

*Your
Name
is
Nectar*



Satsangs of Baba Somanath Ji

volume 3

translated by
Christopher and Suzanne McMahon

Cover Design: Prem Shinkar
Printing: Prem Shinkar 2025

Publisher:
Som Ajaib Kripa Ashram
Guddella, Marimakala Palli, Kambadur Mandal
Anantapur District 515765, Andhra Pradesh, India

Table of Contents

Preface	vii
1 Amass the Wealth of Devotion	1
2 No Place Without Him.....	21
3 The Cornerstone of Devotion.....	27
4 The Folly of Imitation.....	33
5 As the Calf Runs After the Cow.....	41
6 Manmukh and Gurmukh	49
7 Children of the True King.....	57
8 Please Give Me Some Fire	63
9 The Shop of Spiritual Knowledge.....	67
10 Freedom from Fear.....	73
11 The Lord Protects His Devotees	81
12 Playing the Difficult Game	89
13 The Millstone of Maya.....	97
14 The State of Natural Equipoise.....	101
15 A Serpent Who Devours All.....	111
16 The Two Things Worthy of Worship.....	117
17 Doing the Devotion is Not Child's Play	125
18 Drenched in a Rain of Nectar.....	133
19 In the Company of the Cobra.....	141
20 The Bitter Fruit.....	153

21 My Sleeping Fate Has Awakened	157
22 The Labyrinth of Kal	163
23 No Austerity Equal to Truth	181
24 Your Wealth is Being Plundered.....	189
25 When the Dead Tree Blossoms.....	195
26 Make Your Forgetful Mind Understand	201
27 Stand at the Door and Wait	207
28 The Most Powerful Mantra.....	215
29 Fast Asleep in Ignorance	223
30 The One Good Deed.....	235
31 Lamps Burn in Every House.....	247
32 This Life is of Four Days Only.....	253
33 Remain Within the Three Lines	259
34 Transformed from Poison into Nectar	269
35 The Noose of Worldly Attachment	279
36 All the World is Blind.....	287
37 Nothing Else Attracts the Heart.....	299
38 Mind is a Bold Youth.....	307
39 Tilting the Scales.....	315
40 The Competent Trader.....	321
Biographical Notes	339
First Line Index.....	355
About the Translators.....	360

Your Name is Nectar

Volume 3



Baba Somanath Ji

Translators' Preface

All Saints are One. They come from the Almighty Lord with the same mission—to free the suffering souls from this world of duality and restore them to their True Home. Giving out the Path of the Sound Current, they guide the aspirants back to their native Godhead. God resides with His Saints and when we come into Their company, we are approaching God Himself. Kabir Sahib tells us:

*My mind like a bird flew heavenwards,
But found that paradise was all deserted
As the Lord resides with His Saints.*

It is in Satsang that we can imbibe the Teachings of the Saints. *Sat* denotes Truth—the Unchangeable Permanence; and *sang* indicates union. So “Satsang” means union with Truth. The message of Truth is given out in Satsang. In the Satsang, the Saints eloquently lay before us the mystery of God and the soul, unveiling the profound connection between the two. They illuminate the sacred Path to God-Realization, emphasizing the necessity of the Godman or Guru—revealing His nature, profound significance, and indispensable role in guiding the soul on the inner journey until it reaches back to its Source. All the Saints lay great stress on love, faith, compassion, and ethical living, weaving together all the elements essential for the steady evolution and revelation of Divine Life, guiding the spirit towards a radiant blossoming into cosmic

awareness and ultimate union with the Godhead. Recognizing the transformative power of Satsang, Swami Ji Maharaj makes this prayer before the Lord:

*Purify my heart with Thy Satsang; for there it will
separate itself from the body and contact the Mystic
Sound.*

*Then will it drink Amrit from the fount of immortality.
Then will pains and miseries disappear, and the
soul will have no fear.*

*Then will I contact the Sound principle (Word or
Shabd) and gain the love of my Swami,*

*O Lord! make me Thine own: I have come, for I seek
shelter at Thy feet.*

Regardless of the language or mode of expression they employ, whoever has seen the Truth will say the same thing, for the Path leading Homeward was fashioned when the creation came into being and will endure unaltered until the end of time.

For instance, Maharaj Sawan Singh's major mission was in the northwestern regions of India, and, while fluent in Urdu, Persian, Sanskrit, and English, Hazur chose to deliver His Satsangs in the Punjabi language, touching the hearts of the listeners with familiar tales from the rich traditions of an area where Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim cultures coexisted and intermingled, sharing such cultural treasures as *Hir Waris Shah*, the allegorical Sufi romance of Hir and Ranjha who symbolize the soul and God and the quest for union with the Beloved.

On the other hand, Sant Kirpal Singh, who was educated by Christian missionaries, was well-suited to present Sant Mat to the Western World, giving Satsangs in English in the style of lectures, or better said, heart-to-heart talks, drawing freely from the Bible and interspersing His discourses with quotes from Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Madame Blavatsky, Henri Bergson, and many other Western luminaries to demonstrate the universal nature of the spiritual teachings.

So, the intoxicating nectar may be served up in different vessels, but its message of the Oneness of the soul and the Almighty Lord never varies. Saints are the diverse messengers sent by God to give out that One Eternal Truth.

In the saga of spiritual enlightenment—where North India had long been adorned with Saints teaching the Path reawakened by Guru Nanak and Kabir Sahib and proclaimed openly by Swami Shiv Dayal Singh of Agra and His successors in modern times—Baba Somanath Ji emerged as the pioneering gardener, cultivating the seeds of Surat Shabd Yoga in southern soil. While many mystics and mahatmas have flourished in South India over the centuries, Baba Somanath was the first to work there following directly in the lineage of Swami Shiv Dayal Singh Ji, Baba Jaimal Singh, and Hazur Sawan Singh.

The ancient Path of Surat Shabd Yoga has come down unchanged and unchanging from time immemorial. Yet, each Saint makes a unique contribution to this universal message, bringing forth the Truth of the One Light through the prism of their own individuality and experience, tempered by the demands of the era and region they inhabit. Baba Somanath Ji, as the torchbearer of Sant Mat in the South during modern times, unfolded this ageless wisdom with a distinctive cadence, resonating in the hearts of the people immersed in the South Indian culture.

The Life of Baba Somanath Ji

Baba Somanath Ji was born in a small village in the Gulbarga district of Karnataka on September 7, 1885 and was given the name Saibanna. Orphaned in infancy, he was raised by his grandmother, whose loving and devotional nature had a profound effect on his later life. He grew up deeply influenced by the Hindu religious traditions and from an early age he was drawn to the life of spiritual renunciation as portrayed in the lives of great Hindu mystics such as Gorakhnath, Machindranath, Akka Mahadevi, and Basaveshwara. The inspiration from the teachings of these great souls propelled him forward into a lifelong quest for God realization.

When he was old enough to make his own living, he first took up work with a wealthy cloth merchant in Sholapur. The merchant soon discovered Saibanna's intense interest in religious and spiritual matters and granted him access, once the day's work was completed, to his personal library of scriptures and sacred writings. He himself taught the young boy Sanskrit and instructed him in the writings of the Vedas, Puranas, and Upanishads, all of which stressed the need for a living Guru to guide the aspirant on the Path Godward. This phase of life opened up new spiritual horizons for Saibanna, and it was also at this time that the desire to make a pilgrimage to the sacred centers of Hindu tradition took firm root in his heart.

Later he moved to Bombay where he was employed in the cotton mills. Each day when his work in the mills was finished, he would translate the ancient scriptures for his fellow workers and demonstrated a natural ability to explain the abstract truths embedded in the Vedantic teachings into simple language that the common person could easily understand. It was in Bombay, in the year 1913, that fate led him to the feet of his first spiritual preceptor, Swami Shivadayal, who initiated

him into Nathpanth yoga and on that day Shivadayal changed Saibanna's name to Somanath.

Immersing himself totally in the practices of the yogi—fasting, intense tapas, and pranayama—Somanath quickly perfected the disciplines of Nathpanth and mastered the kundalini power. But even though his strenuous sadhanas granted him supernatural powers that dazzled the ordinary people, still he had found no peace for his soul. He knew deep in his heart that he had not come into this world to accumulate such meaningless trifles.

He realized that spiritual enlightenment still lay far ahead, and he set out in earnest to find a Perfect Guru who could guide him onward to his cherished goal. In his search, Baba Somanath undertook many arduous pilgrimages, first to Surat and Pandharpur, then on to Girnar, Dwarka, Nashik, and Trimbak. Finally, he turned his steps northward to attend the Kumbha Mela at Kurukshetra, but there also he found no one to guide him further on the spiritual Path. Forging on, he traveled to Rishikesh and Haridwar, but not finding what he sought there, he trekked high into the icy fastness of the snow-covered Himalayas, seeking out the sacred temple of Lord Shiva at Triloknath. Reaching that temple, his hopes were dashed once again, for there he found only the gruesome remains of animal sacrifice—but not a trace of true spirituality.

Desperately disheartened, he descended from the mountains to Chintpurni and then onward to the plains of Punjab. Wandering aimlessly with no particular goal, he reached the village of Daulangarh not far from Beas. One day, Baba Ji was sitting under a tree, offering up the prayers of an anguished heart for union with its Creator, when the local schoolmaster, Mahadaya by name, happened to be walking by. Strangely attracted to the emaciated yogi, he stopped for a while to converse

with him. Mahadaya was an initiate of the great Saint, Hazur Baba Sawan Singh, and, as he learned of Baba Ji's long search, he began to share with him stories about his own Master and the Path of Surat Shabd yoga. Hearing Mahadaya's amazing words and sensing that—against all hope—the culmination of his long and arduous quest was at hand, Baba Somanath did not delay even an instant but hurried to the nearby Dera Baba Jaimal Singh to have the darshan of the Great Soul Mahadaya spoke of.

Approaching the ashram immersed in devotion, a tearful Baba Ji prostrated himself before Hazur, who was sitting outside supervising the agricultural seva in the ashram fields. Very kindly and gently, Hazur inquired from him, "Where have you come from and what has brought you here?" Baba Ji, overcome by emotion at Hazur's tender words began humbly and haltingly to relate his long search for Truth, the practices he had adopted to attain it, and the inner ascent he had gained so far. He told Hazur, "Now that I have reached you, I will never leave your protective shelter. Now kindly liberate my soul from the Wheel of Transmigration." Deeply touched by Baba Ji's appeal, Hazur gave him a place at the ashram, and after several months, imparted to him the charged words of the Simran, connecting Baba Ji to the Sound Current within.

Baba Ji embraced daily meditation and seva, surrendering his ego to the radiant presence of Hazur. Though Baba Ji came from a different background to most of the residents in the ashram, the essence of the spiritual teachings—love, humility, and selfless service—transcended all external differences. The Saints tell us that when the spark touches the dry gunpowder, it explodes instantly. Baba Somanath's long years of austerity and discipline made him an apt pupil, and he quickly scaled the spiritual heights to reach the final goal.

Baba Ji lived and served at the ashram for several years, but one day Hazur Sawan Singh called him and told him that the time to return to the South had arrived. Hazur instructed Baba Ji to earn his own livelihood, to subsist on a pure vegetarian diet, to be devoted to daily meditation for a minimum of 2 ½ hours, while attending to all his worldly duties as well. Along with this he was to commence spreading the Sant Mat teachings to any sincere seekers he encountered. Hazur saw that Baba Ji had now become practically successful in the Inner Way and because of his command of Kannada, Marathi, and Hindi and his familiarity with the culture and spiritual traditions of the South, he was uniquely qualified to give out the message of Sant Mat in that region.

As a parting gift, Hazur Sawan Singh gave Baba Somanath 20 rupees, two pillows, a small wool rug and a silken sheet. With these few possessions and the treasure of the Guru's blessings and instructions, Baba Ji returned to Bombay to take up the work allotted to him by Hazur.

On his return to Bombay, Baba Ji at first sold roasted chick-peas at Worli Sea Face, later taking up work in a grain merchant's shop. The merchant himself was a religiously-minded man and he readily gave Baba Ji permission to hold Satsang in the evenings on the steps of the shop after business hours were past. Being greatly moved by the depth and beauty of Baba Ji's discourses, he soon realized that his common laborer was a person of high spiritual attainment. One day he told Baba Ji that it was not fitting that he be employed in such a menial position. He told Baba Ji he would lend him the money to start his own business, saying he could pay the loan back once he was established.

In this way, Baba Ji opened a cloth shop in Bombay that would provide his livelihood. He began to give regular Satsang

discourses, and the sangat in Bombay and the surrounding areas grew steadily. Initially, most of the seekers came from the large community of mill-workers who had been drawn to the area by the city's burgeoning textile industry, but with the passage of time, a number of professional people like lawyers, doctors, and teachers were attracted to the timeless teachings of the Saints revealed in his discourses. Gradually the message also spread to the several agricultural communities in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. Periodically, Baba Somanath Ji would visit those areas—often traveling from village to village by bullock cart to distribute spiritual water to the thirsting souls.

During this time, Baba Ji would periodically take seekers up to the Punjab to receive initiation into Sant Mat from Hazur Sawan Singh. Hazur also made several visits to the South, once to Bombay and once to the Kingdom of Sangli, with a stop-over in Bombay where He gave Satsang at Baba Somanath's new satsang hall that had been constructed for the convenience of the ever-growing sangat.

During his trips to Beas and during Hazur Sawan Singh's visits to the South, Baba Ji would translate Hazur's Punjabi satsangs into Marathi for the benefit of the local seekers. Baba Somanath occasionally described a special incident that took place during one of his visits to Beas in 1946, when Hazur requested Baba Ji to come sit on the dais to do the translation during the Satsang. Of this time, Baba Ji would relate: "As soon as I was seated, my whole body began to tremble. When He looked into my eyes with His merciful, grace-filled glance, a current of pure Divine Consciousness flowed into my heart and permeated my entire being from head to toe. Then Hazur motioned to the Pathi to commence chanting the bani. During the entire Satsang, that Power itself—the Power that he had been transferred into my heart—conducted all parts of the Satsang."

In 1947 Baba Ji, along with other dear ones from the South,

went to Beas in the month of February. When Baba Ji went to Hazur for Darshan, Hazur tried to speak, but no words would come forth as he was very weak. Still, heart speaks to heart through the eyes and Hazur filled Baba Ji's within with his grace in an exchange of glances. This was to be the last meeting on the physical plane between these two Great Souls. On April 2nd of 1948, Hazur cast off his mortal coil.

In the period immediately following this event, Baba Ji, along with all those who were devoted to Hazur, passed through a painful time. Those who had inner access and who had transcended body consciousness to meet the inner Radiant Form of the Master had the daily consolation of His Presence within, but even for those fortunate souls the knowledge that they could no longer meet with Hazur outwardly was hard to bear.

Along with this, Baba Ji also realized that the time was now approaching when He would need to take on the responsibility of initiating seekers of Truth, as instructed by Hazur, into the practices of Simran, Dhyan and Bhajan, which all great Masters have taught to those who wish to practically begin the arduous task of controlling the body and taming the mind so that the spirit within can shake loose the shackles of the physical, astral and causal coverings and enter the realm of Pure Spirit. Eventually, Baba Somanath Ji sold the cloth shop and purchased land in the small village of Kengeri, outside of Bangalore, where Sawan Darbar Ashram was established in 1958. He would still return twice a year to Bombay for bhandara programs, and many of the Satsangs in this collection were given at that time. Baba Somanath Ji departed from the physical plane for the final time on November 28, 1976.¹

1 For greater detail see: Christopher McMahon, *The Life of Baba Somanath Ji: Sant and Sage of South India* (Guddella, India: Som Ajaib Kripa Ashram, 2023)

Baba Somanath Ji's Satsangs

While we have profound respect for the physical body of the Master who shares with us the means to reach our True Home, the Saints themselves tell us: “Respect my words more than my body.” Kirpal Singh has said, “Satguru’s words—words ARE Satguru.” The lives of the Masters are a model and inspiration to the disciples, but it is only when we understand their teachings and put them into practice in our own lives that our journey Homeward can commence.

In the Guru Granth Sahib we are told by Bard Harbans:

*Like the holy, the ever-flowing waters of the sacred Ganges,
Flow the sermons of the Guru.
In it bathe the congregations of the disciples.
The scriptures are explained and recited,
As if Brahma himself chanted the Vedas,
Over the Guru’s head waves the royal umbrella.
From His lips the Divine Name as nectar rains.*

It has been our long-standing desire to make the message of Baba Somanath Ji accessible to a broader audience and during the course of a retreat with Baba Ram Singh, in January 2019, we asked if we could take up the work of translating some of Baba Somanath’s Hindi Satsangs into English. As soon as Baba Ram Singh kindly gave approval to the project, some wonderful things unfolded to make it possible for us to move forward with that work in a concentrated way.

While we were at the retreat, an old friend of ours from the early days of Sant Ajaib Singh’s first Bombay programs, Mr. Satpal Dase, came with his son, Roshan, to participate in the Satsang and meditation program. Satpal was one of Sant Ajaib

Singh Ji's first Bombay initiates, and he worked tirelessly in the seva of the programs there.

We were very happy to see him and meet his son, for we had not been together for many years. Earlier that day, we had been walking around in the ashram garden, wondering how we might locate tapes or transcriptions of Baba Somanath Ji's Satsangs in Hindi. We knew of several small booklets that had been published, each containing about ten Hindi Satsangs; we already had two of them at home. But then Satpal's son, Roshan, informed us that he had been active in digitizing the audio files of Baba Somanath Ji's Satsangs and, if we liked, he could send us files for a number of Hindi Satsangs that were clear and, for the most part, complete. We did not even know that such a resource existed. We were stunned and delighted. When we got home, we found that Roshan had already sent audio copies of all the digitized Satsangs to us, and, with this treasure house of Hindi Satsangs, we commenced the translation work in earnest. Under Baba Ram Singh Ji's guidance, our efforts to give form to this project began moving forward steadily.

By the grace of the Master Power working overhead, we have now completed 120 of these Satsangs and are publishing them in three volumes of 40 Satsangs each. This is the third volume in that series. *Your Name is Nectar*, the title for the series, is taken from the beautiful bhajan often sung by Baba Somanath Ji's sangat:

Terā nām rasamūlā jī, jinhoneñ svāda liyā

Your Name is Nectar for those who have tasted it.

The Satsangs presented in *Your Name is Nectar*, were recorded in the later years of Baba Ji's life, roughly from the mid-1960s to mid-1970s. They encapsulate the essence of Sant Mat and were mostly delivered on His visits to Bombay, though several were given at the Sunday Satsangs in Kengeri.

These discourses span a range of topics: the need for a living Master in order to tread the Path of spirituality; the importance of perfecting the Simran, or repetition of the five holy Names given at the time of initiation; the vital role played by regular and accurate meditations in contacting the Shabd within, and the tenets of righteous living that loosen the karmic bonds tying the soul to this material plane. Each discourse deals with a unique and vital aspect of the spiritual journey. It is told from the perspective of a Param Sant who spent years practicing the austerities of Nathpanth yoga, traveling the length and breadth of India in search of a Perfect Guide who could reveal the further way up, coming into the shelter of Hazur Baba Sawan Singh on the banks of the River Beas in Punjab, completing the inner journey under the guidance of that great Saint and finally carrying Hazur's message back to the souls in South India who were searching for the way Home.

Baba Somanath Ji gave Satsang according to the needs of His audience. The Saints see the condition of the jiva, just like looking at the contents of a glass jar. He would often scan the assembled crowd, thumb through the collections of banis of the Saints that he had on hand, and then choose one for the Satsang that would be appropriate for the moment. If only Hindi speakers were present, He would deliver a Satsang in Hindi for a full hour, but if the Sangat was mixed, he would split the available time, discoursing first in Hindi for half an hour and then in Marathi or Kannada for half an hour. As a result, the length of the available Satsangs varies considerably, but whether the Satsang is long or short, the message of Truth always comes through with equal power. During the Hindi Satsangs in Bombay His Bombay Pathi would recite the banis, but then in the middle of the

Satsang, He would often have Pushpamma, His regular Pathi and devoted sevadar, chant from the Kannada hymns written by the mystic poets of the South like Akka Mahadevi, Bhasweshwara, and Mankutimma. He would then comment on that hymn and afterwards return to the main bani of the Satsang. Baba Somanath's Satsangs are deeply rooted in the message of Surat Shabd yoga and to make that teaching accessible to His southern audience he draws not only on the Granth Sahib of the Sikhs and the writings of Swami Ji, but also draws freely on His experience as a Nathpanth yogi, His familiarity with the traditions of the Vedas and Vedanta, the Hindu epics, and folk tales of the common people.

A Word on Translation

We have tried to provide not just a translation from Hindi to English, but also to build a bridge for seekers across linguistic boundaries to the spiritual realms that Baba Somanath Ji so ardently explored and illuminated. Through these pages, we embark on a pilgrimage, guided by His words, towards unraveling the layers of our own consciousness and discovering the Eternal Melody that reverberates throughout all the creation.

Translating these satsangs has been a spiritual, cultural, and linguistic journey for the translators. Baba Somanath spoke a highly eclectic form of Hindi, deeply influenced by His extensive contact with sadhus throughout India, His long sojourn in Punjab at the feet of Hazur Sawan Singh Ji, and the ancient patterns of culture, deeply rooted in the Ramayana, Mahabharat and other epic literature, as well as the Sanskrit texts of Vedanta. As we delved into the intricacies of Baba Somanath Ji's words, we felt a profound connection with the wisdom he imparts. The challenge of preserving the essence and nuance of His teachings in the translations was met with a sense of reverence for the spiritual

depth embedded in each discourse and a heartfelt prayer to the Master Power to shower grace on our feeble efforts.

Besides the actual words Baba Ji chose, the mode of expression was molded by His long and intense search for God and His unwavering devotion to the inner practices taught by the Saints of Surat Shabd Yoga. Baba Somanath was affectionately described as the Mahayogi. He was big-hearted and broad-minded, but for the benefit of the spiritual aspirants Baba Ji did not hesitate to present the Truth in unequivocal terms. The breaths of this human life are precious, and Baba Ji was quick to correct errors in the disciples that could throw them down from spiritual heights and make their journey home longer than need be.

Translating esoteric teachings involves navigating a subtle landscape of language and culture. In rendering Baba Somanath Ji's words into English, we have endeavored to preserve the linguistic and cultural context inherent in His original Hindi discourses. We have footnoted terms and concepts that may have been very well known to Baba Ji's listeners, but are likely to be quite unfamiliar to the English-speaking reader. We have also used diacritics sparingly to approximate the pronunciation of unfamiliar Hindi terms.

Baba Somanath Ji would often make timeless Truths accessible to His agricultural audience through folk stories, jokes, and puns that would appeal to the simple people to whom he was ministering. Where feasible we have tried to capture some of His light-hearted wordplay, and, while it is impossible to convey the full experience of hearing the Hindi Satsangs, we hope that some flavor of the time, the sangat, and the personality of that great Saint and Sage of South India can be experienced by the readers and that the universal and timeless wisdom encapsulated in these Satsangs echoes through to all sincere seekers after Truth.

Acknowledgments

As this effort draws to a close, we would like to extend heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has made it possible. First, in this as in all things, we offer our humble thanks to the great Master Power working through all the Saints, who inspired the project and brought it to fruition. And in particular, we are inexpressibly grateful to Baba Ram Singh Ji for His unwavering support and blessings throughout the translation process.

We are grateful to Revati Shinkar for reading portions of the translations to Baba Ji when we had questions about particularly enigmatic sections; and we would also like to thank Prem Shinkar and Ashok Shinkar for their kind encouragement and invaluable expert guidance. We are grateful to Joe Gelbard for his careful proofreading of the entire manuscript, which contributed greatly to the overall readability and clarity of the volumes. We are deeply indebted to Mr. Satpal Dase and his son Roshan for providing the audio files of Baba Somanath Ji's Hindi Satsangs. Without the efforts of Roshan and the other dear ones who worked on the remastering project of the Satsang recordings, this translation project would not have been possible. And finally, we would like to thank Bernard and Dominique Daniel for their loving support as this project proceeded.

— Christopher and Suzanne McMahon

When you become rich with the wealth of Naam, then the power of detachment will manifest within you. "I and mine" will be eradicated, and you will be at peace. Then birth and death will have no meaning for you. You will not need to come back again into this mortal world.

—Baba Somanath

Amass the Wealth of Devotion

**The Guru exhorts us again and again:
Devote yourself to Simran with attention and
understanding.¹**

This is the bani of Param Sant Satguru Hazur Radha Swami Ji. He tells us that the whole world is involved in the simran, or remembrance, of one divine name or another. No one is without this practice. Everyone does the simran or meditation on their *Isht Deva*, their own personal god.

So, He asks: “When everyone is repeating that simran, why don’t we receive some spiritual benefit from that repetition?” First, because we have no understanding, we do not know whose remembrance we should be doing. And second, we do not practice that remembrance with unwavering attention. Therefore, Swami Ji Maharaj explains that we should repeat the Naam Simran of the five charged names.

And further, we should be fully attentive in our Simran; otherwise, we won’t have any effect from it. We regularly perform some repetition in remembrance of our favorite god; we go on repeating some customary prayer or formulaic recitation. When we rise in the morning, at that time we

¹ Swami Ji Maharaj, *Guru kaheñ pukār pukār...*

rotate the rosary ten times. We chant *Ram Ram* or *Krishna Krishna* or the name of some other god, and then we set it aside and forget it.

In many communities and religions, when you greet someone in the morning, it is customary to inquire: “Have you eaten yet?” It is just a polite phrase like “How are you?” In some communities, you will hear: “Have you performed your *sandhya snān* (sacred morning ablutions)?” The inquiry seems to be related to sacred practices, but, in fact, it is just a way of asking: “Have you eaten yet?” In other communities, people say: “Have you completed your *Shiva puja* (ritual worship of Shiva)?” But they are actually enquiring: “Have you had your food yet or not?” According to the customs of their own social groups, people repeat all these formulaic greetings without much attention or significance.

Similarly, many people perform their simran practice without giving much importance to the words or their meaning. Some recite customary prayers and hymns hoping to receive one boon or another. Others perform their practices as a religious observance. They say: “Our mothers and fathers bequeathed this tradition to us.” Everyone goes on repeating the time-worn prayers without understanding their true significance. But you don’t receive anything from this type of devotion; it makes no difference whether you practice this simran or not. Until you do the remembrance of the Lord with understanding and attention, no matter how much you repeat empty words, you can’t hope to achieve any benefit.

So, Swami Ji Maharaj says the Satguru first explains that you must make the mind understand the theory, and then you must put the theory into practice by performing the Naam Simran. He tells the mind, “O mind, before engaging in the Simran, understand its significance. Understand how to do it properly.”

When the time comes for Simran, unite your mind with the Naam, and then repeat the Simran with your full attention. What will you achieve by performing this practice? All the sinfulness of the mind will be removed. The Power of Naam will infuse your whole being. Until we perform the Simran in this manner, the mind and the Naam remain far apart from each other. And as long as the mind and the Naam are not in contact, nothing is gained. Kabir Sahib Ji also tells us:

*If the mind and the pavan remain apart,
nothing can be achieved.*

It is imperative that both the mind and pavan, that is the vital airs, remain firmly fixed in the Naam Simran. If the pavan is flowing off one direction and our mind is running here and there in another direction, then we won't be able to establish a connection with that Naam. If our entire attention is not absorbed unwaveringly in the Simran at the eye center where the Naam is resounding, we won't be able to access the Inner Knowledge. Even if we go on with mindless repetition for a hundred years, our efforts will be fruitless.

Until your mind becomes united with the Shabd, until your mind is filled with the Power of Naam, its flaws cannot be eradicated. Your mind will remain separated from the Naam, just as it has been for ages. You sharpen knives and swords with a grinding wheel. That grinding wheel goes on turning, but as long as there is even a hair's breadth between the blade and the wheel, you cannot sharpen the edge. In the same way, the grinding wheel of Naam is turning in your within; but until the mind comes into contact with the Naam, that Conscious Power will not penetrate the mind and clean away its grossness.

**With every breath, your wealth is diminishing.
Your life is passing away.**

What does He tell us? We all pass through four stages of life: childhood, youth, middle years, and old age. Now we are in the prime of life. We are busy caring for our families and raising our children; but in the end, we will reach the fourth stage, and old age will overtake us. It would be good for us to dedicate that fourth and final stage of life to the Almighty Lord. The Shastras also prescribe this: “Once I grow old, I will engage myself in the Lord’s devotion.” But just consider. A certain number of breaths is allotted in our destiny. When that count of breaths is finished, our life expires. During the 24 hours of the day, we take 21,600 breaths. According to that reckoning, we use up 15 breaths a minute. With each and every breath, our body is being emptied out; our lifespan is shortening. Therefore, He says, “With every breath, your wealth is diminishing. Your life is passing away.” The allotted breaths become fewer and fewer till eventually, the body becomes totally hollow. It will be of no use at all. Therefore, Kabir Sahib says:

What you have to do tomorrow, do today.

What you have to do today, do right now.

In a moment, Doomsday will descend;

What can you accomplish then?

You alone can complete your work. Do you think someone else will do all the work and then hand you the earnings? The son does not eat what the father has earned; the father does not eat what the son has earned. You yourself will have to accomplish whatever work you have been assigned. What you have to do tomorrow, do today; what you have to today, do it right now. In the space of a moment, the entire creation can roll up in

Dissolution; and you will be carried along with it. What work can you complete then? Many people put off doing the devotion until they reach old age. Kabir Sahib tells us:

*Your good days are behind you,
and you have not developed love for the Lord.
What is the point in repenting now when
the birds have already picked the field bare?*

When the crop ripens, if instead of bringing in the harvest, the farmer sips a glass of cold lassi and stretches out to relax, then the birds will eat up all his grain. His field will be stripped bare, and there will be no harvest.

In the same way, if you didn't guard your field during your youth, then all the birds of lust, anger, greed, attachment, ego, children, family, and relations will devour your crop. In the end, you become old, and your body becomes hollow. You start to cough, your eyes don't see anymore, your ears don't hear anymore, your hands and feet start to shake and tremble, and you don't even have teeth left to chew your food. So, consider. At that time, you are no longer fit for any work—not for the work of the world, not for the work of spirituality. When the worldly people despise you and toss you out, do you think the Lord will be recruiting all the discarded old people? Once you grow old, what work can you do? Why not practice the devotion when you are young, while your intellect is sound, and you have all your wits about you. There is a Marathi saying:

*His wits are wandering,
and he hobbles about with a stick.*

When you are old, you get around with the support of a stick. At that time, what else are you good for?

**The time has come to take your seat upon the throne;
Give up rummaging in the garbage.**

When you get the human body, the time has come for you to return to Sat Lok, claim your birthright, and take your seat upon the throne. But instead, you are wasting your precious breaths in worldly pursuits. You were supposed to seize this auspicious opportunity, reach your True Home, and leave behind forever the pain of birth and death.

But instead, you are rummaging in the garbage. At the dump where the village people throw their trash, chickens scratch around looking for food. This world is a big garbage heap. If you rifle through that garbage heap, can you hope to discover anything pure and untainted? The only thing you will find is a foul stench and garbage upon garbage. Therefore, Swami Ji says to give up scavenging in the garbage heap of the world.

**Now the Guru has shown you the Path.
Take hold of the Inner Sound and cherish it in
your heart.**

How can we be saved from the difficulties of this world? How can we come out of the wheel of 84 lakh species of life? How can we be freed from the torments of Yama, the angel of Death? The Guru tells us: “Brother, that Inner Voice is calling you from within, that resounding Shabd is streaming down from on high.” Put your thoughts to one side, turn your attention within and remain all alone. Once you are contained within yourself, focus your attention, and unite it with the Shabd, which is the form of Oneness; then, that Shabd will transport you directly back to its source.

You don’t need to undergo any extreme hardship. You don’t

need to give up eating. You don't need to abandon your worldly works and relations. You don't need to run away to some lonely, wilderness spot. Only one thing is required—in the midst of all your worldly activities, practice your meditation with a loving heart. The Lord is already within you, but He is hidden behind the veil of “I and mine.” Through your loving meditation, remove that veil and meet with the Lord.

**Attach your surat to the Shabd.
Constantly wait upon the Guru and pay homage
to Him.**

Day and night, our thoughts should be turned to that Shabd. Just like the mother's love is centered on her child, and the child's love is centered on its mother, in the same way, we should focus our thoughts on the Lord. In one place, Kabir Sahib explains:

*If you want to meet the Lord, fix your
thoughts on Him every moment.*

If you want to meet Him, then fix your thoughts on the Shabd. For a few days, it may seem dry and uninteresting because your thoughts remain spread outside in the world. But if you go on with the practices—regularly, lovingly, and with firm faith—you will succeed. Do you think the Lord has gone away to some other place? He is within you and, sooner or later, He will give you His darshan. But if you remain indifferent to Him, if you cling to the world and worldly things, then all you will get is the world. If you attach your love to the Lord, then you will get the Lord. For this reason, Swami Ji says that you should always listen

within to the Shabd and keep your thoughts fixed on it. Keep your attention engrossed day and night in the Shabd, contemplate on the Guru's form and cherish the love of the Guru in your heart.

*Giving up all sense of I-hood,
Become absorbed in the Guru.*

This is the goal for which you should strive. You do not remain; only the Guru remains. Then your heart will be bathed in light; all your sins will be washed away. The conscious power of your soul will come in contact with the Conscious Power of Shabd. Even now, the soul and the Shabd both dwell within the body. So why have they not come in contact with each other? Because we have not practiced the technique taught by the Guru. We have not applied it wholeheartedly with love.

Consider the example of the telephone. On this side, one person is waiting for a phone call, and on the other side, another person is trying to place the call. But the caller doesn't know the correct phone number and keeps on dialing the wrong number. So how can the call go through?

In the same way, the Lord is within, the soul is also within, and we desire to bring them together, but how can we accomplish that meeting? We don't understand the correct technique or how to apply it. We don't realize how much perseverance will be required to achieve success. We think, "If it works, well and good. Otherwise, forget it." And the One within also says, "This is up to you. Make the effort if you feel inspired to do it; if not, then do whatever you would like." He has no needs or desires. He dwells beyond all care and sorrow.

**Accept His grace and mercy every moment;
Go into the refuge of His holy feet.**

Kabir Sahib tells us the importance of Guru bhakti:

*In the first birth do the bhakti of the Guru,
In the second become absorbed into the Naam.
In the third birth you will gain liberation
And in the fourth you will reach your True Home.*

Now, many people ask: “How many days do we have to do the meditation before we get the inner awakening?” Friend, there is no set course of time. You can’t say that after one year, two years, four years, eight years, or twenty years, you will achieve success. It’s not like that. What does He tell us? “You will succeed when true love dawns in your within.” The Lord is Love. Love will merge into love. If you have no love in your within, then success will still elude you even after a hundred years, or a hundred lifetimes or a hundred yugas. Further, Kabir Sahib says:

*O, man! Why do you search for me outside?
I am dwelling with you.
I am not in the heavens or in the nether worlds.
Look within yourself for a moment, and you will find me.*

He says: “Where should you search for me? I am not far away in the heavens nor in the nether regions. If you wish to find me, then delve into your within, and search for me there with true love. Then you will meet me in a moment; no, in less than a moment.” There is no set time to complete the course of spirituality. If you think you can find Him by force, then you won’t complete the course, even in a million lifetimes. Therefore,

Swami Ji says, “First become absorbed in the contemplation of the Guru.” You do not remain; only He remains. Then, by His grace, your within will be flooded with Light. Your heart will become pure and spotless, and the power of grace will unite you with the Naam.

