

## THE GURU

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Next to God is the place of the Guru in Sikhism. The Guru is essential to get Light of Knowledge. The fourth Nanak says :

Without the Guru, it is pitch dark and nothing can be perceived.

ਗੁਰ ਬਿਨੁ ਘੋਰ ਅੰਧਾਰੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਮਝ ਨ ਆਵੈ ॥

Without the Guru, one is conscious not (of God), nor is perfected nor emancipated.

ਗੁਰ ਬਿਨੁ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਨ ਸਿਸ ਗੁਰੂ ਬਿਨੁ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨ ਪਾਵੈ ॥

The first Satguru in *Asa di Var* says :

Even if hundreds of moons and thousands of suns shine, there is utter darkness without the Guru.

ਜੇ ਸਉ ਚੰਦਾ ਉਗਵਹਿ ਸੂਰਜ ਚੜਹਿ ਹਜਾਰ ॥

ਏਤੇ ਚਾਨਣ ਹੋਇਆ ਗੁਰ ਬਿਨੁ ਘੋਰ ਅੰਧਾਰ ॥

Again he says :

Without the true Guru no one has attained to God and no one will do so.

ਬਿਨੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕਿਨੈ ਨ ਪਾਇਓ ਬਿਨੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕਿਨੈ ਨ ਪਾਇਆ ॥

He resides in the Satguru and reveals Himself through him.

ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਵਿਚਿ ਆਪੁ ਰਖਿਓਨੁ ਕਰਿ ਪਰਗਟੁ ਆਖਿ ਸੁਣਾਇਆ ॥

On meeting the Satguru one always gets emancipated because the Guru detaches one of all attachments.

ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਮਿਲਿਐ ਸਦਾ ਮੁਕਤੁ ਹੈ ਜਿਨਿ ਵਿਚਹੁ ਮੋਹੁ ਚੁਕਾਇਆ ॥ (ਵਾਰ ਆਸਾ ਮ: ੧)

The fifth Guru has described in detail :

Let no one be misled by illusions in the world.

ਮਤ ਕੇ ਭਰਮਿ ਭੁਲੈ ਸੰਸਾਰਿ ॥

Without the Guru no one has got across.

ਗੁਰਬਿਨੁ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਉਤਰਸਿ ਪਾਰਿ ॥੧॥ਰਹਾਉ॥

The Guru shows the way to the strayer,

ਭੂਲੇ ਕਉ ਗੁਰਿ ਮਾਰਗਿ ਪਾਇਆ ॥

who forsakes all others and gets attached to One God.

ਅਵਰ ਤਿਆਗਿ ਹਰਿ ਭਗਤੀ ਲਾਇਆ ॥

Fear of births and deaths is obliterated.

ਜਨਮ ਮਰਨ ਕੀ ਝ੍ਰਾਸ ਮਿਟਾਈ ॥

Boundless is the glory of the Perfect Guru.

ਗੁਰ ਪੂਰੇ ਕੀ ਬੇਅੰਤ ਵਡਾਈ ॥

By the Guru's Grace the inverted lotus (heart) blossoms,

ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ਉਰਧ ਕਮਲ ਬਿਗਾਸ ॥

In the utter darkness Light is shown.

ਅੰਧਕਾਰ ਮਹਿ ਭਇਆ ਪ੍ਰਗਾਸ ॥

The Creator is known through the Guru.

ਜਿਨਿ ਕੀਆ ਸੇ ਗੁਰ ਤੇ ਜਾਨਿਆ ॥

By the Guru's Grace the ignorant mind has come to believe.

ਗੁਰ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਤੇ ਮੁਗਧ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਨਿਆ ॥

The Guru is the Creator and Cause of causes.

ਗੁਰੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਗੁਰੁ ਕਰਣੈ ਜੋਗੁ ॥

The Guru-God is and will also be.

ਗੁਰੁ ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ ਹੈ ਭੀ ਹੋਗੁ ॥

Nanak says, that is what God has revealed.

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਪ੍ਰਭਿ ਇਹੈ ਜਨਾਈ ॥

That without the Guru no one is emancipated.

