORY OF GOD-KNOWLEDGE

All sages and prophets realised God through the True Master. King Janak realised God from sage Ashtavakra, an enlightened seer, who had eight hunches on his body. Lord Rama had to approach sage Vashishta. Our ancient devotees had to seek enlightenment from some sage or the other just as Arjuna invoked Lord Krishna for the purpose. Only then they realised God and were known as seers and sages. At times, we address a taxi driver as 'Taxi' because he has got a taxi. Likewise, we give the name of God to a

divine sage, because he knows God. Certain persons think that the Nirankaris glorify and worship a man. In fact, what the Nirankaris glorify and worship is God and the True Master. The latter is all humility. He does not demand veneration or glorification. However, the devotees do venerate and glorify him because he blessed them with God-knowledge. A devotee of God, wherever he may be, is always revered. None can depreciate his reverence because it is meant not for his person but for his God-knowledge and Dharma.

FIRST THING FIRST

The only distinction between the worship of the worldlings and that of God realized Him, but the latter first perceive Him and then worship. It is impossible for a virgin to enjoy conjugal happiness simply by repeating a name or visualizing a husband, day and night. Nor can she love him or win his love affection.

The Nirankari mission avers that the virgin should first seek and identify a husband, marry and live with him in order to enjoy conjugal bliss. Similarly if we really wish to be True devotees of God, we must first know and realize God. Thereafter, we can meditate on Him, love Him and bank on Him. Those who worship God without knowing Him, cannot enjoy bliss here or hereafter. All sages have stressed that our life cannot be transformer unless we first integrate ourselves with the grand transformer i.e. God.

WHO IS A NIRANKARI?

One, who diffuses God-consciousness and inspires faith in God, is the True master. Not the one who wears saffron, blue or white robes or long hair. Such sham practices are not the mark of a True Master. A True Master strengthens our faith that God is omnipresent and the sustainer. He never lets us fumble or look up to any other power. Nirankar means God, the formless. One who realizes Nirankar(formless) is called a Nirankari. All this is quite simple. We have to know God fully, remember and worship and trust Him throughout the life. God-conciseness and God-remembrance should command our maximum attention: it sustain our faith, banishes fear and keeps us calm, cool and composed. God remembrance is a panacea for all ills. We must ever remember Him, reciting, “One thou formless, I take refuge in thee, pray forgive me.”

TENETS

We are not masters of our body, brain and belongings. Yet, people are often proud of these assets. This drives them to many evils. Certain person exults in their physical prowess and charm. Similarly others are proud that they are great philosophers and eloquent speakers. Victims of such caprices, they do many wrongs, considering themselves as special personages. There are still others who deem themselves superior because of their riches. For them, riches are all in all, the master-key to popularity and name and name.

Such concepts do not come up to, the divine devotion. It is the divine world that is supreme, not the material forces and objects. Those intoxicated with immense wealth even land into jails when they are unable to account for their wealth. Persons, who feel inflated at their intelligence and eloquence, too lose these talents. All such faculties are in fact, gift of God , but we mistake them as ours. The devotees here however acknowledge that their body, brain and belongings, are not theirs, but trusts of God Himself. They would prove auspicious only if used in a spirit of divine dedication.

The Nirankari devotees do not believe in casteism and sectarianism, because these discriminative factors generate hatred instead of love. Caste-consciousness makes people feel superior to others. Such a spirit must be changed. The Nirankari Mission does not seek to convert anybody to a different religion or change his getup or name. All that it does is to transmute his head, heart and his way of thinking.

Another tenet of the Mission is not to hate anyone on the account of his diet, dress and culture. These differences generally prompt people to malign one another. Criticism of others diet, dress or culture, breeds hatred and is, therefore, forbidden.

Use of substances that adversely affect the mind such as intoxicants is to be avoided.

Yet another Tenet of Mission is to live as an active householder and fully discharge our worldly responsibilities. Our Mission teaches us to lead an ideal family life, full of zest and dynamic activity and boosts our morale. It does not want us to become idlers. No preacher is a parasite on the Mission. He carries on his personal profession. In his spare time however he pursues the humanitarian activities of the Mission. These are some of our tenets.

NO DISCRIMINATION

Our Mission does not believe in attracting only well to do persons and ignoring the masses. The idea that truth can be realized only by so called cultured urbanites, eloquent speakers, scholars, philosophers and the rich people, too, is unfounded. Here every aspirant, high or low, is welcome. Our Mission has adopted the path of love and humility. The devotees of our Mission, rich or poor, sincerely try to become models of love and humility. Even the richest person is worthless if he behaves haughtily. One becomes great and glorious only by regarding oneself as humble servant of humanity.