We think, “We have no need of a teacher, but we definitely expect to pass and receive a diploma.” Who is going to pass you and award you a diploma except for the teacher? Likewise, in spirituality, everything depends on the Guru. Naam is Guru, and Guru is Naam. But we people understand the Guru to be something separate from God. As long as we understand them as two different things, we will remain mired in duality. We will not be able to merge into that Oneness. After all, who has given you the knowledge of Naam? It is the Satguru who has given you the Naam initiation. Who do you understand Him to be? He Himself is the very form of Naam. If you practice your meditation, understanding this secret, then the Guru will shower grace on you, and through His grace, the Naam will manifest.

But what do we do? We say we have no need of the banker, even though we want to borrow money. Friend, you borrow money from the banker. Are you planning to obtain that money by some disreputable means? If you steal the money, you will definitely be punished. In the same way, it is only through the Guru’s grace that we can achieve our cherished goal. How can we win His grace? Only by going into His shelter with single-minded devotion.

**He has revealed the inner secret to you.
Take hold of the Shabd and cross over the ocean
of existence.**

You can know the Perfect Guru through His teachings. He doesn't tell you to adopt outer modes of worship: "Read the *Gita*, read the *Ramayana*, read the *Bhagavata Purana*, read *Bhakti Vijay Granth*²." The Perfect Guru won't involve you in endless reading of the scriptures. He won't tell you to practice outer mantras (repetitions) or tantras (incantations): "Repeat such and such a five-syllabled mantra, or six-syllabled mantra, or twelve-syllabled mantra, or sixteen-syllabled mantra." He will not recommend recitation of these empty formulas. What does He say? "Within you is the True Shabd, the Shabd that supports the whole of Brahmand. That Shabd is also supporting your body. Connect your attention to that Shabd." These are the true teachings of the Guru, and this is how you can recognize Him. If someone abandons these true teachings and presents some other teaching, then he is not worthy of being called a Guru. The Shabd has no connection with outer things. When you become absorbed in it, the Shabd will ferry you back to the source from which it has sprung. The Shabd itself will take you across the ocean of existence.

**Become absorbed in Shabd and forget the world.
You soul will ascend to the Imperishable Realm.**

Once your soul has merged into the Shabd and has become the form of Shabd, then the two remain united. But when we people do the meditation practice, we don't bring our soul into contact with the Shabd. What to speak of coming into contact with the Shabd, we don't even perfect our Simran. When we do the practice of the five holy Names, if by chance the first name

2 The *Bhakti Vijay Granth* details the life and teachings of Shri Gajanan Maharaj, a holy man active in Maharashtra from 1878 to 1910.

comes into our mind, by the time we get to the second name, our mind has already rushed outside and is lost in the attraction of some worldly object. But when we perfect the Simran of all five names, we will find that the fifth name is the True Name—that is the Shabd, the inner Sound. When you unite with that Sound, when you become the form of that Sound, then your meditation will flow like an unbroken stream.

Until you bring your soul into contact with the Shabd, sometimes your mind will take to the meditation, and sometimes it won't. You may feel bliss, you may feel harassed by the world, or you may just fall asleep. After a while, you say: "Let's give the meditation up for now. We can see how it goes tomorrow." What is the cause of all this wavering? You have never experienced the enjoyment within, and so this disturbance never ceases. If you don't go to Satsang for a few days, then you decide to give that up too. The mind is creating all this turmoil with the express purpose of making you leave the meditation and the Satsang.

The mind is always playing tricks, bringing thought after thought to convince you to abandon the meditation. The mind wants you to lay back down and go to sleep. So, you have to keep practicing the meditation—with strong determination, regularity, and love, whether the mind takes to it or not. One day the inner door will have to open. One day your soul will reach the Immortal Realm, the origin of that self-contained and self-existing Shabd. When you achieve this state, do you think this perishable world will remain with you? You yourself will not remain, so how can the world remain?

**Whoever keeps the company of the Guru,
escapes from the cycle of births and deaths.**

Those disciples who follow the Guru's teaching go within and realize the Shabd—the true form of the Guru. Those disciples who sacrifice everything to Him and unite with Him within, their account of births and deaths is finished. We people want to understand the teachings through talking, but nothing is accomplished through talk. We discourse on spirituality and wax eloquent on the subject of love, but it is all empty words; our within is bereft of true love. When we are speaking with someone about love, we praise it to the skies.

Friend, you are talking about love. Do you have even a speck of that love or are you empty within? Think about this honestly. You get very carried away talking about love; you become intoxicated in your own words. But have you cultivated even an ounce of love within yourself?

There was a wealthy landowner, who had laborers working in his fields. He mounted his horse and rode out to see how the work was coming along. It was quite hot, one or two o'clock in the afternoon. He thought, "I should ride over there where water is flowing in the canal and give my horse a drink." When he reached there, he dismounted and ordered one of the laborers, "My horse is thirsty. Show it where the water is." The laborer said, "Very good, Maharaj."

Then he led the horse up on a small hillock with a view of the canal flowing below. He tethered the horse and said: "O horse, look down there. You can see the water flowing along in the canal. May it quench your thirst." What could the poor, thirsty horse do? It just stood quietly, as thirsty as ever. Then the laborer took the horse back to its master. That wealthy landowner asked, "Did the horse get something to drink?" The laborer replied: "Maharaj, when did you say anything about giving the horse a drink? You said, 'Show my horse

where the water is.' So, I led it up on the hill where it could see the water flowing down below."

So, this is our condition. We quibble over words and but do not understand how to put them into practice. We want to perfect our spirituality, but mere words cannot quench our inner thirst. Our cherished desire cannot be fulfilled in this way, and true love will never manifest within us. Therefore, He says, "You must do the inner practices. This is not a matter of talking only."

Once you have taken refuge at the feet of the Perfect Satguru, what need is there for you to go into the cycle of births and deaths? If you again have to take birth and die, it is your own fault. In this birth, you did not practice the spirituality; you only talked about it.

**Give up this perishable world and understand
the Truth.**

Your cycle of births and deaths will be finished off.

He says that this world is a trap. It is destructible. It is tasteless and without attraction. If you understand the world in this light, you will become detached from it, and you will unite with the Power of Truth, the life-giving Naam. Otherwise, the world will not release its hold on you. The trap of illusion is standing ready. How will you become free of it?

**Attend Satsang; have love for the Guru within;
Rise up and behold your true self in the mirror.**

What is the meaning of Satsang? Just listening to stories every day cannot be called Satsang. Manifesting the true love within

is Satsang. And what will you gain from that true love? The refuse and dirt of egotism that has obscured the mirror of your heart will be removed, and you will behold your true self. If the mirror is covered with dirt or dung, or if you turn the mirror around backward, will you be able to see your face in it? If you look at the back of the mirror, you see only a wooden board. That board cannot reflect your face.

Therefore, going into the within, you should clean the mirror of your heart. When you see your face in that inner mirror, you will realize that you have so many sins within you. You will clearly see the faults and virtues in your within. All of this will manifest by itself. Now we don't look within ourselves. We want to throw everything on others and find fault with them. This person is like this; that person is like that. Friend, never mind about others. If you want to find fault, examine your own within.

Listen to the voice of the Dhun coming from the inner sky and amass the earnings of devotion.

What does He mean by the earnings of devotion? The devotee does not collect rupees or gold. The wealth of the devotee is the meditation and the Simran, going on day and night. What do the rich people and the greedy people do? They do not squander their wealth; they hoard it up little by little and lock it in a safe. In the same way, go on earning the spiritual wealth—the Naam Simran. Fill your heart with that treasure.

Naam is your wealth. That Naam imparts benefit both here and hereafter. No matter how much of it you spend, your treasury will never be exhausted. It will double, triple, quadruple. It will always become more. That wealth does not come

to an end. Earn that wealth, and you will never be a pauper. What is the meaning of poverty? “I want something. I need something.” Begging makes you a pauper. Even at the time of death, the soul departs begging. Looking around at children, family, wealth and possessions, the dying person is troubled. “What will become of all this? What will they do without me?” With all this mental disturbance and unrest, the soul departs from this world clinging to the outer things, and so the soul will have to take rebirth in that place again.

When you become rich with the wealth of Naam, then the power of detachment will manifest within you. “I and mine” will be eradicated, and you will be at peace. Then birth and death will have no meaning for you. You will not need to come back again into this mortal world. Always keep your attention fixed on the higher realms, and merge that attention into the Ethereal Sound streaming down from above. Let the world say what it likes; don’t pay any attention. “He just sits with his eyes closed. He doesn’t know anything.” People may go on criticizing you like this, but what difference does it make? You should remain intoxicated in your own work, no matter what anyone else says.

*You should dance to your own tune,
no matter what others say;
If the critics cavil, pay them no heed.*

**O dear one, soar into the inner sky;
Untie the knot between body and mind.**

Merging into the Ethereal Shabd, become the form of Shabd. At present, unconsciousness and consciousness are knotted together in our within. The word *gānṭh* is a word for “knot,”

which is also called *granṭhi*. The holy scripture of the Sikhs is called the Granth Sahib. Whoever has untied the *granṭhi*, the knot between unconscious matter and the consciousness within, has read the Granth Sahib. Until that inner knot is loosened, how can anyone fathom the true meaning of the Granth Sahib?

Our body and mind are unconscious. Our soul is conscious. But when the soul entered the unconscious realm, it was tied to the body and mind and became their form. So, when the knot is untied, the soul can go free. The body and mind remain below, and the soul soars upward.

**I have not seen anyone happy in this world.
Take a firm hold of the Guru's words.**

After explaining so much, Swami Ji further tells us that you have no real well-wisher in this world. Everyone loves you for their own self-interest. But when they have no more need of you, no one cares about you at all. Take, for instance, your children. When you are earning money and bringing it home, how much love everyone has for you. Even before you arrive home, they prepare to serve you water, tea, milk, lassi. But when you grow old, where is the question of you bringing them any wealth? Then they think, "Let's see. If we serve this old man food once a day at lunchtime, it should be enough. And if he doesn't eat then, that's fine too. Old people don't need much food." The basis of all these relations is selfishness. Only the Guru loves you selflessly. He doesn't want anything from you.

Everyone in the world is unhappy. You won't find even one person who is happy within. From the outside, we look alright.

We apply some creams or cosmetics, and the surface may sparkle, but inside, you'll find only a sack of coals. Within, everyone is suffering.

**The fools are enmeshed in the web of suffering.
Why are you joining them in the snare?**

Those who deal in coal will have their hands and face blackened. You can see that all the world is trapped in the web of unhappiness. So, why do you allow yourself to become entangled also? You understand why everyone is suffering. You are a beloved of the Guru; you have taken the Naam initiation. So why do you go and fall into the same trap as everyone else? The worldly people who are already caught there naturally think, "Alright. We are trapped ourselves. Let's lure these other people into the snare with us."

**Forsake all illusion of "I and you, mine and yours."
Enter into the refuge of Radhaswami.**

Four forces are at work: I and you, mine and yours. These forces have no color or form, but they are active within everyone. The lowly and the exalted alike, all are under the sway of these forces. If we throw out these four forces, then nothing of the world remains. But how can we get rid of them? Their roots have penetrated deep into the nether realms; they do not grow on the surface.

Why do mighty nations quarrel and fight with each other? Why do they feed and house huge standing armies? It all comes back to these four forces—I, you, mine, and yours. And in these struggles whole civilizations are destroyed; all the

world's resources are exhausted. These powers are foremost in everyone, even the gods and goddesses. Be rid of these four and with one-pointed attention, go into the refuge of the Satguru. You will achieve happiness here and hereafter.

Where does the Lord reside? Is there any place without Him? The Lord is omnipresent—He dwells in all places at once. He dwells in the East and the West. He is present in the North and the South. There is no place where He is not.

—Baba Somanath

No Place Without Him

**It is said that Ram dwells in the East and Khuda
in the West.**

But tell me—who resides in the North and the South?¹

This is the bani of Satguru Paltu Sahib Ji. People of many faiths worship in India, but during Paltu Sahib’s time, two major religions predominated and boasted legions of orthodox followers. Which religions is Paltu Sahib referring to here? Hindu and Turk.² The Hindus believe God is found in the East, and Muslims say that He is found in the West. The Hindus worship the sun and the Muslims revere the moon. One worships the daytime and the other the night, but whether you worship the day or the night, one important question remains unanswered—where can the Omnipresent Lord be found? Therefore, Paltu Sahib asks. “If some worship God in the East and some in the West, then what about North

1 Paltu Sahib, *Pūrab meñ rām hai, pacchim khudāy hai...*

2 By the time of Paltu Sahib, the term “Turk” had become synonymous with “Muslim,” because the Muslim rulers, who had been in power for several centuries, were mostly of Turkic origin. Ghiyath al-Din Tughluq, the founder of the Tughlaq dynasty (1320-1413), is generally held to be Turkic or Turko-Mongol. And Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire (1526-1857), was a Chagatai Turk (this branch of Turks was named after Chagatai Khan, the second son of Genghis Khan).

and South? Since the Almighty Lord is everywhere, doesn't He dwell in those places also?

**Where does the Lord dwell? Is there any place
without Him?**

Still, the Hindus and Turks hurl abuse at one another.

Where does the Lord reside? Is there any place without Him? The Lord is omnipresent—He dwells in all places at once. He dwells in the East and the West. He is present in the North and the South. There is no place where He is not. But both religions, stuck fast in their own beliefs, try to claim that the Almighty Lord is theirs alone, and then they unleash a barrage of insults on each other. When the Hindus and Muslims quarrel, the Hindus say that Ram, the Hindu God, is the greatest; the Muslims say that Rahim, the Muslim God, is greater still. Then such a battle ensues that Ram kills Rahim, and Rahim destroys Ram. But the truth is that neither group has any idea where God is dwelling; these outer religions cannot lead you on the Path to liberation. All this religious conflict grows out of artificial, man-made divisions, just like caste and community.

**The Hindu and Turk tug on opposite ends of
the rope,**

**But both are washed away in the torrent of their
own beliefs.**

Hindus and Muslims are both pulled back and forth in a tug-of-war. One says, "My religion is the greatest"; the other says, "No, my religion is far greater." But, in reality, there is no high; there is no low. All this friction is due to our wrong way of thinking.

The Hindus and the Muslims each have their own rites and rituals, but the sacred objects they fashion are not made up of different kinds of matter. Their temples and mosques and outer trappings are all assembled from the same material elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether. If the temples and mosques were put together from different kinds of matter, then we might think that they had been created by different deities. But Hindus and Muslims use the same matter, composed of five elements, to build their places of worship and to create all the outer things used in devotion, putting them together according to their own different ways of thinking. In that way, separate religions are formed.

The sun that rises in the East also sets in the West. If it did not set in the West, how would it rise again each morning in the East? We can't have East without West; they are linked together. But when we describe a place as lying to the East, we are speaking relative to where we are standing; someone standing in another location may say that place lies to the West. We are both describing the very same place, but since our viewpoints are different, we start to quarrel over the words we are using, and in this way, all this disturbance arises over nothing. In such a confused condition, we don't meet with Khuda, we don't meet with Ram, and we don't attain liberation. Instead, we wander about getting kicked and knocked, until we have to depart from this world.

**The servant Paltu says: The Lord dwells within all;
No one is even separate from Him,
even by a hair's breadth—all I am telling
you is the Truth.**

The Almighty Lord dwells within everyone; no one is

without Him. He is not near to us or far away from us. He is Unchangeable Permanence. In your thoughts, you may imagine Him as separate from you, but the Almighty Lord is not close or distant; this is all a creation of the mind. If you sit in solitude and turn your attention within, you will find Him waiting there. But if you imagine the Lord is far away, then He will be just as far from you as you think He is. However you conceive of Him, He takes on that form.

People believe that trimming the mustache very short or shaving it off entirely makes you a Muslim; and further they think that shaving the head is the religious duty of a Muslim.³ In this way, they make the hair of the head into a religion, but never think of sacrificing that head, the ego, to the Almighty Lord. The Hindus are also concerned with the hair. The Brahmins prescribe shaving the head and keeping only a *choti*—a small tuft of hair at the crown.⁴ They say that wearing the *choti* is the Brahmins' religious duty; and the Muslims, in order to distinguish themselves from the non-Muslims, remove the mustache and, after completing a sacred haj (pilgrimage), they shave their heads as well.

But what does any of this have to do with true spirituality? Friend, the orthodox people have made a religion of their hair, isn't that so? But you do not become a true Hindu through these practices; you do not become a true Muslim. Your only concern is with the hair. Therefore, He tells us that the Almighty Lord never comes and never goes. It is only we people who think that He is near to us or far away. He is as close or distant as we imagine Him to be. When the mind

3 During the Hajj to Mecca, devout Muslims shave their heads.

4 This rule applies to anyone reciting the Vedas or performing the yagyas, or ritual sacrifices.

becomes still and concentrated within, then you will become His very form. Everything lies within you; you do not need to wander anywhere outside.

The beginning of devotion is contentment, and the end of devotion is also contentment. When desires enter in your heart, contentment departs; but when you remove all those desires, then contentment fills your within again. As long as your heart is longing for the things of this world, you will be chasing after those desires day and night.

—Baba Somanath

The Cornerstone of Devotion

**The elephant stands patiently and eats its fill,
But the dog cannot find a scrap to eat, even after
running from door to door.¹**

The dog says, “If I just sit here, who will care if I eat or not? Who will feed me?” Similarly, we people say, “I have to stir about; I have to do my worldly work; I have to look after my children. If I neglect all my duties and meditate all day, what will get done?” But Paltu Sahib replies, “This is all due to your lack of faith. If you would practice your meditation with firm faith and love, then the Lord Himself would bring the food to your door. You would have no more worries.”

As long as our belief in the Lord is not resolute, we are still responsible for attending to our worldly work. But once our faith is perfected, then we entrust everything to the Almighty Lord. So, what reason is there for our attention to remain entangled in the affairs and disputes of this world?

What is the condition of the elephant? The elephant is content; it stays happily in its own place and has a personal servant to care for all its needs. At feeding time, the servant

1 Paltu Sahib, *Santosh ke dhare se khāy gaj peṭ bhari...*

brings it food to eat and water to drink. But the poor dog has to wander to ten or even a hundred doors in order to fill its stomach. Why? Because it has no patience or contentment. Similarly, whatever understanding we keep in our hearts determines how we will act. If our faith is not firm, then we ask, “How will I make my living? How will I get by?” Because we lack faith, we also end up wandering here and there. What other choice do we have?

**The Saints follow the example of the python.
Without roaming about, it still receives
nourishment.**

Paltu Sahib tells us that the Saints and Sadhus must conduct themselves with equanimity. Look at the example of the snake who sits contentedly in one place but still eats and drinks. The snakes nourishment comes of itself; the snake does not have to go out hunting for food. Similarly, the Saints and Sadhus are the abode of contentment. In their hearts, they request nothing except the Naam. And the all-pervading Lord, hearing their plea, fulfills all of their needs.

Once Shivaji Maharaj was constructing a fort. He had thousands of men working at this task. One day, egotism entered into his within. He thought, “It is only because of me that so many people can fill their stomachs. Who is equal to me?” His Guru, Samrath Ramdas Swami, realized all that was happening and thought, “My disciple is getting puffed up. Whoever is controlled by pride and egotism cannot make any progress. He is in danger of a fall.”

So he went to visit Shivaji at the fort. The construction work was underway, and a large, heavy boulder had fallen

in front of the main entrance to the fort. Shiva Ji wanted to have it dug out and split into pieces, but that boulder was very heavy and very hard. The workers tried for many days, but they couldn't smash it or shift it. Finally, Shiva Ji decided that they should complete the fort first and deal with the boulder afterward.

In the meantime, Ramdas Swami came there and said, "Shivaji, there is a huge boulder blocking this entryway. You should split it up and move it out of the way before going any further." Shiva Ji replied, "No, Maharaj Ji. We will break it up later. First, let us complete the fort." But Ramdas Swami said, "No, I don't like the way the entrance looks. Break up this boulder now." These were the orders of the Guru and could not be ignored.

All the workers put their whole energy into smashing that boulder. Finally, it split into two pieces, and a small frog hopped out. Everyone standing there saw that there was a store of food and water inside the huge boulder to nourish that frog. So, Ramdas Swami said to his disciple, "Look, Shivaji. Who was providing this food for the frog? How was it maintaining itself? Your within had become filled with egotism, and to remove your pride, I have shown you that it is the Lord Himself who cares for all of His creatures." The Lord is omnipresent—He is sitting within all. According to our deeds, according to our faith, He rewards us. Whoever thinks that they have to go from door-to-door begging for their food, the Lord lets them go begging. On the other hand, if we remain content and go on remembering the Naam and singing the Lord's praise, then the Lord Himself will bring our food to us ready-made. But those who wander from door

to door like the dogs, go away empty-handed—they get nothing to fill their stomachs.

**The lion obtains its food easily;
But the jackal must wander to ten or twenty places,
bowing down over and over.**

The lion easily finds its food. But the jackal doesn't know where to look; it wanders here and there, trying to find a way to scrounge the food it needs, and even then, it has a difficult time. Similarly, if you put full faith in the inner Power of the soul, the Satguru and the Naam, if you fix your undivided attention in the Naam Simran and inner contemplation, then the problems of the world will no longer torment you. All the worldly problems that arise—whether they are physical or mental—are swept away.

The Lord is all-pervading; He is the knower of your heart. When your heart merges into the Almighty Lord, then your difficulties come to an end. But because of our wavering faith, we go on suffering, wandering from place to place.

**Das Paltu says: Don't waste time on other practices.
Develop contentment, which is the cornerstone of
devotion.**

Now Paltu Sahib explains: "What is the cornerstone of devotion? It is contentment." The beginning of devotion is contentment, and the end of devotion is also contentment. When desires enter in your heart, contentment departs; but when you remove all those desires, then contentment fills your

within again. As long as your heart is longing for the things of this world, you will be chasing after those desires day and night.

*Desires are like the sweepers and tanners wives;
Desires are the lowliest of the low.
You would have become the Lord Himself
if desires had not come in between.*

We are born in desire, and in desire, we die. Desire is the source of all our bondage. But if we cast away desire, nothing remains to chain us to this world.

Some people try to become like the True Sadhus, simply by adopting some kind of special costume or custom. They imitate the Sadhus outer behavior, but what is the outcome of their actions? Well, within, the hell worlds are waiting. Why? Because those unfortunate people have failed in two ways. They have not become a worldly success, nor have they succeeded in spirituality.

—Baba Somanath

The Folly of Imitation

**O Sadhu, don't do the devotion just looking
at others and imitating them.¹**

This is the bani of Jagjivan Sahib on the subject of bhakti. Kabir speaks of bhakti in one of His slokas:

*Everyone engages in the outer bhakti,
but no one casts out illusion from their within.
Entangled in the net of deception,
all undergo terrible suffering and strife.*

The entire world is engaged in devotion. No one is without it. Whoever has taken birth is performing one type of devotion or another. But until we fully grasp the inner secret, our devotion cannot earn the real spiritual merit.

Take for example the trees. They do their own form of devotion. They are also benefactors. They provide shelter for the birds. They yield wood for fuel. And further they give us fruit to eat. They perform this service for the benefit of others, not for themselves. This is also one type of devotion. Similarly, the crop ripens in the field and bestows its harvest upon us. This too is a form of devotion. The cows and the buffaloes also provide us with milk, while they themselves live on hay and grass clippings.

¹ Jagjivan Sahib, *Sādhō dekh karai nahīñ koī...*

And human beings are also engaged in so many types of devotion according to their own temperament and understanding. If you ask someone, “Where does your devotion lie?” they might reply, “I am a member of the Congress Party.”

Someone else may say, “I am a patriot. I love my country.”

A third person claims, “I am a philanthropist.”

A fourth asserts, “I am a Communist.”

And a fifth person tells you, “I am a member of the Jana Sangh Party.² So, all of these people are devoted to some outer cause—they are each doing their own type of bhakti or devotion.

No one is devoid of devotion. Women do the devotion of men, and men do the devotion of women. All sentient beings are engaged in some form of devotion. Many people worship God in the in the form of Shiva, Shankar, Shakti, Rama, Vital, Hari, and so on.

Therefore, seeing all the forms of devotion that the devotees practice, Jagjivan Sahib is cautioning us: “O Sadhus, do not perform the devotion, just mimicking what others do.” Each person is following their own type of bhakti in the world, but what can you gain by adopting all these superficial aspects of devotion?

Putting on the *jeneu* (sacred thread), tying the *choti* (ritual tuft of hair), wearing the *kafani* (sadhu’s unsewn garment), smearing sacred ash on your body, breaking the coconut, and playing the *chimtā* (small bells attached to a paddle)—we engage in all these practices only because other people have told us that they are meritorious. But when we perform the rites and rituals, merely copying others, we remain far away from the Lord. Hypocrisy takes root in our heart, and our egotism increases.

2 The *Bharatiya Jana Sangh* (abbreviated as BJS or JS, short name: *Jana Sangh*) was an Indian right-wing political party that existed from 1951 to 1977.

We cannot gain enlightenment by imitating others; in this way we only become more deeply enmeshed in illusion.

As long as we go on blindly with the prescribed rituals, understanding can never dawn in our within. Our intellect remains under the control of illusion, and we go on squandering our precious lifetime.

Those people who try to imitate the True Sadhus, they make their way to hell.

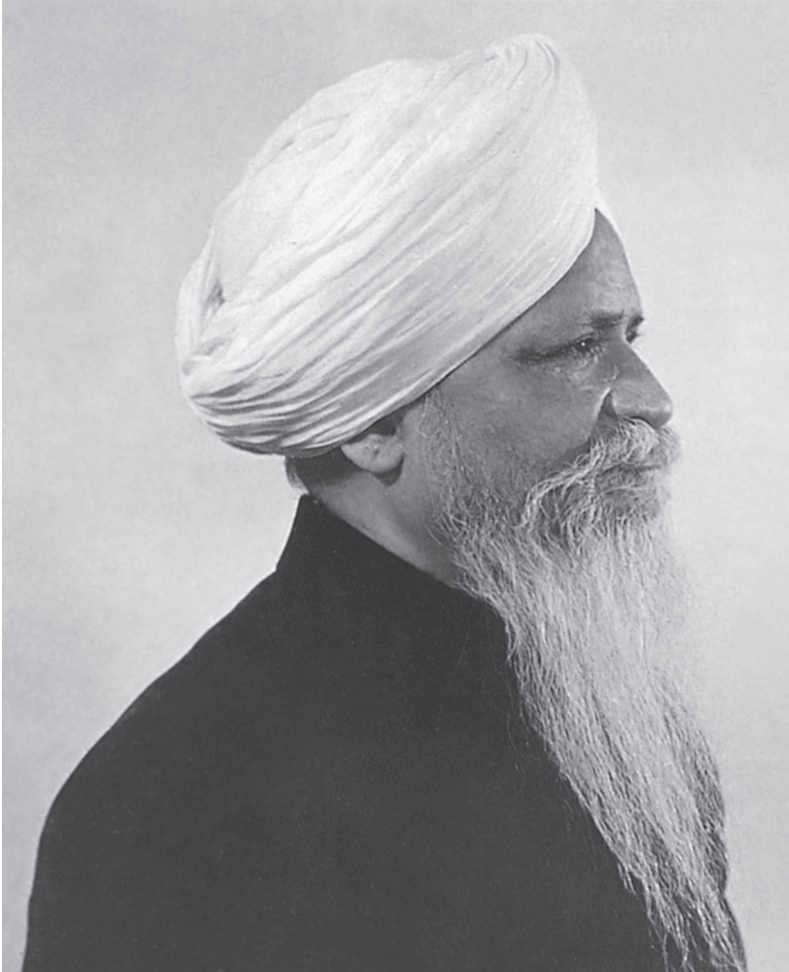
Some people try to become like the True Sadhus, simply by adopting some kind of special costume or custom. They imitate the Sadhus outer behavior, but what is the outcome of their actions? Well, within, the hell worlds are waiting. Why? Because those unfortunate people have failed in two ways. They have not become a worldly success, nor have they succeeded in spirituality.

*The washerman's dog belongs neither
to the house nor to the riverbank.*

Similarly, the imitation sadhus belong neither to this world or the next. For this reason, they have to suffer the torments of hell.

The rishis, munis, anchorites, and ascetics have done the inner practices and have recorded their own experiences in the Vedas, Shastras, and other holy books. But after reading their books, we adopt only the external trappings of dress and ritual, and in this way, we think we have become Sadhus.

We paid no attention to their real Inner Teachings. We have copied only their outer behavior. In this way have become imitation sadhus, and we will be rewarded accordingly.



Baba Somanath Ji

The True Sadhus have done the meditation practice and have reaped the fruit of their efforts. But that is something different altogether. Those aspirants who stick only to the superficial forms fall prey to hypocrisy. And what is their reward? They are thrown into the hells.

**Becoming obstinate, they debate and argue.
In this way, everything is lost.**

Further, Jagjivan Sahib tells us that the imitation sadhus read the scriptures and, according to their own understanding of what is written there, they become skilled in argument and debate.

But how can intellectual wrangling lead us to the inner experiences that the True Sadhus have gained in their meditation? From reading the holy books, we become stuck fast in our own opinions. All we can learn from such study is how to wage a war of words. Ramdas Swami tells us:

*The words we speak are free. They cost us nothing.
But day by day, through and through,
pride swells within us.*

The more we go on lecturing others—expounding on the glories of Sach Khand and Anami Desh—the more our egotism expands, casting one more veil of illusion over our understanding. Why does this happen? Because we have not experienced the Inner Reality that we are describing.

It's just like reading about a battle in the newspaper. Someone who was actually engaged in the conflict understands all too well the bitter struggle that led to victory. The opposing forces were locked in combat, bombs were exploding, this was happening, that was happening. In contrast, we get up in the morning and sit comfortably reading about the ordeal in our newspaper. But if we were actually standing on the front lines, we would see it very differently. Only the ones who fight the battle and subdue their mind can taste the bliss of the inner nectar. And the record of their experiences is written down in the holy books. But if someone reads those experiences

of bravery and then imagines that, merely by adopting some special form of dress, they have become like those spiritual warriors—“I am as strong as a tiger. I am as brave as a lion”—well, what benefit can possibly come of that?

**The mind cannot be stilled through discussion
and debate, even if you go on talking and talking.**

You have engaged in so much intellectual wrangling and debate. But still your mind hasn't come under your control. So, what did you accomplish with all that talk? Absolutely nothing.

**Without meditation you will remain ensnared in
illusion, so how can you achieve liberation?**

Until you sit for the meditation practices, until you ascend into the inner ethereal planes, riding on of the Conscious Power that dwells within you, you won't be able to unite with the Shabd. Without meditation it is all mere words, no matter how many scriptures you can recite.

**This is all the imitation devotion;
The true devotees are very rare.**

The whole world is filled with those who perform the outer practices, but only some rare devotee engages in true devotion.

*Out of millions, only a rare one gets the
meditation of the Lord.*

**Jagjivan says: Repeat the Simran in your heart
and merge your soul into His lotus feet.**

Here He tells us that real Simran is the remembrance of Naam. In true remembrance, there is no need for outer repetition with the tongue. That true remembrance goes on within.

Repeat the Naam in the silence of your heart. This is what we call the hidden repetition. The fault we have to correct is not with the mouth, but with the heart. The mouth is only for eating and drinking. The lacking is in the heart.

To remove the defects from the heart, remember the True Lord inwardly—then merge your soul into Him. You may call it soul, or you may call it Light. But the conscious Inner Power is the same, no matter what words you employ to describe it.

When anyone begins to practice the devotion, the worldly people start to give them a hard time. When a monkey comes into a village, the children see it and chase after it. So, in the same way, the worldly people chase the devotees and harass them. But the devotees endure all of that abuse and attend to their own real work. They remain lovingly devoted to the Almighty Lord and strive to become liberated from this mortal world. The devotees follow after the Lord as the calf runs after the cow. And the Lord cares for His devotees as the cow looks after the calf.

—Baba Somanath

As the Calf Runs After the Cow

Wherever the mother may be, her attention remains riveted on her child.

The serpent may remove the jewel from its forehead, but its contemplation on the jewel does not waver.¹

This is the bani of Paltu Sahib. He says, “Wherever the mother may be, her attention is riveted on her child.” In the same way, the devotee should have love for the Lord. The Lord tenderly watches over such devotees. This is the nature of the relationship between the Guru and the disciple—just like the love between the mother and the child. When the child is very young, it has no idea how to eat or drink or how to bathe itself. At that time the mother takes care of the child with great love and concern. And likewise, all the child’s love is for the mother. No one teaches the child to have that love; it arises naturally. The bond of love between mother and child is forged before the child is born.

Similarly, in the dense, dark forest, there lives a type of snake that has a jewel in its forehead, and that jewel is very dear to the snake. At night, when the snake comes out of its

1 Paltu Sahib, *Mātā bālak kañhai rākhtī prān hai...*

burrow, it removes that jewel and sets it to one side. Then, by the light of that sparkling jewel, the snake can eat its food, drink water, and move about. But the attention of the snake always remains focused on the jewel. Just like that snake never forgets its jewel, in the same way we should keep our concentration fixed on the Simran and contemplation of the Lord. Then even while living in the material world, we can stay focused on our true work while tending to our worldly duties. We will not be the losers.

In the same way, the mother's thoughts are turned toward her child, even when she is busy with her other work. Even after the infant is born, the mother makes sure that the rest of the household does not go hungry. She looks after the child, and at the same time, she attends to all her other responsibilities. Following her example, we should take care of our worldly duties, while focusing our love and devotion toward the Almighty Lord—this will be to our benefit.

The gardener plants the trees and then gives them water.

O Paltu, the devotee and the Lord are just like the calf and the cow.

The relationship between the devotee and the Lord is just like the gardener and the trees. The gardener plants the trees and then tends them carefully, giving them water and all the things they need to flourish. Similarly, the Satguru, who is the form of God Almighty, is always striving to uplift His devotees. He never seeks to throw them down. The Satguru is ever at hand, offering all feasible help. It has been said that through all the four yugas, the world has shown enmity toward the devotees. The worldly people and the devotees can

never get on together. When anyone begins to practice the devotion, the worldly people start to give them a hard time. When a monkey comes into a village, the children see it and chase after it. So, in the same way, the worldly people chase the devotees and harass them. But the devotees endure all of that abuse and attend to their own real work. They remain lovingly devoted to the Almighty Lord and strive to become liberated from this mortal world.

The devotees follow after the Lord as the calf runs after the cow. And the Lord cares for His devotees as the cow looks after the calf. For this reason, He is sometimes called *Bhagat Bachal Gopal*.²

**There is no lacking in the Court of the Lord;
The shortcoming lies in our service, and our
devotion falls short.**

Many people say, “If we close our eyes and sit in meditation, then our children will die of hunger.” What kind of bhakti is this? Friend, if you bring thoughts of your children along with you when you sit for devotion, what bhakti will you be able to perform? The devotees should enshrine the form of the Lord in their hearts. If our heart is filled with thoughts of our children, then where is the room for the Lord’s love? The Lord and the devotee must become one; the Lord dwells in the heart of the devotee, and the devotee resides in the heart of the Lord. When the two become one—this is called bhakti. When our devotion is superficial and half-hearted, no matter how much meditation we may perform, still the inner veil will

² *Gopal*, the cowherd who looks after the cows and calves, is a name of Krishna. *Bhagat* is the devotee and *bachhal* means calf or child. So *Bhagat Bachhal Gopal*, is God as the Protector for cares for the child disciple.

not be removed. As long as we have not lifted that veil, all our connection is with the world. How can we develop love for the Lord who hides behind that veil? We have to lift the veil and go within, isn't it so?