ਬਿਨੁ ਗੁਰ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨ ਪਾਈਐ ਭਾਈ ॥ (ਗੋਂਡ ਮ: ੫)

The Guru, therefore, reveals the Word, the *Shabd*. He is the connecting link, being in 'spirit' one with the 'Creator' at one end, and at the other, dealing with us as one of us. In dark ignorance, the Guru rends the veil of *maya*, gives the Light and shows the way. It is by the Grace of the Guru that, the egg of superstition breaks, and the mind is illumined :

ਫੂਟੇ ਅੰਡਾ ਭਰਮ ਕਾ ਮਨਹਿ ਭਇਓ ਪਰਗਾਸੁ ॥

The Guru cuts the fetters off the feet and frees the captive.

ਕਾਟਿ ਬੇਰੀ ਪਗਹ ਤੇ, ਗੁਰਿ ਕੀਨੀ ਬੰਦਿ ਖਲਾਸੁ ॥

Satguru has not claimed any monopoly in receiving the *Shabd*, the *Hukam*, and knowing the Divine Will. The *Shabd* has always been revealed as Satguru himself says :

It is the Guru's *Shabd* which emancipated innumerable men of silence and Brahma and Indra and the like.

ਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਸਬਦਿ ਤਰੇ ਮੁਨਿ ਕੇਤੇ ਇੰਦ੍ਰਾਦਿਕ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾਦਿ ਤਰੇ ॥

And Sanak and Sanandan and myriads of ascetics have received deliverance by the Guru's Grace.

ਸਨਕ ਸਨੰਦਨ ਤਪਸੀ ਜਨ ਕੇਤੇ ਗੁਰ ਪਰਸਾਦੀ ਪਾਰਿ ਪਰੇ ॥

The Light and Knowledge, in *Shabd*, have always been revealed to the world. The Aryan schools called the one who brought the message an *avtar*; while the Semitic schools called the revealer a prophet. But there is a difference between the concept of an *avtar*, a prophet and the Guru.

*Avtar* means incarnation. In Sikhism the principle of incarnation is straightaway ruled out, as God is eternal and does not take birth (ਅਜੂਨੀ). The fifth Satguru has very definitely and clearly stated in *Rag Bhairon* :

Man, lost in ignorance, produces false arguments.

ਭਰਮਿ ਭੂਲੇ ਨਰ ਕਰਤ ਕਚਰਾਇਣ ॥

God is above birth and death.

ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ ਤੇ ਰਹਤ ਨਾਰਾਇਣ ॥

You stealthily offer sweets.

ਕਰਿ ਪੰਜੀਰੁ ਖਵਾਇਓ ਚੋਰ ॥

God neither takes birth nor dies, O ! materialist animal understand it.

ਉਹੁ ਜਨਮਿ ਨ ਮਰੈ ਰੇ ਸਾਕਤ ਢੋਰ ॥

It is the greatest mistake to try to lure your God to sleep.

ਸਗਲ ਪਰਾਧ ਦੇਹਿ ਲੋਰੇਨੀ ॥

Burnt be that mouth that says God is cast into the womb.

ਸੇ ਮੁਖੁ ਜਲਉ ਜਿਤੁ ਕਹਹਿ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਜੋਨੀ ॥

He is neither born nor dies, nor comes or goes.

ਜਨਮਿ ਨ ਮਰੈ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥

Nanak's God is omnipresent and pervades all over.

ਠਾਨਕ ਕਾ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਰਹਿਓ ਸਮਾਇ ॥

In *Rag Ramkali*, this is further explained :

