

34. Through Nānak may Your Nām for ever be on the increase.
35. And may all prosper by the grace.
36. The Khālsā belongs to the Vāhigurū, who is always victorious.

Excerpts from: The Sikh Prayer by Tejā Singh. Published by SGPC, Ammritsar

Questions

1. Why is prayer so important in the life of a Sikh? (1 mark)
2. How do we know that prayer occupies an important position in Sikhī? (2 marks)
3. What is so unique about the authorship of the Ardās? (2 marks)
4. Explain how the Ardās can be personalized by the person who is reciting it. (1 mark)
5. Using the information from the text as well as your own ideas, explain why this is important/unique. (2 marks)
6. How does Ardās/ prayer prepare us for harmony with Vāhigurū? (4 marks)
7. Why is it important for Sikhs to remember the sufferings and sacrifices of earlier Sikhs? (2 marks).
8. Tejā Singh states that “The community even now has not abdicated its right of molding this part of the prayer. It can refer in any suitable terms to the present day difficulties and sorrows of the Panth e.g.in connection with the wearing of *Kirpān* (ਕਿਰਪਾਨ) and the reforming of *Gurduārās*”. What present day difficulties/ sorrows/ issues would you want to address or raise in your personal Ardās? (2 marks)

Total: __/16

Answers to questions on Tejā Singh's (ਤੇਜਾ ਸਿੰਘ) Essay "The Sikh Prayer" (Handed out in the previous class)

Questions

1. Why is prayer so important in the life of a Sikh (ਸਿੱਖ)? (1 mark)

Prayer is very important in the life of a Sikh because a Sikh's conception of Vāhigurū (ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ) is personal. A Sikh is in constant communion with Vāhigurū through prayer.

2. How do we know that prayer occupies an important position in Sikhi? (2 marks)

We know that prayer occupies an important position in Sikhi because the Sikh scriptural canon, i.e. Gurū Granth Sāhib chiefly comprised of prayer such that no ceremony is complete without it. Before embarking on any task, a Sikh is instructed by the Sikh Rahit Maryādā (ਸਿੱਖ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ) to perform Ardās (ਅਰਦਾਸ).

(**Note:** At this point, it might be useful for the teacher to direct the students' attention to a *Sabad* – ਸਬਦ, from Gurū Granth Sāhib (ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ) in order to illustrate how even most of Gurbānī (ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ) is a prayer. See following page for a suggested sabad and its translation. The teacher should also point out that the *Maṅglācaran* (ਮੰਗਲਾਚਰਨ) at the beginning of many *Sabads* and sections of gurbānī are really just short prayers asking Vāhigurū for blessing before beginning the *Sabad*.)

3. What is so unique about the authorship of the Ardās? (2 marks)

The authorship of the Ardās is unique because it is not the work of a single man or woman; the entire Sikh Panth (ਪੰਥ) has been working on it for centuries, and even today the community has not completely abdicated their right of molding the Ardās to express present day difficulties and sorrows.

4. Explain how the Ardās can be personalized by the person who is reciting it. (1 mark)

The Ardās can be personalized by the person who is reciting it during the last section of the prayer. At this point, s/he can express his/her own thoughts or the conjectured ideas of the congregation.

5. Using the information from the text as well as your own ideas, explain why this is important/unique. (2 marks)

Personalizing the Ardās is important because it allows the Sikhs to express their own thoughts at the time of prayer. In this way, a Sikh can address Vāhigurū with the issues/problems/thoughts that are uppermost in his/her mind allowing for a very personal harmony with Vāhigurū.

6. How does the Ardās/ prayer prepare us for harmony with Vāhigurū? Why is it important for Sikhs to remember the sufferings and sacrifices of earlier Sikhs? (6 marks).

Just as the *Gurūs* (ਗੁਰੂ) composed Gurbānī (ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ) with attention to preparing a disciple for harmony with Vāhigurū, the Ardās also first prepares the Sikh for communion with Vāhigurū. "The Sikh has to bring himself into a prayerful mood before he addresses himself to his Vāhigurū, when he actually prays. We stand face to face with Vāhigurū. But before we enter into the innermost tabernacle of Vāhigurū and reach that consummation, we have to traverse the ground of moral struggle and spiritual preparation. We have to realize what the

communion with Vāhigurū is meant for those who have loved him. What sufferings and sacrifices they had to undergo to be able to meet with Vāhigurū. We have to refresh ourselves with the sweet faith of those immortals and fortify our minds with their patient strength and resignation. Prayer does not mean a mere physiological harmony with Vāhigurū, but an undisturbed rest in Vāhigurū. It means an active yearning of the soul to feel one with Vāhigurū who is always active and patient, who is always hopeful. Prayer should, therefore, refresh our spirit and make us ready to be in Vāhigurū's will. This can be done if we first commune ourselves with the Vāhigurū revealed in History, and reverently watch the organic growth of Divinity in humanity. To do this we have to feel ourselves a part of that congregation of Vāhigurū-like beings who represent the best in humanity. We should steep ourselves in association of those in whose company we feel the presence of Vāhigurū.

7. Tejā Singh states that “The community even now has not abdicated its right of molding this part of the prayer; it can refer in any suitable terms to the present day difficulties and sorrows of the panth e.g.in connection with the wearing of *Kirpāns* (ਕਿਰਪਾਨ) and the reforming of *Gurduārās*”. What present day difficulties/ sorrows/ issues would you want to address or raise in your personal Ardās? (2 marks)

It is important to remember the sufferings and sacrifices of the earlier Sikhs because it reminds the present generations of Sikhs of the men and women who died for their love and faith in Vāhigurū. “How many hearts in these long centuries has it soothed in affliction and strengthened in difficulties. It bears the stamp of all that is the best and most moving in Sikhī. It is the crystallization of the Sikh nation's history. It is the living monument of its greatness which generations of the Sikhs will repeat to themselves to keep alive the old fire in their midst.”