That Lord who bestows His blessings on all the world—on the worms, and insects and moths, and all the other types of bugs and crawling creatures—would such a Lord let His devotees die of hunger? Would He give them anguish and distress? He would never harm them. Those who have not surrendered to the Lord, those who have no faith and trust in Him, they have to carry their own burdens. But when, with a sincere heart, we become His, then He becomes ours.

When you belong to the Lord, your problems become His. So why would you need to worry about money or food or drink? He will shower all these blessings, and if He chooses not to give these things to you, then He has a reason. This is all His Will.

He is aware of all the creatures, whether in the water or on the land.

He knows the animate and the inanimate.

O Paltu, He gives nourishment to the silkworm, wrapped in its cocoon.

The earth is divided into water and land. So many creatures dwell in the oceans, and the Lord gives food to all of them. The air is filled with microscopic creatures, too subtle and tiny to be seen with the naked eye. But whatever food they require, the Lord provides for each of them according to their needs.

When we are sitting in His devotion, do you think He will not give us what we need? He will definitely take care of

His devotees and will provide everything we require. But our devotion has to be sincere. If we acquire some worldly power or wealth or possessions, people start respecting us. They will fold their hands to us and say, “He has become a Swami.” Then we puff up with egotism and think, “If it weren’t for me, how could all this be happening? This is all because of me.”

In this way, our devotion is spoiled. The ego forms a wall between the Guru and the disciple, and our bhakti becomes like barren soil. One day Raja Shiva Ji was somewhere building a fort. Thousands of men were working on its construction. A thought of ego came into Shiva Ji’s mind: “If it weren’t for me, how would these thousands of poor laborers be earning their living? This is all happening because of me.”

Meanwhile, Shiva Ji’s Guru, Maharaj Ramdas Swami, arrived at that place. Before one of the gates of the fort, a large, heavy stone had fallen. The workers had tried to break up that stone, but it was too strenuous a task, and they decided to deal with it when all the other construction was complete. Seeing this stone, Ramdas Swami said, “First of all, remove this boulder.” Shiva Ji replied, “No, Maharaj. It is impossible to break this stone.” But Ramdas Swami insisted: “No, no. It doesn’t matter how much effort you have to make or how many workers you have to assign to that job; you must break it open.” When they finally split the boulder open, they found water inside, and a frog hopped out of the water. Then Ramdas Swami told his disciple, “Shiva Ji, I have removed the egotism that had entered your heart. You thought all this work was going on because of you. But can you tell me who poured the water into this stone? Can you tell me who put this frog inside? Can you tell me who provided food for that frog to live on?”

In this way, the Lord cares for all the creatures. As long as you think you have to take care of your own self, then the responsibility is yours. But when you direct all your effort toward becoming one with the Lord, He will worry for you.

Why have we not surrendered to the Lord? Because there is some mistake in our service, in our devotion. We remain in the company of the Guru, but we don't do the work He has told us to do. We think that we are devoted to the Naam. Someone asks you, "How long have you been initiated?" You reply, "I have been initiated for a long time. I am an old satsangi." You're right; you are an old satsangi, and old things are full of worms. The worms devour them. You have been present with the Guru physically, but you have not done the practices that He has enjoined. Until you actually apply yourself to the meditation, egotism will not leave you. And when you are full of ego, how can you entrust yourself to the Lord? How can you gain the protection of the Lord?

**Who is that Power? I can get no news of Him.
All the lesser powers come in between, but He is
the greatest of all.**

What Power is Paltu Sahib describing? He is speaking of the Supreme Power. Many other great powers exist in the creation. Many other powers have performed mighty deeds. But who is the One who is greatest of all? The Almighty Lord is that Power.

**The Lord has taken on my form and is doing all
my work.
Paltu says: My name comes in between, and all
the credit is going to this unworthy one.**

Paltu Sahib tells us: “That Lord has taken on my name and my form, and in this form He is doing all my works. Since my name comes in between, all the credit, all the glory and praise is coming to me, and I feel very embarrassed. The Lord is the All-Doer. Sitting in my body, He is doing His work, but when people start giving all the praise to me, at that time I feel very embarrassed.”

In front of the Guru, we say, "Maharaj Ji, this body is yours, this mind is yours, this wealth is also yours." But when the time comes to make a sacrifice for the Guru, then we say, "Who is the Guru to me, after all? Is he my father that I should give all this to him? My children would die of hunger. All of this belongs to me."

—Baba Somanath

Manmukh and Gurumukh

**O dear one, go into the shelter of the Satguru,
and pay your karmic toll.¹**

This is the bani of Hazur Radha Swami Ji. He says, “Detaching your soul from this world, reach your True Home, Sat Lok.” If your soul wishes to return to that immortal realm from where it came, you must first go into the shelter of the Satguru. The word “Guru” does not refer to some human being. The word “Guru” is not applied to some swami or renunciate. The Guru is a Power—the Power that awakens us from that state of forgetfulness and unites us with the All-Conscious Lord. If you go into the *sharan* (shelter) of such a Guru with whole-hearted devotion, then that Guru Power will manifest within you. Some people think, “By receiving initiation from the Guru, I have already gone into His shelter.” But taking the Guru’s shelter means more than merely receiving initiation.

Giving up your “I-hood,” become absorbed in the Guru.

When not one trace of self remains in your within, when only the Guru remains—this is called going into His shelter.

1 Swami Ji Maharaj, *Satguru saran gaho mere pyāre...*

If you wish to transport goods from one country to another, then at the port of entry, you must pay a toll. Otherwise, you cannot bring your goods across the border. Similarly, when you wish to return with your spiritual treasure to your True Home, Sat Lok, then also you have to pay a toll—you must give up your body, mind, and wealth. Without paying this toll, you cannot move forward. Therefore, He explains, “You must pay your karmic toll.” When you surrender the worldly karmas in the refuge of the Guru, that is, when you sacrifice everything to Him, you are paying your karmic toll. Then you can take your spiritual wealth and proceed on your homeward journey.

**All the world remains entangled in error and delusion.
No one is attracted to His unique message.**

No one grasps the inner secret. Everyone takes initiation and performs the practices, but the inner veil of illusion is not lifted. Even though we have taken the Naam and go on doing the meditation, still the delusion remains. How can this be? Because all of our devotion is flimsy and half-hearted, all of our meditation is superficial. We have not given ourselves over to the practices with one-pointed devotion. In one common folk saying, the host says to the guest:

*Think of this as your home; come and go as you please.
Use the flour, the pots, the vessels like your own —
Prepare your meal and eat to your heart's content.
But everything is really mine;
So just remember that all the credit goes to me!*

So this our condition. In front of the Guru, we say, “Maharaj

Ji, this body is yours, this mind is yours, this wealth is also yours.” But when the time comes to make a sacrifice for the Guru, then we say, “Who is the Guru to me, after all? Is he my father that I should give all this to him? My children would die of hunger. All of this belongs to me.” So such a person has not surrendered everything to the Guru within. Outwardly he is devoted to the Guru, but for him, it is just a matter of routine, like reciting *Satya Nārāyan Pujā* (ritual worship of Lord Vishnu). The mouth is uttering the words, but the mind is running riot in the world.

In this way, outwardly, we dedicate everything to the Guru. But within we don’t change; we remain just as we were before. Therefore, Swami Ji says, “This is the secret. But no one understands it, and the whole world is going on in delusion.” What a surprising thing it is that we have never fathomed the deeper significance. On the surface we do understand, we say we surrender, but when the opportunity for surrender to the Guru arises, we are nowhere to be found.

**All the hapless world remains under Maya’s sway;
No one attains the state of pristine purity.**

Why do we remain stuck fast? Because all the souls in this hapless world are under the control of Maya. With the intellect under Maya’s domination, we cannot fathom the secret of the Truth; we cannot become absorbed in the Guru’s devotion. Our intellect is under Maya’s control, so how can we go within? This is our misfortune.

How do we become the fortunate ones? We cannot accomplish this task through our own endeavors. But if we persevere and continue to make efforts, then the mercy of the Guru will be awakened, and through His Grace, we will surely succeed.

**When the Primal Creator showers His Grace,
longing to taste the nectar arises within.
What more can I say in praise of such a state?
Only a few rare Gurumukhs understand it.**

Swami Ji says, “What more can I tell you? Going in search of the Lord, I have lost myself. When I do not remain, how can I describe my condition? When I have become His very form, what words can I utter on my own?” Further, Swami Ji says, “What can I say about such a state that lies beyond the power of words? Only the rare Gurumukhs understand the Reality.”

The poor souls who are dominated by mind and intellect, what can they know of it? Such people think, “We can’t see the heavens until we die. When we die, then we will find out what lies beyond.” But this is a misconception. Only when our intellect gets absorbed in Truth can we understand the Truth; then no doubt remains because we behold Truth with our own eyes. As long as the intellect is entangled in rumination and speculation, it remains blind.

**He loves nothing but the Guru’s feet.
He remains absorbed in the inner bliss.**

Now Swami Ji tells us clearly who can be called a Gurumukh. He has already revealed that this subject is beyond the understanding of all but the Gurumukhs themselves. Still, the question arises, “Who is worthy of being called Gurumukh?” So He says, “When only the Guru’s holy feet dwell in the devotee’s heart, and no other thought or mental oscillation arises there, that devotee is a Gurumukh.” If we consider this carefully, we will realize that there is a vast difference between the Gurumukh, the mouthpiece of the Guru, and

the manmukh, the mouthpiece of the mind. We have never become absorbed within; our devotion to the Guru has all been at a superficial level. We have never communed with His blessed feet. Tulsi Das Ji tells us:

*Dazzling light flashes from the nails of the Guru's feet.
When I remember Him, His divine vision fills my heart.*

The Guru's inner feet emit a dazzling light like precious gems. When you become lost in His remembrance and your within is illumined by that light, then the curtain obscuring your inner vision is thrown open, and that divine light floods your soul. By the radiance of that light, you behold the Lord within. This vision doesn't come through the outer eyes. We close our eyes and see only darkness, so we think that nothing lies within. But what does Samrath Ramdas Swami tell us?

*These eyes of flesh cannot see Him;
You can behold the Lord only with the Eye of Wisdom.*

The Guru of Shiva Ji Maharaj, Ramdas Swami, says, "You cannot see Him through these eyes of flesh, through the outer vision. You must look with the divine vision, the vision of the Inner Eye. Then you can behold His glory." No matter how much you may look with these outer eyes, still you cannot have His darshan. Even if you put on eyeglasses, you may see the outer things more clearly, but the inner things will remain hidden from you. The Gurumukhs see through the Eye of Wisdom.

**Having the Guru's darshan, all awareness of the
body is lost;
We do not know if we are inside the house or outside.**

Now He describes the state of contemplation. Becoming absorbed in the darshan of the Gurudev, you lose consciousness of everything else. The body is forgotten. The world is forgotten. You yourself are forgotten; you do not know if you are inside the house or outside. You do not know whether the world exists or not. Such absorption is called contemplation on the Guru. This is true discipleship.

What can I say about the soul that is drenched in the color of love?

You will not discover the nectar of bliss in yoga, renunciation, or scholarship—these are all dry and tasteless things.

Finally, He clarifies that yoga cannot be compared to that state of Bliss. Yoga is a forced and prescriptive practice, in which you have to assert. You have to drag the prana upward. You must perform the purifying practices of *netī* (washing the nasal passages), *dhautī* (cleansing the stomach) and *bastī* (purifying the intestines). You have to do this. You have to do that. Renunciation, or *vairāgya*, is also a forced practice.

*There is conflict in the home, so he says:
 "Let me go to the guru's monastery."
 But when the guru puts him to work,
 that disciple moves on like a rolling stone.*

Friends, this is the condition of the renunciates.

Now, let's consider scholarly learning. First, we posit the question: "Who am I?" Then to answer the question, we gather knowledge from this book and that, and we memorize a few sayings. In one place, we find someone saying, "*Aham Brahmāsmi*. I am Brahm." In another place, we see, "*Ayam Ātmā Brahm*. My Soul is Brahm." In a third place, we read,

“*Pragyānam Brahm*, Knowledge [the Knowing Self] is Brahm.” And in a fourth place, someone has written, “*Tat Tvam Asi*. Thou art That.” All these sayings express the same Truth in different ways, but we have no experience of that Truth—for us it is all dry words.

So, He tells us that there is no taste in scholarly knowledge, yoga, or renunciation. The nectar of bliss is enjoyed only in true discipleship and love for the Guru.

**Only the rare lover with great good fortune
receives His abundant bounty.**

Swami Ji tells us that the devotee in whom this precious treasure, this gift of love, manifests, such a devotee is truly blessed.

**Radhaswami says, only a Gurumukh can sing the
ārtī of the Lord.**

In the end, He clarifies that this devotion, this *ārtī*, belongs to the Gurumukhs. The manmukhs can gain no knowledge of it.

The brave warrior marches on to the battlefield, and as soon as he sees his enemy, he draws his sword and hews off the enemy's head. In like manner, the brave sadhus enter the battlefield of meditation with the Sword of Knowledge unsheathed. Once they behead the enemies who are lurking within—those enemies never rise again.

—Baba Somanath

Children of the True King

**If you are a real Rajput, then you will surge onto
the field of battle,
And slay the five senses and the twenty-five prakritis.¹**

Now, Paltu Sahib tells us about the heroes and brave soldiers. In earlier times, people believed very strongly in the four classes or varnas— Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras—and even today, this belief still lingers. The Kshatriyas are the rulers; they fight in battle, and their aim is to achieve victory over their enemies. Brahmins are the priests and scholars; they inspire people to the devotion of the gods and give out mantras and spells. Whatever they earn, they carry back to their homes, and in this way, they make their living.

The Rajputs are Kshatriyas, and it is said that when they hear the call to battle, they steel themselves for the fight, and every pore of their body stands ready to face the enemy. On the other hand, some people call themselves Rajputs, but ask for two months' leave as soon as they hear a battle is coming—these people are not true Rajputs. The name Rajput means “child of the king.” But what king do these false Rajputs serve? In

1 Paltu Sahib , *Hoya rajpūt so charhai maidān par...*

this body, the king is the mind, and his authority is supreme. That king commands a vast army—the twenty-five prakritis, the five faculties of sense, the three gunas—and in the blink of an eye, the soldiers in that army of the mind can stir up the worldly desires in your heart, and you will have to do battle with them.

But for the real Rajputs, the King is the Almighty Lord, and they are His devotees. They are the children of the True King. Such Rajputs always keep up the fight on this battlefield of the body. All the other so-called Rajputs are not worthy of the name. Just because your body was formed in the womb of a Rajput mother does not make you a Rajput—a brave warrior. The real Rajputs, the spiritual warriors who battle the forces of the mind, are very, very rare. Paltu Sahib says, “March onto the battlefield and slay your enemies. Destroy the five senses and the twenty-five prakritis.”

Lust and anger are both mighty enemies.

Vanquish them, taking up the bow of Knowledge.

Who are the commanders of this army? Lust and anger. They cannot be killed through ordinary rites and rituals, attendance at religious services, devoted readings of sacred texts, or repeating formulaic daily prayers. We may ring bells, rotate rosaries, partake of parshad, keep the fasts, and sing bhajans all night long for *Shivarātri*², but we cannot be rid of these enemies through any outer means. Lust and anger are very mighty opponents.

Until you shoot them down with the bow and arrow of

2 An all-night festival celebrated during the month of *Phālguna* (February-March) in honor of Lord Shiva.

Knowledge, until you become immersed in the inner experience of the Divine Light and Sound, these enemies will not depart from your heart.

**Leap upon the walls of the fort of the body;
Set fire to attachment, and burn it to the ground.**

You have to scale the walls of the fort of the body and grapple with all these enemies; that is, you have to rise up to the still point above and between the two eyes. When you reach that high place, set fire to the battlements. With the radiant Divine Light within, drive away all the darkness from within the body. When you succeed in taking this fort, you can declare victory over your foes.

**The servant Paltu says: This is the way of the
Rajput warrior.
When you achieve victory over the mind, you also
conquer your own petty self.**

He tells us that a Rajput is one who has brought the mind under control. The true warrior is the conqueror of the mind. And once we become free of the mind's tyranny, we become humble and lowly and go into the shelter of the Lord, imploring His grace.

**In this way, we should grasp hold of the sword
and march on to the spiritual battlefield.
The sadhu of high status does not waver or delay.**

The brave warrior marches on to the battlefield, and as soon as he sees his enemy, he draws his sword and hews off the

enemy's head. In like manner, the brave sadhus enter the battlefield of meditation with the Sword of Knowledge unsheathed. Once they behead the enemies who are lurking within—those enemies never rise again.

**Burn the army of lust and demolish anger.
Remain fearless and show no sign of cowardice;
Then capture the king—the mind—and bind him
with *gyān* [inner wisdom].
With the shield of mercy, ward off the hostile
blows and seize the fort of Lanka.**

The mind, who was the king of the opposing forces, now sits skulking in the body. Bind him fast in the chains of Spiritual Enlightenment. Now that you have gained the victory take back the city of Lanka—the body.

**Paltu says: The Satguru's devotees rise into the Void.
Seated in the hidden dwelling place, they beat the
drum of victory.**

Here Paltu Sahib mentions the servant of the Lord. The word *dās* means a servant or devotee. Many people are called by the name “Das.” Someone may be called Hari Das or Shiva Das or Ram Das. Friend, this “Das” is only an outer name that we have taken up. But who is the true *dās* or devotee of the Guru? The one whose consciousness has become riveted within and who has become fixed in the region of the Void. There you have no awareness of body, mind, or worldly desires. When your soul has become etherealized and crosses over the region of Par Brahm, then you can be called the real *dās*.

In the hidden region beyond Par Brahm, unknown to the worldly people, there is a cave. The Maharashtrian sages and other mahatmas have described this cave in their writings. The Saints call this region Bhanwar Gupha, the whirling cave. In this hidden realm, the indescribably sweet melody of the Sound Current is playing. The souls who rise to this realm become absorbed in this Sound and achieve emancipation.

If you remain tranquil within, if you go on with the Bhajan and Simran of Naam, then the words that arise in your heart and issue forth from your mouth will be drenched in the blissful sweetness of your meditation. Others will feel at peace listening to your words, and your own heart will be filled with coolness and tranquility. But if you are burning with anger within, then even if your outer words are honey-sweet, still when a sudden gust of wind blows away the ashes, the fire roars back to life.

—Baba Somanath

Please Give Me Some Fire

**Shame on you, O foolish fakir! Don't get so angry.
It's not good for a holy man to throw tantrums. ¹**

You may call the spiritual practitioner a fakir, or a sadhu, or a servant of the Lord, or a devotee; it is all one and the same thing. Therefore, Paltu Sahib says, “O sadhu! You should not keep anger in your within.”

Lust and anger are two mighty powers that have taken the whole world captive. On the surface, folding our hands, we make a great show of humility. But if anyone harasses us or contradicts us, then just observe how we flare up. It is just like spreading ashes over a blazing fire. Once you have covered the fire with ashes, you can put your hand on those ashes, and it will not be burned. No one will even be able to tell that a fire is buried there. But when the wind blows those ashes away, then the flames shoot up again.

In this way, Paltu Sahib is explaining to the sadhu that he should not harbor the fire of anger in his heart. If we become devotees, but still keep anger within us, then we cannot become successful in our spiritual practices.

¹ Paltu Sahib, *Fakir ke balke gusā nā kījiye...*

**If your words are full of sweetness,
then everyone will benefit.
You have dressed up like a sadhu;
Now maintain the honor of those garments.**

What does He tell us? If you remain tranquil within, if you go on with the Bhajan and Simran of Naam, then the words that arise in your heart and issue forth from your mouth will be drenched in the blissful sweetness of your meditation. Others will feel at peace listening to your words, and your own heart will be filled with coolness and tranquility. But if you are burning with anger within, then even if your outer words are honey-sweet, still when a sudden gust of wind blows away the ashes, the fire roars back to life.

Sadhus often visited the village of Bulleh Shah, and sometimes Bulleh Shah would go and test them. One evening about five o'clock, a visiting sadhu was sitting performing his rituals, and all his limbs were besmeared with ashes. Bulleh Shah arrived there and thought, "He looks like a great renunciate. Let's see about his inner condition." So He said to that sadhu, "Baba Ji, please give me a little fire." The sadhu replied, "I don't have any fire to give you"—because at that time the sadhu had already damped down his sacrificial fire with ashes. Then again, Bulleh Shah asked, "Maharaj Ji, the fire is burning brightly, but you are telling me it isn't. If you give me a little bit of fire, what harm will it do to you?" The sadhu replied, "I keep telling you I have no fire. Why do you go on asking and asking?" So Bulleh Shah told him, "But Maharaj Ji, I see the fire burning right there. That is why I am asking you. Since you have that fire, won't you please give me some?" Aggravated, the sadhu replied, "Are you going to get out of here or not?" Then he picked up the iron thongs to strike Bulleh Shah and

chase Him away. Bulleh Shah laughed and told that sadhu, “Maharaj Ji, you told me you didn’t have any fire, but now just look how the hot flames are blazing,”

In this way, the fire is hidden in our within, and Bhajan is the only remedy to extinguish that fire. When we have anger burning within us, how can we do the meditation of Naam?

You may put on the saffron-colored robes, thinking in that way you can meet the Lord. But you will achieve nothing by merely dyeing your clothes. You cover your body with ashes, but what good will that do? The donkey is always covered with ashes, but can that poor animal become a sadhu?

**Conduct yourself with humility and meekness.
Then all the whole world will be happy to take
care of you.**

If you remain humble and lowly, the whole world will be ready to look after your needs.

**Wheedling and cajoling, the servant Paltu is
trying to make you understand.
My child, accept the wisdom of my words.**

Just like the mother makes her child understand with sweet, cajoling words, in the same way, I am lovingly admonishing you. Think on my words carefully, and mold your heart according my teachings. The Lord is not far away from you. He will fill your heart with peace, and all the hubbub of this world will be swept away.

I have stocked my shelves with the deep Spiritual Knowledge of the soul. But the worldly people who are coming here are demanding children, or money, or name and fame, and all the other things with a brackish, disagreeable taste. I want to distribute the honey-sweet Amrit, but they are demanding salt.

—Baba Somanath

The Shop of Spiritual Knowledge

**The people say, “Just look! Some mad merchant
has opened up a Shop of Spiritual Knowledge.”¹**

This is the bani of Satguru Paltu Sahib Ji. Paltu Sahib came from the baniya caste. The banyas are merchants and shopkeepers. So here, Paltu Sahib tells us about His Shop of Spirituality. And what type of goods is He selling?

**I am selling Amrit, but the customers think it is poison,
so no one comes to buy my wares.
They ask for salt, but I show them sugar, so they
leave my shop and return home empty-handed.**

He tells us, “I think I will open a shop of Spiritual Knowledge.” But no customers go to that shop. They all say, “This merchant has gone mad. He has nothing here that appeals to us, so what can we buy from such a shop?” All the customers go back to their homes, and the merchant thinks, “I have opened my shop, but I am sitting here all alone. I have set up a shop of Spiritual Knowledge, and I want to sell Ambrosial Nectar, but no one wants to buy it.

1 Paltu Sahib, *Dekho ik baniyāñ baurānā, gyān kī karai dukānā*



Baba Somanath Ji

They are demanding salty things, thinking they are full of sweetness, but I don't stock such things here. And so, all my customers are leaving. I have not found anyone who wants to buy my wares. I have stocked my shelves with the deep Spiritual Knowledge of the soul. But the worldly people who are coming here are demanding children, or money, or name and fame, and all the other things with a

brackish, disagreeable taste. I want to distribute the honey-sweet Amrit, but they are demanding salt. I don't have such things for sale, so all the foolish customers turn away and go back home. What is there for them here?"

**I will give it on credit, without any conditions;
I am encouraging everyone to buy.
Whoever takes these wares will be lost in bliss,
and I will never remind them to repay me.**

Now, what does He say? "I will even offer to give my goods on credit. Friend, you can give me the payment at a later date; when you have the money, then you can pay me. Even though I am offering to sell on credit, still no one is interested. If they would take this Amrit only once, they would never need to come back again."

He goes on: "If they would purchase these goods just one time, then they would become satisfied within. Then they would have no more desire for the things of this world—they would attain peace. This is what I am offering for sale in my shop. But only a very few rare customers want to purchase this valuable merchandise. Otherwise, so many people crowd around, looking to buy the useless goods of this world."

**If you put the true weight on the scale of forgiveness,
then you will speak sweetly to all.
The Merchant heaps the jewels of Naam on the
scale to weigh them but distributes them free
of charge.**

Now He describes the scale of forgiveness. If someone says

something unbecoming to you, but still the weighing pans of your thought do not tip up or down, then you are using the scale of forgiveness. If the merchant's weighing scale does not rock back and forth, or sway up and down, no matter how much happiness, suffering, criticism, or praise of this world may come, then understand that exalted One as the True Merchant.

On the scale of forgiveness, the True Merchant puts the weight of Perfect Inner Realization and Power. And because of His Inner Enlightenment, He speaks sweet words to everyone who comes to Him.

*The one mantra to bring others under
your control is sweet speech.*

When you never let the thought of high and low enter your heart, when you always give full measure and weigh using the scales of forgiveness, then your speech will always be honey-sweet, and your words of wisdom will penetrate into every heart.

When you go on repeating the Simran of Naam unceasingly, then the treasure house of your heart will become filled with the jewels of Naam. You will not trade away that treasure in the business of give and take, but you will give it freely to whoever comes asking for it.

**The surat is the key, and the Shabd is the lock;
When they fit together through meditation, the
Inner Sound becomes audible.**

**Paltu Das says, "I am trading in Truth; I never
leave it for a moment, all the twenty-four hours
of the day and night."**

Now, what kind of lock does He put on His shop? We people put locks on all our trunks and cupboards: new locks, worn-out locks, sturdy locks, all kinds of locks. But these are all outer locks with outer keys. Inside, when both the surat and the Shabd come in contact with each other and become one, this union forms the unbreakable lock of the True Merchant. When you practice the meditation and unite your soul with the inner Dhunatmak Naam, then the Sound that is coming from the highest spiritual regions manifests within you.

Paltu Sahib says, “In this way, you should become absorbed in the business of Truth; never leave it for even a fraction of a second. This is the real meaning of becoming a *baniya*, a dealer in Truth. When you carry on the business of Truth in this shop of the body, you will never suffer any loss. Instead, you will earn profit on top of profit.

When you remove the color arising from this world, then you can become dyed in the True Color of the Lord. You will become fearless. Your soul will become free, and you will be liberated from the cycle of births and deaths.

—Baba Somanath

Freedom from Fear

**Whoever wishes to become fearless should go
into the Satsang.¹**

Abhay indicates the Almighty Lord who is free from all fear—the Self-Existing Power, the One without equal. No other force can threaten that Power. That Power dwells beyond fear. But everything in the creation is subject to fear. Hunger, fear, sexual indulgence, and sleep—these four forces work within all beings. What will happen tomorrow? How will I deal with it? Fear of the future haunts everyone, but the greatest fear of all is the fear of death. In the grip of this fear, we try countless means to evade death, to escape from its clutches. But what is going to happen will happen.

Therefore He says, “The Almighty Lord is called the Fearless One. Drive all dread from your heart, and you will attain that fearless state.”

**When you go into the Satsang, the longing to
become free from the world awakens within you.**

Through Satsang, you will come to understand that fearless

1 Paltu Sahib, *Jo kou chāhai abhay pad, jāi karai satsang*

state. Otherwise, no matter how much you may read about fearlessness in the Puranas or other holy books, you are only storing information in your *buddhi* (intellect). And after a short time, the intellect once again takes on the form of the outer things; as soon as you close the book, your intellect races back into the world. You gained nothing through your reading of books. Fearlessness is an inner state of being.

He says, “With all your heart and soul, pursue the way of renunciation.” If one day by chance we don’t get our meal on time, then we are ready to give up the Satsang. Many people say, “Baba Ji, I have to eat my meals at a set time. Otherwise, I can’t digest my food properly, and then I won’t be able to sleep at night. That’s why I don’t come to the Satsang.” What can I say to them? Food is more important to them than the Satsang.

[Baba Somanath asks Pushpamma to sing a couplet of *Akkā Mahādevī*]

**When I am hungry, I will beg for alms.
When I am thirsty, I will drink from lakes and
wells and streams.
When I am sleepy, I will shelter in temple ruins.
And for a soul-mate, I have you,
O Chenna Mallikārjuna—Lord, white as jasmine.**

This is the story of Akka Mahadevi,² a renunciate sadhu who lived in South India. As a young girl, she always remained absorbed in the contemplation and Naam Simran of the Lord. Near her village, there lived one king named Kaushik, who belonged to the Jain religion. Once, he was coming through the

2 “*Akkā*” means elder sister and “*Mahādevī*” means great goddess.

village, riding on an elephant. All the people of the village ran up on their rooftops to get a glimpse of him, and that young girl also climbed up there.

Suddenly, that king's glance fell on Akka Mahadevi, and he was attracted to her. He sent his royal messengers to call that girl and escort her to the palace. But her parents told him, "This is not possible. You follow the Jain religion, and our beliefs are not the same. We will not give you our daughter." When they refused, the king seized her and started to take her away. Her parents began to weep, but Akka Mahadevi said to them, "Why are you crying? I am happily going with the king." Then the king called for a palanquin and carried her away to her new home.

When they reached the king's palace, she told him that he must make three promises: "First, no matter how many sadhus come to our door, and no matter how much wealth I give them in alms, no one should stop me. Second, whenever I am sitting in meditation, you should not disturb me. And finally, you must respect my religion and my spiritual quest." At that time, the king was under the control of lust, and he agreed to all of her conditions.

The next morning when she arose, she sought out thousands of sadhus, and, taking them to the treasury, she distributed wealth to them freely. The prime minister told the king, "If she goes on like this for three or four more months, she will empty out the whole treasury, and we will all become beggars." So the king stopped her from giving away any more alms. Then one day, when Akka Mahadevi was sitting

in meditation, he came up behind her and grabbed the end of her sari. At that time, she said, “You have already broken your first promise, and now you are breaking your second promise as well. So, take back your sari.” Saying this, she collected all her saris and her jewelry, and, throwing them at his feet, she departed naked from the palace to follow the renunciate’s way of life.

She passed by her village, and on the way, she met her mother and father. Her mother said, “You are a young girl, and your body is delicate. How will you endure a life of austerities and deprivation in this naked condition? If you were a man, it would be a different matter. But as a woman, you will face many difficult circumstances. How will you manage in the future?”

Then Akka Mahadevi replied, “If I am hungry, then I will beg alms. And I can take water from the lakes and the rivers. And when I am tired, I can sleep in the fallen-down ruins of temples and monasteries. If I am not concerned about how I will live today, then why should I worry for tomorrow?”

She was a worshiper of Shiva, whom she addresses as *Chennā Mallikārjuna*—Lord, white as jasmine. She says, “My protector, *Mallikārjuna*, sits in my heart, so what should I fear? For the outer body, I can beg alms. I will drink water wherever I find it—in the ponds and rivers. I can clear off a spot in the broken down temples and sleep there. My Lord, my boon companion, is with me.” With a complete surrender of worldly desires, she set out on her quest—this is called renunciation.

[Baba Somanath Ji returns to the hymn of Paltu Sahib]

**Listen to the teachings of Vedanta³, accept them
and make your mind understand.**

The Upanishads, which are considered the end of the Vedas, praise the Power of the Soul. Paltu Sahib tells us, “Listen to that Power of the soul. Accept those teachings, and become absorbed in that inner Power.”

**The yogis practice hatha yoga and invert the vital
airs in the home of the body.**

Hatha yoga does not just indicate control of the pranas. To perform hatha yoga means applying yourself to your practices with *hath* or determination; this is the principal characteristic of hatha yoga.

**Controlling the pranas, you can behold the soul
within the human frame.**

Riding on the current of the pranas or vital airs, the yogi ascends from the navel up to the still point between the two eyebrows, and then, after pausing at that point, travels back down to the navel. This circulation on the breath is performed

3 Vedanta, “the end of the Vedas,” refers to the Upanishads, metaphysical commentaries that deal with the soul, the created world, and the power controlling the created world. The term Vedanta also indicates the various philosophical schools of thought that draw on the Upanishads, the Brahmasutras and the Bhagavad Gita.

while the yogi repeats the “hans mantra”: *so-ham ham-sā*.⁴ The yogi performs this mantra with every breath, in and out, becoming united with the breath. This way, repetition—as the breath circulates on the pranic current—becomes automatic. The yogis call this unceasing repetition *ajapā jāp*. You are not repeating the mantra; the breaths are repeating the mantra, and this is called *ajapā jāp* in hatha yoga.⁵

**When you realize your real Self, you enter into
*gyān samādhi*⁶.**

**Now, cast aside all these lower practices you were
performing previously.**

“*Sam*” means to get absorbed, and “*ādi*” indicates the primal form. You should perform your meditation on Naam in such a way that you merge into your Primal Form. But nowadays,

4 In yogic practice, *soham* or *sohang* is a sound emanating from the throat chakra in the body. This physical sound is distinct from the “*Sohang*” of Sant Mat, “I am Thou,” the Divine Sound reverberating in the fourth Spiritual Plane.

5 This *ajapā jāp* of hatha yoga practice at the level of the body is only a distant reflection of the *Ajapā Jāp* of the Saints, who describe it as the omnipresent Music of the Spheres reverberating throughout creation and ultimately leading to the Realm of Truth: “At each stage, the Music becomes more enrapturing than before, until in Par Brahm (beyond the three Lokas) the soul becomes self-luminous in her pristine glory; then the Music too becomes exceedingly charming, in full swell with unending continuity. This is the *Ajapā Jāp* going on at all times in an Unspoken Language. As the soul hears it, she gets magnetized, with the result that the mind with its outgoing faculties is paralyzed for want of the inspiration it is used to drawing from the Spirit, and gradually it loses its hold of her. The high-born maiden (being a drop of the ocean of Sat Naam) is freed from its clutches and now moves on unhampered.” Kirpal Singh, *Simran: The Sweet Remembrance of God* (Delhi: Ruhani Satsang, 1967) p 7-8.

6 When the soul sheds the *annamaya*, *prāṇamaya*, and *manomaya* koshas, it enters the *gyāna-* and *vigyānamaya koshas* and realizes the nature of the soul and Brahm (God).

when we bury a body in a grave, we put a memorial platform over that grave and call it a samadhi. Friend, this samadhi is just an outer stone to honor some departed soul. But what is the real meaning of samadhi? When the soul merges into the Primal Lord and becomes One with Him.

When you become absorbed in the Sound Current and enter into the True Samadhi, what need do you have of the lower practices? How will they help you? If once you become absorbed in the Unchanging, Eternal Power of True Naam, then why would you engage in any other practice? When you have accumulated millions of rupees, then you can live on the interest from that money; you won't need to strive for anything else. Nowadays, the interest rate is less, but previously it was much more.