Currently, it is noticed that one, who is clever in his talk and everyday dealings and has a knack of one-up-manship, manages to attain social prestige . His actions, however harmful and cruel, are ignored. People start acknowledging him as great, out of his mundane might. He is even flattered and lauded. They do not however, value the noble conduct of the devotees and dub it as double dealing. The devotees, innately, advocate humanism and evince compassion towards the helpless humanity. They do not mind if the world is hostile towards them without rhyme or reason.

REVERENCE

The devotees do not discriminate between the high or low, the rich and poor. They serve and revere every devotee. Anyone who behaves so, is himself revered. It is the reason that we bow even to a child occupying the dais, as we do to the True Master. It is neither the dais nor the child but the divinity in him, that is being revered. The saints and devotees are dedicated not to the physical bodies but to the Supreme Being dwelling therein.

VALUE THE CONTENTS

Will poison contained in a beautiful bottle become fit for consumption? Should the honey contained in an ugly bottle, be thrown away? What matters is the contents of the bottle, not its attractive or ugly appearance, or the label attached to it. We are hardly concerned with the diverse cultures and patterns of living of the Hindus, the Sikhs, the Christians. We should love and appreciate their harmonious dynamism.

We are not out to set up a new religion. Nor are we going to destroy or alter any established religion. We are not resorting to conversion either. Nor do we believe in changing the 'labels of bottles'. But we do replace the poison contained inside the bottles viz. evil thoughts and attitudes. Everyone is accorded equal regard in this Mission. This indeed is the key to their basic unity and universality.

At birth, everyone is a human. One acquires religious and social bonds later on. This means that humanity is the one real core, which is, however, fragmented into separate religions and sects. For ages, mankind has been shackled and choked in this fashion. Now an era of liberation is going to dawn. We have opened the corks of the 'bottles'. Pure and clean humanism has manifested itself and stands liberated. It has heaved a sigh of relief. Now man has come closer to man. This is the way the Mission is unifying humanity into a common chord.

TOUCHING FEET

Certain devotees plead that they love and revere all from their heart of hearts and that it does not matter if they do not touch others' feet to play to the gallery. They forget that demonstration of humility and truth is not merely a display, but an inspiring signal and symbol for general good and emulation.

For instance, a highly qualified general repeats the same elementary words in the class, the whole day long, for teaching the children. He need not do so for himself. But does so for driving home the lesson to the students.

SECRET OF SUCCESS

Certain people are curious to know how our Mission is taking great strides day-by-day in spite of heavy odds and without the aid of any missionary newspaper or government assistance. The fact is that the devotees, who live up to God-knowledge, lead a blissful life, free of tension. They are the ideal preachers. It is just like a doctor whose reputation is enhanced by his record of cures. The latter publicize the proficiency of the doctor, and attract more patients to him. The doctor, who commands the skill of curing the patients, need not put up big signboards. Patients would throng his clinic automatically and become his publicity agents. The Nirankari Mission too has been strengthened and consolidated in this manner.

Today man has fallen a prey to various egoistic ills. When his egoism is cured, he imbibes humanism and love. This draws more and more devotees to the Mission. One, who is unregenerate today grows into a preacher tomorrow. This, indeed is the simple technique of the progress of our missionary preaching. It cannot be countered even by all the impediments put up by the world.

IDENTIFICATION

During the last Annual Samagam of the mission, it was suggested that special safeguards would have to be devised to prevent the entry of mischief mongers. Certain police officers wanted us to take suitable steps against infiltration of miscreants as also to identify them in such a big crowd. I said that a devotee could be recognized, particularly by another devotee, even from a distance. The glow on the face of other devotee marks him out. There was no cause for worry. When the Annual Samagam successfully concluded, the police officers acknowledged that my view-point was correct. But for love, faith and devotion, such colossal task could not be accomplished so smoothly in spite of efforts and exertions. The devotees are sustained by the spirit of selfless service and self-sacrifice, infused in them by the True Master.

ENTRENCHED

Something back, I happened to visit Calcutta, where I saw a very big banyan tree that provides shade to hundreds of persons. I noticed that this tree had not one but many massive trunks, more than those of any other banyan tree, seen by me so far. We were told that wherever the branches of that tree reached, they got entrenched as so many trunks. Now, it seems impossible to locate its original trunk. This is also True of our Mission today.