*Vedas* do not know Thy Greatness.  
 ਮਹਿਮਾ ਨ ਜਾਨਹਿ ਬੇਦ ॥  
 Nor does Brahma know Thy Mystery.  
 ਬ੍ਰਹਮੇ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਨਹਿ ਭੇਦ ॥  
 No incarnation knew Thy End.  
 ਅਵਤਾਰ ਨ ਜਾਨਹਿ ਅੰਤੁ ॥  
 The infinite transcendent God is incomprehensible.  
 ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਬੇਅੰਤੁ ॥੧॥  
 He knows His state Himself.  
 ਅਪਨੀ ਗਤਿ ਆਪਿ ਜਾਨੈ ॥  
 Others state only hearsay.  
 ਸੁਣਿ ਸੁਣਿ ਅਵਰ ਵਖਾਨੈ ॥੧॥ਰਹਾਉ॥  
 Shiva too did not know the mystery.  
 ਸੰਕਰਾ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਨਹਿ ਭੇਵ ॥  
 The gods were tired of the search.  
 ਖੋਜਤ ਹਾਰੇ ਦੇਵ ॥  
 The goddesses also know not the secret.  
 ਦੇਵੀਆ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਨੈ ਮਰਮ ॥  
 The unfathomable Supreme Being is above all.  
 ਸਭ ਉਪਰਿ ਅਲਖ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ॥੨॥  
 The Creator plays as He wills.  
 ਅਪਨੈ ਰੰਗਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਕੇਲ ॥  
 He Himself unites and Himself separates.  
 ਆਪਿ ਬਿਛੋਰੈ ਆਪੇ ਮੇਲ ॥  
 Some go astray while some are dedicated to Him.  
 ਇਕਿ ਭਰਮੇ ਇਕਿ ਭਗਤੀ ਲਾਏ ॥  
 He Himself makes known what He does.  
 ਅਪਣਾ ਕੀਆ ਆਪਿ ਜਣਾਏ ॥੩॥  
 Listen to the truthful evidence of men of God;  
 ਸੰਤਨ ਕੀ ਸੁਣਿ ਸਾਚੀ ਸਾਖੀ ॥  
 They state what they observe themselves.  
 ਸੇ ਬੋਲਹਿ ਜੋ ਪੇਖਹਿ ਆਖੀ ॥  
 Nanak's God is not affected by virtue or sin,  
 ਨਹੀ ਲੇਪੁ ਤਿਸੁ ਪੁੰਨਿ ਨ ਪਾਪਿ ॥  
 He is Self-existent and Himself All in All.  
 ਨਾਨਕ ਕਾ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਆਪੇ ਆਪਿ ॥੪॥੨੫॥੩੬॥ (ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮ: ੫)

Amongst the *avtars* are included even fish, tortoise, pig. To put the Satguru in that line would be an insult to Him. When any incarnation of the Supreme Being is rejected out of hand, it will be still a greater insult and travesty of truth to consider the Satguru as an incarnation of somebody else. This point has been unequivocally made clear by the Satguru himself, when in *Var Majh*, the first Satguru states that he is just a minstrel who has been entrusted with the mission of revealing the *Shabd* and spreading Knowledge (*Gian*) :

I, a jobless bard, have been put to service.

ਹਉ ਢਾਢੀ ਵੇਕਾਰੁ ਕਾਰੈ ਲਾਇਆ ॥

Be it night or day, the Order is issued, to sing praises.

ਰਾਤਿ ਦਿਹੈ ਕੈ ਵਾਰ ਧੁਰਹੁ ਫੁਰਮਾਇਆ ॥

I, the bard, have been called to the Master's Presence.

ਢਾਢੀ ਸਚੈ ਮਹਿਲ ਖਸਮਿ ਬੁਲਾਇਆ ॥

I praise the True One and the robe of honour is bestowed on me.

ਸਚੀ ਸਿਫਤਿ ਸਾਲਾਹ ਕਪੜਾ ਪਾਇਆ ॥

The bard then sings and spreads the *Shabd*, the Word.

ਢਾਢੀ ਕਰੇ ਪਸਾਉ ਸਬਦੁ ਵਜਾਇਆ ॥ (ਵਾਰ ਮਾਝ ਮ: ੧)

The fourth Guru also says in *Var Sri Rag* :

I am the bard of the Supreme Master come to call at His door.

ਹਉ ਢਾਢੀ ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਖਸਮ ਕਾ ਹਰਿ ਕੈ ਦਰਿ ਆਇਆ ॥

We find that this idea of incarnation is repeatedly rejected in *Gurbani*. Guru Nanak Dev in *Maru Solhey* says :

Brahma Vishnu and Mahesh are standing to attention at the service of the Incomprehensible and Limitless God.

ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਬਿਸਨੁ ਮਹੇਸੁ ਦੁਆਰੈ ॥ ਉਭੇ ਸੇਵਹਿ ਅਲਖ ਅਪਾਰੈ ॥

There are innumerable others too who are seen bewailing and crying at the Divine Door.

