

WORLDLY LIFE

Sikhism is a way of life in which we have to fulfil our duties both towards the Creator and His creation, His manifestation, where He has been pleased to send us. Individual spiritual efforts, developments and attainments had been there already prior to Sikhism. But the people were divided into two main groups; one monopolized the spiritual side while the other, bereft of religious and spiritual content, was occupied only with worldly, material living. Sikhism brought both these factors together and expected these to work as two wheels of the same chariot. The chariot could reach its destination only if both the wheels were functioning. Sikhism, therefore, laid down two main principles of *simran* and *sewa*. *Simran* has been discussed elsewhere. *Sewa* means service, which means action. The Sikh life, therefore, consists of activity in doing good to others. For this purpose, building of character of the individual was of foremost importance. Indoctrination and regimentation and other such doctrines are great obstacles in this path. They put an unyielding cap on individual effort, incentive, intelligence, interest, and character. They suffocate individuality and personality. There are no shortcuts in Sikhism such as *mantras* or miracles. But the individual has to develop the best in him. This development has to be based on *simran* through which both God and Guru fill the individual. This generates Godly virtues, and vigour in Sikh. This incorporation of the Guru in the Sikh links him up with an inexhaustible source of power. Sikhism proceeds like a caravan. In a march like this, quick decisions have to be taken and every member of the caravan is to be carried along.

Satguru provides intellectual foresight and has created the institution of *sangat*, the Sikh congregational assembly. When the *Sidhs* asked Guru Nanak Dev to perform some miracles or show them his power with which he was going to spread his message, the Satguru replied that he depended only upon *Shabad* and *sangat*. There is no other way. The practice of the Name besides being done in solitude, when worshipped in the form of congregational recitation or singing becomes more impressive and effective. It may not be necessary in the case of an individualistic religion but where religion consists in realising God mainly through service done in the world, it is not possible to do so without an organised *sangat*. The idea of *sangat* led to the establishment of local assemblies. Every Sikh was supposed to be a member of one or other of such *sangats*. The Guru, of course, was the central unifying factor. The *sangats* acquired awe and sanctity because of the belief that the Guru lived and moved among them.