INITIAL HARDSHIPS

During a railway journey, you must have noticed quite often that, the entrances of the compartments are overcrowded. Consequently, while entering a compartment, you have to face a lot of jostling and even exchange of sharp words. After getting into the compartment, your humble and affectionate approach towards the co-passengers would induce them to spare sitting and even sleeping space for you. Yet, in the first instance, they were not prepared to allow you room even for standing. You devotees, possibly may have to put up with contemptuous and nasty remarks during your visit to a new station. But, you must maintain your cool and humility. I am confident that loving and humble conduct of even a single devotee visiting a particular place is bound to leave an impact and pave the way for dissemination of divine light.

EQUIPOISE

A devotee takes pleasure and pain alike. An unenlightened person, However, is perturbed by pain and elated by pleasure. He transcends the impact of pain and pleasure alike. A devotee is not upset even if severely deprecated. Nor is he inflated by abundant admiration. He stays unruffled, always serene. He is not terrified by misery. Nor does he attach much importance to pleasure. Contentment is embedded in his inner self. This certainly serves him as an ideal asset and anchor in life. Even in utmost affluence, he continues is not disturbed, even if he is divested of all belongings.

During the Baisakhi Samagam of the Mission, celebrated three-four years earlier in Chandigarh, a few devotees of the Mission were interviewed by some journalists. On inquiry, one devotee said that he was quite fit and fine by the grace of God. The journalist took his reaction as natural because the devotee looked quite well-off. Thereafter, another devotee, an employee, too endowing him with a blissful life. After some reflection, the journalist made

similar searching inquiry from a devotee in rags, apparently pauper. The journalist put an abrasive question to him. The latter smiled and said, “ God, surely, guards me invariably against starvation. Though wearing patched clothes, I feel better clad than lakhs. In America, people like clothes with patches. That is why a pair of trousers with patches costs there fifty dollars, while one without patches costs two dollars only”. At this the journalist was astounded. Such a spirit of contentment is characteristic only of saints and devotees. They are always happy in submitting to the divine decree. We must cultivate such a spirit.

DIVINE GUARD

God guards the devotees who have known His mystic secret from sages and have realised Him. They do not have to face any hurdle. We know what a terrible time we had to go through, sometime past, but God protected us in every crisis. In future too, we will be fully protected by God. We must always be firmly anchored in peace, love and humility and dispel popular pervasive delusions. We must bring our message home to doubting Thomases and gently explain the reality of our Mission and missionaries. Many people speak ill of us simply on hearsay. We must transmit and elucidate our message of Truth even to the victims of false propaganda. Rest assured, our words would be heeded and valued. This will ensure success in our mission of redeeming others.

KINGDOM OF GOD

As you devotees push forward the message of truth, pervasive malice, hatred and jealousy, would go on disappearing. Only the righteous can cleanse the country of the mire of power-politics and fraud that have currently become a way of life.

Now that you righteous ones have appeared, True religion is bound to make rapid strides and create a climate conducive for establishing the Kingdom of God. In fact, this congregation itself is a miniature Kingdom of God. All those, who observe this spectacle of calmness, peace, love and sweet interaction among the mammoth audience, are highly impressed. They wonder how such a diverse mass of humanity shares food with one another and is knit together in harmony by identical ideals. No discrimination in status or otherwise is discernible among the devotees. Despite differences in caste, color, language, dress, etc. of the members of the assemblage, they

have imbibed the Mission's spirit of amity, harmony and brotherhood. If such a sublime spirit permeates the entire country, the Kingdom of God is bound to dawn speedily. This congregation, a miniature Kingdom of God, has come into being by the kindred realization and consciousness of the all-pervading God, without which any contemplation of His kingdom is impossible.

FOCUS ON VILLAGES

Admittedly, India lives in its villages. We can safely say that the achievement of the Nirankari Mission would be judged by the spread of its preaching in the villages. Thereby, it would assume a new shape and dimension. The aim of the Mission will be fulfilled when it is embraced by the masses, at large, particularly in villages.

Blessed are the devotees, who are diffusing the philosophy of the Mission in villages and are striving hard to elevate the common man there.

The world would be redeemed speedily, if the village folk imbibed the real spirit of religion. They have to face a variety of problems. Communalism and untouchability are eroding our society, more acutely in villages. Consequently, village life is tainted with double dealing. Guidance and assistance by our Mission would enable them to enjoy a happy life. The villagers are more simple minded than the urbanites. Hence, religious preachings have a greater scope in the villages.

EQUALITY

No organizer, preacher or Parmukh (area head) or Mukhi (unit head) must ever entertain the idea that he has acquired a status. Ours is a spiritual Mission and in the spiritual realm, we have to designate some devotees as Members of the Executive Body. Zonal Incharge, Parmukhs (area heads), Mukhis (unit heads), Parcharaks (Preachers) and Seva Dal organizers

TO DEVOTEES

GOD- CONSCIOUSNESS

Even after attaining God-knowledge, some fail to imbibe God-consciousness. Our hearts cannot be purified, nor our lives transformed,

unless we translate God-knowledge into practice. Selfless service, God-remembrance and congregation, enlighten our mind, strengthen our faith and sublimate our life. we become God-conscious only when we lead an enlightened and righteous life, and develop unwavering faith in God, who, in turn, protects us.