Paltu says, "When you give up your sense of I-hood, then you become dyed in the True Color. Whoever wants to become fearless should go into the Satsang of the Saint."

When you remove the color arising from this world, then you can become dyed in the True Color of the Lord. You will become fearless. Your soul will become free, and you will be liberated from the cycle of births and deaths.

When someone is a true servant, a real devotee of the Lord, then no matter how much the worldly people may try to inflict suffering on that devotee, in the end, that suffering rebounds back on them. No one can harm the devotees of the Lord.

—Baba Somanath

The Lord Protects His Devotees

**Those who oppose the devotees cannot be saved;
Those with enmity all suffer defeat.¹**

Throughout history, the worldly people have opposed the devotees of the Lord. The worldly people are filled with falsehood and attachment to worldly pleasures; they are dominated by egotism. Those people don't wish well for anyone. If they see someone else prospering, they start quarreling with them; they try to harm them. Therefore, when the Saints and Mahatmas came in the past, the worldly people didn't allow them any peace. They would always try to visit sorrow and suffering upon them. The worldly people called Guru Nanak Dev "the one who leads the people astray." They drove him out of their village; they would not even give Him food to eat or water to drink. They traveled from village to village, spreading false tales about Him: "One guru is coming by the name of Nanak. Don't allow him to stay in your village. Do not give him food or water." But the truth is, Guru Nanak had not harmed anyone at all. He was God Almighty in human form, who had come as a benefactor to humanity. But the

¹ Paltu Sahib, *Bhakt se droh kari kou nā bachā hai...*

foolish people are trapped in love of the world and blinded by ignorance. Just like owls who hide from the light of the sun and prefer to dwell in the darkness, so the worldly people harbor enmity towards the lovers of God. Therefore, Paltu Sahib cautions, “Whoever opposes the devotees of the Lord will have to suffer severe punishment.”

**Five Pandavas overcame all the warriors in the Mahabharat war.
The crocodile was slain when it tried to drown the elephant.**

Paltu Sahib says, “There were only five Pandavas. They faced the mighty Kaurava warriors, one after another—Karan, Dron, Bhishma, and many others like them. But when the Lord showered grace on the five Pandavas, they conquered all the opposing forces. In the same way, there was a struggle between the crocodile and the elephant. Once when an elephant went to drink water from the lake, a crocodile seized the elephant by the leg and dragged it into the water. But the Lord Vishnu himself came there and, killing the crocodile, liberated the elephant.”²

**Durvasa went to Ambarish to spoil his fast,
but Vishnu’s hidden discus started chasing him.**

Ambarish was a bhakta of the god Vishnu and had become

² Gajendra, the leader of the elephants on Mount Trikuta, had been a king and a devotee of Lord Vishnu in a previous life. Because of his overweening pride, he had been cursed by Agastya Rishi and had to be reborn as an elephant. When he was attacked by the crocodile, he surrendered all his pride and implored Lord Vishnu to rescue him. Seeing his humility, Lord Vishnu came there and liberated him.

famous because of his devotion and love. Durvasa Muni was a great ascetic. The ascetics who perform austerities develop a lot of anger in them, and, witnessing how Ambarish was being appreciated by the people, Durvasa fell into a rage and started trying to bring about his downfall. Seeing the plight of his devotee, Lord Vishnu released his magic discus, the *sudharshana chakra*, and that discus spun away in pursuit of Durvasa. Frightened by this terrible onslaught, Durvasa ran first to Brahma, then to Shiva, and finally to Vishnu, but they could do nothing to stop the *sudharshana chakra*. Finally, Lord Vishnu told him, “Go and fall at the feet of Ambarish; there is no other way to save yourself from being cut to pieces.”³

**Paltu Sahib says: In order to rescue Prahlad,
Vishnu burst from the column and ripped open
the stomach of Hiranyakashipu.**

How wonderful it is that the Almighty Lord takes on so many different forms for the sake of His devotees. Prahlad was a great bhakta of Lord Vishnu, and his father was King Hiranyakashipu. The king had performed many arduous austerities, and, when Lord Brahma became pleased with him, he asked for several boons: “Grant that I may not

3 Ambarish was a king in the Treta Yuga or Silver Age. His devotion was so pleasing to Vishnu that the god gave him his sudarshana chakra or magic discus. But the discus was not visible; it was hidden as a circle of peace and prosperity around the kingdom of Ambarish. Durvasa was jealous of Ambarish, so he paid him a visit, with the intention of spoiling the fast Ambarish was keeping. But seeing his unworthy intention, Lord Vishnu decided to teach Durvasa a lesson. Vishnu made the magic discus visible and released it on Durvasa, who only escaped from being hewn down when he humbled himself before Vishnu’s true devotee—King Ambarish.

die in the day nor in the night. May I not be killed by a man or a woman or by any animal. May I not die inside or outside of any building. And may I not be killed by any weapon.” He had thought the matter out carefully, and he felt confident that these boons would shield him from the inevitability of death: “Since no one can kill me during the day or the night, how could I possibly ever die?” On hearing King Hiranyakashipu’s request, the Lord Brahma gave him these boons as a reward for the intense austerities he had performed.

This king had a young son, the devotee Prahlad. Nowadays, communists and others tell us: “There is no God. It is all a figment of your imagination. All this belief in a divine power is just nonsense. “ They are atheists. In previous times, there were also people with such beliefs; what gods did Ravana worship? Hiranyakashipu was also of this way of thinking. He told his son, “I am the God of the present time. If anyone wants to worship God, they should repeat my name; they should give me their adoration.” But Prahlad did not accept these words. He replied, “You have been born in the form of a demon, and you are very cruel. You are my respected father, but you cannot become God. I will not do your remembrance. My only God is the Lord Vishnu.”

Hiranyakashipu tried very hard to convince him, but Prahlad stood firm and replied: “Even if I lose my life, still I will worship only my beloved Lord, Shri Vishnu.” Finally, Hiranyakashipu decided to kill him. He wanted to destroy Prahlad since he would not worship him as God. First, he took Prahlad up to the top of a mountain and tried to hurl him over the edge; but Prahlad was saved. The king had a sister named Holika, who had also performed many austerities. As a reward, one rishi had given her a

blessing in the form of a magic sari that would protect the wearer from fire. Whoever wore that sari could sit in the fire and not be burnt.

Holika was very clever and she told her brother, “Why are you going to so much trouble? I will put on my magic sari, sit with Prahlad in my lap, and then you can kindle a bonfire. I will be protected from that fire by the magic sari, but Prahlad will be burned alive. This idea pleased Hiranyakashipu very much. So Holika went to her wardrobe trunk to find that magic sari, but she had many saris of the same color and, by mistake, she chose the wrong one. Putting on that ordinary sari, she called Prahlad to come sit in her lap, and when her brother lit that bonfire, poor Holika was burned up—but once again, Prahlad was saved.

This is the origin of the festival of Holi—it is named for Holika, the sister of King Hiranyakashipu. Why do we celebrate Holi every year? All the world rejoices because the enemy of the Lord’s devotee was killed. Holika was burned up, and Prahlad was protected. This is why we celebrate Holi. But what do we people do on that sacred day? We hop about and make an awful racket. We take intoxicants and end up unconscious in the ditch. Who remembers Holika or the real significance of Holi? No one even gives it a thought.

Then Hiranyakashipu thought, “Since I was not able to kill him in that way, I’m going to have to try something else.” So he selected an iron pillar and heated it until it was red hot. Then he led Prahlad to that pillar and told him to embrace it. Looking at that burning pillar, Prahlad hesitated. But to reassure his devotee, the Lord Vishnu came swiftly to that place, and, taking on the form of a tiny ant, he started crawling up and down that red-hot pillar. When Prahlad saw

that ant, he understood in his heart that the Lord Vishnu had come, and his fear evaporated. Happily, he embraced that pillar and still remained unharmed. Seeing that his plan had failed, Hiranyakashipu became enraged, and he shouted, "Where is this God of yours?" Prahlad replied, "My God is everywhere." Now, there was another pillar standing nearby, and pointing to it, the king said, "Is your god in that pillar? Is your Lord Vishnu there?" Prahlad answered, "Yes, he is there also; he is everywhere."

Then the king kicked that pillar with all his might. Actually, Lord Vishnu had not been in the pillar at that time; but, seeing Prahlad's unshakeable faith and love, Vishnu entered that pillar, and when Hiranyakashipu kicked it, Vishnu burst forth as Narasimha Avatar. What an amazing thing! That incarnation of Vishnu had the head of a lion and the body of a man. At that very moment, twilight was gathering.

Then Narasimha stood astride over the threshold of the building, with one foot planted outside and one inside. He seized Hiranyakashipu and held him aloft so that they were both half-in and half-out of that building. One foot out, one foot in. Lord Vishnu swung Hiranyakashipu over his head and asked him, "Tell me. Is it day or night?" At that time, the sun was just setting, so the king replied, "It is neither day nor night."

Then he enquired, "Am I inside the building or outside?" The king replied, "You are neither within nor without." Further, Narasimha asked, "Am I a human being, or am I something else?" The king replied, "You are neither human nor animal." And finally, he asked, "Do I have any weapon in my hand?" The king replied, "No, you hold no weapon." Then Narasimha dug his nails into the king's stomach and ripped him apart.

When someone is a true servant, a real devotee of the Lord, then no matter how much the worldly people may try to inflict suffering on that devotee, in the end, that suffering rebounds back on them. No one can harm the devotees of the Lord.

The Lord is the form of Oneness; meet with Him, and become His form. Remove all the turmoil of the world from your heart. Then—within and without—only the Lord remains. There will be no more scope for either happiness or sorrow. In this world, whoever achieves this state experiences the True Essence, the Naam of the Lord.

—Baba Somanath

Playing the Difficult Game

O Sadhu, forsake your pride of mind.¹

This is the bani of Shri Guru Teg Bahadur Singh Ji, the ninth Guru of the Sikhs. Mind is the cause of both liberation and bondage. When the mind wavers, it keeps us bound; when the mind becomes firm, it helps us towards liberation. Now, the mind is filled with pride. The mind remains trapped in pride and has come under the sway of Maya.

For this reason, we go on creating karmas; over and over, we revolve in the wheel of birth and death—through millions of yugas and millions of incarnations. Why do we undergo all this suffering? It is only because of our egotism, our sense of “I and mine,” that we have to endure so much pain.

Now Guru Teg Bahadur addresses the sadhus. Those people are called sadhus who perform the spiritual practices, bring the mind under their control, and make it obedient to their commands. So He says, “O Sadhus, perform your practices in such a way that your egotism is eradicated.”

**Lust, anger, and evil people—flee from their
company, by night and by day.**

¹ Guru Teg Bahadur, *Sādho man kā mān tiāgau...*

All the friends of egotism join in to help keep the jivas bound. It is only because of egotism that we endure the ups and downs of happiness and sorrow. Because of egotism, we suffer in the cycle of births and deaths. But egotism does not accomplish all this on its own; it receives help from the other evil propensities—lust, anger, and all of the passions. We must give up the company of these mischief makers—but first of all, we have to understand that these evil propensities are sitting within us. And we have to take into account that each evil propensity provides support to all the others.

Lust and the other passions bring anger in their wake.

Where lust is working, greed and anger join in. These are the evil propensities that have made their home within us.

Then further, people living in the outer world—the evildoers—join forces with these inner evil propensities. And so we constantly have to be on guard. We must shun the company of both the evildoers outside and the machinations of the evil propensities within. Whoever we visit, whoever we spend time with, whoever we have dealings with, we become like them—this is the nature of the mind. What form does the mind assume? Whatever the mind sees, it takes on that form. Whatever it hears, the mind will become that form. Whatever deeds it performs, the mind is molded in that very form. The mind has this quality.

When you venture out into the world, your mind will come back home filled with impressions from the places you have visited—maybe wine and meat were served there, maybe movies were showing there, maybe dancers were performing there, or maybe some other force was at play there, leading the mind astray. You should shun such worldly places because, if you frequent them, you will come home filled with evil thoughts

and impressions. You spend your money to go there, you are jostled about along the way, and when you finally reach back home, you are carrying with you a basket filled up with bad thoughts and evil impressions. Then those thoughts and impressions spoil the atmosphere of your home as well. In this way, you gradually develop a strong fondness for vice and, in the end, you will become its very image. Therefore, Guru Teg Bahadur tells us, “First of all, we keep bad company outside and further we have the evil propensities within us. We should always refuse the bad company and refrain from the vices. We should flee far away from them both.”

Consider pain and pleasure as the same.

Attach no importance to honor and dishonor.

What is the result of severing our attachment to the world? While we are living in the world, happiness and suffering are bound to come our way; but if we become detached from the world, we won't feel any difference between the two. For us, happiness and suffering will be the same. So Guru Teg Bahadur says, “Understand happiness and pain as one.” If happiness comes, we should not become exhilarated. If we get suffering, we should not be shaken.

Also, we are very much affected by the mighty forces of honor and dishonor. Every living being is always full of “I and mine” and egotism, not only human beings but also the animals, the birds, the insects, everyone. So we should give no importance to honor and dishonor, and we should understand happiness and sorrow as one. If you give up lust and anger, your heart will become clean and pure. If you perform the Simran of Naam with a pure of heart, the Lord is never far away from you, and He will manifest to you instantly.

Many people complain: “My mind won’t concentrate within.” If you examine the matter carefully, you will realize that your mind has become attached somewhere outside. It is besmeared with filth, but filth and purity cannot coexist. You won’t even let a dirty person sit near you; so when your heart has become polluted with the world, how can you expect the Lord to accept you? If your mind doesn’t come in contact with the Conscious Power within, then your meditations will be fruitless. So leaving all this aside, you should devote yourself wholeheartedly to meditation.

**The one who remains detached from joy and
sorrow realizes the true nature of the world.**

Now He explains that happiness is a dream that fills us with fleeting contentment and suffering is the form of worry. These two forces are at play in everyone. You think, “I desire happiness.” And to achieve that happiness, you labor and undergo so much hardship. Therefore, He says, “Become detached from happiness and sadness, and fix your thoughts on the one Sat Naam.” The Lord is the form of Oneness; meet with Him, and become His form. Remove all the turmoil of the world from your heart. Then—within and without—only the Lord remains. There will be no more scope for either happiness or sorrow. In this world, whoever achieves this state experiences the True Essence, the Naam of the Lord.

**Seek the state of Nirvana, renouncing both
praise and blame;**

This world is a strange place. When you perform virtuous and meritorious deeds, people all at once wish to raise you to

a place of honor. In that position, you blossom, and in your elation, you forget the Lord's Name. You start to believe that you deserve that honor. You think, "This has all been accomplished through my greatness." When swamis are invited to visit peoples' homes, they have the custom of allowing people to worship their feet for a price—maybe 500 rupees or 1000 rupees. There is a hierarchy of swamis, and some achieve very high status. The higher they climb in the hierarchy, the more these swamis charge the people for the privilege of worshipping their feet. Now think. If people are paying to worship your feet, what benefit do those worshipers receive and for that matter, what can you hope to gain yourself? The true meaning of worshipping the feet is taking refuge in the Guru Power that illuminates our within. So how can you be selling your outer feet for money? Sometimes you arrange to be taken out in procession; sometimes you are carried in a palanquin, sometimes you are seated on a throne, sometimes a diamond-studded crown is placed upon your head, one thing and another. All this outer show is far-removed from true spirituality.

Therefore, He says, "When people praise you, don't lose your head hearing that praise. The only one worthy of praise is the Almighty Lord." If you want to criticize someone, criticize yourself. If you want to praise someone, praise the Lord or the Guru. But what do we people do? We praise ourselves and criticize others; this is our inclination. From greed and attachment, we gain some tangible outer benefit, but from criticism, we get nothing. Criticism is neither sour nor sweet—it has no taste at all. But we are habitually drawn to criticize others.

Once Emperor Akbar put a question to his assembled court. "If someone criticizes others, what lesson should we teach him? What punishment should he receive?" All the people in attendance there kept quiet. Everyone there was involved in

criticism, so what could they say? Further, those who indulge in criticism always do it behind your back, never to your face. When you speak to them face-to-face, they don't want to mention these matters. So no one in Akbar's court spoke up to answer his questions. What reply could they make when they indulged in the practice themselves? Just then, Birbal² entered the court, and Akbar asked him: "If someone is guilty of criticism, what punishment should they receive?" Fearlessly, Birbal answered: "What to speak of those who criticize, even those who listen to criticism should have their ears cut off."

If someone comes to you to criticize others, you should tell them: "Friend! You are criticizing this person, but I can tell you that I am far worse than they are." Why should you carry the garbage of others? You should concern yourself with your own affairs. You should remember the Lord. You should praise the Guru. Remain engaged in the Simran of Naam and the contemplation of the Guru. Tell that critic: "Why are you bringing such stories here? Never do it again." The next day he won't return to open up his book of tales. If someone comes to us with vicious gossip and we listen to them, the next day they will be back with more stories to share. For this reason, Guru Amar Das says:

*There is no benefit in criticism;
Only the foolish manmukhs indulge in this vice.
Those who criticize others, their faces are blackened,
and they are thrown into the deepest hells.*

It is not good to criticize anyone, but we all have this tendency. If we don't criticize others, we don't feel satisfied. Whether a little or a lot, everyone indulges in this bad habit. Therefore,

² Birbal was a favorite minister of Emperor Akbar. He was known for speaking the truth without hesitation.

He says: “Don’t be pleased when you are praised and don’t be downhearted when you hear your own criticism.” Remain equipoised and remember that Almighty Lord, who is the form of Oneness.

The servant Nanak says: This is such a difficult game; only a few Gurmukhs know how to play it!

In the end, He admits that this no easy thing. It is very difficult to achieve that state of equipoise. Only a few rare Gurmukhs experience it. The manmukhs cannot grasp this subject; it lies beyond their reach.

Action and inaction, virtue and sin, life and death, good deeds and bad, these form the millstones that are grinding everything down. The sages have tried many ways to liberate the jivas from this mill, but the jivas themselves go and hurl themselves into this mill of their own accord. Thus they are ground into flour.

—Baba Somanath

The Millstone of Maya

The mill of Maya grinds on and on, reducing the whole world to flour.¹

This is the bani of Satguru Paltu Sahib Ji. The millstone of Maya is turning, and all of the jivas are ground down to flour. What is that millstone? The revolving millstone of karma. First, thoughts arise within us, and then, according to those thoughts, we perform deeds and create karmas. In this cycle of karma, our whole lifespan is ground to bits. Our childhood, adolescence, and youth are reduced to dust. Our old age comes and is ground up also. Then we are carried to *Sonāpūr*, the “city of sleep” (the cremation ground), where we are burnt and reduced to ashes.

**All the world is being crushed; no one escapes,
even after making thousands of efforts.
Caught between the two grinding stones,
not even one grain remains intact.**

All the world is being crushed in the mill. To save us from being ground between the millstones, many great souls have

¹ Paltu Sahib, *Māyā kī chakkī chale, pīsi gayā sansār...*

explained this reality in the Vedas, Shastras, Puranas, and other holy books. But the jivas do not want to understand; they do not wish to escape. Instead, they go and try to throw themselves into that mill of the karma.

*Seeing the mill revolving, Kabir laments.
Caught between those two grinding stones,
Not one grain remains whole.*

Action and inaction, virtue and sin, life and death, good deeds and bad, these form the millstones that are grinding everything down. The sages have tried many ways to liberate the jivas from this mill, but the jivas themselves go and hurl themselves into this mill of their own accord. Thus they are ground into flour.

**Lust, anger, arrogance, and greed turn the wheel.
The three gunas are the grain; they toss in handful
after handful, and the revolving stone crushes
everything to a fine powder.**

He says that some are ground up by lust. Some are ground up by anger. Ravana kidnapped Sita; lust crushed and conquered him. When the Kauravas and the Pandavas came under the control of anger, kinsman began fighting with kinsman, and, in this way, they were all destroyed. Nowadays, in our India, because of discord and strife, everything is being ground up, and no one knows where it will end.

**Wicked Maya is very skilled; she kneads that
flour and shapes the chapatis.
Then she bakes them on the frying pan of karma
and makes them ready for eating.**

Wicked Maya kneads the flour and pats out the chapatis. Where does she cook them? She bakes them on the frying pan of karmas, and then Kal and Maya sit together and enjoy a feast.

Desire is like a harlot who brings disgrace on her whole household.

Kal is very mighty; he devours everyone in one bite.

Desire is like a woman of low character, and she has taken up residence in every household. Kal is a mighty power; in one bite, he swallows those chapatis that Maya has prepared. We people don't grasp the reality. We say that one deed is auspicious, and another is inauspicious; we become caught up in the duality of virtue and sin, and so we are ground in the mill. What is sin and what is virtue? If your consciousness is wavering and unsteady, this is sin; it doesn't matter if your deeds are auspicious or inauspicious. When your consciousness becomes steady and unchanging, that is virtue. As long as your consciousness is not steady, the millstone goes on turning.

Paltu says: Without meditation, no one crosses to the other shore.

The mill of Maya turns, grinding the whole world into flour.

There is only one way to escape from those revolving millstones. What is that method? Repeat the Simran of the Lord, the Simran of Sat Naam. Whoever becomes absorbed in the love of the True Name will become free from the auspicious and inauspicious karmas; otherwise, everyone will be crushed in that mill.

Just like the clay pot is filled with empty space, this material body formed from the five elements is also filled with the inner spiritual Power of the soul; that Power is trapped in the covering of five elements and the sense of "I and mine." This embodied soul is called a jiva, and when the sheath of the five elements and I-hood is removed, then the soul goes free. The Power that enlivens the soul is the Almighty Lord Himself.

—Baba Somanath

The State of Natural Equipoise

**The moon of knowledge has risen in the sky.
When you behold its scintillating light, the mind
becomes enthralled.¹**

This is the bani of Satguru Paltu Sahib. He asks, “What is meant by the word *gyān* or knowledge?” You can deliver lectures based on reading scriptures and other books to any extent you want, but this is not True Knowledge; you are only repeating empty words gleaned from the experience of others. Many wise people have distilled the meaning of knowledge down to one brief sentence:

God is One; there is no other.

The totality of knowledge is captured in these few words. There is only one Almighty Lord residing within you. The many outer forms of the Divine that we worship are all creations of our own mind and are subject to destruction. These outer idols and images are easy to understand; even a child can bow down before them. But what is the meaning of True

¹ Paltu Sahib, *Gyān kā chāndnā bhayā ākās meñ...*

Knowledge? When you lift your soul above the nine doors of the body and cross into the Inner Etheric Sky, then you behold the Light within, and that Radiance drives the darkness from your heart. This is what is meant by Knowledge. When the mind becomes absorbed in the Inner Light, then True Knowledge begins to dawn.

When your inner vision opens, then the Truth stands revealed.

You see the false illusion of the world with your own eyes.

Ramdas Swami tells us:

*The eyes of flesh cannot behold that Inner Light;
Only the Eye of Knowledge can perceive it.*

He says, “When you look with these eyes of flesh, you see all the material things of this world—mother, father, children, family, relations—this is all the spectacle of flesh. Even your eyes are made of flesh, and when you look with these outer eyes, you are lured and captivated by the material objects that are also composed of flesh. You cannot see what lies beyond this mortal world. But when the Spiritual Eye within you opens, then your whole being will be flooded with Light. You cannot see this Light with your outer eyes; the Inner Eye that beholds the Lord is of a different order. Until that Inner Eye opens, all of your so-called wisdom is just blind speculation.

When the Divine Radiance sprouts forth, it chases away all darkness and illusion from your within. When the Inner Light becomes manifested, then all the false attraction Maya disappears; within and without, you behold only the One Lord.



Baba Somanath Ji

**Recognize the secret of the jiva and the Lord;
Understanding comes through experience of the
True Shabd.**

First, consider the matter carefully. What is the nature of the jiva? What is the nature of the Almighty Lord? Search deeply in your heart and discover the Truth behind this secret. The jiva is an embodied soul; the body is fashioned from the five elements, and taking on the body, the jiva becomes trapped in egotism. When the soul casts off egotism, then it becomes formless and merges into the Lord. The soul and the Lord are one Power.

It is just like the empty space within the clay waterpot or butter churn. Each clay vessel has an empty space inside. When the potter fashions the pot out of clay, the empty space is captured naturally within that pot. And when the outer clay pot is broken, that empty space escapes unchanged—the same as it was before the potter molded that vessel.

Just like the clay pot is filled with empty space, this material body formed from the five elements is also filled with the inner spiritual Power of the soul; that Power is trapped in the covering of five elements and the sense of “I and mine.” This embodied soul is called a jiva, and when the sheath of the five elements and I-hood is removed, then the soul goes free. The Power that enlivens the soul is the Almighty Lord Himself.

First, think carefully and understand the nature of the Lord and the embodied soul. Then, meditate on Shabd as enjoined by the Satguru; always go on repeating the Simran of Naam so that falsehood and egotism may not enter into your heart. In this way, perform the spiritual practices so that you can gain emancipation, and, when your end time comes, you may say goodbye to this mortal world forever.

**The servant Paltu says: I have opened the curtain.
When I entered within, the mystery was revealed.**

Paltu Sahib Ji describes His own experience: “That thick curtain of illusion and egotism was thrown open. These are not just hollow words. I am speaking only after seeing with my own eyes.” If you have not seen within, then even if you go on chattering like a monkey—repeating accounts you have read in books—still, your words will all be futile and without savor.

**Leave behind mere understanding of the soul;
Rise higher and become absorbed in the Power of
the soul itself.
This state of complete Oneness is the sign of the
True Shabd.**

Once you have understood the reality of the soul and the Lord, then you must rise above that understanding and leave it behind. The soul is encased in the *koshas* or sheaths: *annamaya*, *prānamaya*, *manomaya*, *gyānamaya*, and *vigyānamaya*.

First of all, what is the most pressing need of the body? Nourishment. There is a well-known saying:

*First, take care of your stomach,
Then you can offer your devotion to the Lord.*

Once you have given food to the body, then it can begin to dance. When you are hungry and have no food to fill your stomach, then you can't do anything at all. This need arises from the *annamaya kosha* or the sheath that is nourished by food. If you had nothing to eat and if someone were to say to you—“I will be sure you have three square meals every

day, but you will have to sacrifice your life”—you would not accept that offer. Your immediate worry about finding food will be forgotten; your only concern will be to preserve your precious life: “I can remain hungry, but I do not want to die.” At that moment, your attention moves from the *anna-maya kosha*, or food sheath, to the *prānamaya kosha*, or prana sheath; your whole thought is to preserve the prana or life force in the body.

Beyond this, you encounter the mind sheath, the *manomaya kosha*. Say, for instance, that you have committed some error in your work and you are facing disgrace and punishment from the authorities. Dreading the suffering you will have to endure, you may think: “It is more than I can bear. It will be better if I end my life.” Your attention has left the *prānamaya kosha*, the sheath of the pranas, and has entered the *manomaya kosha*, the mental sheath, characterized by intense waves of thought and emotion. Under the sway of impulses from the mental sheath, you may even consider giving up the pranas and throwing away your precious human birth.

When you rise above the *manomaya kosha*, you enter into the *vigyānamaya kosha*, the sheath of knowledge; that sheath has two aspects *gyānamaya* and *vigyānamaya*. In the aspect of *gyānamaya*, you recognize the reality of the soul and perceive the falsehood of Maya; you see the Shabd permeating the whole creation. When this knowledge dawns in your within, then all the waverings of the mind and all the thoughts arising from the intellect are stilled. The soul realizes “I am Brahm.” From this stage, the soul rises still further; the power of the mind has been left behind, and, freed from the pull of the created world, you move into the aspect of *vigyānamaya*, or deep knowledge. In *gyānamaya*, the soul still remains trapped within the boundaries of the created world. There is still a

sense of duality—the knower and the Known. But in the *vigyānamaya*, the soul turns to face the Lord. You realize that the Shabd power is the motive Power behind all that exists, and the knower becomes the Known. The soul becomes merged into True Knowledge and becomes the Knowledge itself. This is the nature of the *vigyānamaya kosha*. Going further the soul is drenched in Bliss.² The Shabd manifests within, and the soul becomes absorbed into that reverberating Sound—no difference remains between them.

**Now the soul enters into Sunn Samādhi,
And becoming free from the world, it ascends
higher and becomes absorbed in Sehaj, the
State of Natural Equipoise.**

Some devotees practice *sāguna samādhi*—contemplating on that which has form or attributes. When you set up an image or idol of Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Kali Bhavani³, or any of the other gods and goddesses, and absorb your attention in that form, this is called *sāguna samādhi*. When you still the thoughts of your mind and contemplate on an abstract God beyond form and attributes, this state is called *nirguna samādhi*. But beyond both of these types of samadhi, the soul experiences the *sunya samādhi* or, contemplation of the Void; at this stage, when the soul escapes from the confines

2 Beyond the *vigyānamaya kosha* lies the *anandamaya kosha*. The creator is Pure Spirit and when Pure Spirit interacts with Prakriti, the result is Bliss, the first gossamer-thin veil that is thrown over the soul. When the soul penetrates through that veil of Bliss, it enters into Par Brahm.

3 Kāli Bhavani is an avatar of Parvati and is considered to be the embodiment of both ferocity and mercy. She was the patron deity of King Shivaji and is widely revered in Maharashtra.

of the mortal world and rises into Par Brahm, then it becomes absorbed into the *Sunn*.

Now, the body, mind, and intellect have all been left behind. You are wholly identified with the Void. Your soul is perfectly tranquil and still; no disturbance of thought or desire intrudes there. In the *Sunn*, the True Shabd becomes manifest of itself. The soul is etherealized, and the exquisite Divine Music resounds. The soul becomes wholly absorbed in the *Sunn* or Void. This absorption is referred to as *sunya samādhi*. From here, the soul is drawn upward into Sach Khand, the Realm of Truth, and enters into *sehaj samādhi*, the State of Natural Equipoise.

**In the heart of that Realm, become absorbed in
the Almighty Lord;
The unending devotion awakens within you.**

In the middle of this Realm, the Sat Purush sits upon the Throne of Truth. Beholding the glory of the True Lord, the soul becomes transfixed, enraptured in adoration. In this realm, the everlasting bhakti is awakened. All devotion is worthy, but this devotion is of a different order—eternal and without end.

**When the soul goes beyond Brahm and enters
into the Par Brahm,
Day and night it remains drenched in Love.**

While still in this created world, the soul moves between states of waking, dream, deep sleep, and the meditative state or *turiya*.⁴ But when the soul ascends into Par Brahm, it becomes

4 In the state of *turiya*, the soul realizes, “I am Brahm”

turiyāitā—beyond the state of *turiya* or super-consciousness. In the Par Brahm, the soul becomes merged into the Power of Truth. Beyond the three worlds, the soul is freed of the mind-stuff and becomes Self-Existing.

Absorbed in the Effulgent Light, your soul becomes one with the Music of the Spheres.

Then day and night, the Self-Luminous Light shines forth. When your soul merges into that Light and becomes the Light itself, then, the Pure Sound of the True Realm begins to reverberate. Within and without, there will be Shabd and Shabd alone—Sweet Harmonies of the Celestial Music, pulsing with dazzling Radiance.

The servant Paltu says: The Saint is the Lord of the Universe; when illusion runs away, only the Unity remains.

Paltu Sahib tells us: “The Saint is the Lord of the Universe, the Ruler of all the realms. He is free of all duality—the One, Undivided, and Self-Existing, the Sovereign Lord.”

The jiva gets stuck in children and family and relatives—it is inevitable. But at the end time, Mrityu Devi, the goddess of death, comes to collect that soul, because it belongs to Lord Kal. So, first, the female snake lays her eggs, then she eats them up. If any egg is spared, it is only because it rolls out of the reach of that snake. Otherwise, she will eat them up.

—Baba Somanath

The Serpent Who Devours All

**The serpent Maya gives birth to her offspring,
then she herself devours them.¹**

Maya is such a great power that she shaped the entire creation. The three gunas—rajas, sattva, and tamas—arose from Maya. Maya gave birth to Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. But Maya is like the female serpent. First, she lays her eggs, and then she eats them up. It has been said:

*The mother is created to give birth;
The goddess is created to be worshiped;
The wife is created for union;
But the end time belongs to Kaliki (goddess of death).*

First of all, the mother was created to give birth to the offspring. The goddesses were created to be worshiped and adored. For sexual union, the wife was created. And Mrityu Devi, the goddess of death, was created to take the soul at the end time. We do not understand the nature of Maya's creation, but still, we are enveloped by it; we are drowning in it.

1 Paltu Sahib, *Nāgini paidā karat hai āpui nāgini khāya...*

When Shanmukha² had grown to maturity, his mother Parvati said to him, “My son, now you have grown up, and you need to get married.” Shanmukha thought about her words and then asked, “Mother, what does it mean to get married?” She replied, “It means to take a woman as your wife.” Again, Shanmukha became lost in thought for a while, and finally he asked, “What is a woman like?” To this, Parvati replied, “I am a woman. Those who are like me are women.” Then, Shanmukha said, “But you are my mother, isn’t that so? Therefore, those who are like you are my mothers. No matter how many women there are in this world, they are all like mothers to me. So how can I marry a woman?” Parvati answered, “No, no. It’s not like that. You have to find a woman to marry.” But Shanmukha repeated, “Mother, how can I do that? How can I marry a woman who is like my mother?”

Finally, Parvati became angry, and said to him, “If you will not do what I am telling you to do, give me back the milk that I fed you when you were a baby.” So, he replied, “As you wish. Take it back.” There is a place near Sandur³ where it is believed he vomited up that milk, and the worshipers think the earth there is saturated with that milk. When he had vomited up all the milk, he began to vomit up blood as well, and even today the soil in that area is as red as blood. But Parvati was unmoved by this display, and she did not relent. So, in the end, Shanmukh spoke a curse, saying: “Any woman who comes to have my darshan will become a widow in each of her next

2 Shanmukha is another name for Kartikeya, the son of Parvati and Shiva, and brother to Ganesh, the elephant-headed god

3 The Kumaraswami temple compound in the small village of Bellary, about six miles from the town of Sandur (meaning “mountain pass”) is believed to be the first abode of the god Shanmukh (Kartikeya) in South India. The compound currently includes shrines to Parvati, Shanmukha and Ganesha.

seven lives.” At this, Parvati was silenced. And even now, no woman is allowed to go up to that place where Shanmukh spoke his curse.⁴

“The mother is created to give birth.” After a child is born, the mother has to take care of all its needs. When that child grows into a young man, so that he will not run away, his mother embraces him and binds him to a wife. “The wife is created for union.” The jiva gets stuck in children and family and relatives—it is inevitable. But at the end time, Mrityu Devi, the goddess of death, comes to collect that soul, because it belongs to Lord Kal. So, first, the female snake lays her eggs, then she eats them up. If any egg is spared, it is only because it rolls out of the reach of that snake. Otherwise, she will eat them up.

**The female serpent devours everyone;
No one escapes from her.
Shiva, with his mighty weapons, dances
before her.**

Among the gods, Shiva is the most powerful. But even he dances in front of Maya.