ਹੋਰ ਕੇਤੀ ਦਰਿ ਦੀਸੈ ਬਿਲਲਾਦੀ ਮੈ ਗਣਤ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਕਾਈ ਹੇ ॥

This point of the Guru being an incarnation of the Supreme Being is strongly and finally rejected by the tenth Guru in *Bachittar Natak* :

Those who call me God, will all be thrown into hell.

ਜੋ ਹਮਕੋ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਉਚਰਿ ਹੈ । ਤੇ ਸਭ ਨਰਕ ਕੁੰਡ ਮਹਿ ਪਰਿ ਹੈ ।

Know me as His servant. There should be no doubt in that.

ਮੈ ਕੋ ਦਾਸ ਤਵਨ ਕਾ ਜਾਨਉ । ਯਾ ਮੈ ਭੇਦ ਨ ਰੰਚ ਪਛਾਨਉ ।

I am the Supreme Being's servant come to watch the play in this world.

ਮੈ ਹੋਂ ਪਰਮ ਪੁਰਖ ਕੋ ਦਾਸਾ । ਦੇਖਨ ਆਇਓ ਜਗਤ ਤਮਾਸਾ ।

Prophet means messenger, who brings and conveys the message, and who spreads and propagates Divine Knowledge.

The Guru can, therefore, to some extent, be called messenger. The word 'Guru' had not been used in this sense before Guru Nanak, as it is understood in Sikhism. The institution of the Guru amongst the Sikhs is very special and peculiar. The Guru not only delivered the message, laid down postulates and showed the way, but took the Sikh (disciple) by the hand and saw that he tread it with full responsibility, fitness, and self-confidence. That is why we find every Sikh, every Khalsa, fighting and functioning as an institution in himself. To complete this mission, the Guru took ten generations. The peculiar speciality in Sikhism lies in the continuity of the Guru in ten human forms and afterwards the continuity finally laid down in the Guru's omnipresence and dynamic existence amongst the Sikhs as the guiding and driving force and spirit in *Gurbani*, the *Shabd*. As has been said before :

*Bani* is the Guru and the Guru is *Bani*.

ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ

The *Shabd* has also been revealed and broadcast from time to time. But the transmitter ceased to function with the end of the human life of the messenger. The Guru's transmitter is always broadcasting the *Shabd*; one has only to tune in his mind to the particular wavelength to receive guidance and light. This any one can do who has a will and devotion, irrespective of any caste, creed, or colour. It is open to all and no one is precluded. In *Rag Maru*, the fifth Nanak says :

Nanak, the Guru, hath instructed all in this Divine wisdom, whosoever heareth, finds emancipation.

ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ਕਹਤੁ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਸੁਨੈ ਸੋ ਪਾਰਿ ਪਰਾਨਥ ॥

The tenth Guru in *Akal Ustat*, says :

I speak verily, hear me all ye people,  
those who love God have obtained Him.

ਸਾਚ ਕਹਉਂ ਸੁਣ ਲੇਹੁ ਸਭਹਿ ਜਿਨ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਕੀਓ ਤਿਨ ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਪਾਇਓ ।

In *Var Ramkali*, it is said about the continuity of the Guru :

The Light was the same, the way the same, only the body  
changed.

ਜੋਤਿ ਓਹਾ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਸਾਇ ਸਹਿ ਕਾਇਆ ਫੇਰਿ ਪਲਟੀਐ ॥

The tenth Guru discontinued the Guruship in any human form after him. The spirit (ਜੋਤਿ) remained conserved in *Gurbani*, the *Shabd*, and under its presiding guidance, the Guruship was transferred to the Khalsa in 1699. So the spirit (ਜੋਤਿ) remained in *Gurbani*, and its implementation (ਜੁਗਤਿ) was entrusted to the Khalsa. The third part, the body (ਕਾਇਆ), reached culmination with the tenth Guru. Whether the body is of bones, flesh, blood, muscles, and the sinews, or of stone or metal, or canvas and colour, or paper and ink, it is all perishable. Being composed of matter it keeps changing form. The Guru is immortal and omnipresent, timeless and formless. He is :

The Guru is the Bestower. He is cool and calm as ice.  
He lights the three worlds;

ਗੁਰੁ ਦਾਤਾ ਗੁਰੁ ਹਿਵੈ ਘਰੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਦੀਪਕੁ ਤਿਹ ਲੋਇ ॥

He is ever existing treasure. By bringing our mind to  
belief and faith in him, we get eternal bliss.