God-consciousness has the potential to solve all our tangles and troubles. It can clear all hurdles when we feel helpless and bewildered. Farmers and those who grow plants in their homes know that on removal of weeds around the plants, the roots become a bit shaky and the plants become lush green. Like-wise, God enacts such dramas to weed out the shortcomings and slackness that might have crept in the propagation of Truth. Our life terrifying incidents do not terrify the devotees, who lead a life full of joy and rapture. Such incidents have happened in the past and shall happen in future, as well. Whenever and wherever the message of Truth is given, it generally arouses opposition. Vested interests indulge in nefarious activities. They often distort the religion and oppose the message of Truth.

VALUE THE MESSAGE

The True Master is immortal. This is true not of his body but of his message. The body decays and perishes. The message is, however, eternal and immutable. It is the ghee (butter Oil) and not its container that is valuable. Yet, even the container has to be guarded to preserve the ghee. Likewise the luminous message of the True Master elicits all reverence even for his body. But it is the message that is entitled to all primacy, not his body. It is, therefore, incumbent on us to acknowledge the importance of the word of the True Master and act up to it.

PRACTISE SPIRITUAL VALUES

Devotion commences after divine enlightenment. But the ecstasy of devotion emanates from selfless service, God-remembrance and congregation. Certain persons, even after divine enlightenment fail to experience bliss or transformation. This is because they don't actually practise spiritual values.

An analogy, we apply for a job and are selected and even receive an appointment letter. All this would not, however, entitle us to draw any salary. It is only after we start serving and doing the job that we would get

salary and service benefits. This is true of welfare activities as well. Enlightenment is just a bald appointment letter. By itself it cannot prove fruitful. It would prove fruitful only by regular practice of selfless service, God-remembrance and congregation. Only then would devotion confer bliss on us and make us genuine devotees.

SELFLESS SERVICE

We are inspired to render selfless service, simply because it benefits the person who renders it. A seasoned person once advised a farmer that his fallow land could make him prosperous, if properly ploughed and sown. This was, no doubt, a benevolent gesture on his part. The beneficiary of this advice would, of course, be the farmer. Likewise, benevolent saints, knowing as they do the benefit accruing from selfless service, advise us to serve selflessly. Divine enlightenment has already safeguarded the next world for us. Selfless service is essential for ensuring our material happiness in this world.

SELF-SURRENDER

A True devotee of the master maintains the spirit of humility, self-surrender and service. He is never inflated with egoism. Nor does he claim to be a doer or indulge in tall-talk. He always believes that God's will must prevail, and admits his helplessness. Human power is, in fact, limited and is often of no avail. It is well-known, on the other hand, that humility and love impart us immense strength and success. A proud person, however powerful, ultimately, falls headlong. History abounds with instances of arrogant persons who clashed with saints. They were, however, laid low, by divine dispensation. On the other hand, all the hurdles confronting the devotees, who took refuge in God, vanished, forthwith. The people helped and supported such devotees in full measure. This is also fully illustrated by the careers of ancient sages. A devotee is always protected from the hostile world, provided he takes shelter of God and the True Master, in a spirit of self-surrender. The devotee, therefore, obeys the True Master and does not act arbitrarily. He should march ahead under the guidance of the True Master. A devotee always banks on God and the True Master and dedicates his all to Him. Complete dedication relieves him of all anxieties. He is not bothered about his poor security and scanty financial resources.

He rises above such mundane considerations. Dedicating his all to God, he does not mind even losing his life in devotion to God and service of His devotees. He believes that his life is God's gift, which is guarded by God. Hence, he is never perplexed or frightened. The devotees are generally persecuted and tormented by the people in various ways, but they remain serene and steadfast. They do not threaten others, nor feel threatened themselves. We should never think that such and such person is very powerful and may cause us harm. For, the omnipotent God always stands by us. Who then dare harm us? Our physical frame can be destroyed any moment, by disease, accident or any other cause. We need not, therefore, be upset and disown God or the Mission. This would be sheer cowardice. We have always to seek sustenance from the assembly of saints and maintain our morale. No obstacle can then block our way. God Himself would guard us, when we entrust ourselves to His care and protection completely.