**The serpent went into the forest and devoured
Shringi Rishi.
Narada could not stand before the wave of Maya,
and he was swept away.**

Shringi Rishi performed austerities in the forest, renouncing food and water for many years. But the serpent Maya also

4 Traditionally, the Shanmukha shrine was restricted to men, but now all visitors are welcomed.

came to that forest, ensnared him and then took him along to perform the yagya of King Dasrath⁵. Narada⁶ went to the swayamvar⁷ of the Princess Shrimati and sat there with the face of a monkey. The serpent also made him dance.

**The brave warriors, the human beings, the sages,
and the assembly of the gods—Maya, the female
cobra, consumes them all.
She devours the yogis, the celibates, and the
ascetics; no one is spared.**

All the great gods and goddesses, the brave warriors, the human beings, the yakshas, and the gandharvas⁸, the rishis and the sages, the yogis, the celibates, and the ascetics—the serpent Maya captured all of them.

**The discerning Saint is like Garuda.
Paltu says: Seeing Him that snake becomes afraid.
The serpent Maya gives birth to her offspring,
and then she devours them.**

Exercising discrimination and discernment, the Saint becomes like Garuda⁹ and devours that serpent. Those who come to

5 King Dasrath wanted Shringi Rishi to perform a yagya (vedic sacrifice) so he could get a son. But, when Shringi Rishi would not leave his austerities in the forest, the king sent a female courtier, who lured Shringi Rishi back to civilization so the yagya could be completed.

6 Narada became arrogant when he overcame Kamadeva, the god of lust. But, in his pride, he became infatuated with Princess Shrimati and in order to win her, he requested Lord Vishnu to make him as beautiful as himself. But to save his devotee from a fall, Vishnu gave him the face of a monkey instead.

7 Swayamvar is a ceremony where a girl chooses her own bridegroom.

8 The yakshas are demigods and the gandharvas are celestial musicians.

9 Garuda, the vehicle of Vishnu, is the enemy of all snakes; he has the head of an eagle and the body of a man.

the Saint are saved; everyone else goes into the mouth of Maya. Taking on one form or another, she will attract them.

It has been said: “Gold and women, both trap you in desire. Those who set out to meet the Lord are ensnared by the temptress along the way.” Someone gets stuck in money; someone gets stuck in the opposite sex; someone gets stuck in name and fame. Everyone gets stuck in the three “K’s”—*kanchan* (gold), *kāminī* (lust), and *kirti* (renown). Everyone gets trapped in these three “K’s.”

So, it is clear that only two things are worthy of our worship in this world. What are they? The Lord and the Lord's true devotee. The beloved devotee of the Almighty and the Almighty Himself—only these two things are worthy of worship. The other things that we worship are all unconscious and inert.

—Baba Somanath

The Two Things Worthy of Worship

**The Saints consider two things worthy of our
worship:
The Lord and His True Devotee; nothing else has
any value.¹**

What things do the Saints consider worthy of worship in this world? Some people worship the gurdwaras, some worship the temples of Rama and Krishna. Some people worship the holy Ganges, Jamuna and Sarasvati rivers; some worship their place of confluence, Prayag. Some worship the sacred city of Kashi. Some worship the temples of Rameshvaram and Jagannath. Going to all these places, we bow our heads, we fold our hands, we prostrate ourselves, and then return home. But think carefully about it. Who are you saluting respectfully with folded hands? The one to whom you are folding your hands isn't aware of your greeting and doesn't even realize that you are there. You fold your hands in reverence, but the object of your devotion is not conscious of your actions. Until the one you

¹ Paltu Sahib, *Santan kiyā vichār, pujave ko doy haiñ...*

are worshipping accepts your folded hands and understands your devotion, how can they shower grace on you and offer you protection? Are such things worthy of your worship? One person presses their forehead to a stone, someone else worships the water, and another person bows down before the holy books. But these things cannot even speak or move by themselves. How can they bring about your liberation?

So, it is clear that only two things are worthy of our worship in this world. What are they? The Lord and the Lord's true devotee. The beloved devotee of the Almighty and the Almighty Himself—only these two things are worthy of worship. The other things that we worship are all unconscious and inert.

**He is the God of all the gods, greater than
Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.
O Paltu, worshipping all these other gods
entangles us in the creation.**

The God of all the gods is our Gurudev. By worshipping all these other gods, we become ensnared in the entanglements of this world. And furthermore, these very gods place their entreaties before our Gurudev. Brahma, Vishnu, and Shankar (Shiva) all are beggars before Him. These other gods are requesting His mercy and grace. In one place Kabir Sahib describes our condition:

*Giving up the meditation on True Naam,
We meditate on lesser deities.
Whoever turns away from Sat Nam,
smells the sulfurous fumes.*

What are the sulfurous fumes? The burning in the hells. Besides the one True Naam, there is no other “naam.”

**The Lord and His devotee are united in the
True Shabd.**

Their Will prevails in the Court of the Saints.

In the True Darbar, the True Court, the devotee of the Lord and the Lord are one. The Gurudev is the Lord Himself, and His loving devotee is one with Him. They can do anything they wish.

Once casually in passing, Amar Das addressed a weaver's wife as a “crazy woman.” And that woman became mad from that time on. Her husband went to Guru Angad Dev Ji, bemoaning her condition, saying, “Maharaj Ji, your disciple Amar Das has cursed my wife.” Guru Angad Dev Ji replied, “He would never curse anyone. But if by chance he did, that curse can never be avoided.”

Then He called Amar Das Ji, who was so delighted to receive the summons of his Guru that his heart began pounding. Lovingly he thought, “My Guru Ji has sent for me today!” When he went there, the Guru asked him, “Why did you curse the weaver's wife?” Amar Das replied, “No, Maharaj Ji, I did not curse her. In the early hours of the morning, I had gone to the river to fetch water. As I was returning, along the way my foot struck on a stone or something sharp like a thorn, and I slipped and fell down. Hearing the noise one of the weavers said, ‘What is this commotion? Who is about so late at night?’ That weaver's wife answered, ‘It is that homeless Amru who has no dwelling place of his own. He was bringing water and has stumbled on the peg

of our loom. He doesn't know the difference between day and night.' Laughing, I replied, 'O crazy woman, my eternal dwelling place is assured, but you have no place to call home.' I was just replying to her casually in passing." So the Guru said, "Brother, have mercy on the poor lady." What did Amar Das reply? "Lord, if You are merciful on her, she will become alright." So, in this way, whoever becomes the true devotee of the Lord, his words come true. His words cannot be evaded. Whatever he wishes comes to pass.

**With just one word, the Saints can make us meet
with the Lord.**

**O Paltu, as the redness is hidden in the henna
leaves, so the Lord dwells within.**

If He wishes, instantly He can throw open the inner door for the unconscious jiva. But such is not the Will of the Lord. Once a Brahmin pandit took initiation from Baba Jaimal Singh Ji Maharaj. The karmic load of the pandits is the heaviest of all. Why? Because for their whole lives they eat the food of others. And their fathers and grandfathers also maintained themselves eating the food of others. So the pandit took initiation, but afterward, he did not follow the Guru's instructions wholeheartedly. He continued with all his outer practices: offering oblations to departed ancestors, repeating the Gayatri mantra, reciting ritual prayer and incantations. Along with his practices of Sat Mat, he continued all his other rites and rituals as well. His attention was divided and so he accomplished nothing.

One day he went to Baba Jaimal Singh Ji and said, "Look here. You have so much praise for the glory and greatness of Sat Naam. But it is all bogus. The time I spend reciting the

Gayatri mantra and performing my other practices gives me some benefit. But I get nothing at all from your Sat Naam.” At that time Baba Jaimal Singh told him, “Pandit Ji, are you following the instructions you were given? Do you meditate on Sat Naam?” The pandit replied, “Yes, I meditate daily. But I don’t get anything from my practice. You go on praising this method without anything to back it up.” So Baba Jaimal Singh advised him to perform his meditation with more love and devotion, and after explaining to the pandit, Baba Ji sent him home. That egotistical pandit didn’t pay any attention to the Guru’s advice. Instead he kept coming back to Baba Jaimal Singh; three or four times he returned to argue and dispute.

Then one day, the pandit suddenly resolved to confront his Guru, “Either you admit that your Sat Naam is all bogus, or you show me something within.” With this in his mind, the pandit came to the Dera. When he arrived, he looked all around but found that the Guru was not there. He enquired and was told that Baba Ji had gone for a visit to some other place. So he said, “Okay, I’ll go there and meet Him.” He made a big fuss and arrogantly set out to find his Guru. On the way, he met Baba Ji returning to Dera. Beside the road there stood a thorny acacia tree and the pandit said, “Maharaj Ji, take a seat under this tree. Listen to what I have to say.” Baba Jaimal Singh replied, “What is on your mind?” The pandit hurried on, “I have come to you three or four times already, to discuss this very matter. And every time you have put me off and sent me away. Today I am not going to let you go till I am satisfied. Today either you show me something within, or you admit that this Sat Naam is all bogus.” So at that time, Baba Jaimal Singh Ji said “All right, Brother. Sit down here.”

He made the pandit sit in meditation, and He also sat to one side. From within He pulled the pandit's soul up to behold the Inner Light. But when the soul is pulled up forcibly, it is just like when the yamduts wrench the soul from the body at the time of death. In every pore of his body, the pandit experienced unbearable pain and cried out, "Maharaj Ji, I am dying." Jaimal Singh Ji replied, "If you are dying, then go ahead and die. What can be done now? You wanted to see within." The pandit repented saying, "No, Maharaj Ji. I was mistaken. I didn't understand what I was asking." Then Baba Jaimal Singh Ji had mercy on that pandit and told him, "Now, go and do your meditation. The inner way will open to you. But do not try to force anything. Do not worry or be anxious to have results. Progress in meditation cannot be hurried."

**If you wish to earn the Naam, sit in the Satsang.
If you meet the Saint, do not care about his color.**

If you want to earn the Naam, then go and sit in the Satsang of the Saint. Do not give any thought to what country the Saint comes from; it does not matter. Do not worry about his caste or community.

**Everything comes from Him; when the flowers
appear, the fruit will follow.
O Paltu, the Lord dwells within his devotee as the
fragrance is hidden in the flower.**

There is no difference between the Lord and the Saint. The Saint can do whatever He wishes. As the disciple's vessel gradually becomes purified and prepared, the Saint showers more and more of His grace. When the flower blossoms, there is hope for fruit.

The Saints emit their fragrance, just like the fragrance radiates from the flower. That fragrance is unseen, but its perfume is very potent. In this way, the body of the Saint is like that blossoming flower, and the delicious perfume that wafts from Him is the fragrance of Lord.

You aspire to become a devotee, and yet you are still craving the things of this world. Can you be called a true devotee if you are asking for children, family and relations, houses, wealth and possessions, name and fame, high positions and rulership? You go on praying for all these outer things, and at the same time, you claim that you want to follow the Path of devotion—you say that you want to become a bhakta (devotee). But how is that possible? You can only receive one reward at a time. Either you can become devoted to the Lord, or you can enjoy the pleasures of this world.

—Baba Somanath

Doing the Devotion is Not Child's Play

**The Lord's devotion is not a visit to your
auntie's house;
Bhakti is not just eating a plate of rice and daal.
The home of the Lord lies far away; you cannot
reach there easily.
O Paltu, if you fall down you will be smashed to
bits; take heed of my words.¹**

Speaking on the subject of bhakti, Paltu Sahib Ji says, "It is no easy thing to do the devotion of the Lord." We can accomplish the most difficult worldly tasks; if we makes efforts we can achieve success. But to become successful in bhakti is the most arduous undertaking. He says the home of the Lord is far away and the journey of devotion is long and fraught with danger. Don't understand bhakti as a prize easily won.

"*Khālā*" is a word for aunt². So, He tells us, "Devotion is not a visit to your auntie's house." When you visit your aunt, she

1 Paltu Sahib, *Khālā kai ghar nāhiñ bhakti kai Rām ki...*

2 *Khālā* is the Urdu word for "aunt," meaning your mother's sister. The Hindi word is *mausi*.

makes rice and dal for you, and you feel light-hearted and merry. But devotion is a noble aim that requires dedication and strenuous effort.

Now, we are not on one side or the other, and through such half-hearted devotion we achieve nothing. We make some efforts to forgo the sense pleasures and renounce worldly name and fame, but, because of our lack of real commitment, we do not attain the fruit of bhakti for which we are striving. It is said that the washerman's dog doesn't belong to the house or to the washing ghat, but he gets beaten in both places.³

Think carefully before you step on this Path;

walking on this Path is like dying.

The price you pay for the fakir's wisdom is your head.

He says that before you place your foot on the Path of devotion, think about it honestly. "Can I become a devotee? Will I be able to do this work or not?" Before you start, you should consider the matter fully. Set out on the Path only when you are certain. How does Paltu Sahib describe the Path of Devotion? He says, "Walking on this Path is like dying." In fact, dying is easier; following this Path is far more difficult. It is not a hard thing to die. If you eat too much opium, you will die, or you fall into a well, you will die. But the practice of devotion is extremely demanding. Therefore, do not adopt the practice of bhakti just because you see others following it.

³ The washerman's dog guards the washerman's house, and he also guards the place at the riverside where the washerman launders and dries the clothes. But that poor dog isn't fully accepted at either place.

Then He asks, “What is the price you will have to pay for the knowledge of the fakir, the teachings of the fakir, the wisdom of the fakir?” You will have to cut off your head and make it an offering to Him.

It is child's play to adopt the trappings of a fakir, but to follow the Path of bhakti and to gain the inner knowledge is an arduous endeavor. It doesn't take any time to become a fakir outwardly. In the morning you tie on a loincloth, smear your body with ashes, and presto, a fakir is born. But friend, such a fakir is a sham.

**Treading this Path is so daunting that you'll be reduced to utter helplessness—don't undertake it lightly.
O Paltu, the Mansion of the Lord lies far away, but you think it's child's play.**

[Break in tape...]

First, dig your grave; then you can become a devotee.

Wrap your head in the funeral shroud, and then place your foot on the Path.

He says that if you want to walk on the Path of devotion, first think: “On this Path of devotion, I will die. So, what will happen to my corpse? Will someone cremate it? Will someone bury it?” You should make the arrangements; before you die, be sure and prepare your *samādh* (memorial tomb): “When I die, such and such will be my final resting place.” And you can't be sure that anyone will provide you with a *kafan* (buri-

al shroud) once you are dead; therefore, you should buy the cloth for your *kafan* beforehand. When you have made preparations to die to this world, then you are ready to place your foot on the Path of devotion.

You aspire to become a devotee, and yet you are still craving the things of this world. Can you be called a true devotee if you are asking for children, family and relations, houses, wealth and possessions, name and fame, high positions and rulership? You go on praying for all these outer things, and at the same time, you claim that you want to follow the Path of devotion—you say that you want to become a *bhakta* (devotee). But how is that possible? You can only receive one reward at a time. Either you can become devoted to the Lord, or you can enjoy the pleasures of this world. But if you run after both, what can you accomplish? You will belong neither to this world nor to the next. Not here, not there.

Day and night, the lover gets no rest.

**O Paltu, when will the heartless Beloved remove
my pain?**

The One who you desire to meet is a very strict taskmaster. No matter how many difficulties may come your way, He will not be lenient. The lenient one is softer than butter, very tender-hearted. But His heart is as hard as stone. He judges your inner condition, and if even a trace of egotism remains there, then that egotism will have to be removed, so that you can progress further. No matter how much discomfort it entails, He understands that suffering is the cure. He is called *bep-arvāh*—the One without care. Paltu Sahib says, “He is worri- less. He is above all care.”

But He does not forget you. Even if you may encounter countless hardships on your way—disgrace may fall upon you, you may have to endure poverty, the world may despise you—still at your end time, the Guru comes to take charge of your soul. Throughout your lifetime, you may have to pass so many tests, but it is only through this preparation that you become fit to place your foot on the Path of devotion. As long as even a trace of egotism remains within, you cannot progress.

Raja Siriyala was a devotee of Lord Shiva. Once to test him, Shiva came disguised as a wandering Shaivite sadhu demanding food, and he told Siriyala that he would only accept the body of his son for his meal. So Raja Siriyala killed his own son, cut his body into pieces, and prepared that meal—he had vowed to always serve Shiva and his devotees. So when the meal was served, Shiva revealed his true identity and told Siriyala, “I have put you to the test and you have passed; I am pleased with you. Now, you can ask for your heart’s desire. But before I eat the meal, please ask your wife to call your son, because I cannot eat in a childless home.” So Siriyala’s wife called to her son, and the boy came running.

Then, once again, Shiva said to Siriyala, “Tell me what you wish, and it shall be granted.” Siriyala replied, “I wish to ascend to the sacred heaven world in your blessed company.” But as they were traveling to Kailash, the heavenly home of Lord Shiva, along the way an egotistical thought crept into Siriyala’s mind: “There is no devotee, no benefactor, as great as me; no one else has ever made such an immense sacrifice. I offered my son, the offspring of my own body, without any hesitation.” And at that moment, he tumbled down from the heights of heaven.

So, as long as even a speck of self-love remains in our within, we cannot rise into the inner worlds. We have to remove the sense of ego. Either we must remove it through practicing meditation or through undergoing outer suffering. This is all the grace of the Satguru. All the difficulties of the world may descend on you. But if you do the meditation, the suffering goes away. Otherwise, if you neglect the Bhajan and Simran, then you will get punishment from the body, punishment from the mind, and punishment from the religion. Problems will assault you from every direction.

This is the Guru's grace—He has to clean us. If we perform the meditation, that is very good. But if we don't, then, one way or another we will have to settle the karmas we have made. At that time, it does no good to cry out: "I repent!"

Maharaj Sawan Singh Ji's own secretary, Rai Harnarayan Sahib, was afflicted with illness for three years. His organs were failing, and his condition was extremely painful. Even at the present time, you will have observed the condition of _____. So, one day when Rai Harnarayan could bear the suffering no longer, he made this request before the Satguru: "Maharaj Ji, please, either take me out of this world now or make me better."

Maharaj Ji replied, "Rai Sahib, you yourself will have to bear this. Until this karma is finished off, where can I take you? The karma has to be paid either through meditation or enduring the suffering. These are the karmas you made yourself; if someone else had made this karma, the reaction could be passed on to them. But now, either you must endure the karmas outwardly in the form of physical suffering, or you must eradicate that karma through meditation so that you can rise within. These are the only two methods to pay off the karma.

What can I do? You will have to bear the reaction of your karmas—through this suffering, you will be purified. Then I will not need to give you another birth. All of the impressions and karmas have to be eradicated. If you remove them through meditation, well and good. Otherwise, you will have to undergo this suffering. What you have sown, you have to reap.”

Fix that love in your heart, and it will stir up his grace and mercy; your within will become flooded with light as you ascend into the higher realms. When that true love manifests, the Inner Guru appears. The Naam will shower down, and you will be drenched in a rain of Nectar.

—Baba Somanath

Drenched in a Rain of Nectar

**Without the Guru, you will never cross to the
other shore;
Without the Naam, you will never attain salvation.¹**

Except for the Guru, we are all blind. Where can a blind man go when he cannot see the way? He does not know which direction to take, so how can he reach his destination? If you are going to cross a river in a boat, you need a ferryman. If you are traveling to a town on a train, you need a train engineer. So, if you want to go to Sach Khand, the Realm of Truth, how can you travel there without someone's help? Therefore, He tells us, "Without the Guru, no one can reach the other shore." Naam is the boat, and the Guru is the ferryman; if you have them both, you will be able to cross the ocean of this world. Sometimes you may locate a boat, but there is no boatman available. At other times, you can secure a boatman, but there is no boat to be found. Many itinerant gurus travel from place to place. They say, "I am a guru. You are also a guru." One man took initiation with the express purpose of becoming a guru himself. As soon as his guru had whispered the mantra in his ear, he instantly considered himself fit.

¹ Swami Ji Maharaj, *Guru bin kabhi na utare pār...*

The next year when the guru was making his rounds, he returned to that place and enquired how his disciple had been doing. The disciple was standing there with 100 or so people he had initiated during that year. His guru asked, “Who are all these people?” His disciple answered, “Maharaj, these are your grandchildren.” His guru was pleased. He thought, “This is well done. Our numbers are increasing. Each one will donate a rupee, and I can easily collect 50 or 100 rupees.” And then the following year, when he came back again he found that all his “grandchildren” had themselves become gurus. There was a shortage of disciples. The whole place was full of gurus. This not the correct meaning of guru and disciple. Therefore, Swami Ji tells us that we need a Guru who has the True Naam with Him. A bogus guru can only give you a bogus naam. It is said: “The guru opens up his shop and a wandering disciple drops in to sample his wares. In the evening the guru shaves the disciple’s head (gives him initiation), but the next morning, they both go their separate ways.” This is the condition of the so-called gurus and their disciples.

**Without the Satsang, you cannot grasp the
True Essence.**

Without love, you will never gain His friendship.

You have found the Guru, and you have received the Naam, but until you attend the Satsang, you won’t gain knowledge of the Truth. We think “guru” and “naam” are just words, and we take names like Gurucharandas, Satguru Singh, Harnaam Singh or Satnaam Singh. Once we have adopted these names, we proclaim, “Well, now we have both the Guru and the Naam. We don’t require anything else.” But Swami Ji tells us that one more thing is needed for right understanding—Satsang, the company of Truth. From Satsang, we come to know what

Power resides in the Guru and in the Naam. We come to know what benefit can be derived from their company, and how to put the teachings into practice. We can understand all of this through Satsang. Some people say, “We have gotten the Naam initiation. Our work is done.” Really? Will our Guru pick us up and transport us into the inner realms without any effort on our part? Think about this carefully.

Once all the students went to their college to earn their degrees, and they assumed that no more was required of them. They thought, “We have done our duty; we have come to the college. Now it is up to our professors to learn all the subjects for us. Then they will pass us and give us our diplomas! The professors will do all the studying! And after they have passed our exams for us, we will all go home!” In just the same way, we think that our gracious Guru will lift us up and carry us within. We think we don’t have to do anything ourselves. My friend, if this is so, then why are you not progressing during your meditation? People say, “What can we tell you? This is just how the Guru’s grace is manifesting right now. We get sleepy when we meditate.” If getting sleepy is the Guru’s grace, then what kind of Sat Lok are you headed for?

Since we don’t have the proper understanding, we throw our whole burden on the Guru. The disciple says, “I’ve taken the Naam initiation, but now my wife has died.” We blame our Guru for what has happened. Until we go into the Satsang, we will not understand the essence and power of the Truth.

Until you understand the Truth, love will not enter your heart. And until the love manifests within you, that Almighty Lord, who is love personified, will not meet you. A friendship is formed when the Love of the Lord and the love of the soul become one, both without and within. When your within overflows with love, then that Loving Power will be attracted to you. He will become your Friend.

Without the proper technique, you cannot rise into the ethereal realms.

Without His grace, the mighty door will not open.

Until you regularly practice the meditation taught to you by the Guru, that heavy door within will not swing open for you. Many people exert. They squeeze their eyelids closed; they hold their breath; they force their eyes upward. Some people clutch to have one thing or another: “We should see the moon. We should see the sun. There will be stars within. There will be clouds.” You imagine all these things and exert force to have one thing or another. This is not correct.

Giving up all sense of I-hood, become absorbed in the Guru

Setting aside your ego—your sense of self—become one with the Guru. Until the Guru’s grace descends on you that inner door will not open.

Without the surat, you cannot contact the Shabd.

Without the nirat, you cannot take the support of the Naam within.

For the meditator, this single couplet suffices. Swami Ji tells us the surat is the faculty that hears within, and the nirat is the faculty that sees within. Until these two faculties merge and become one, we don’t get the support of the Shabd coming from the higher realms. Many people say, “We hear the Shabd within off and on. Sometimes it stops; sometimes it becomes loud. Sometimes it comes from this direction; sometimes from that direction.”

Friend, something more is wanted here. Until we get the support of the Shabd flowing from the higher regions, this fluctuation will continue. Because we are still connected to the

gross, material body, this Shabd we are hearing is resounding at a lower level, where our consciousness still partakes of the inert, material plane. At the material level, the Shabd cannot attract us and pull us up. The Shabd has the power to attract the soul, but only when we ascend within and come into its magnetic field. Shabd is a mighty force. Once you have the support of that Shabd coming from the highest regions, know it for certain that your meditation practice is complete.

First of all, have love for the Guru, then conquer the mind, and drink the Nectar of Naam.

After describing the higher stages of meditation, Swami Ji now explains how to get started on the journey. He details the steps you have to take to reach those higher levels. First, you must remove the love for all the worldly things from your within. Then replace it with love for the Guru. Fix that love in your heart, and it will stir up his grace and mercy; your within will become flooded with light as you ascend into the higher realms. When that true love manifests, the Inner Guru appears. The Naam will shower down, and you will be drenched in a rain of Nectar. When you reach the other shore, your sense of “I and mine” will be finished off, and all the worldly desires will be eradicated.

Give up the world, understanding it as the home of Kal; journey to the home of Dayal, the Merciful Lord, and improve your life.

Now we have two homes. One is the home of Kal, mind and Maya. This body and the created world are the home of Kal. When we forsake this home, we will discover the way leading to the home of Dayal. Now, we are roaming

about in Kal's domain. We are only talking about finding another home, where the Merciful Lord is dwelling. How can we reach there? First, we must leave this dwelling place of Kal, and then we must turn our steps towards Sat Lok, our True Home, where Dayal, the Merciful Lord resides.

In the Guru's company you can achieve the status of the Saints.

In the company of the Shabd, you can reach the fourth stage.

How do we achieve the status of the Saints? How do we walk on the Path of the Saints? How do we receive the Saints' bounty? All this comes only through our Satguru. In one place, Swami Ji Maharaj tells us: "When I compare my Guru to the Anami realm, that place has no appeal to me. Why should I leave my Guru's feet to go there? What is there for me in Sat Lok?" The Guru has told you: "Friend, that Power lies within you. When you progress within, you will see for yourself that your Guru is the Sat Purush, the Almighty Lord Himself." So why would you give up your faith and turn away from such a Guru? Why strive for Sach Khand, Sat Naam or Anami? When you hold fast to your Guru, with a true and loving heart, all these things and more will come to you of themselves. In the company of Truth, you will soar upward through the physical, astral, and causal stages and pass into the fourth stage of Par Brahm. Supported by the Power of Shabd, the Gurumukh passes through each of these stages and finally arrives at the highest stage— Sach Khand."

Radhaswami says, contemplate on the Inaccessible One—listen to His words, follow His commands, and achieve salvation.

Finally, what does Swami Ji tell us? The Lord lies beyond the intellect, beyond mere words, beyond the senses, beyond the body. He dwells in the Inaccessible Realm. Contemplate on Him alone. Meditate on the Lord in that region where the intellect finds no access. As long as you are stuck fast in the limited understanding of the intellect, you cannot fathom this higher knowledge. Spirituality is not a small thing. You want to find a way to grasp it intellectually, but the intellect cannot comprehend it. You turn to the scriptures for support, but you interpret them according your own speculation and invention. Whatever interpretation the intellect places before you, you enshrine that in your heart and view the scriptures in that light. What can be gained in this way? People praise you saying, “What a great scholar!” Friend, this is not even your own knowledge; you have gleaned it from the books of others. Reading those books, you may store some knowledge in your brain, but you do not earn any true spirituality. And the bookish knowledge you have acquired is further limited by your own narrow interpretation.

Therefore, Swami Ji Maharaj tells us that this Bani is inaccessible and incomprehensible—it lies far beyond the scope of the intellect. Only those who have ascended to that Inaccessible Realm can understand this state. Everyone else is only repeating hearsay: “Such and such a person said this and experienced that.” This is the extent of their understanding. Whatever words you hear from the Saint, you have to accept those words in your heart and act upon them. Only then can you achieve liberation.

He says that you may think that there is some place, some direction where you can escape from Maya, but it is not like that. To the east, the west, the south, or the north—in whatever direction you may go—you will find that Maya has already surrounded and taken control of that place. My friend, there is no corner of the world that is free of Maya; such a place does not exist.

—Baba Somanath

In the Company of the Cobra

How can you obtain happiness in the company of the cobra?¹

This is the bani of Satguru Paltu Sahib Ji. Becoming enslaved by one pleasure or another, all the world goes on creating karma. Within each one of us, the thought arises: “If I can enjoy this comfort, it will be a good thing; I should make efforts to achieve it.” Cherishing such desires for happiness, the whole world comes under the domination of karma. And yet, if we look at the reality, there is no happiness to be found anywhere in this world.

*This world has no happiness to offer;
You can find happiness only in
shelter of Satguru's holy feet.*

No outer thing can give you happiness.

*What we see will be destroyed,
if not today, then tomorrow.*

Whatever we see outwardly will be destroyed—maybe today,

¹ Paltu Sahib, *Kusal kahāñ se pāiye nāgini ke parsang...*

maybe tomorrow. And if these outer things are subject to destruction, how can they bring us any happiness? Such happiness is only a figment of our imagination. It is just like a person trudging through the desert under the midday sun. Waves of hot air rising from the sand bend the light of the sun and produce an image of the blue sky on the ground; this phenomenon is called a mirage. From a distance, the mirage looks just like a sheet of water. You see that “water” and rush towards it. But will you find water there? Will your thirst be quenched? Not the least.

In the same way, the waves of worldly pleasures produce an illusion of happiness, but there is no real happiness to be found in them—only burning fire. Now we are worrying about accumulating wealth; our human birth is spent running after money to such an extent that one paisa becomes dearer to us than life itself. Why do we enlist in the military service? We have no worry that we may lose our life; we enlist only to make money. What else is there in it for us?

In this way, all the worldly things appear to be very beautiful; they seem to be the source of happiness. But we perceive the world according to the condition of our inner mind (*antah-karana*). If our inner mind looks at an object with a feeling of happiness, then we perceive it as beneficial and desirable. But another person may perceive the very same object as a source of pain and view it with aversion. The object is the same but two people view it differently because it is all Maya; it is all illusion. Otherwise, it would appear the same to everyone in all situations; an object would not seem beneficial to one person at one time and harmful to another person in some other circumstance. Think about the chili pepper. Many people put chilies in their food and find them very tasty. But what if someone puts the same chili pepper in their eye? They would

scream in pain. So the same object can seem to be a source of happiness or a source of suffering, but both of these states are only an illusion, a dream.

The created world is nothing but Maya, so how have we become entangled in this illusion? What is the real meaning of Maya? Maya is the thing that is not—Maya means that which does not exist. This is the nature of Maya. Maya is a serpent, and all the world is chasing after her, searching for happiness. But that serpent is full of poison. What happiness can we hope to find?

**We keep the company of the serpent, but she is
the power that destroys us.**

**If we set a thief to guard our treasure, how can it
remain safe?**

Maya is the power that devours us. The farmer sows the seed at the proper time and then later harvests and eats that crop. In the same way, people take care of the animals and the birds so that they can take work from the animals, and, in the end, when the animals are no longer useful, they slaughter them. Likewise, when Maya cares tenderly for all the jivas in the creation, she is doing that for her own selfish motives. She sows her seeds in the creation—that is, she gives birth to the jivas. She waits for the crop to ripen; then, she harvests and consumes it. Who can stop her? She is the owner of that crop.

Therefore, Paltu Sahib says, “Can you ever find happiness with such a one as Maya? Even in your dreams, you will find no happiness.” But in our ignorant state, we are controlled by the desire for the pleasures; understanding them to be the source of happiness, we spoil this precious human body. “You have posted an inveterate thief as your guard. Since his skill lies in

stealing, how can your treasure be safe?” We have set a thief to guard our wealth. When someone has chosen a thief for their guard, how can their wealth remain intact?

If we light a fire in a storehouse of cotton, the storehouse will burn down.

If we place poison before an innocent child, that child will eat the poison.

When we light a fire in a cotton warehouse, can that cotton be saved? No, the fire will burn it up. If we set poison before a young child and think that the child will remain safe and healthy, how can that be? Whatever we put before that child, it will eat. So, in the same way, the cotton of our allotted lifespan is kept in the warehouse of this human body. If we ignite the fire of the passions and pleasures in that warehouse, do you think the cotton will survive? Sooner or later, that cotton—our span of life—will be burned up by the fire of the passions. We are expecting to live happily in this human body, but that is not possible. The fire will ignite the cotton, and our life will be destroyed.

Though Maya is flowing like a stream of gold, do not allow it to touch your body.

Can you expect to feast on kheer (rice pudding), if you set a lion loose in the village?

What can you gain from wealth? Wealth is also Maya, so what happiness can you find in it? Under the influence of wealth, you forget the Almighty Lord. You are lost in eating, drinking, and enjoying luxuries and comforts. You are trapped in family, caste, and community. Moreover, you gather together guests and relations; important people come to visit you and ordinary

people come to visit you as well. My friend, you have turned all of your desires towards the worldly things, and you yourself have become completely empty.

Paltu Sahib says, “Remain far away from Maya; she destroys your devotion.

How can you obtain happiness in the company of the cobra?”

In one place Kabir Sahib tells us:

If the woman’s shadow falls on the cobra, it becomes blind.

Kabir says: “Then what is the condition of one who always remains in the company of women?”²

Traditionally, it is believed that a snake will go blind if the shadow of a pregnant woman falls on it. So people think that until that woman gives birth to the child, no snake will come near the place where she is staying. Kabir says that if there is so much poison in the woman’s shadow that it can make a poisonous snake blind, then what will be the condition of the man who is always in the company of women, that is, the man who is controlled by lust. What is the condition of one who is always involved in lust? Does he have a right to show his face? What face could he show?

2 Kabir has framed this verse on the dangers of lust in terms of cultural norms prevalent in the society in which He lived. But the Saints are clear that the origin of lust is in the mind that is present within everyone. And in terms of spirituality, the They make no distinction between men and women. They tell us that the soul is immaculate and that all the impurity is in the mind. Kirpal Singh tells us: “Spirituality is one and the same for all, whether woman or man. Being a woman makes no difference--they are all souls. Soul is of the same essence as that of God. The possibility is the same for a woman as for a man.” Kirpal Singh, *The Light of Kirpal* (Sanbornton, NH: Sant Bani Ashram, 1980) “The Role of Women,” p 285.

[Pushpamma recites in Kannada and Baba Ji comments]

Just read the histories of the gods and goddesses. We consider them exalted; we worship and honor them. But Maya also surrounds them and takes them prisoner. If the gods were unaffected by ego and Maya, then why did Vishnu feel compelled to incarnate in the forms of the ten avatars? He came as Matsya (The Fish), Kurma (The Tortoise), Varaha (The Boar), Narasimha (The Man-Lion), Vamana (The Dwarf), and Parasurama (Rama with an ax). Who were all these incarnations? They were all nothing but Maya.

We people are always lost in the thoughts of Maya. But if we want to complete our gurubhakti, our devotion to the Guru, we should go on doing the Simran of Naam and the contemplation of the Guru day and night. In this way, our thoughts will be reversed, and we will remain perpetually anchored in the Guru. When we waste our lives under the influence of Maya and remain bound to the mind, then what future happiness can we hope to find?

[Baba Somanath returns to the bani of Paltu Sahib]

**I have looked in all the four directions — east,
west, north, and south.**

**I have looked everywhere, but have found no one
who escapes from Maya.**

**King, pauper, and fakir — Maya has made her
home in them all.**



Baba Somanath Ji

He says that you may think that there is some place, some direction where you can escape from Maya, but it is not like that. To the east, the west, the south, or the north—in whatever direction you may go—you will find that Maya has already surrounded and taken control of that place. My friend, there is no corner of the world that is free of Maya; such a place does not exist.