ਅਮਰ ਪਦਾਰਥੁ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਮਨਿ ਮਾਨਿਐ ਸੁਖੁ ਹੋਇ ॥ (ਵਾਰ ਮਾਝ, ਮ: ੧)

While revealing the knowledge, the *Shabd*, the Satguru, to explain his teachings, did not create any mythology and did not take cover behind any miracles or show of supernatural powers. Repudiating mythology and symbols of mythology (as also symbolic ritualism), the Guru presented 'Word' (*Shabd*) as symbol. Words are symbols only because they convey a condition of knowledge and information. Words are symbols of their meaningfulness. Thus, Words become paramount carriers of knowledge (*Shabd* and *Gyan*). Realisation comes through knowledge of the *Shabd*. Thus, *Shabd* is the Guru. It is, therefore, the purest of symbols. It cannot be bogged down by mundane

associations and misleading mythological symbolism. *Shabd*, therefore, becomes the purest vehicle of the noblest experiences. To put it in modern terminology, the Guru used the 'myth of the language' which is the most potent, rich and effective form of communication.

The *Shabd* revealed and broadcast by the Satguru, was recorded in his own presence in the Holy Granth. Without meaning any disrespect to any one, the fact is that the Sikh Scripture, the Holy Guru Granth, is the only Scripture in the World which is written, prepared, and sealed by the Founder who directly received the Word. We know that the Scripture of the Buddhists was written 400 years after the death of the Founder, Gautam Buddha. No *Gospel* was composed by or in the lifetime of Jesus Christ. Similarly, the *Quran* was not written by Prophet Mohammed. It was compiled after his death. The *Bhagwad Gita* was not written or composed by Krishna. The names of the authors who composed the *Vedas* or when they were composed are not even known.

The Holy Granth is unique and unparalleled in another respect too. We find in the Holy Guru Granth, besides the *bani* of the Nanaks, the Gurus, the compositions of many other men-of-God, *Bhagats* or *Bhatts*, etc., who belonged to different castes and regions, schools of thought, ways of life and religions, but who had understood the Word of the Master. Their *bani* was given equal status and position to that of the Gurus. It is before them all that we pay our obeisance. The Sikh Scripture thus attains an unequalled greatness and stature. This makes Sikhism unparalleled in cosmopolitanism, catholicism, and tolerance. It will not be wrong to say that no other Scripture in the world can claim this unique and universal position. For instance, we find in the Sikh Scripture the following words :

For dogs devoid of prayer; is not the right way of life.

ਬੇ ਨਿਵਾਜਾ ਕੁਤਿਆ ਏਹ ਨ ਭਲੀ ਰੀਤਿ ॥

Never to visit the Mosque for five daily prayers.

ਕਬਹੀ ਚਲਿ ਨ ਆਇਆ ਪੰਜੇ ਵਖਤ ਮਸੀਤਿ ॥

After the tenth Guru, the position is that under the Supreme Authority, Light and Guidance of *Gurbani*, the Guruship stands

entrusted to the Khalsa. This transfer was complete and absolute in 1699 when the Satguru himself asked for and received *amrit* from the five Beloved Ones. He thus became himself the disciple and himself the Guru. (ਆਪੇ ਗੁਰ ਚੇਲਾ)

Some writers have said that the transfer of Guruship to Guru Granth Sahib happened at Nanded on the banks of the Godavari. Some others have said that this was done at Chamkaur. This does not seem to be a correct reading of facts. While leaving Chamkaur, the Satguru put in charge of the place a Sikh who very much resembled the Satguru. There was no question of any Guruship being transferred. What happened at Nanded was that when the tenth Guru prepared to leave this world, the Sikhs asked him whom they were to look up to for guidance and light. To this, he replied that they have the *Shabd*, compiled and conserved in the Holy Granth Sahib. Since then the Holy Granth began to be called Guru Granth Sahib. But the handing over and transfer of Guruship (ਗੁਰਿਆਈ) was definitely complete and final at Anandpur as has been explained before.

At Nanded, a copy of the final edition of the Holy Granth called Damdami Bir was specified from which to take Guidance and Light. Since then the final Damama edition came to be known as Guru Granth Sahib.

This, however, does not mean that the Sikhs were asked to become 'book worshippers.'