GUARDIANS OF IDEALS

The devotees should not forget that one, who has attained divine enlightenment and is conscious of the injunctions of the True Master, owes enhanced responsibility. He is, as it were, the guardian of the divine ideals. In case, an unlettered person violates some law, he may possibly be awarded a lighter punishment, or even forgiven. But the one, who knows the law and breaks it, cannot escape rigorous punishment. An ignorant or unregenerate person, who wrongs someone, is not so blameworthy. However, if a realised person wishes ill of and injures a fellow being, he must suffer. Hence, you must never bear malice towards anyone nor raise an accusing finger at anyone. The more you love the more peaceful you will be and the cleaner will be your image.

BE HUMBLE AND GOOD

The first principle and ornament of the devotee is humility the sense of regarding oneself as inferior and humble. Here one who serves and bows before all and adopts a humble approach, is the real Pradhan (Head). He is so unlike the worldly Pradhans, some of whom achieve top positions by brute force or by cunning. Such prominent positions are not, however, enduring. After some six months or a year, they face their doom. The Pradhan of the devotees, however, always rules the hearts.

We must invariably maintain and sustain the spirit of service and humility and spread the missionary message dauntlessly, without any anxiety the body, but the word of the True Master.

The guiding principle of devotees is not to wrong or malign anyone, nor to fling mud at anyone or let anyone down but do good and be good. We have to trust the True Master and do our duty. Such values sustain our Mission. We must practice humanism. We must not act like beasts. We have to diffuse the message of Truth in every nook and corner. For, the whole mankind constitutes our family. Such a noble spirit must be stimulated all around. It is a benevolent act of universal brotherhood.

CONTENTED

Pain and pleasure constitute a recurring cycle. They are inevitable adjuncts of life. Nobody is free from pain and pleasure. The hinge on one's state of mind. Human mind is as prone to advent or exit of pain and pleasure as his body. Pain and pleasure are infact the pair of a carriage-wheels. All the great ones of the world had to face sufferings- financial, physical or mental and other afflictions. History speaks of numerous such incidents. Saints do not, however, take suffering at its face value. They calmly accept every situation as a divine decree. They regard suffering as an instrument of faith fortification and steadfastness. They are never upset nor perplexed by suffering. The world takes suffering, as an agonising experience, not to be endured calmly even for a moment. Man clamours even because of a little suffering, and is bewildered. Conversely, a little happiness puffs him up with delight. This is not the way of a devotee. He regards even suffering as an aid in attaining his goal. He is always in a state of bliss. He does not forget God even in blooming prosperity, but expresses gratitude to Him for His graciousness. He prays to Him to teach him how to utilise his bounties in the service of mankind.

The devotee feels contented with his lot as a divine dispensation. Such a spirit makes him capable of submitting to the divine will. Everyone of us should cultivate such an attitude. The touchstone of a devotee's life is to treat pain and pleasure alike and surrender to the divine will.

BE HELPFUL AND HARM NONE

The acid test of a noble and great man is how helpful and loving he is towards the oppressed. For instance, even Lord Rama appreciated the love and devotion of Bhilini and partook of the berries already tasted by her. The devout persons treat the high and low alike out of love. Only the vicious and selfish people practice discrimination and foster social evils like untouchability by posing themselves as leaders. We must avoid such a style and spirit. Like devotees, we should regard and respect everyone equally.

The world has always been peopled by two types of persons, saints and satans. Conflict is not the style of saints. Conflict and confrontation would degrade them to the level of evil-doers. The devotees and saints do not harm or harass anybody, with all the powers at their never misuse their powers. Ours is a humanistic mission, marching on the saintly track. We should not, therefore, harm anyone.

In fact, nobody can monopolise power in perpetuity. All powers are fleeting. They come and go like a whirlwind. This divine gift (of powers), however, is not utilized by mindless man, for human welfare.

REVERENCE FOR ALL

The reverence and regards extended by Lord Krishna to sudama (his childhood friend and fellow disciple) on his visit, is an ever glowing torch of devotion. Such a conduct, evokes admiration from everyone and will continue to do so. If Lord Krishna had been egoistic and arrogant, he would not have entertained Sudama as he did. Sudama was extremely poor and Lord Krishna was a king. But we have it on record, that Lord Krishna welcomed his poor friend Sudama reverently and embraced him. He even washed his feet with his tears. This is a clear proof of Lord Krishna's intense love and devotion for his friend. There could hardly be a better illustration of sincere devotion. such a spirit of devotion is characteristic of devotees and must be imbibed by us. We must adopt a style of life and surrender ourselves to God's will. We have to treat everybody with reverence, regard and love. We must humbly treat every possession as a gift of God. In case we do not develop such a spirit, we are hardly entitled to be called devotees, regardless of our status and resources.