Because of the fear of Maya, Sukhdev remained in his mother's womb for twelve years. He refused to come out because he was afraid of becoming engulfed by Maya when he emerged into this physical world. So for twelve years, he remained in the womb. Finally, the Lord had to suspend the working of Maya for one moment, so that Sukhdev could take birth. The nine Naths and the eighty-four Siddhas and other great rishis and munis also incarnated in that one moment. While the power of Maya was held in abeyance, they also could come into this world. At that moment, when Maya's power was nullified, those noble souls were able to take birth.

Maya is such a powerful force that she surrounds you and takes you captive without you even knowing it. Kabir tells us:

*The enemy attacks us with force,
But the woman uses playfulness and laughter.*

Whenever your enemy gets the opportunity, he will attack you with force and kill you. But Maya is already dwelling in your own home: as your spouse, as your children, as your sisters and brothers. Through these forms, Maya takes you captive and brings about your demise. When your enemy attacks you, he kills you openly, then and there. But Maya is already dwelling in your own home; she amuses herself by capturing you, and then playfully, she destroys you. You remain intoxicated in all of your worldly relations. They go on laughing and

joking with you, but all the while, they are stealing your life away. Such is the power of Maya.

**She brings everyone under her control;
Maya conquers the world,
But no one can control her; she remains aloof
from all.**

She brings everyone under her control. And yet she remains aloof from all; no one has any control over her. She lures everyone, but she herself remains unaffected. No one can attract her—this is her greatness. Everyone is running after money. But that money is not attached to anyone. It doesn't make even a penny's worth of difference to that money if it is in the possession of a poor person or a rich person; the money is totally unconcerned. But everyone is attracted to money, and they are eager to collect it.

Similarly, everyone is attracted to the children, family, and relatives, but those relations stay with you only to fulfill their own needs; they are not concerned with your welfare. At the time of your death, those very people will be saying: "Tell us where you have hidden the money. What will become of your child? What is going to happen to this thing? What is going to happen to that thing?" Those relatives are not drawn to you for your own sake; they are only concerned with themselves. Even at your end time, when you are departing from this world, they are pulling at you. If they are dragging you to them while you are still living in this world, that is one thing. But when your end time has come and you are leaving this world, if they are still tugging at you, then they will drag you back to this world. You will have to take birth and come here again.

**She makes us forget the Almighty Lord and involves us in her own work.
She is like the woman who has no fear of her husband.**

If we develop any love for the Almighty Lord, Maya tries to make us forget about it. This is her primary assignment. If we become involved in the Lord's worship, if we meditate and pursue the other spiritual practices, then Maya will adopt one of her many disguises and lure us far away from that devotion. This is her foremost work. She may come as our mother or sister; she may come as our sons and daughters; she may come as money and wealth. Then by one means or another, she will lead us away from the Spiritual Path. This is her main function.

Maya is such a powerful force. She is like the woman who takes a husband but then has no fear of him. If she shows respect to him, then she is just putting on a show. It is not sincere. Within, she has no fear. But outwardly, to get her own way, she may pretend to be respectful. Within, she is bold and unafraid. Understand that if she is showing fear and respect, it is all hypocrisy. Her respect is not heartfelt. She is only shamming in order to further her own plans.

**Paltu Sahib says, "Maya is plundering the whole world.
I have looked in all the four directions—east, west, north, and south.**

Paltu Sahib Ji says, "My friend, I have looked in all the four directions, and this is the condition of the world. No one escapes Maya in any direction. She is dwelling in all the four directions. She is the greatest ruler. Everyone in her realm has

become intoxicated in illusion. Everyone is crying out: “Give us independence! We want independence!” But my friend, what kind of independence are you talking about? There is no independence in this realm of Maya. So, where can you find it? You will gain independence only when you know your True Self and become Self-Existent. This is the real independence.

There is one type of tree that, from a distance, appears very beautiful, bearing wonderful bright-red fruits. When birds see that tree, they are all attracted by its lovely fruit—it beckons luscious and sweet. Anticipating a sumptuous feast, they rush there and perch themselves on that tree, but at the first taste of that fruit, their hopes are dashed.

—Baba Somanath

The Bitter Fruit

**O mind! You are like a fish swimming in the
ocean of this world.
Now, you should reflect carefully on your strange
condition.¹**

Ravidas says, “O mind! You are like a fish, and this world is an ocean of fear.” This creation is filled with sense allurements in all their variegated colors and forms. The merchandise of this world is traded every moment—the give and take never ceases.

**Whoever takes the lure of false attachments will
be slain by them; shun their company and run
far away.**

False attachments are destroying your life. You should free yourself from them. Chasing after the illusory creations of Maya day and night, we are squandering our precious birth. If we will only renounce their company, then they can do us no harm.

¹ Ravidas, *Re man mächhalā sañsār samude...*

**Yama is the fisherman, the bangles are the hook
on the line, and another man's wife is the bait.
O fool, if you revel in that indulgence, lost in
infatuation, you will bitterly rue your ignorance.**

How do the dheeveras (a caste of fisherman) snare a fish? First, they tie a fishing line to a wooden stick and toss it into the water. And to fishing line they have attached a baited metal hook. Attracted by that bait, the fish rushes there thinking it has found something good to eat. And when the poor fish swallows that bait, hook and all, the sharp barb gets caught in its throat and, in this way, it has to give up its life.

Similarly, in the created world, the fisherman is Kal, the hook and line signify the binding power of karma, and the bait attached to that hook and line is the attraction of the opposite sex. Like the ignorant fish, the poor jiva swallows that bait and when the hook gets stuck in its throat, it loses its life.

In the beginning, the taste of the sense pleasures seems very alluring, but because of our rash deeds, in the end, we die suffering and repenting our folly. And then, once again we are thrown back into the cycle of 84 lakh births and deaths.

**The fruit of sin appears very sweet and enticing,
and the restraint of righteousness seems bitter;
But when we bite into that fruit, we lament.**

There is one type of tree that, from a distance, appears very beautiful, bearing wonderful bright-red fruits. When birds see that tree, they are all attracted by its lovely fruit—it beckons luscious and sweet. Anticipating a sumptuous feast, they rush there and perch themselves on that tree, but at the first taste of that fruit, their hopes are dashed.

**If you think it is wise to steal other people's wives,
just consider the fate that befell King Ravana.**

If you think you will find happiness with other people's wives, then just keep the picture of King Ravana before you and contemplate on his sorry fate. Ravana was the greatest king who ever lived. There has never been one equal to him before or since. He had 100,000 sons and 125,000 grandsons. Just think of it! 100,000 sons and 125,000 grandsons. The world has never seen a king who could match him. But because he abducted Sita, the wife of Lord Rama, he lost his life, and his entire kingdom was destroyed. Turn this over carefully in your mind.

**Ravidas says, "If you wish to win the precious gem
of God's Name, then sing His praise every moment.
Otherwise, you are like an unbaked pot; day by
day the water of your life is seeping away.**

Now what does He tell us? If you wish to be liberated in this life, then day and night you should do the Naam Simran of the Lord and become detached from the net of this world and the ocean of illusion.

Once Mira Bai had occasion to travel to Kashi to meet with the Brahmins, and there she met with Guru Ravidas who imparted to her the spiritual teachings. Previously, she had been a devotee of Lord Krishna. But when she took initiation from Ravidas, her inner divine eye was opened, and she saw that he was not a mere man but the All-Pervasive, All-Knowing Lord.

—Baba Somanath

My Sleeping Fate Has Awakened

**My heart has become so enthralled with the Lord
that I am no longer bound to this world.¹**

This is the bani of Param Bhakt Mirabai. Lovingly, Mira Bai united her consciousness with the Almighty Lord and became His very form. Mira was a Rajput princess by birth, and she was married to the King of Mewar. But in spite of her noble status, she told the King plainly: “No matter what restrictions you place on me, I will not remain stuck fast in convention. No matter what the Rajput caste may demand of me, I bow only before the Almighty Lord and have become one with Him.”

**I have met Guru Ravidas who has opened to me
the inner secrets of divine wisdom.**

She says, “Now I have found Guru Ravi Das and he has granted me the Spiritual Knowledge. All the sickness and infirmity of spirit that bothered me before has been removed. I have united with True Form of the Lord and have become one with Him.” Ravidas was a cobbler by caste. And Mira was a member of the royal family; she was a queen.

¹ Mirabai, *Mero man lāgo Hari jī sūñ, ab na rahūñgī aṭākī...*

Once Mira Bai had occasion to travel to Kashi to meet with the Brahmins, and there she met with Guru Ravidas who imparted to her the spiritual teachings. Previously, she had been a devotee of Lord Krishna. But when she took initiation from Ravidas, her inner divine eye was opened, and she saw that he was not a mere man but the All-Pervasive, All-Knowing Lord.

Now, Ravidas was a cobbler. He mended shoes and sandals and so forth. So, one day Mira Bai said to her Guru, "Maharaj, you should accompany me back to my home in Mewar. You could live in the royal palace." Then Ravidas replied, "Why would I want to go there? What could I do in a place like that?" Mira replied, "If you move there, then I can have your darshan every day. You should come back to Rajasthan with me."

So, to please Mira, Ravidas shifted from Kashi to Mewar, He built a straw hut near the royal palace and again took up the work of repairing broken shoes and sandals to earn his living. And Mira Bai would go to the hut regularly to enjoy her Guru's darshan, counsel, and Satsang, etc. But the people began to gossip about the royal queen who was going outside of the palace to visit someone of low caste. As a woman and a widow from the royal family, she was subject to so many restrictions to uphold the honor of her family and clan. Undeterred, she continued her practices, shattering all the conventions with her daily trips outside of the palace and to visit the hut of a cobbler no less.

One day, the thought came to Mira, "My Guru is living in a humble hut made of grass and straw. This is not proper." So, she said to her Master, "Maharaj, you should build yourself a nice house." Ravidas answered her, "Dear Mira, it is very difficult for me to earn even four annas a day. How could I ever save enough money for a house? And when would I find the time to build it? Without money there can be no house.

I have only enough to fill my stomach; and even that is hard to come by.”

One day when Mira visited, she brought a diamond for Ravidas and left it in his hut. She thought Ravidas would use that jewel to build himself a new house. But after six months she saw that nothing had changed. Finally, she asked her Guru, “Maharaj, why have you not built yourself a better place to live?” Ravidas replied, “You are always bringing up this subject of a house. But where would I get the money for such a project?” Then Mirabai said, “But Guru Ji, six months ago I left a diamond with you.” Ravidas replied, “It must be there where you left it. Just take a look.” And sure enough, the diamond was sitting where Mira had placed it previously.”

Now, Mira’s husband had passed away, and his younger brother was now the new King of Mewar. He was very displeased with Mira’s conduct and forbade her to go again to the hut of Ravidas. But Mira did not accept his words: “O King, I undertake these trips to my Guru’s hut with all the love in my heart and soul. Each trip is a pilgrimage in the name of the Almighty Lord. You may try to stop me in any way you wish, but I will not be stopped. Whatever restrictions you place on me, I will shake them off and continue with my devotion.”

**I am pierced through by the Lord’s True Name;
my heart is restless and in pain.**

The arrow of the Lord has pierced my heart. Day and night, that arrow remains lodged in my breast. It has awakened the fire of *virah* (separation) within me.

**I no longer adorn myself with jewels and pearls;
I have no use for worldly show.**

Now, I do not wear pearls and jewels. I do not drape myself in diamonds and rubies. I have forsworn them, once and for all. Now, I wear wooden beads and garments of the sadhus.

Instead, I am adorned with the two-stranded tulsi mala² and a tilak of sandalwood paste.

Now, my only ornaments are the two-stranded rosary of tulsi wood beads and a tilak of sandalwood paste.

I have forsaken the pride of royal lineage and wander now in the company of the Sadhus.

I have broken free from pride of royal birth. I have given up fear of public shame. Now, I wander with the sadhus.

Every day, I visit the True Temple of the Lord; I dance in blissful abandon.

Now, each day, I go within to the True Temple of the Lord. Becoming absorbed in the love of Naam, Simran, I dance in ecstasy. I play the *chimta*³ and snap my fingers at convention. Now, nothing remains of my connection with the royal family or the King's palace.

In the congregation of the Saint, my fate has awakened, and I have found my Lord, Sanvariya.⁴

2 A sacred garland fashioned from the wood of the Tulsi plant.

3 A small Indian percussion instrument similar to castanets.

4 "Sanvariya" is an epithet of Krishna meaning: "the dark-skinned beloved." Before coming to the feet of Ravidas, Mira was a devotee of Krishna, and she often expresses her devotion for her Guru and the Shabd Power in the imagery and vocabulary of Krishna bhakti.

Now, I am the fortunate one to keep the company of the Saints; now, I am united with Sanvariya, my beloved Lord.

**I have turned a deaf ear to the scolding of my
in-laws and pay no heed to public shame;
My head is bare, and I have cast my veil aside.**

Now, I am deaf to the exhortations of my elder sister-in-law. The commands of my husband's brothers and sisters have no more power over me. I am no longer worried for family honor. I have abandoned all other devotion and keep the company of the Saints.

**In the refuge of my Supreme Guru, I have
discovered hidden mysteries; I bow prostrate
before Him.**

Now, I remain, day and night, in the refuge of my Supreme Guru and, constantly, I remain absorbed in the contemplation of the Lord's name. I am no longer trapped in worldly entanglements.

**Mira's Lord is Giridhar Nagar,⁵ and she is freed
from the cycle of birth and death.**

5 "Giridhar Nagar" is an epithet of Krishna used by Mira Bai: "Giridhar" means "he who lifted up the mountain." Having aroused the anger of Indra, the villagers were being drowned in a deluge of rain, but, seeing their plight, Lord Krishna saved them by lifting up the mountain Govardhan and holding it over the countryside like a giant umbrella. The use of "Nagar" imparts a sense of someone clever or gallant; it is a way of addressing Krishna as her Beloved.

In this way, one year, ten years, twenty years, a hundred years pass by, and this human birth is lost. You wander on through millions of yugas and lifetimes, trapped in the labyrinth of Kal. For this reason, you waste your life in useless thoughts and pursuits, and in the end, the power of Kal will surround you and take you captive.

—Baba Somanath

The Labyrinth of Kal

**Do not forget the Name of Ram,
Otherwise, you will drown in the ocean of this
world.¹**

This is the bani of Satguru Paltu Sahib Ji. The Power that dwells beyond everything is the true Ram, and yet, that Power permeates all the creation. Kabir Sahib has said:

*One Ram speaks in every heart;
The second Ram took birth as Dashrath's son;
The third Ram pervades the entire created universe;
The fourth Ram exists beyond all.²*

The Supreme Power—the Naam—is the true Ram. That Naam lies beyond all descriptive names—it is Nameless. The Naam that can be described in words is called *varanatmak* Naam. But this true Naam that cannot be expressed in words is called *dhunatmak* Naam.

1 Paltu Sahib, *Rām ke nām se bulnā nāhiñ hai...*

2 One Ram, the soul, dwells within every being. The second Ram incarnated into this world as Lord Ramchandra, the son of King Dashrath. The third Ram is the Universal Mind, the all-pervading force that fashioned the material universe. And the fourth Ram is the Supreme Lord—present in all, yet dwelling apart, beyond the created world.

Never let the remembrance of this Ram Naam slip away from your heart. Before sending us into this world, the Lord placed the power of understanding in the human body. Two forces are at work in the human frame. One force—Maya—wraps the souls in forgetfulness. The other force—the Power of Naam—awakens the souls from their slumber.

Therefore, He tells us that we should never forget the Naam, even for a fraction of a second. Otherwise, the power of Maya will bring forgetfulness, worry, and wavering into our within.

When we allow forgetfulness to overtake us for even a moment, then all the thoughts of the world crowd into our heart, and the mind spurs us into action through the five indriyas,³ the twenty-five prakritis,⁴ and the three gunas.⁵ As a result, we are saddled with karmic reactions and unfulfilled desires for the future, and, dragged by those desires, we go on revolving in the wheel of eighty-four.

Day and night, you remain involved in lust and anger.

You plow the field of greed and attachment.

Day and night, the jiva is beset by lust and anger—the greatest enemies. Day and night, these enemies stir up thoughts in our within. When an intense desire for some worldly thing enters

3 The indriyas are the organs of sense.

4 Kirpal Singh describes prakritis as: “the twenty-five compounded elements in varying degrees of proportion (prakritis) which prepare the physical molds or bodies in different shapes and patterns, shades and colors as a result of karmic reactions...” *Life and Death: The Wheel of Life, The Mystery of Death* (Sanbornton, NH: Sant Bani Ashram, 1980) “Life in Fullness,” p 60.

5 The three gunas are *rajas* (mercurial restlessness), *sattva* (righteousness) and *tamas* (inertia or actions born of ignorance and darkness).

your heart, this is called lust. If that desire is fulfilled, well and good, but if that desire is frustrated, then anger arises. Therefore, it is said: “Lust gives rise to anger.”

Whenever lust controls you, anger will flare up, and greed and attachment will also take hold of you. In this way, the seeds of desire are sown in the field of your heart. You will have to reap the harvest according to the seeds that have been planted; the karmas you have created will fructify, and you yourself will have to endure the result.

You have wealth and land, but the ruler will demand his taxes.

In the same way, Lord Kal will come to collect the karmic taxes that you owe.

When you forget the Lord and live your life immersed in the intoxication of egotism, then the Kal power will seize that opportunity and launch an attack upon you. The name “Kal” means “time.” According to the time of day, our soul moves from one state of consciousness to another. In the wakeful state (*jāgrat avasthā*), we take care of the business of the world. We eat and drink, we enjoy all the material luxuries and comforts, we believe in high and low, and we become entangled in quarreling and wrangling, troubles and worries. All of this takes place in the state of wakefulness (*jāgrat*). And when the mind sinks to the throat center, then we fall into the dream state (*svapan*). And when the soul sinks further, into the heart center and below, then we enter the state of deep sleep (*sushupti*). In that state, we have no awareness of ourselves or the world around us. We aren’t even aware of where we are lying. In the course of a day and a night, we move in this way through these three states of consciousness. And then another

day dawns, and our condition is the same. This is the play of Kal or time. In this way, one year, ten years, twenty years, a hundred years pass by, and this human birth is lost. You wander on through millions of yugas and lifetimes, trapped in the labyrinth of Kal. For this reason, you waste your life in useless thoughts and pursuits, and in the end, the power of Kal will surround you and take you captive.

The servant Paltu says, “Why are you lost in these worldly thoughts?

The call to march may come any hour, any minute, any second.”

He says, “Why do you remain lost in worldly thoughts? Why have you fallen asleep? In just an instant, your breaths will come to an end, and your relationship with this world will be severed.” You will be taken to the cremation ground or the graveyard, and your body will be reduced to ashes and dust. In just an instant, everything is finished; the air you had just inhaled doesn’t come out again; or the breath you had just exhaled remains outside and is blown away. The life of this body is dependent upon the breath.

Only the one who has experienced this state can understand it.

Whoever remains in the Satsang gains this knowledge.

If the Almighty Lord showers love and grace on a soul, then that soul experiences and understands the inner secret. Only such a fortunate one can become absorbed in the Lord. Otherwise, we may hear spiritual stories, we may listen to recitations from the Puranas, we may perform all manner of

outer practices, but until the Power of Love awakens in our within, we cannot establish a heart to heart connection with the Lord. We perform all these outer actions under the control of the inner mind or *antahkarana* (literally, “inner cause”) comprised of *manas*, *buddhi*, *chit*, and *ahankār*. First, the volatile and unsteady *manas* (thinking faculty) gives rise to thoughts. Then the *buddhi* (reasoning intellect) weighs those thoughts. The *chit* (recording faculty) captures and stores the thoughts as images and memories. And ultimately, *ahankār* (self-assertiveness) is the root of the entire process. Entangled in this process, we waste our whole life.

But there is another force within us. You may call it the Power of the soul, or you may call it the True Love of the Lord. When that Love manifests within you, then you will become connected with the Lord. He is the form of Love and when your soul also becomes the form of that immaculate Love, then naturally the two will merge and become One.

Whoever attends the Satsang and remains day and night in the company of Truth, comes to understand the secret of True Love. But until we become connected within, even though we may listen to the Guru’s words with rapt attention and even though our mind is stilled while Satsang is in progress, still, we forget everything when the Satsang is over and remain just as we were to begin with. We travel ten miles forward, but then we go back five more miles. We proceed for fifty miles but then slip back twenty miles. We spend our whole life going forward and sliding back, and then one day, we have to leave this world. But when the True Love of the Lord awakens in our within, all wavering comes to an end, and we will never again forget that love.

What is Satsang? Satsang does not mean listening to some stories. Just hearing of the exploits of Rama and Ravana,

or the Pandavas and Kauravas—how they confronted each other on the battlefield, the bravery they displayed in so many ways—this cannot be called Satsang. In one place, Shankaracharya has written:

*Keeping the company of Truth turns
our thoughts from this world.
And when our thoughts turn away from the world,
we are freed from all forms of attachment.
When we are freed from attachment,
we become steady and unmoving.
And when we become steady and unmoving,
we achieve salvation from the cycle of births and deaths.*

What is the result of coming into the Satsang? Our thoughts turn away from the world and the worldly pleasures. We experience the effect of Satsang deep within our hearts. By going in the Satsang, our thoughts turn away from the world. And when our thoughts turn away from the world, we lose all attachment to the outer worldly things. Therefore, when attachment disappears, this is the sign that we have freed our thoughts from the bondage of this world by attending the Satsang.

When our thoughts turn away from the world, we become detached. And when we become detached, the soul becomes steady and still. We are immovable. When no attachment remains, our attention ceases to waver; the attention becomes firm. And when we achieve this state of stillness, when the attention is no longer dragged here and there, then we attain liberation from the cycle of births and deaths. True Love manifests within. This is called absorption in the Lord. The person who achieves this state learns the secret of Love. Satsang means keeping the company of Truth. Only those who contact the Truth within can understand the real meaning of Satsang.

Otherwise, giving examples and telling stories from here and there may pass the time, but it cannot be called Satsang.

**When you are struck down by the pain of separation,
millions of remedies cannot remove this disease.**

Once the pain of separation awakens within the devotee, then the people will say, “This poor fellow is suffering from jaundice. Look how all his limbs are dried up and yellow. We must give him some medicine.” But on this subject, Paltu Sahib says, “If you take one remedy or if you take a million, it makes no difference. No medicine will cure this disease of Love.” There is only one remedy for the pain of separation—the darshan of the Beloved.

When Guru Nanak became consumed in the pain of separation, His body grew frail and emaciated. Guru Nanak’s father, Kalu Ji, called many ayurvedic and unani physicians from the surrounding area. Finally, Guru Nanak was reduced to skin and bones. One day, when an ayurvedic physician was sitting reading his pulse, Nanak said to him, “Doctor Sahib, you do not even understand your own illness, so how can you diagnose mine? You should return to your own home.” Hearing this, Kalu Ji became enraged and threw Nanak out of the house. Nanak said, “Never mind. It makes no difference whether I am in the house or outside.” And at that time, Nanak went to live at the home of his sister, Nanaki.

[Baba Somanath Ji has Pushpamma recite some couplets of Mira Bai.]

*Only the one who has been pierced by the
arrow can understand the pain of that wound.*

When a warrior is fighting on the battlefield, every pore of their body may be pierced by arrows. Only the one who has been wounded can understand what that condition is like. What can others know about it? In the same way, only the one who has been afflicted by the pain of separation can understand that suffering. This cannot be described in words. Many people think this is a matter of talking. They think that Satsang is collecting stories from here and there and then relating them to the people. My friend, this cannot be called Satsang.

*Understand that place as Satsang,
where the One Naam is spoken of.*

When we listen to the words of the Satsang, our attention should ascend within. This is the real Satsang.

*Made restless by this pain, I wandered through
the forests;
But I have found no physician to treat my
wound.*

Mira Bai tells us: “Because of that pain, I roamed from forest to forest, but I did not find any physician who could heal me.”

*Sanvariya is the true Physician.
Only the Lord of Mira can remove this pain.*

“When I meet with the True Physician, then the suffering of my affliction is removed. He is Sanvariya, the Dark-Skinned Lord. He is Giridhari, the one who holds

up the mountain. When I meet with Him, my pain and suffering go away.” This is called Love.

[Baba Ji returns to the commentary on Paltu Sahib]

**Tears flow down from my eyes in an unbroken stream.
I do not feel the pinch of hunger and sleep eludes me.
The noose of love has been fastened around my neck.**

Within the devotee, day and night the tears of love come unbidden and flow down from my eyes like a cascading stream. Such devotees are not affected by hunger or thirst or sleep. The noose of love has been tied around their necks. If they lose their lives in the devotion of the Beloved, they don't mind. This is called *virah*—the pain of separation. Until this pain of separation arises in our within, we cannot remove the thoughts of “I and mine” or “you and yours” that have been piling up in our within since time immemorial. The fire of love alone can burn away the fire of *virah*. No other remedy exists.

**The servant Paltu says: Once you have been
struck down by the pain of separation,
you cannot become free from that affliction.
Even if all the world joins together to ridicule
your devotion, it makes no difference to you.**

Paltu Sahib says, “Once the pain of separation comes in your within, it does not leave you.” If your pain comes and goes, then you should understand that you are not genuinely afflicted by *virah*. All your so-called pain is just hypocrisy and outer show. But if the love in your within does not decrease no matter what happens—if you do not waver when all the world

despises you and everyone makes fun of you—then know that your Love is true, your *virah* is genuine.

**You become focused at the seat of the soul and
rise into the gagan;
Becoming one-pointed, you remain connected there.
When your soul gets fixed at this still point within,
then your love is perfected.**

Now, He talks about the condition of the lover. Where can we go to get that love awakened? When your attention crosses beyond the four elements (earth, water, fire and air), when you rise into the fifth element, the *gagan* or inner etheric sky, then you yourself become etherealized. You become so much identified with the *gagan* or etheric element that you see it everywhere. Beholding that etheric sky, both without and within, you yourself become all-pervading. When you achieve this state, then your meditation will bear fruit. Your mind will be immovable—then no thoughts will arise. When you ascend into the *gagan* and become absorbed there, you become united with the Power within and remain merged with the Shabd forever. Then the inner Love is awakened, the Love that is the form of Oneness. Those who have not gone within speak of love, but they remain trapped outside. Someone clashes the cymbals; someone beats the drums; someone sings devotional songs. But this can't be called true Love. Only when the Conscious Power within you rises above the body, can you become connected with the inner Power of Love.

**From Love springs the Knowledge;
from Knowledge springs the Contemplation.
When the Contemplation becomes firm,
you awaken the Essence of the soul.**

Within the Love, True Knowledge is hidden. And when you fix your consciousness in that True Knowledge, such contemplation is called Dhyān. When you become absorbed in that Dhyān, you unite with the Inner Power which is the Essence of your soul. Within and without, you merge into the Oneness.

This form of Love and Light is beyond description. When you reach this stage, all turmoil of this world is left behind. When the Inner Sound becomes audible and you merge into it, then, the little will becomes one with the Great Will; but until that stage is achieved, the individual jivas have the duty to apply themselves wholeheartedly to the practices as enjoined by the Guru.

**When your essential Self awakens within,
then you become connected to the Hari Naam—
the Name of the Lord.
And when you become united with the Name of
the Lord, you become fixed in the company
of the Truth.**

When the essential nature of the Self is awakened, then the Sound manifests within you. Once that Sound manifests, then automatically, you begin to hear it resounding throughout all of creation.

*Naam supports all the divisions and
grand divisions of the creation.*

Naam supports all the heavens and the nether worlds.

When you merge with Naam, you take on the form of Truth and come to realize that you yourself are omnipresent.

The servant Paltu says: Your devotion should go on unceasingly.

When illusion is banished, all your doubts will fly away.

Once you become united with the eternal Sound Current, you can never be separated from it again. This is called bhakti or devotion. When you become free of doubt, how can illusion have any influence over you? Illusion will arise only when you are affected by doubt.

**Putting on the *kafan*, perform the practice of Love.
When you become absorbed in Love, sleep will not come near you.**

What *kafan* is He referring to? First of all, the word *kafan* refers to the funeral shroud that is wrapped around the body after someone has died. And the *kafanī* (sometimes called *kafan*), can also refer to the long, unsewn garment adopted by the ascetics. Paltu Sahib says, “I have died in respect to the world, so now prepare my *kafan* (funeral shroud).” He is indicating: “I am no longer alive to the world. I have died to all the outer things.” So, the real meaning behind putting on the *kafani* (unsewn garment) of the ascetic, is to become wrapped in the *kafan* (funeral shroud) of dying to this world.

When you become the perfect lover or devotee of the Lord, then hunger, thirst, and sleep do not trouble you. Give and take with the world and all the outer affairs have no more meaning. Such a devotee is a true lover, but it is very difficult to achieve this status. We are very fond of listening to these words, but when it comes to putting them into practice, we say, “No, I can’t do that. It would kill my mother and father.”

**When you detach yourself from the worldly worries,
you will burn day and night in the fire of separation.
Knowingly, you offer your life like the sati on the pyre.**

Those who free themselves from the cares of this world go on burning in the fire of separation from the Lord. They die while living, and then their egotism is destroyed.

In South India, perhaps in Kerala, or Tamil Nadu, or Karnataka, there once lived a ruler named Raja Siriyala, who was a devotee of Lord Shiva. He was a brave soul and such a great donor, that when the beggars gathered at his door, he never sent them away with just empty words. He would always fulfill their wishes. One day, Shiva came there to test his devotee. He disguised himself in the garb of a sadhu and said to Siriyala, "Give me alms." Then Siriyala asked him, "Maharaj, what alms do you wish for?" The sadhu replied, "If you promise solemnly to fulfill my request, then I will tell you." So Siriyala told him, "Yes, I swear that whatever you will demand of me, I will give to you."

That sadhu, who was really Lord Shiva in disguise, replied, "I want to eat the flesh of your son. You should fulfill my request." The king had only one son. His name was Chilala. The king told Shiva, "You go now and bathe, and when you return, I will fulfill your wish."

Then Shiva went to bathe. At that time, the boy Chilala was studying with his tutor, and Shiva, in the form of the sadhu, went to that place. He warned Chilala, "My boy, you should not return to your home. Your mother and father have gone mad. They are planning to cut you up and serve your flesh to a wandering sadhu who has come. So, stay away from that place." The boy replied, "Maharaj Ji, one day this body will return to dust anyway. If someone can benefit from my death, then I will not delay. I will return home right now." Then, after

asking his teacher for permission to leave, he went straight home to his mother, the queen.

In the meantime, the queen had heard all about the situation, and she was prepared. When the boy returned home, she took him in her lap and slit his throat with a knife. Then she cut his body into two parts. The head she put aside where some rope and other things were stored. And then she cut up the rest of his body and prepared it to feed to that sadhu. When that sadhu—the Lord Shiva—returned from his bath and saw what she had done, he said, “The head is the most important part of the body. But you have set aside the head and are serving me all the other parts. I refuse to eat this food.”

Then the king and queen took the boy’s head and crushed it with a pestle and made it into chutney. Then Shiva became pleased. They told him, “Enjoy your meal. We have prepared everything for you.” Shiva said, “You also sit and eat with me.” They replied, “As you command.” Then Shiva pretended he still could not eat the food. He told them, “I do not take food in any house that has no son. If a house has no son, I will not eat there.” Then Siriyala folded his hands in front of Lord Shiva and replied, “Maharaj, we had only one son, and he is before you.” But Shiva said, “No, you go outside and call him.” So, Siriyala went outside and called out, “Chilala, my son, come here.” Hearing his father’s summons, that boy came running. All of this took place in a town called Kanchi. Then what did Shiva say? “Siriyala, what is your desire? Ask for anything you want.” Siriyala said, “Please, take me to your abode in Kailash.” Shiva agreed, but on the inner journey to Kailash, King Siriyala became puffed up with of ego. He thought, “There is no devotee in this world who is equal to me. I cut up my own son and served his body to Lord Shiva.”

At that time, Shiva realized what had happened, and he thought, “Oh dear! He is on his way to Kailash, but still,

egotism is attacking him. What should I do now? What is the best way for me to make him understand?" To teach Siriyala a lesson, Shiva transformed himself into a guru and made Siriyala his disciple, and then he transported them both to a village called Nilur. In that village lived one old widow lady named Nimmavva, who had only one son. One morning, that boy took their bullock outside the village to graze. After the boy had left, Shiva and Siriyala arrived at the widow's house and said to her, "We are hungry. Please feed us." She replied, "Yes, of course, I will give you food to eat. First, go and refresh yourself with a bath, and then return here."

While they were gone, she prepared some fried patties that are called *karigadabu*⁶ in Kannada. She left the kitchen briefly to fetch some water, and meanwhile, her son returned. Looking into the kitchen, he didn't see his mother, but he did see the platter of freshly made patties. Standing right there in the kitchen, he picked up one patty from the pile and started to nibble on it. As he ate, the crumbs from his mouth fell on to all the other food, making it polluted.⁷

When Nimmavva returned and saw that her son had spoiled the food she had prepared for the two holy sadhus, she immediately picked up a heavy pestle. "Take that," she said, striking the boy a heavy blow on the head, and the boy died on the spot. Near the place where their bullock was tied, there was a big pile of grass. She stretched the boy's body out there and covered it with that grass. Then she bathed again and prepared the food afresh.

When Shiva and Siriyala returned from their bath, they sat down to eat their meal. Then Shiva said, "Mother, we have a

6 *Karigadabu* is a deep-fried pocket made of wheat and rice flour, stuffed with grated coconut, jaggery, cardamom, almonds, and cashews.

7 *Jhūtha* means polluted food, that is, food that has already been tasted.

custom that we follow.” She asked, “What custom is that?” He replied, “We do not take food in homes where there is no son. If you have any son, you should call him now to join us.” Then Nimmavva told him, “Please don’t think that I am like Siriyala. I have already sacrificed my son in the kitchen when he was disrespectful to Lord Shiva, and I have kept that pestle with me. Now you sit quietly and eat the food I have prepared for you in the remembrance of the Lord. Otherwise, I may have to perform the same puja on you.” Hearing her words, both Shiva and Siriyala, bowed their heads and ate the food she served them without complaint. When he saw the quality of Nimmavva’s devotion, Siriyala’s pride was humbled, and Lord Shiva was able to take him to his home in Kailash. And showering grace on Nimmavva’s son, Shiva also brought him back to life⁸.

If, while you are still alive, you sacrifice your life to the Guru, not caring even to preserve the breath in the body, then at the time of your death, only the thought of that Guru will fill your mind. But if you spend your whole life engaged in sinful deeds, and then you call on the Lord to save you at the time of death, do you think that He will come to your aid?

8 After passing an extremely difficult test, Siriyala was attacked by the ego—he began thinking that Shiva had no other devotee equal to him. To show him his error, Shiva took him to see the widow Nimmavva, whose devotion was of a much higher order. When Shiva had demanded that Siriyala kill his son and serve him up as a meal, Siriyala was willing. But even without Shiva asking, Nimmavva was ready to sacrifice her son for Shiva’s sake when the boy polluted the meal she had prepared for the sadhus. When Shiva offered to restore Siriyala’s son to life, Siriyala was delighted, because he was much attached to the boy. When Shiva wanted to resurrect Nimmavva’s son, she had no interest either way, because all her love was for the Lord Shiva. Siriyala asked to be taken to Kailash as a reward for his devotion. But even when Shiva offered to take Nimmavva to Kailash, she prayed that instead, he give her the boon of remaining on earth to serve his devotees, because she understood service to the Lord as the highest form of devotion.