The injunctions in *Gurbani* on this point are very clear :

Blessed, Blessed, is the true Guru, the Formless Being,  
Infinite is whose End.

ਵਾਹੁ ਵਾਹੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ਹੈ ਜਿਸੁ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਪਾਰਾਵਾਰੁ ॥

The image of the Guru in *Rag Gaund* is described by the fifth Nanak as such :

Meditate on the image of the Guru by submitting your mind to the Guru's *Shabd*.

ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਧਿਆਨ ॥ ਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਸਬਦਿ ਮੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਨ ॥

Bhai Gurdas has made it clear thus :

The image of the Guru is the Guru's *Shabd*.

ਗੁਰ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦ ਹੈ ।

When some devoted followers of the sixth Satguru brought the royal painter artist from Delhi and asked for Satguru's permission for having his picture painted, the request was politely but firmly refused in the above words of Bhai Gurdas. Basically the Sikhs are spirit-born people. The very idea of a physical form is materialistic. The respect and obeisance we pay to Guru Granth Sahib is because *Gurshabd* is conserved in it, and it is not because we are book worshippers. That will amount to idol worship which is basically opposed to Sikhism. The compilation of the Holy Granth became necessary because as early as during the period of the second and third Satgurus, *Gurbani* available freely to the Sikhs, began to be tampered with, adulterated and corrupted. Since this compilation by the fifth Guru, the purity and originality of *Gurbani* has been very strictly observed and protected. There is no 'Institutionalisation' of religion in Sikhism and there is no 'Church' as such. No body, not even the *Panj Pyaras* or for that matter any form of '*Gurmatta*', the highest authority to legislate, can touch the tenets laid down in *Gurbani* in Guru Granth Sahib. The rule has always been most strictly enforced. Baba Ram Rai, son of the 7th Nanak, Guru Har Rai, on account of his learning and talents, was sent to the court of Aurangzeb at Delhi to explain some matters. There, obviously under the influence of the Emperor and to find an easy way out, he changed only one word of the *Gurbani* from '*Musalman*' to '*Beiman*'. When the Satguru came to know of it, he at once disowned Baba Ram Rai and ordered him not to show his face to the Satguru again. The Khalsa, too, is entrusted with only the interpretation of the spirit and guidance in the *bani*.

History tells us that after delegating of the Guruship to the Khalsa, under the supreme guidance of *Gurbani*, in 1699 the tenth Satguru brought into actual practice the spirit of democracy thus introduced. He subordinated even his considered opinion to the wishes and decisions of the Khalsa. Two illustrative instances from Sikh history can be quoted in this respect — evacuation of Anandpur Sahib and leaving Chamkaur Sahib.

When the Sikhs were besieged in the Fort at Anandpur by the Mughal Army and the forces of the Hindu Hill *Rajas*, the Sikhs

started feeling the impact. Some of them even lost heart and began to beseech and persuade the Guru to agree to the proposals of the besieging hordes to evacuate Anandpur Sahib. The Satguru advised them not to be ensnared by and believe in the oaths of the enemy and told them to be brave and hold on for a few days more and everything will be alright. No wonder he had in his mind his valiant followers from the Malwa tract in the Cis-Sutlej area, who had been deliberately kept out of Anandpur and not invited even to the great Vaisakhi occasion of 1699. But the tightening seige had affected the encircled Sikhs, some of whom began to lose patience and increased their pressure on the Satguru by persuading the ladies of the Satguru's household to advise the Guru to leave Anandpur. The Satguru explained to the Sikhs the dangers and consequences of such a wrong step. But when the Sikhs still persisted, he demanded in writing from them their decision to leave and allowed them to go. When those who were left behind too insisted, Satguru gave in and agreed to evacuate the Fort against his own considered judgement. What terrible atrocities fell on the entourage of the Guru are too well known to need recounting here. But the Satguru never complained that a wrong step was taken.

In the same way, when they were besieged in the fortress at Chamkaur, the tenth Master wanted to fight to the end against the enemy. But the Sikhs with him decided and commanded him to leave the scene of battle because they realised that if he survived, the Sikhs will survive too. The Satguru submitted to the wishes of the Khalsa and with a couple of companions, left the fortress at night and with the help of his devoted Muslim friends got to safety and again organised the Sikh forces.