RENUNCIATION

Renunciation of attachment to mammon is the key to happiness. This does not mean, however, that money must be thrown away or shunned. It is, actually, utilisation of money with the spirit of renunciation, which enhances our happiness.

Once a passenger alighted from a railway train. He had a lot of luggage with him. Instead of engaging a rickshaw, he himself carried his luggage for one and a half miles upto his exertion he was laid up with pain and fever for many days. How much suffering he had to face for not spending a rupee or two. The devotees know very well that renunciation of money does not mean its absolute relinquishment. We are not required to forsake all gainful activity.

The Great Master advocate that we must work hard, earn money and use it in a spirit of detachment. For the sake of money, we should not sacrifice our peace and happiness.

This is not to say that we should indulge in extravagance or misuse anything. Our health, character and life suffer by misuse. Hence, we have to use our possessions rightly, for ourselves, our family and the society. The devotees also realise that money is best utilised for human welfare. By doing so, we would derive maximum peace and happiness.

TOLERANCE

A furniture concern has carpenters, clerks, workmen, salesmen, other employees, engaged and some employers. In case all the persons, engaged in different jobs, continue criticising one another or start doing the same job, the Concern will have to be closed down. The business would flourish only by their team work, though everyone would do his own job. This is precisely coordination and unity. Similarly, the people have evolved their peculiar modes of living according to their countries, climate and culture. In fact, their distinct identity and culture have sustained the world. Maintenance of such diversity with mutual tolerance and understanding is conducive to unity.

ERASE EGO

Devotees serve the saints to erase ego. Such service is not possible in the absence of piety and purity in thought, word and conduct of an individual.

He should not feel that he is the 'doer'. Nor should he be proud of his physical, material or intellectual powers. Every benevolent action of his must be selfless, dedicated and steady. He should always be conscious of the grace of God and blessings of the True Master in every action done by him. The devotees, who genuinely practice selfless service, God remembrance and participate in congregation, became pure, within and without. They are indeed great. They appreciate the plus points of others. To err is human. It is, however, characteristic of the devotee to emulate the merits and ignore or discard the errors and demerits of others.

RICH AND POOR

On inquiry by a person, whether I would like to bring the rich and the poor at par, I remarked that somebody should first let me know the point where riches commence and poverty ends. Until now, I have not come across any rich person who is fully contented. Even a multi-millionaire craves for more. He feels himself still wanting. On the other hand, a poor but contented person enjoys a blissful life though he may not have even one or two hundred rupees. Thus, there is no yardstick for riches or poverty, no criteria for demarcation of the two states. Ultimately, it boils down to a question of contentment. A contented person deems the Almighty as the Supreme Doer and Donor. He, who feels jubilant in submitting to His will, never faces any He is not greedy for anything. Such a one is, in fact, the richest person on earth.

APPRECIATION

People may not appreciate the greatness of saints, seers and prophets, to the extent the devotees do. We should always refer to them with utmost reverence and devotion.

NO FLOWERS WITHOUT THORNS

We must not be scared of tensions and turmoils. We cannot get hold of flowers if we are terrified by the thorns. One who plucks the flowers skillfully, unmindful of thorns, can enjoy their fragrance. A True lover of flowers does not bother even if he is pricked by thorns. Likewise, the devotees, go on serving saints and seers and march ahead on the path of Truth, mindless of the hurdles in their path.

We must follow the above principles undaunted, and practice benevolence with all love and humility.

BLESSING IN DISGUISE

Even apparently terrifying and troublesome incidents incidents may prove a potential blessing, later on. Surging flood appears to spell all round destruction. A farmer, however, knows that flood water also brings manure and fertility to the soil. Consequently, the next bumper crop makes good all the past losses. Hence, we must never be anxious or perturbed. Any adverse development, facing us, is actually meant to eliminate our deficiencies and drawbacks. It warns us against our erratic actions and utterances, in order to reform ourselves.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Children are the foundation of society. Special attention must be paid towards their breeding and education. In future, they may be called upon to shoulder any high responsibility. Hence, their attention should be diverted away from pervasive frivolity and fashion. They must be inspired to lead a diligent, simple and righteous life.

DOWN TO EARTH

MODERN AMENITIES

Today science has made rapid strides and has placed so many amenities at our disposal. For instance, we have got electric fans that start giving breeze by the switch of a button. The alternative is to suffer choking heat or engage another person to fan us and afford relief. Likewise, why not utilize means of transport currently available for travelling from one place to another? In case one marches certainly not doing an act of devotion. the time spent on foot-march can well be utilized in doing a job of high order, calculated to impart maximum benefit to the society and the world.