You ignored the Lord and passed your life in evil deeds, but then you cry for help at your end time. How can you expect the Lord to rescue you?

**Give up hunger, thirst, and worldly desires;
Then you will lose all awareness of your petty
self.**

Hunger, thirst, and the desires of the world, giving all these up, eradicate the ego within you: "I am nothing." Since that Conscious Power is perpetually within you, and since that Power supports the whole world, it will manifest of its own. There will be no need for you to summon it.

**Servant Paltu says: You should sacrifice your head
on the battlefield of love;
But do not let regret intrude, even for a moment.**

When you sacrifice your head for the sake of true *virah* and love, you should never weep or have any regrets. If we do some devotion for a few days and then we say, "I have been doing the bhakti for so many days. There is nothing left for me to do. Bhakti is an old thing for me now." How can it be old? Does the devotion ever become old?

Iron is of little value, but when the philosopher's stone touches it, that iron is converted into gold. When we throw any object into the fire, it is set ablaze and becomes the fire itself. Similarly, He says: "In my within when my attention merges into the radiant Inner Light, then it is purged of all its grossness, and my attention becomes the form of Consciousness."

—Baba Somanath

No Austerity Equal to Truth

O Paltu, when the lowly one gains high status, no one calls him lowly anymore.

No one calls him lowly when he has gone into the shelter.

When the canal flows into the River Ganges, then people call it Ganges water.¹

This is the bani of Satguru Paltu Sahib. He tells us: “For so many days, I was controlled by ignorance, drowned in the pride of the body. I indulged in the worldly pleasures and wandered through all the 84 lakh forms of life in the wheel of transmigration. Now, through the Grace of the Almighty Lord, I have gained the human body. When He showered His abundant blessings on me, He manifested the Truth within my heart.

I have gone into the shelter of the Satguru, and He has told me of the Path within that leads to the Almighty Lord. He has set me on that Path, and, following His instructions, I have done the meditation. I was of no consequence, but now that I have attained high status, no one will count me as unfortunate. It is just like the water running from the village

¹ Paltu Sahib, *Palṭū nīch se ūnch bhā, nīch kahe na koy...*

drains and gutters into the Ganges; once it flows into the river, it is called *gangodaka*, the pure water of the Holy River. It is no longer gutter water. So Paltu Sahib tells us: “Previously I was a *jiva*—an embodied soul—filled with egotism and pride. But when I came into the shelter of the Satguru, I became the highest of the high.”

**In the company of the philosopher’s stone,
iron is transformed into gold.
If something falls into the fire, it flares up and
becomes the fire itself.**

Iron is of little value, but when the philosopher’s stone touches it, that iron is converted into gold. When we throw any object into the fire, it is set ablaze and becomes the fire itself. Similarly, He says: “In my within when my attention merges into the radiant Inner Light, then it is purged of all its grossness, and my attention becomes the form of Consciousness.”

**The Home of the Lord is great; reaching there,
we find all our sins forgiven,
Just like the sesame seed becomes fragrant when
it absorbs the essence of the flowers.**

He tells us the Home of the Lord is highly exalted. There you find no trace of virtues and sins. Even the worst sinner can become the form of the Lord if the Almighty One showers His grace. The Home of the Lord lies far away. A kilo of sesame seed oil sells for five, maybe six rupees. But when the sesame seeds absorb the aroma of fragrant flowers,² the perfumed oil

2 Jasmine petals are layered with sesame seeds. The seeds absorb the jasmine fragrance, and the perfumed sesame oil is then extracted in a process called *enflourage*.

extracted from those seeds soars in value to five hundred rupees per tola.³ In the same way, by taking the support of the Lord, the gross, unconscious jiva becomes the very form of that Almighty One; that soul becomes the greatest of the great.

Meditate on the Lord; through the greatness of meditation, your body and mind become spotless. O Paltu, when the lowly one becomes high, no one calls him lowly anymore.

So He says, “Through the majesty of the Lord’s mercy, do the meditation day and night. What is the result of such meditation? Your body and your mind become purified.

**The Saint is a locked treasury of jewels, but the key is in the enemy’s hand.
The enemy holds the key, and by criticizing the Saint, he opens the lock.
The Saint’s fame spreads, and the majesty of Naam stands revealed.**

The Saint is a treasure house of jewels, but that treasure house is locked, and the key lies in the enemy’s hand. We would like to snatch that key and unlock the treasure house ourselves, using the power of the mind. But this is not possible. Satguru explains to us the limits we must observe, and we must abide by His injunctions. If we try to transgress His orders, then we become manmukhs—the slaves of the mind. Our further inner progress will be stopped; it is even possible that we may backslide and fall down to a lower level. Who is the enemy who holds the key? The critic, who is the devotee of duality.

3 In traditional weights and measures, a tola was equal to the weight of 100 seeds. A tola is now standardized at 180 Troy grains or 3/8 Troy ounce.

The enemy is like the striking-steel; the Saint is like the flint stone.

The fire of the Lord's majesty leaps out when the steel and stone collide.

He gives a further example to help us understand. In earlier times, people did not have matches and matchboxes for making fire. At that time, they used a *chakmak*, a lidded tin that holds a piece of steel and a flint stone. First, they placed a fragment of char cloth on top of the flint stone. Then, as they struck the sharp flint stone with a piece of steel, small shavings from the steel flew off as sparks and ignited that char cloth. This was the method they used to start a fire.

Similarly, the Saint is the flint stone, and the enemy acts like the piece of steel. When the steel strikes the flint stone—when the enemy opposes the Saint—then the luminous sparks of Naam fly off and catch the char cloth on fire. That char cloth is the egotism lying within us. When sparks strike that char cloth of ego, it bursts into flame and is consumed in the Naam. So when the enemies oppose the Saints, the sparks of Naam fly, and if we remain in the Saint's company with love and devotion, then the char cloth of our ego catches fire and is burned away, kindling the True Fire of Saints within us.

Seeing this fire, everyone in the world is afraid; awe spreads all around.

Through the work of the enemies, that great hidden treasure stands revealed.

The fire that radiates from the Saints is pure and undefiled, and when that luminous Power spreads throughout the whole

world, everyone stands in awe. Nevertheless, the Saints say, “It is through the greatness of the enemy that this fire of Naam has become manifested.⁴ If the enemies had not opposed the Saints, then how could this secret have been unveiled? This revelation has come about through the effort of the enemies.”

Paltu says, “The veil has been lifted, and all bow their heads before Him.

The Saint is a treasury of jewels, but the key is in the enemy’s hand.

When we practice the meditation, we find three inner veils blocking our way—*mal*, *vikshep*, and *āvaran*.⁵ Many practitioners remain stuck in impure deeds; they are not capable of performing the meditation and devotion. You can ask such a

4 Once when Master Sawan Singh went to Abbottabad to conduct Satsang, the organizers asked Him if they should put up posters and do advertising. He replied, “Don’t worry about it.” The Arya Samajis and Akalis, who opposed Master Sawan Singh, went all around the city with loud-speakers fitted on a jeep, announcing, “The Radhasoami Master has come. Don’t go to His Satsang, because He puts musical instrument in the heads of the people who are coming to Him, and with His eyes, He makes the people His own.” As a result of that negative publicity, people were curious to know what that person looked like who was doing all these things. Many new people came to the Satsang and took initiation, and they thanked the Arya Samajis and Akalis who had helped them get such a Master.

5 Maharaj Kirpal Singh also mentions these three veils as obstacles to Self-Knowledge: “The yogic art is long, tortuous and arduous. The reality of the self lies buried under the debris of the mind, consisting of mal, avaran and vikshep, viz., filth or impurities, ignorance of the true values of life, and constant vacillations or modulations in the chit. The mental stratum has therefore to be cleared of all these and then to be pierced through and penetrated to find the divine nature of the self or atman.” *Crown of Life: A Study in Yoga*, Kirpal Singh (Irvine, CA : Ruhani Satsang, 1997) p 23-24.

disciple: “Do you sit for meditation?” They will answer: “Yes, I sit for meditation.” But if you ask them how long they sit, some people will say ten minutes or half an hour. Some reply that they are wide awake when they first sit down for meditation, but then they fall asleep. This is the condition of such devotees. My friend, such practice cannot be called meditation. We people want to deceive the Lord, but we are only fooling ourselves. This veil is called *mal* or impurity.

Next comes the veil of *vikshep*. We sit for meditation, and then we start to allow the thoughts of the world to creep into our minds. To remove these thoughts, we start over, repeating our Naam Simran. Then once again, the worldly thoughts return. All our meditation is wasted in this back-and-forth. When the time is up, we say to ourselves: “Now I have done my meditation,” but such meditation is no meditation. It is *vikshep* or vacillation.

Third, comes the veil of *āvaran*. The meditator afflicted with *āvaran* is neither in a waking state nor are they fast asleep. Between these two states of consciousness lies the veil of *āvaran* or ignorance of Truth. In this condition, the practitioner thinks, “Now I have sat for meditation.” But this has nothing to do with meditation.

When we pierce through these three veils, then the treasure chest of Higher Consciousness opens within us. But as long as these three veils remain, we cannot rise above; all our words and explanations come from the level of the intellect only. They are not based on experience.

When these inner veils open, then we realize: “O Lord, you permeate all of Brahmand; and all of Brahmand lies within you.” We experience this for ourselves, and in that state of consciousness, we are no longer involved in love and hatred or arrogance of speech—none of this remains.

Ramdas Swami⁶ says:

*Talk is cheap. What does it cost you, after all?
And day by day, your store of pride increases.*

Kabir Sahib tells us:

*Speech is priceless if one knows how to speak properly.
First, weigh the words in the scale of your heart;
only then speak those words from your mouth.*

Just to go on talking—yakety-yakety-yakety—what can be conveyed through such empty words? Before you speak, first weigh the words in your heart. Will anyone be hurt by these words? Will these words seem bitter or sweet to the hearer? Will they seem just or unjust? Are you really explaining to others about the Path Godward, or are you just spinning tall tales? Consider all this and choose your words carefully. Only then should you speak those words out loud to others. Otherwise, your discourses are just like playing a phonograph record. What use does it serve?

This body is called the treasure house of the Saint's jewels. And the key to open that treasure house remains in the hands of the enemy. So how can we unlock that treasure house? Not by egotism and pride. Not through the workings of our own mind and intellect. Truly speaking, that lock can be opened only when the Saint showers His Grace.

⁶ Ramdas Swami was a Marathi Poet-Saint who lived during the 16th and 17th centuries. He is traditionally considered the Guru of King Shiva Ji.

The fool even falls asleep while he is guarding. And what does he find when he awakens? The thieves have plundered all his wealth and possessions. And those thieves reside in that very neighborhood. They have their hideout next door, and there they store up all their loot. They sit eating and drinking and making merry. And whenever they wish, they can just come and steal more.

—Baba Somanath

Your Wealth is Being Plundered

**The thieves have snuck inside and are looting the house,
while the fool is standing guard at the door.¹**

This is the bani of Satguru Paltu Sahib Ji. The thieves have crept into the house to steal the wealth stored there. But the foolish owner is still standing guard at the door with his gun. Paltu Sahib is telling us that the thieves of worldly desire have taken up residence within each of us, and they are looting our treasure. On the outside, we appear to be devotees and make a great show of guarding against the five passions. Outwardly, we seem alright, but if we search in our within, we will find the thieves are already hiding there. So how can we claim to be devotees? Is this a wise way to protect our wealth?

**The fool stands guard at the door, but in the morning,
he weeps.
All his neighbors are thieves, but that careless one
hoards his wealth in his house, and then falls
asleep unconcerned.**

The fool even falls asleep while he is guarding. And what

¹ Paltu Sahib, *Chora mūnsi ghar pahunchā, mūrakh paharā dei...*

does he find when he awakens? The thieves have plundered all his wealth and possessions. And those thieves reside in that very neighborhood. They have their hideout nextdoor, and there they store up all their loot. They sit eating and drinking and making merry. And whenever they wish, they can just come and steal more.

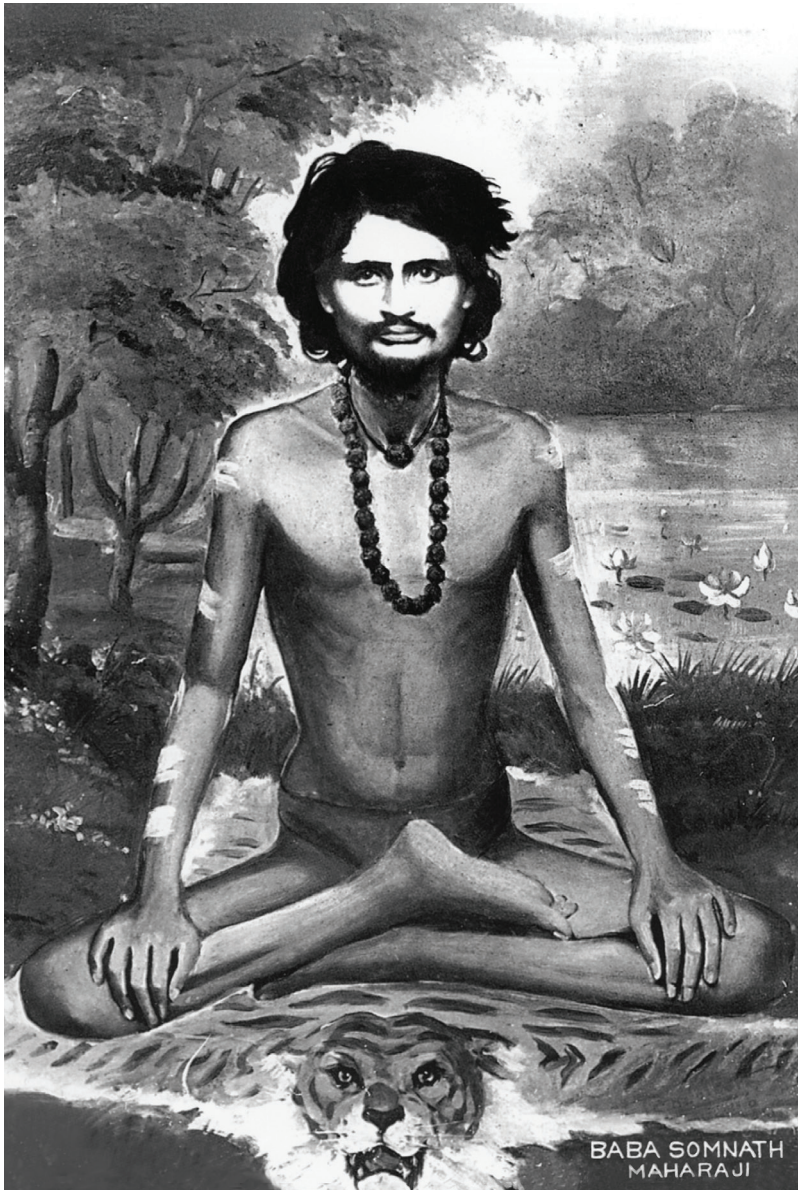
In the same way, all the passions are dwelling within us. Lust, anger, greed, attachment, and egotism take delight in plundering us. None of them ever shirk their duty. Anger and lust are always standing ready. Whenever anyone taunts you even a little bit, just see how the passions flare up within you like a gasoline fire.

On the surface you may say: “I am very humble and lowly. I am the guilty one. I have no good qualities.” You say so many things. But if anyone contradicts or criticizes you, then anger burns up within you. The thieves have already entered into your within, but you go on standing guard outside to keep them away, pretending to be a great devotee. What can you gain in this way?

Listen, O wealthy merchant. The thieves are lurking about, waiting to plunder your riches.

Do not trust them. Remain watchful day and night.

Now Paltu Sahib says, “O soul, you have taken on the human form. Within you is the wealth of the breaths.” But your wealth is being plundered; the thieves are snatching away your life-breath. Therefore, He says, “Do not trust these thieves. Cast them out of your heart. Otherwise, they will consume your entire life, and at the end time, you will go empty-handed. Not even a penny will go with you at the time of death.



Baba Somanath Ji practicing
Nathpanth Yoga as a youth

**Increase your wealth day by day; don't look to others.
Remain aloof from those around you; don't strike
up friendships with the worldly people.**

In this way, remain focused on your devotion; you must complete your own work. What do you have to do with anyone else? If someone speaks well of you or speaks ill of you, it has no effect on you. You will not reach the heavenly realms because people are saying good things about you. Through the praise of the world, you will not achieve liberation. And you will not go into the hells because the world criticizes you. Be true to yourself and perform your duty. Fix your thoughts in the Naam, and ignore what the worldly people have to say about you.

Constantly exam your own heart. Ask yourself: “Have any of the thieves slipped past me? How did they sneak in without my even noticing?” Once the thieves enter within you, they show their true form, and they are very underhanded. When they are creeping in, they pretend to be very well-behaved and polite. But once inside, they behave like the hooligans they are. Search your heart: “Have any thieves entered into my within? How can I throw these scoundrels out?” In that way, day and night, go on increasing your wealth of true devotion. Don't strike up a friendship with the world. If you become attached to anyone in the worldly way, then you become stuck fast there. If you make the world your own, then you are bound. You are bound to the path you choose. So you should accept only the one Naam; don't waste time in other practices. Then you will become successful in your bhakti. Otherwise, you will follow a thousand paths that lead nowhere. Someone tells you to follow this path; someone tells you to follow that path. If you do not accept their way of thinking, they will say, “This man has gone mad. His brain has become addled.”

Paltu says, if you remain vigilant, no one can snatch away your treasure. The thieves have snuck inside and are looting the house, but the fool is standing guard at the door.

Paltu Sahib Ji says, “Whoever remains firm, whoever inverts within and unites their thoughts with the Naam, whoever remains always absorbed in the Holy Sound Current, no one can disturb their wealth. It will remain safe and untouched.” But all others will be plundered. When these thieves come skulking about, no one even realizes they are there. No one lays hold of them. They are looting everyone’s home, but no one takes them into custody.

No matter how many books you may read, what can you gain from all that reading? Therefore, Paltu Sahib says: "Whatever words you speak from your mouth, mold your heart and fashion your deeds according to those words. Then you will have no more need to search for the Lord." When Truth becomes manifested, then the dead corpse becomes alive. The dried-out wood sprouts and becomes green and flourishing.

—Baba Somanath

When the Dead Tree Blossoms

The words of the Saint are eternal Truth for one whose heart is true.¹

This is the bani of Paltu Sahib. He tells us that the Saint's words are true in every respect. But the question arises: "Why do we people not gain full benefit from them?" He says that whether or not you will be able to appraise His words at their true worth all depends on the truthfulness of your heart. You will reap the benefit according to the condition of your own heart. His words are never false, but because our within is full of faults, we get the result of His words according to our own understanding.

When the well water irrigates the fields, sugar cane soaks up that water and converts it into sweetness, but chili peppers absorb the same water and make it bitter. Similarly, whatever quality we have within us, that quality will be multiplied and made manifest. So the words of the Sadhu benefit you according to the quality of your own heart. "The words of the Saint are eternal Truth for one whose heart is true." When your faith is firm, then His words become the truest of the true.

¹ Paltu Sahib, *Sādh bachan sāchā sadā jo dil sāchā hoy...*

**The one whose heart is true is not involved in duality.
Without delay, they receive whatever they desire.**

He says that the Lord is not limited by time. Whatever the devotees wish for, they receive instantly. The Lord dwells in the words of the Guru; His words contain the Power permeating the entire creation. But until your heart is true, you cannot gauge the real value of those words or reap their benefit. Kabir Sahib says:

*The one Shabd of the Gurudeva is full of limitless wisdom.
The gods and the human beings, the sages and the demigods,
none could fathom its meaning.*

What does the Guru bestow on us? He only speaks a few words, but each word is filled with the Guru's Power. Still, until we hear His words with firm faith within, we can gain nothing.

**Mind, word, and deed are dedicated to the Guru's seva.
When Truth enters the heart, the dead tree blossoms.**

He tells us that because of the body, speech, and mind, our soul has become the form of the world. Now just consider this carefully in your heart. Your mind aspires for liberation, but your body does not perform deeds that will lead to that goal, and your tongue does not praise emancipation from this world. In your mind, you are longing for liberation, bliss, and inner experience. You are thinking: "It would be wonderful if I could have the darshan of the Lord right now." But in your speech and your deeds, you are not ready to pursue that aspiration.

So, the Almighty Lord has to act as the *panchāyat*² in this

2 Traditionally, the *panchāyat* was comprised of five village elders who were appointed to resolve local disputes.

dispute. “Should I reward this devotee according to the words he is speaking with his mouth? In his mind, he is thinking about something else entirely, so, should I reward him according to those thoughts? And his deeds are different from both his thoughts and his speech. Should he be given the fruit of those deeds?”

It falls upon the Lord to be the judge in this dispute, but if you had introspected your own within, you could have sorted this out for yourself . You should consider your words carefully. You should examine your own mind. Ask your mind if you belong totally to the Lord in body, mind, and speech. Ask if you are wholeheartedly devoted to the service of the Guru. Your mind will tell you frankly what is lacking. You don’t need to ask anyone else about your condition.

Paltu Sahib tells us: “Dedicate mind, speech, and deeds to the Guru’s seva.” When Truth enters the heart, the dead tree blossoms. Tukaram tells us:

I bow down before those who live up to their own words.

He says that if you act according to the words that you speak, then what need is there to search for salvation? But at present, there is no connection between your heart and your speech. You say one thing and do another. How will you meet the Lord? Sometimes we search for the Lord in books, but what do we find there? Books contain a plan, instructions on how to meet Almighty God: “Friend, search in this way, and you will find the Lord.” Still, it is only a plan. It is like the blueprint for building a house; you may study that blueprint all day, and then light a lamp and study it all night. But all this studying will not build the house. So we read and read. First, we peruse one book, and then we set it aside. We take up a second book; then we put that one down and pick up a third.

Guru Nanak tells us:

*O Nanak, if I had millions of pounds of paper;
Even if I have read the scriptures over and over with love,
If my ink were inexhaustible, and my pen raced like the wind,
Still, I could not value You at Your true worth.
How can I describe the greatness of Your Name?*

No matter how many books you may read, what can you gain from all that reading? Therefore, Paltu Sahib says: “Whatever words you speak from your mouth, mold your heart and fashion your deeds according to those words. Then you will have no more need to search for the Lord.” When Truth becomes manifested, then the dead corpse becomes alive. The dried-out wood sprouts and becomes green and flourishing.

**When our faith is strong, we flourish in the Truth
of the Guru’s teaching.
Our work is accomplished, and we understand
the greatness of the Saints.**

Whoever believes in the Guru’s words will accomplish their task. Once Guru Nanak was out walking with the sangat. It was afternoon, and everyone sat down to rest under the shade of a *kikar* tree³. One of the disciples was feeling very hungry. Some disciples, and other people as well, do not have the strength to bear hunger. They have to have their meals at a set time. If the food is half an hour early or late, they raise such a fuss that you would think their own mother had died. So at this time, that disciple folded his hands and requested: “Maharaj Ji, I am hungry. Give me something to eat now.” Guru Nanak replied, “Do you think I have brought along any

3 Thorny acacia tree, also called *babul*

provisions? Do you think I have packed bread to serve? I don't have anything to give you. If you want something to eat, then shake the branches of this tree." Having said this much, the Guru Sahib sat silently. The disciples were all contemplating His words, but no one had anything to say in reply. What kind of fruit could you get from the branches of a *kikar* tree? They all thought that the Guru was poking fun at them. But His perfect disciple, Angad Dev Ji, immediately climbed up the tree and shook the branches. Mangoes fell to the ground, and everyone was fed. The meaning of this story is that the one who has a true and faithful heart will proclaim: "My Guru is no less than the Almighty Lord in human form." [break in audio]

**Paltu Sahib says, tie His teachings to your heart;
your efforts will not go in vain.
The words of the Saint are eternal Truth for one
whose heart is true.**

While in the human body, the soul possesses the faculty to contact the Divine Power within and achieve union with that Power. God Almighty Himself has placed the means of liberation within us, and we should avail ourselves of this opportunity without wasting another moment.

—Baba Somanath

Make Your Forgetful Mind Understand

Going in the Satsang, make your forgetful mind understand.¹

This is the bani of Satguru Paltu Sahib. The Shastras prescribe numerous methods to make the forgetful mind understand: going to the places of pilgrimage like Mathura, Brindavan, and Kashi; bathing in the waters of the Ganges and Yamuna Rivers; keeping fasts, reciting formulaic prayers, observing codes of righteous conduct; listening to the scriptures; worshipping the gods and goddess. The holy scriptures enumerate so many outer practices of one kind or another, but none of them can awaken the forgetful mind.

When the mind is performing prayers or listening to scriptures, that is just another form of forgetfulness. If we go without eating to awaken the mind, that will accomplish nothing. We may observe fasts and give trouble to the body, but then the mind becomes just like a snake that has crawled into the safety of its hole. And when the snake has taken refuge in its

¹ Paltu Sahib, *Bhūle man ko samajhāya lijai...*

hole, even if we take up a stick and beat on that hole, do you think we can kill the snake? In the same way, when we try to subdue the mind by keeping fasts and performing other outer practices, at that time, the mind remains safely hidden within us, and our efforts have no effect on it at all. The only means to make the mind understand is Satsang. Satsang means bringing the soul in contact with the Truth, making our thoughts true and absorbing us in the Naam.

Therefore Paltu Sahib explains: “Going in the Satsang, make your forgetful mind understand.” In the Satsang, you can bring the mind under control. But what is meant by Satsang? Many people read out a few verses from the Shastras, collect some stories from here and there, and then declare: “I am giving Satsang.” But this is not Satsang; it is just entertainment. The mind becomes pleased and intoxicated for the moment. But it comes no nearer to grasping the Truth.

*Understand that place as Satsang,
where the One Naam is spoken of.*

In the Satsang, the glory of the One Naam is proclaimed, and illusion is driven out from our within. Call that place Satsang, where you become inspired to manifest the Truth within yourself. Sit in such a Satsang, and make your forgetful mind understand.

**Don't throw away this opportunity, now that you
have gotten the beautiful human body.**

Paltu Sahib says that you have achieved this human birth, after millions of yugas and billions of lifetimes.

Even the gods long for the human body.

The gods and goddesses are hoping to achieve an incarnation in the beautiful human body, but even for them, it is difficult to obtain. The gods and goddesses have a longer life span. They enjoy greater happiness, grandeur, and comfort. But the Almighty Lord has placed the birthright to attain liberation in the human body alone. But when, with great good fortune, we finally get the human body, what do we think? “Oh, I must earn money. I have to achieve material success. Then I should have children, and so on, and so on.” In this way, caught up in the hubbub and activity of the world, we squander our entire lifetime.

Four activities consume our human birth: eating, sexual enjoyment, fear, and sleep. First of all, you need food to live; then, sleep troubles you, and you become involved in lust. Finally, you are constantly haunted by fear because death is standing on your head. In the birds, beasts, and insects, these four impulses predominate, and in human beings also they are present.

But in the human body, the Almighty Lord has placed a unique quality, entirely different from the other four—the capability of meeting with the Lord face to face. The question of the mystery of life arises in the within: “Who am I? Why has my soul become the indweller of this body? How did my spirit become bound to gross matter? How can I cast off this physical sheath and make my way towards my True Home?”

While in the human body, the soul possesses the faculty to contact the Divine Power within and achieve union with that Power. God Almighty Himself has placed the means of liberation within us, and we should avail ourselves of this opportunity without wasting another moment.

Kabir Sahib says:

*What you have to do tomorrow, do today.
 What you have to do today, do right now.
 In just a moment, Doomsday descends;
 What can you accomplish then?*

Why should you wait till tomorrow to accomplish this work? Only you can accomplish this task; no one else can do it for you—not your neighbors or acquaintances, not your near and dear ones. So why put it off till some other day? And if you are going to do it today, then why not do it right now? Don't procrastinate. When you engage in the Lord's devotion and contemplate on His form, your heart will be remade in His image.

**Contemplate within and fathom the Inner Knowledge.
 Make your mind peaceful and still.**

We may visit a temple, ring the bell, rotate the *ārtī* platter², bow before the idol of some god, and eat a little prashad, but this cannot be called devotion.

Paltu Sahib is describing the Inner Knowledge of the Almighty Lord. What does He mean by Knowledge? Guru Nanak tells us:

*Contemplating on the Inner Sound,
 we obtain True Knowledge
 and speak the Unspoken Word.*

2 The *ārtī* platter is a metal dish on which the devotee places some flowers, kum-kum powder, and camphor. Lighting the camphor, the devotee rotates the platter around the image of the deity while reciting devotional verses or prayers.

Many people teach others, quoting from the Vedas and Shastras, taking them to be the repositories of all wisdom; but True Knowledge lies far beyond these outer scriptures. Ignorance is the form of darkness, and Knowledge is the form of Light. When True Knowledge dawns, countless lamps illumine our within and drive the darkness away. The heart becomes filled with the Inner Radiance, and the outer and inner worlds merge into One. The Saints refer to this exalted state of understanding as *gyān* or True Knowledge. To achieve this experience for ourselves, we should hasten into the Satsang of the Satguru and become absorbed in His *dhyān* or contemplation.

Now what does Paltu Sahib tell us. Take full benefit from the Satsang. Don't just listen to the discourses about *gyān* and *dhyān* and then dust off the words of the Satsang like you dust off your clothes. Don't go home and leave the Satguru's words behind. Tie them to your heart and take inspiration to mold your life according to what you have heard.

**O Paltu, aim your arrow into the center of *gagan*;
loose it from the bow of the surat.**

Now, what does He say? First, fix your attention in the middle of the *gagan* or inner sky. Then, just as an archer shoots an arrow at a target, take firm hold of the bow of your contemplation, loose the shaft of your concentrated attention, and soar into the realms within.

We have no understanding of His True Nature. He is the source of all Knowledge; His form permeates all creation. What homage or worship can we offer Him? Therefore, Paltu Sahib tells us that neither bookish knowledge nor concentrating on material images of our own creation will serve us. We cannot know the Lord through yoga or other techniques we may devise. He says that to achieve liberation, we must come as humble disciples and wait patiently at His door.

—Baba Somanath

Stand at the Door and Wait

**Not through rote learning or contemplation of idols;
Not through yoga or other artifice;
To achieve liberation, the disciple must stand at
the door and wait.¹**

This is the bani of Param Sant Paltu Sahib Ji. Explaining about the Self-Existent form of Omnipotent Creator, He tells us that many people search for God through bookish knowledge. Others turn to visualization and concentration on forms conjured up by their own minds. But Paltu Sahib Ji says that we cannot succeed in our search just by reading about the experiences of others, or by contemplating on imaginary deities, or by practicing yoga and other artificial methods to unite with the Lord. Such outer knowledge, contemplation, and practice have nothing to do with the God Almighty.

He is Self-Effulgent, His Form is Unchanging, and His Power is Eternal. What importance can these outer practices hold for Him? He is the source and support for all True Knowledge (*gyān*) and Contemplation (*dhyān*). How can we

¹ Paltu Sahib, *Gyān nā dhyān nā, jog nā jugati hai...*

hope to win Him through outer practices that we have fabricated with our own minds?

The sun soars into the heavens every morning and sinks below the horizon every evening. It does not rise or set because someone has read about the sun in the Vedas or other books. Its regular appearance and disappearance are not dependent on the musings of our mind. The sun is luminous by its very nature; we don't need to perform any practices to make it shine. All on its own, the sun sheds brilliant light upon the earth.

In the same way, at sundown, nighttime envelops the world according to the nature of darkness. If we sit in the dead of night and discourse on the sunlight, do you think we can manifest the sun's shining rays in the blackness? We do not have the power to summon the sunrise. The sun returns and illumines the new day without any assistance from us because shedding radiant beams upon the earth is its inherent characteristic.

Similarly, the Almighty Lord is Self-Effulgent Radiance. Throughout all Eternity, He has remained One and Self-Existing—complete in Himself. We conceive of Him with our intellect, and according to our understanding, we perform practices to realize Him, but we are only worshiping the fantasies created by our own mind.

We have no understanding of His True Nature. He is the source of all Knowledge; His form permeates all creation. What homage or worship can we offer Him? Therefore, Paltu Sahib tells us that neither bookish knowledge nor concentrating on material images of our own creation will serve us. We cannot know the Lord through yoga or other techniques we may devise. He says that to achieve liberation,

we must come as humble disciples and wait patiently at His door. Whether we perform the outer practices or leave them aside makes no difference. When the devoted disciple merges into the form of Truth, liberation comes of itself; such a disciple has no need to entreat the Lord for emancipation.

You will not conquer the Lord of Death through pilgrimages, fasts, donations, and righteous deeds.

Now He tells us that we cannot achieve liberation by traveling to places of pilgrimage, or by worshiping idols, or by observing religious fasts. The inner Power of the Almighty Lord is the source and support of all creation. We do not gain any understanding by bathing at places of pilgrimage. We do not experience God by observing fasts, or offering donations, or performing righteous deeds. We cannot experience nature of the soul through the outer practices because our soul is a conscious being.

The Conscious Power of the soul enlivens all our deeds. We cannot gain access to the Conscious Power through outer practices; our cherished goal cannot be attained in this way. It is a misconception to believe that we can meet the Lord by offering donations or performing other meritorious deeds. Tukaram tells us:

*We perform the righteous deeds,
but still, we are heaping sin upon sin.*

We perform righteous deeds, but at the same time, we persist in committing sins. We may serve a feast to thousands of holy

people, but if an outsider asks to join that throng, we turn them away roughly, saying, “No, you have no right to be here.” What spiritual benefit can we gain in this way? Further, when we perform any charitable deed, we want our deed acknowledged—we expect that a plaque will be hung in our honor. We desire recognition and acclaim.

In the same vein, if we resolve to keep a religious fast, we always announce our intentions: “Today I will not eat a bite of food.” When someone asks what we are doing, we proclaim: “I am keeping the *Ekādashī* fast.”² We resolve to undertake this fast, and we carry out that righteous action. But the next day when we break our fast, we eat twice as much food as usual. The day before we performed that *Ekādashī* fast, we had already procured all that extra foodstuff. What merit will we earn from such deeds? None at all.

Therefore, Paltu Sahib says that none of these methods will work—not fasts or daily recitations, not religious practices or pilgrimages—because the Inner Conscious Power is Self-Existing and Self-Radiant. That Power lies beyond fasts, recitations, and all the other outer practices. It is the source of all creation, and all these artificial methods owe their very existence to that One Power; how can they be the means to unite us with the Lord?

Leaving off all these practices, we discover that only the One Conscious Power can overcome the forces of Kal. That

2 This religious fast is observed on *Ekādashī*, the eleventh day of a lunar fortnight. On the day prior to the fast (*Dashamī*, the tenth day of the lunar fortnight) the practitioner assembles the foodstuff, and then on *Dvādashī*, the twelfth day of the lunar fortnight, when the devotee ends the fast, it is a common practice to eat a double portion of everything.

Conscious Power is Self-Existent; it is the foundation and support of the entire universe.