Such an approach of saints and devotees does not mean that they should fully utilize the modern facilities that can be beneficial for mankind. The ideal of a True saint or devotee is to rise above self-interest and adopt modern scientific amenities for his own and others' welfare. He should also

exhort others accordingly. The word, thought and deed of the devotees should exude serenity, spontaneity and dynamism

FAMILY NORMS

Ensuring welfare of the family is our domestic obligation. Principles conducive to the family prosperity, promotion of amiable and loving relationship among children and kinsmen, are wholesome norms. A family torn by conflicts, lack of regard between children and parents, husband and wife, violates these norms. It is our duty to make our family life blooming and blissful. Husband and wife are the two wheels of the chariot of life. Children are the occupants of this chariot. In case one of the wheels is loose or does not run smoothly, the chariot is bound to jolt. The occupants will be upset. They may even sustain serious injury or some other loss. The norms of family life require us to maintain felicity and prosperity by harmonious living and abiding by disciplinary norms.

SHOWMANSHIP

Today people are engrossed in sham show. For example, if we call one some person, he would apparently thank us for the visit and extend us warm welcome. But his heart would be full of different sentiments. He would be thinking of getting rid of us speedily, lest he should have to spend on entertaining us. But outwardly he would ask, what service he could render us.

Such double standards cannot give us peace and joy. We must, therefore, refrain from adopting such humbug. This sort of hypocrisy, ultimately, ruins mankind. Our actions should, therefore, be actuated by pure motives. Only then we will be able to elevate and sublimate ourselves and the world. Even in serving water to the thirsty, we should saturate it with love and faith and avoid false show. A penny worth of service, if genuinely motivated, is always acceptable to the Almighty. On the contrary, service, worth thousands and lakhs, if rendered for mere show, is not appreciated by God.

We have to bridge the gap between our word and deed. Those, who are able to do so, are real saints, and devotees. True sages speak less and act more. Only then people follow in their footsteps and gain. Those who indulge only in empty talk never achieve greatness in life, nor become models for others. We have to be dynamic workers, not mere tall-talkers. Nor should we

become parasites. We must forge ahead towards our goal, upholding lofty ideals. We must shun worthless window-dressing, and do our duty with dedication by harmonizing our thought, word and deed.

ALL TIMES ALIKE

Certain persons are out to curse the current age as ominous. But, actually, no epoch is good or bad. All times and ages are alike for one, who has realized Truth. But deep is the anguish of those ensnared in the web of materialism. Erroneously, they rate the past as the best of times and the present as no good. There is, actually, no difference between times. The past had saints as well as satans. Today too, we witness all sorts of people in world-devouts as well as devils. For this, we cannot blame the times. All this hinges on the ethos of society and the actions of individuals. The people wedded to mammon are arrogant, while those dedicated to God are humble. Both Prahlad, the great devotee, and King Hiranyakashyapa, his father, the great egoist, lived in an age popularly known as Satyuga (Golden Age). In case, the Satyuga had been as saintly as Prahlad. An egoist like Hiranyakashyyapa, would not have been there. In the Treta (Silver Age), what a blissful experience it would have been, if all fold had been like Lord Rama. But actually this was not so. For, Lord Rama had them to face King Ravana, the great egoist, as his opponent. Every age and every time has its quota of good as well as bad people.

The truth is that virtue is all- pervasive, whenever, the message of the saints makes a great impact on the world. And that age is regarded as Satyuga. But when sin and tyranny are dominant, because of the antagonism to divine values, that era is termed Kalyuga (Dark age), an age of strife and suffering.

We have to direct our endeavours to transform every age into Satyuga. We must accordingly march ahead steadfastly on the path of Truth and human welfare. This has been the eternal mission of the saints. They have always been forging ahead and propagating Truth even in the face of suffering, malice and pervasive Kalyuga. They are confident that the pilgrims of truth cross all hurdles. We must never be unnerved but always promote the cause of True human welfare by curbing evil every time at every place.

Role of Youth

Currently, youngmen are roundly censured and criticized the world over. Their aspirations and utterances should, however, receive careful consideration. We must try to enhance their enthusiasm for work, to the maximum extent. It should not be suppressed as childish or youthful exuberance, if aimed at human welfare. People feel perturbed at the possible consequences of joint innovative ventures of youngmen. Another apprehension of the elders is that the studies, employment, business, domestic duties etc. of youngmen would suffer by their involvement in welfare activities. But actually it is not so.

A person has various roles to play in life. He functions as a family-man at home, as a clerk or officer in the office and a player in the playground. He adjusts himself according to the situation. Likewise, in a congregation, he comes as a humble devotee. It is a wrong notion that their participation in benevolent ventures, social welfare pursuits, religious congregations and divine dedication, would scare away the youth from the worldly obligations. The two-fold activities can flourish simultaneously.

Our young boys and girls have already undertaken a variety of selfless services i.e. in the Sewa Dal, missionary preachings, publications, etc. in the residual spare time, these youngmen should also devote themselves, besides their normal profession, to other welfare activities of the Mission e.g. abstinence from intoxicants, service of the ailing and the helpless, simple marriages and other altruistic activities.

Youngmen do earnestly aspire to participate in the enterprises of their elders and help solve their problems. Elderly and aged persons must, therefore, vigorously inspire them to go ahead instead of snubbing and demoralizing them. Love can inject in them the required diligence and enthusiasm. Any deficiency in their performance has to be made good with affection.

No devotee should ever consider youngmen as inferior. Even children and youth can teach us (elders) certain things, more effectively. The devotees pick up high values wherever available, even from youngmen. Children and youngmen too must not entertain adverse sentiments against elders. They should proceed on the assumption that they have to learn from the rich experience of the elders and work under their benevolent guidance. Above all, we must imbibe the spirit of diffusing jointly the teachings of the True master. This must be our primary concern and guiding faith. We must continue to attend to other functions as well, but should excel in

participating in selfless service, God-remembrance, congregation and other humanitarian pursuits.

MARRIAGES AND DOWRY

Our marriage ceremonies must be simple. They should be solemnized during day-time, because of manifold advantages. In day-time, one does not need illumination, Bands and trumpets can be dispensed with. Consumption of liquor can be avoided. The strength of a marriage party must not exceed fifty to avoid undue burden on the bride's family. Receptions, designed to gain prestige and popularity, too should be avoided. The money saved from such display of pomp and show should be utilized for family welfare and benevolent purposes.

Some desirable factors relating marriage are the personal qualities of the couple viz., their health and education, income and disposition. The idea is to make the marital career of the couple blissful in every way. It is hardly necessary to look into their caste and community.

I would like to stop dowry bargaining, but not gifts and presents to the bride. I do not wish to impose any restriction on a rich father desiring to make money-gifts voluntarily to his daughter. For, even the law acknowledges daughter as a co-sharer in father's property. What is to be given to the daughter, should be given with good-will as her valid share. But such gifts should never be openly displayed. It is not bad to give a dowry to a daughter, but it is bad to demand or exhibit it. Incurring debts for giving a dowry is wholly unwarranted.

INTOXICANTS

India is a poor country. It has a tropical climate, which is incompatible with alcohol and other intoxicants. Even otherwise, they adversely affect human health and intellect. One loses the faculty of discrimination between the right and wrong, under the influence of liquor. Without rhyme or reason, an intoxicated person falls foul of others. Drinking, especially, in low-earning families, entails starvation, besides causing discord, suffering and vagrancy among the children. Therefore, not even on the excuse of illness and social etiquette, should we partake of liquor or narcotics such as opium, bhang or ganja.

This does not mean we should launch a crusade against the use of the intoxicants. Nor does this mean any change in the pledges of our Mission. We have not to have anyone on ground of his diet and drink. But, at the same time, we should abstain from intoxicants.

IDEAL LANGUAGE

Human well-being is the foundation of the Nirankari Mission. Such a philanthropic Mission cannot be bound by narrow barriers of countries, castes and languages. Even during my tours abroad, I speak in Hindi, In India, I regard Hindi as the best medium of conveying the message. All states of India use Hindi in some form or another. Otherwise too, Hindi is our national language, that mostly caters to our requirements. In fact we should not get entangled in the language controversy. I feel that the language, whereby we can communicate our views and can understand others' views, is the most appropriate one.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS DEATH

In the event of any mishap or death, the worldlings cry bitterly. They, at times, curse God for not having done the right thing. On the other hand, the saints and devotees, even if overtaken by some mishap, do not raise hue and cry. They serenely accept death or misfortune as a divine decree. Because of their failure to lament, their relations may consider them callous. But the saints and devotees believe that the bond between the deceased and themselves was limited only to that extent. The body of the deceased person was bound to dissolve some day.

While dying, the devotee feels that he is going to merge in his blissful Lord. Thus, he actually, experiences the thrill of blessedness and departs. With such sublime attitude, neither the departing soul is tormented, nor the survivors.

LEARNING

One who claims to have acquired perfect knowledge about an object, loses the spirit of learning. Swayed by ego, one does not try to learn any thing new. But a humble person ever goes on learning more and more, and would become a reservoir of merits.