**Religious rites, good conduct, daily recitations,
and righteous living are of no avail.
He Himself will transport you to His heavenly
abode.**

Paltu Sahib tells us that it makes no difference if we perform the religious rites, maintain prescribed customs, repeat daily recitations, and observe all the religious precepts. Even if none of these things existed, still the airplane that will carry you to the higher regions within will come for you on its own.

All of these outer practices were invented by the mind and vary from religion to religion. Each person follows their own religion, and each religion and community has its own rites and rituals, so how can these varying practices lead us to the Lord? Muslims, Hindus, Jains, and Christians each prescribe their own forms of ceremonial worship and maintain their own beliefs. All the castes and communities follow different customs and observe different religious traditions,³ but none of these outer observances will be of any help in contacting the Almighty Lord.

3 Here, when Baba Somanath mentions all the different castes and religions, He uses the expression “*athārah pagad*” or eighteen turbans. At the time of the Maratha ruler Shiva Ji, all the eighteen communities under his rule followed different customs, including tying their turbans in distinctive ways. Shiva Ji exercised wide tolerance for all outer religious practices—accepting the different conventions of the “eighteen turbans”—and the expression has entered into the common parlance.

**The servant Paltu says: Giving up all other paths,
take to the Path of Easy Union.
The Saint will pull you out from this world.**

Giving up all these outer paths, abandoning the artificial practices of recitation and worship, take to the natural Path of the Saints—the Surat Shabd yoga. There are various stages of samadhi—*sunya* samadhi⁴, *savikalpa* samadhi, *nirvikalpa* samadhi⁵, and finally *sehaj* samadhi.

The Saints rise above all the lower forms of absorption and practice *sehaj samadhi* or “Easy Union.” They live a normal life, take up the householder’s dharma, raise their children, carry on their worldly affairs, all the while

4 Samadhi of the Sunn Region

5 “Samadhi may be accompanied with consciousness of one’s individuality, in which case it is known as *savikalpa*, or it may not be accompanied with any such consciousness and is then known as *nirvikalpa*. The former was compared by Sri Ramakrishna to a cotton doll which when put in water gets saturated with it, and the latter to a doll of salt which when immersed in water dissolves and loses itself in it. Of these, *nirvikalpa* is clearly the higher, for *savikalpa*, though it greatly widens one’s vision, is yet only a preliminary step toward the unconditioned state. Not all yogins can achieve *nirvikalpa*, and those that do attain it generally do only once in their life. They thereby finally escape the realm of name and form and become liberated souls. Their unfructified karmas, both past and present (sanchit and kriyaman) can no longer bind them, but the momentum of their present lives (prarabdha) must be completed and must be lived to the very end. On returning from *nirvikalpa*, or the unconditioned state, to everyday human consciousness, they live and move as other human beings. But while engaged in worldly duties, they are forever centered in the Divine and are never separate from It. This state of normal activity on the plane of the senses but imbued with God-realization, is designated as *Sehaj Samadhi* or the state of Easy Union.” Kirpal Singh, *Crown of Life: a Study in Yoga* (Irvine, CA: Ruhani Satsang Books, 1997) p 75.

remaining absorbed in the state of Perfect Equipoise, having merged their individual identity into Divine Oneness.
[end of tape]

The most powerful vashīkaran mantra is sweet words. In this world, people practice magical arts and recite mantras and tantras of power. But what is the most potent magical mantra of all to bring others under your control? Speak sweet words. Be pleasant and friendly, offering kind and uplifting words to everyone around you. Have no enmity or jealousy for anyone; then, all the world will come under your control.

—Baba Somanath

The Most Powerful Mantra

**If you call yourself a disciple, then surrender
your desires.
Those who lust after the world cannot walk on
the Path of discipleship.¹**

This is the bani of Satguru Paltu Sahib Ji. In order to become free from the conflicts and sufferings of this world, we perform rites, rituals, and other devotional practices. But no matter how many repetitions and austerities we may complete, still, we accomplish nothing through our efforts; we only fritter away our precious life. But finally, when we come under the protection of the Guru, we offer Him our devotion and accept His seva. Taking initiation and vowing to follow the Path according to His behests, we become His disciples. So Paltu Sahib says: “If you call yourself a disciple, then surrender your desires.”

When we have, of our own accord, become the sevadars of the Guru, what place is left for worldly desire? That very desire was the cause of our previous suffering, and to escape from that suffering, we have fled into the Guru’s refuge. And now, even though we have taken His initiation, imbibed His

1 Paltu Sahib, *Dās kahāi ke ās nā kījiye...*

teachings, and devoted ourselves to His seva, still we are clinging to worldly cravings: “Those who lust after the world cannot walk on the Path of discipleship.”

When you are bound up in worldly desires, how can you call yourself the disciple of the Guru? You can only accept one teaching. Either you can become the disciple of the Guru, or you can run after the world. If you try to hold on to both, you will gain no benefit from either.

**Love is only one. If your love is attached to the world,
Then you are stuck fast, and bhakti remains far away.**

Love is only one. If we remain attached to the world, then we will be drowned in the love of the world. Wherever that worldly love shows its face, it destroys all our devotion because love is only one—it cannot be attached in two places at once. To help us understand where we stand, Paltu Sahib says frankly: “At present, your love is bound to the world.”

So, how can we perfect our devotion to the Lord? Bhakti manifests only through true love. If you have attached your love to the world, but still you want to do the devotion of the Lord, then you must redirect that love—turn it away from the world and focus it fully on the bhakti of the Lord. Otherwise, you’d better let it go. How can you expect any success in your devotion, when you are basing it on conjecture and false assumptions?

**If you wish to follow the Path of devotion, you must leave this world behind.
If your heart still clings to the world, then devotion will elude you.**

What is required of the devotee? What is the foundation and aim of devotion? The devotee should keep aloof from the worldly thoughts and become absorbed, wholly and solely, in the Lord's bhakti. As long as you are attached to the world, you will remain far away from bhakti. But once your attention becomes focused on the devotion, then the world fades away. If someone tells you that they can accomplish both at the same time, this is not possible.

The servant Paltu says, "You must give up one or the other.

Two swords cannot reside in one scabbard."

The scabbard of the heart is only one. Either the world or the devotion can reside there. We people want to put both in one sheath—but that cannot be. The heart is only one. Love is only one. If we try to force love for both the world and the Lord into one heart, how can we succeed in our task?

Pass your time singing of His greatness.

Listen when others praise Him, and glorify Him in your turn.

Now, this question always arises: "My attention does not stay focused in the Naam. Sometimes my mind runs wild in the world, and my Naam Simran does not flow in an unbroken stream within. What can I do?" Therefore, Paltu Sahib counsels us: "Sometimes you can sing songs in praise of the Lord. Sometimes you can listen to the stories of God told by others, and you can relate stories as well. In this way, you will pass your time with thoughts anchored always in the Truth.

Laughing light-heartedly, speak sweet words to all.

Then the whole world will come under your control.

The most powerful *vashikaran mantra*² is sweet words. In this world, people practice magical arts and recite mantras and tantras of power. But what is the most potent magical mantra of all to bring others under your control? Speak sweet words. Be pleasant and friendly, offering kind and uplifting words to everyone around you. Have no enmity or jealousy for anyone; then, all the world will come under your control. All the power is in your tongue. But the words spoken by your tongue carry effect only if your heart is filled with sweetness. If your within is devoid of sweetness, then you are speaking honeyed words with your tongue only to ensnare others. When you are speaking with some ulterior motive, then those words carry no real sweetness.

Eat and drink what is put before you; be content with the clothes you receive.

Feel no elation when accumulating things and no sorrow when giving them up.

Be content with whatever you have to eat and drink. Happily wear whatever clothes you can procure. Do not desire to collect more and more. And don't feel disheartened if what you already have is taken away. If wealth comes to you, donate it in the cause of spirituality. If nothing comes your way, quietly accept it as the Lord's Will.

² A *vashikaran mantra* is a verbal formula employed to exert control over people or situations.

**Becoming absorbed in the love, sing the songs of Hari,
And when you maintain silence, became absorbed
in His contemplation within.**

When the opportunity presents itself, sing the praises of the Lord. Extol His greatness and sing songs of love. It is an auspicious deed to glorify God Almighty. And in moments of silence, offer all your heart and soul to the Lord within.

*He was when there was nothing;
He was before all ages began;
He existeth now, O Nanak,
and shall exist forevermore.*

Keep your love absorbed in that Power of Truth.

Many people observe strict silence, but deep in their within the chatter of the world continues. Outwardly you may be maintaining silence, but in your heart of hearts, you are longing for some outer gratification. So what benefit do you gain from your silence?

*One cannot comprehend Him through reason,
even if one reasoned for ages;
One cannot achieve inner peace by outward silence,
not though one sat dumb for ages;*

Nothing comes to pass just through thinking. The thought may occur to us: "I would like to be the King of Mysore." Don't we indulge in such wishful thinking? Of course, we do. But do you think our desires can come to fruition just by thinking about what we want? What to speak of thinking one time, even if you think hundreds of thousands of times, nothing will be accomplished through your idle thoughts.

So many people vow to remain silent. But even the dumb animals never speak. The bullock, the cow and the buffalo remain silent. The dog and the cat don't talk. They know nothing of human speech. But do they meet the Almighty Lord through all this silence? "One cannot achieve inner peace by outward silence, not though one sat dumb for ages." If within you, your heart yearns for union with the Almighty, this is the real silence, and you will gain benefit from it.

**Contemplate on the feet of those who are clothed
in the Lord.**

Never waver from the Path of Knowledge

Always remain at the feet of the Saints and Mahatmas who wear the mantle of the Lord. Go in their company, and serve them with meekness and humility. Never leave your heart empty and idle—always keep some thought, some contemplation, some remembrance of God reverberating in your within.

**Eat what you need from the wealth you receive,
and distribute the rest quickly.**

Drive away Maya and attachment.

If, through some past karma or flowering of fate, you suddenly enjoy a windfall of worldly goods, then pass that wealth on quickly. Why? Because as your possessions increase, so your greed expands accordingly. Your storehouse of sins becomes filled to overflowing, and the storm of falsehood within you grows stronger—because this is all Maya. You cannot collect Maya without practicing falsehood. As your wealth increases, deceit and deception gain the upper hand. So, whatever comes your way, distribute it with both hands in some righteous

cause. Save yourself from both attachment and greed for worldly wealth. Give them both a sound thrashing.

First, come sorrow and happiness, then enemies and friends follow in their wake.

Learn to see all with an equal eye and repose in Unity.

Remember the Lord both in happiness and in pain. Look upon your enemies and friends—those who oppose you and those who love and support you—as one and the same, because as long as the waves of happiness and suffering are heaving in your within, the sense of friend and foe will not leave you. When the waves of joy and sorrow are stilled, when all your love and attention is absorbed in the Almighty Lord, then no friend or foe remains.

**The servant Paltu says, O my child, repeat the
Ram Naam, the Name of the Lord.
Chanting His Name, chanting His Name, you will
easily swim across.**

Therefore, Paltu Sahib says. “O my child, repeat the Ram Naam, the Name of the Lord.” Speak the Lord’s Name without ceasing—both in your heart and with your mouth—and remain absorbed in Him.

Becoming attracted to the worldly things, we are all lulled into a deep slumber. Who can free us from the pull of that attachment? Only the Guru. And how does the Guru accomplish this task? How does He awaken the jivas? The Guru has with Him the one Sat Naam. That Power—you can call it Shabd or Naam or the Inner Voice—remains forever; that Power dwells within us as well. And through that Inner Power, the Satguru pulls us out from this sleep of attachment. It is only because He can achieve this awakening that we call Him a Guru.

—Baba Somanath

Fast Asleep in Ignorance

Except for the Guru, who can bring about your deliverance?

Except for the Naam, what can improve your life?¹

This is the bani of Satguru Hazur Radha Swami Ji. He says, “Except the Guru, who has the power to awaken the jivas who have been sleeping in ignorance for millions of yugas, through countless lifetimes?” Not only the human beings, but also the gods and goddesses, the yakshas (demigods) and gandharvas (celestial musicians) and all the other forms of created life—everyone is fast asleep in ignorance.

What is the principle of true knowledge? “I am the form of Brahm.” The individual soul is of the same essence as the Oversoul. But in ignorance we go on repeating mantras like *Tat Tvam Asi*—“Thou are That”—and *Aham Brahmāsmī*—“I am Brahm.” We cannot achieve spiritual knowledge just by repeating and contemplating on outer mantras. These are mere words; they cannot lead us to enlightenment. Therefore, Swami Ji tells us that this repetition of formulaic mantras is also a state of deep sleep. The gods and goddesses are asleep, and we people are in the same condition.

¹ Swami Ji Maharaj, *Guru bina kaun ubāregā...*

What power can rouse us from such a sleep? The one who is awake can awaken others. If you are asleep yourself, can you awaken someone else? How will you be able to rouse them? Therefore, Swami Ji tells us that the one who can awaken our soul within, the one who can give us the experience and recognition of our true self, is called the Guru. He says: “What power can awaken us except the Guru?” Who else is competent to remove this worldly veil of Maya that envelops us? Attachment is a state of unconscious sleep. Becoming attracted to the worldly things, we are all lulled into a deep slumber. Who can free us from the pull of that attachment? Only the Guru. And how does the Guru accomplish this task? How does He awaken the jivas? The Guru has with Him the one Sat Naam. That Power—you can call it Shabd or Naam or the Inner Voice—remains forever; that Power dwells within us as well. And through that Inner Power, the Satguru pulls us out from this sleep of attachment. It is only because He can achieve this awakening that we call Him a Guru.

**Without meditation who will save you from rebirth?
Without going in the Guru’s shelter how will you
be reformed?**

Now you have gotten the Naam and the Guru. But even after achieving so much, still your work is not complete. For this reason, Swami Ji Maharaj tells us frankly: “If you have gotten the Naam initiation, but you have not practiced the meditation, what was the benefit of receiving that Naam?” Many people do try to practice the meditation, but without going into the refuge of the Guru that meditation cannot become successful.

Until we remove the three coverings, how can we practice the meditation with wholehearted devotion? What are these

coverings? Body, mind, and wealth. We cannot become free of the pride of the body until we do the physical seva. We think, “I wear fashionable clothes. I have earned so many degrees. So why should I go there and do seva? It is such a menial thing. If I can get the Naam initiation just sitting here, then I will take it and will practice the devotion. But all this seva business, that’s not for me.”

Many others assert, “We should be assigned seva according to the qualifications we possess.” You are speaking of seva and qualifications in the same breath? To think you are qualified to do seva is egotism. Can seva and egotism ever exist together? Impossible!

Sometimes people say, “We will contribute in the financial seva, but we can’t manage this physical seva.” The truth is, such people don’t do either seva. They don’t participate in the physical seva, and they don’t contribute in the financial seva either. They are all talk. When the time comes to help with the financial seva, either they slip away inconspicuously or they don’t attend Satsang at all on that day. “Well, you see, today I have to sort out some problem or other.” And they quietly take their leave. When the opportunity for seva arises, such people make themselves scarce, but all the rest of the time they remain front and center, capering about and pretending to be the leading sevadars. Where are they when it is time for financial seva? They make a sour face like Hanuman, the Monkey God, and head back home. Such great donors!

Now let’s consider mental seva. When we selflessly do the Simran of Lord’s Name, when we contemplate on the Guru day and night, this is the mental seva. Obedience to the words of the Guru is another form of mental seva. When we refuse the dictates of our mind and bow before the commandments of our Guru—this is mental seva.

Till we sacrifice these three things—body, mind and wealth—to the Guru, we can't become fit to perform the seva. And until we do the true seva, how can the Naam accept us and pull us within? Naam does not attract unconsciousness; Naam attracts that which is conscious. If we perform these sevas like an unconscious stone, then how can the Naam draw us? We haven't yet understood how to do the seva. For us it is all superficial. In the worldly way, if you want to become a big wholesale merchant, do you think you can accomplish that without making some effort? Friend, it doesn't happen in that way. Similarly, without practicing the meditation, you cannot attain liberation, and without going into the refuge of the Guru you cannot perfect your meditation.

**Without separation, how will you cry out for
the Lord?**

Without pain, how will you remember Him?

At present, we do the meditation practice, and we go through the motions of taking the Guru's refuge. But we truly go in the Guru's shelter when, day and night, the heart cries out in the pain of separation, when no thought other than the Guru strikes the heart, when the heart and the Guru merge and become one.

*If I forget the Beloved even for a moment,
it is as though fifty years have passed.*

These are the words of the great Guru Amar Das Ji Maharaj. But hearing his exalted words, we grasp them superficially with our limited intellect, and then toss them aside. But what is the deeper meaning of His words? "If my Guru, my Beloved, vanishes from my heart, even for an instant, then for me that

instant is not less than fifty years.” He is describing the pain of separation, and until that pain manifests in your heart, how can the garbage of the world be removed?

That pain of separation should feel like someone has plunged a dagger into your heart. The suffering is so great that you feel your soul has become one with that pain. When you are enduring that pain, eating has no appeal to you, drinking has no appeal to you, sleeping have no appeal to you. You get no comfort sitting in the midst of thousands of people, and you get no comfort sitting all alone in the wilderness. Your thoughts are always riveted on that pain. If you don't feel this type of pain within your heart, then what kind of spirituality are you practicing?

**Without the Shabd, what adornment will you wear?
Without the protection of the Saints, who will take
care of you?**

When once the ground has been prepared in this way, then the Shabd manifests, and your within becomes illumined. Within and without there is nothing but Shabd; you yourself become the form of Shabd. Then you will unite with that True Shabd and your connection with the world will be severed.

What a deep subject this is, but Swami Ji has explained it to us in clear and simple words. We can easily understand His words, but we discover their deeper meaning only when we rise above and experience the reality for ourselves.

Now we simply expound on the subject intellectually—Guru Nanak Sahib has said this; Tulsi Sahib has said that; such and such Sahib has said something else. Friend, you are quoting all these Sahibs, but until your own Sahib, your own Guru, reveals all this to you within, what can you gain from quoting others?

**Who is there who can crush Kal?
How will the karmas be exhausted?**

When the Shabd manifests in your within, when you become detached from this world and immune to its power of attraction, then Kal will not even look in your direction. As long as you cling to anything of this world, thinking “This belongs to me,” then Kal will be standing ready. Kal is not some being with long fangs. Kal dwells within you; Kal is a power. As long as you keep company with Kal, you will have to bear the weight of your own karmas. You have amassed a great load of karmas. You need to understand these things and act accordingly. You listen to Satsang, but when you return home, you don’t take what you have heard with you. So what benefit will you receive? Can you gain anything in this way?

One man used to go every day and listen to a pandit reciting the Ramayana, which describes the story of Rama and Sita. For three months, he continued in this way. Then one day the pandit completed the recitation and prepared to move on to another place, after collecting some money and supplies for his journey. But that man had a lingering doubt in his heart. He thought, “There is still one thing I do not understand. How is Sita related to Rama? It will be very good if I ask Pandit Ji about this before he sets out.” So when the pandit was about to depart, this man folded his hands and requested: “Maharaj, I have one doubt.” The pandit replied, “What doubt might that be?” The man then asked: “What is the relationship between Rama and Sita? In many places you keep mentioning Rama and Sita, Rama and Sita. But I still do not understand who Rama and Sita are.”²

2 The Ramayana is the story of Rama and Sita. If you do not understand who they are, then you have not gained anything from listening to the recitation of the Ramayana.

In the same way, we listen to Satsang daily. We hear about the surat, we hear about the Shabd, about what meditation we should do and what practices we should follow. We hear about how to gauge the soul's progress within and about leaving aside the desires and attachment for the world. But until we put these things into practice and experience them in our within, our attendance at Satsang is no different than that of the man listening daily to the Ramayana without ever understanding anything about Rama and Sita.

**Some rare Saint comes and rescues you.
That True Devotee burns away Kal and karma alike.**

Some rare ones—the Saints—can destroy all the power of Kal and karma. It is said:

The Saints erase the fate line drawn by Brahm.

The Saints are so powerful that they can free you from Kal's karmic bondage and attach you to the Naam. They can free you from the grasp of Kal, the Lord of Justice, and unite you with Dayal, the Lord of Grace. The Saints possess the Power to achieve all this. Therefore, Swami Ji says that some rare Saint can destroy all these forces arrayed against you and can cut the fetters of Kal and karma that bind you. Eradicating Kal and karma, that True Devotee takes you to your True Home.

**The task will be accomplished in the company of
the Truth, but only for those who sacrifice body
and mind.**

This entire undertaking can be accomplished through the benefit of just one Satsang. To this, many people will reply, "We

already attend the Satsang daily. We never miss even one day.” They say, “We hear Satsang every day. We listen to the banis of Swami Ji Maharaj, Kabir Sahib Ji, Paltu Sahib Ji, Jagjivan Das Ji, and five or ten other Saints. Today we went and we heard one or the other of them. That should be enough.” Other people say, “We attend once a week. Why should we go every day?” Some others say that they come once a month or come four times a year. A number of people say, “We come once a year for the bhandara celebration. On that day we listen to the Satsang, and then we enjoy the delicious, sweet parshad. This is beneficial. But there isn’t such a large congregation at the daily Satsangs, and we don’t get to meet with the other satsangis. So what is the point in attending then?”

What can such colossal fools receive from the Path of Spirituality? When people remain day and night in the Satsang and still don’t grasp its significance, what benefit can they hope to gain by only attending the yearly bhandara? Tulsi Das Ji says:

*Whether you get one moment,
a half a moment, or half of that again,
O Tulsi, the company of the Saint
destroys millions of sins.*

If, after hearing so much praise of the Saint and the Satsang, someone still declares, “I’ll just come once a year,” then what can such a stone-hearted disciple hope to achieve? The work will definitely be accomplished through attending Satsang. But who attains this success? Only those who sacrifice body and mind to the Guru. It’s not just a question of being physically present in the Satsang.

Such a one is established in the True Naam; such a one liberates the world.



Baba Somanath Ji

When a devotee merges in the True Naam and reaches the True Realm, Sat Lok, then they acquire the power to liberate the entire world. Such a one is called a Gurumukh. For this reason Guru Nanak Dev Ji says:

The Gurumukh liberates millions of jivas, giving just one speck of Naam.

The Gurumukhs are capable of liberating millions of jivas. It makes no difference if you refer to them as Bhakta (devotee), or Gurumukh or the Almighty Lord Himself—all those names refer to one and the same Inner Power.

He will liberate the jivas.

He will remove their pride, ego, and attachment.

This Great Being frees the jivas who are trapped in this world. How does He do this? He removes the pride, arrogance, and egotism that envelop them, and then He unites them with the Lord. Those who themselves are caught in pride and ego, how can they release others?

Taking refuge with the Satguru, you will enter into the Realm of Naam.

Whoever goes into the Guru's refuge with full concentration and a true heart, they have completed the first part of the course. In fact, the final part of the course consists of the very same thing—going into the Guru's refuge with single-pointed concentration. When you go into the Guru's refuge, you get the Naam, you get the Satsang, and you meet the Lord. Until you go into the *sharan*, the refuge of the Guru, you cannot take even one step forward. It is not a small thing to go into the

shelter. Not everyone can do this—it is so difficult. The Naam will come of itself when you make your attention one-pointed and go into the Guru's shelter. The Naam is standing ready.

**Whoever sings the praise of Radhaswami will
reach the True Home.**

Whoever goes into the refuge of Radhaswami, with this kind of devotion, will reach the Radhaswami Dham.

You reach the holy lotus feet of the Sadhu through great good fortune. Otherwise, how could you find Him in this dark world? So when, through His immeasurable grace, your destiny awakens and you come in the Sadhu's company, you should take full advantage of it. Unite with the Almighty Lord dwelling within you and become His very form. Your cycle of births and deaths will finally come to an end, and you will be freed from the wheel of transmigration.

—Baba Somanath

The One Good Deed

**Wandering ceaselessly through the 84 lakh species,
you have now received the precious human
birth—so difficult to obtain.
O fool! You are clinging to these trivial pleasures!
Ambrosial nectar lies within, but you remain
engrossed in poison.¹**

This is the bani of Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs. For millions of yugas, for millions of lifetimes, we have been revolving in the wheel of 84 lakhs births and deaths. Now we have received the precious human body. First of all, even to obtain this human body is very difficult. Once we achieve the human body, still it is difficult to meet the perfect Guru. And finally, even when we are fortunate enough to find the Guru, it is difficult to practice the meditation.

The human body is a rare boon, but what are we doing with it? Instead of following the True Path, we are squandering this incarnation in the debased tastes of sense enjoyments and other worldly pleasures. We were supposed to take advantage of this priceless opportunity, but we have become forgetful and are destroying our life in the pursuit of perishable

¹ Guru Arjan Dev, *Lakh chaurāsīh bhramate bhramate...*

treasures. We will not be granted this human birth again and again. Once we leave this body, we will plunge into the wheel of 84, which is standing ready to receive us.

Now we have this human birth, but we do not appreciate it. The gods and goddesses long for the human body, but, even for them, it is far out of reach. What you have been granted, you have not cherished. Day and night you are spoiling your life in sense indulgence, in arrogance, in the duality of high and low, in the attachment to wealth and property, in falsehood and confusion. But within this very human body, the Divine Power is residing.

If you were to do the devotion of the Lord, you would become the form of the Lord Himself. You would achieve everything. But when you show no concern for the devotion, then that Almighty Lord hides Himself from you. And remaining absorbed in the attachment to the outer destructible things of this world, you are wasting your life. You are throwing away this golden opportunity in the pursuit of the useless, ephemeral pleasures. The Lord has placed a well of nectar in this human body, and that nectar is showering down. But turning your back on the divine nectar, you have fixed your thoughts on the sense enjoyments and have become their very form. You have never glimpsed within yourself, you have never tasted that nectar, and in the end, you will be sent again into the revolving wheel of births and deaths.

**You came to trade in jewels and gems, but you
have carried home only barren soil.**

**You dwell in the house of the body, but you have
never turned your thoughts to what lies within.**

You came into this world to deal in gold and silver and precious gems, but you loaded your cart with salt and brackish

soil and went back with your worthless goods. The Power of the soul, the Almighty Lord, the Sat Naam, the Sat Purush—all of these lie within the human body. But each time you come, you purchase only the worldly things and depart. For the sake of worthless matter, you have to return over and over to this earth plane.

For this reason, during your countless births in the wheel of transmigration, you have accumulated a storehouse of past karmas that bind you with the ties of give and take. Accordingly, someone comes as your mother; someone comes as your father; someone comes as your brother; someone comes as your friend. All of these karmic relations are like veils thrown over your soul. In the end, having brought so much suffering on yourself, you depart once again.

You are as far away as ever from the Power residing within you, and you have never given a thought to discovering your true self. Now if we casually ask someone, “Who are you?” they will reply: “I am a *Brāhmin* (priestly caste),” or “I am a *Kshatriya* (warrior caste),” or “I am a *Vaishya* (merchant caste),” or “I am a *Shūdra* (laborer caste).” But these are just hollow words—artificial divisions.

No one grasps the real meaning of *Brāhmin*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya* or *Shūdra*; but if we practice a little meditation, then we come to understand the reality. A “*Brāhmin*” is someone who knows Brahm, or God. By knowing Brahm, you become a *Brāhmin*. And what is a “*Kshatriya*”? The Power of the soul resides in the body, but lust, anger, and the other passions dwell there as well. The warrior who overcomes lust, anger, greed, attachment, and egoism, and realizes the soul within is called a *Kshatriya*. What about the true “*Vaishya*”? What is their characteristic? The *Vaishya* deals in the true merchandise, they give and take only the Naam. They are the true traders,

and their merchandise is Truth. Finally, what is the characteristic of a “*Shūdra*”? They are of service to others; they accept all the work. The one who lives for the sake of others is the *Shūdra*. This is the true understanding of *Brāhmin*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya*, and *Shūdra*. These outer divisions that we have created have no meaning because at the level of the body we are all the same—we are all one.

We are dwelling in this house of the body, but we have no awareness of the soul that enlivens this body. Have we ever realized that we are that soul? Have we tried to contact the Power within us? We have never given this a thought. We close our outer eyes and see only darkness—we do not perceive the soul that lies hidden within. Therefore, Guru Arjan Dev tells us that the Power of the soul dwells in the house of the body. Look penetratingly into your within, and you will find Light. If you delve deeply, you will find your True Home; otherwise, you will remain in forgetfulness.

**He is immovable, indestructible, the giver of peace
to the soul;**

Yet you do not sing His Praises, even for an instant.

He says, “The Power of the soul that lies within me is immovable and indestructible. It is the form of perfect peace.” Your attention has not come in contact with the soul for even one moment, yet the Power of the soul enlivens the whole body and supports the action of the pranas. The pranas support the body, through which we perform all the outer deeds and enjoy all the outer pleasures. Still, you have not recognized that the Power of the soul is making all this possible. When the soul withdraws from the body, the pranas cease to circulate, and the breath ceases its flow. Then no doctor or ayurvedic physician can save us. They know nothing of where the soul

came from when it first entered the body; they know nothing of where the soul goes when it withdraws at the time of death. This knowledge lies hidden behind a veil of dense darkness. Therefore Guru Arjan Dev Ji says, “Even though your soul is the form of happiness, still you are enveloped in suffering.”

**You have forgotten that place where you must go;
You have not attached your mind to the Lord—
even for an instant.**

When we leave the body at the time of death, we do not know where we are going or what our dwelling place will be. Some people say, “I am going to heaven. I am going to Vaikunth, the dwelling place of Lord Vishnu.” Following tradition, many people nowadays think that if they die in Kashi, they will go direct to Kailash, the celestial realm of Lord Shiva. For this reason, people will carry the corpse of the departed person for hundreds of miles, so that it may be cremated in Kashi. They think that no matter where the person died, if their body is cremated in Kashi, then the person will attain salvation. They have placed their faith in superstition, while the Almighty Lord who dwells within them remains far away.

Friend, you have not found a home here on earth, so how will you find a home in Kailash? In the outer world, there are so many panchayats (village councils) controlling so many houses and other buildings in this world; still, with all their support, you can secure no permanent dwelling place. When your end time comes, you will have to depart from this world, leaving everything behind. And when you go into the inner worlds after death, how do you even plan to reach Kailash? Have you performed any virtuous deeds to make you fit for such a journey? Have you collected the noble karmas into your account to secure your meeting with Lord Shiva? You haven't

made any arrangements at all, but you think that simply by dying you can go there. Friend, how is this possible? You are fooling yourself.

The soul is immovable and indivisible; it is the ocean of bliss. You yourself are that soul, but you have not become linked with the soul, even for an instant. You are giving no thought to the place you have to go after death. Instead, you are trying to make this world your permanent home. As soon as you get up in the morning, you say, "I have to go." You have to go to some cafe to have your tea and breakfast. Then you have to go to work. Then in the evening, you have to go home to eat your dinner and go to sleep. Everyone's mantra is "go-go." I have to go there, and on the way back I'll go to Bombay, and then I'll go home. The mantra of "go-go" never ceases. But going and going, you get kicked and knocked and, in the end, you lay down and say, "I am dying. I have to go now." And all the people around you say, "If you have to go, then go." Once you are dead, no one cares for you, and no one knows where the soul goes when you die. They all just sit there, watching as the soul departs, but where that soul is going, where it will be taken, they have not an inkling. You yourself did not discover the Power of the soul within you, so what can your poor worldly relatives understand about it.

Gazing upon your children, spouse, and worldly goods, you have become entangled in them.

You have forgotten yourself in the worldly things—your wealth, your spouse, your children, your prestige, your robust physical form. As long as the pranas are circulating in the body, then your spouse, your wealth, your children, your grandchildren, your property, your position as king, emperor, or minister, everything is there. But on that day when your soul

withdraws from the body and the action of the pranas ceases, no one would be ready to offer even a penny for you. They will pick up your body and carry it to the cremation ground. So many people will join your funeral procession; thousands will follow you. But then what happens? They set your pyre alight and leave you there. They don't bring you back with them. The next day in the newspaper your obituary appears; such and such a person has passed away. By the following day, no one says one word about you. Even your family members have forgotten you.

People witness all this themselves, but even after seeing the reality so clearly, they will tell you: "Once an astrologer prophesied that I wouldn't die for one hundred years." But that astrologer who made the prediction is himself already long dead. When we pin our faith on such a rigmarole, something that is all guesswork and speculation, then the Supreme Power within us remains aloof from us, and we go once again into the wheel of transmigration.

We take up our role in this world where we are placed and forge fresh karmas accordingly.

Once Kal and Maya determine the thought pattern of your intellect for this incarnation, then the die is cast. It remains fixed. The Power of the soul lies far beyond Kal and Maya and remains unencumbered by the intellect. Once you unite with that Power, you too become free, but because you have not yet merged with that Power of the soul, you remain under the dominion of Kal. So even when you don't want to be guided by the intellect, you have no say in the matter. The intellect drags you into the arena of action, and, as you create karmas, you become bound by those karmas. Many people say, "We are only doing our duty as householders." If you inquire about

the duties they must fulfill, you will find that they are bound up in the children and relations, the worldly pleasures, the evil deeds, the wealth and property. They will tell you, “This is our duty.” But what is the result of such “duty”? Engaged in the outer activities, you lose sight of who you really are. You are surrounded by the worldly things, but your True Self remains hidden. Wherever your past deeds pull you, you follow; and then you create even more karmas that will bind you in the future. And as you become ever more identified with the world, your True Self slips away.

When He becomes merciful, then you get the company of the Sadhu.

The servant Nanak meditates on the Almighty Lord.

Now He says, “When the Lord is extremely gracious, we get the company of the Sadhus.” Where can we find the company of the real Sadhu? On the outer level, we encounter so many so-called holy men. We become devoted to them with the hope that we may receive some good reward. They act and pose and put on a show. Then snatching away our wealth and worldly goods, they go on their way. This is the reward you get from keeping the company of such sadhus. So, it is very difficult to get the company of the real Sadhu in this world.

Once there was a greedy businessman who lent a lot of money to people from the small villages in the surrounding area; then collecting interest from those loans, he earned his livelihood. Once he went to collect a debt, including interest, from one tenant farmer, but that farmer couldn't pay. So that businessman took everything the farmer had, to make good the debt. He did not remit even one day's interest. That farmer became very angry and said, “Let him go his way and may he fall into a hole. I don't care who he is; I won't help him. He

showed me no mercy. He has taken all that I have. He did not forgive even one penny.” The businessman had brought his bedroll with him, along with a trunk that he had filled with all the farmer’s possessions. The farmer told him, “I won’t carry your luggage. You can carry it yourself.” Now that businessman did not want to pay a laborer to carry his luggage. He never liked to spend even a penny. When he arrived to collect the debt from that farmer, first he ate a free meal in the farmer’s home, and then he confiscated all the farmer’s goods. That businessman never ate at his own home when he could get a free meal somewhere else.

But now he was perplexed. Where could he find a laborer to carry his luggage for nothing? In the meantime, one Sadhu came along and saw the businessman standing there in a quandary. He said, “Brother, you look very worried. What is the trouble?” The businessman replied, “It’s nothing. It’s just that I have to go to the next village about two miles from here, and I can’t find anyone to carry my luggage. That is why I am standing here.” Then the Sadhu told him, “Don’t worry. I will carry your luggage. You come along with me.” The businessman agreed, and he was very happy to get such a laborer free of charge. Then the Sadhu told him, “I have one condition. As we go along, either I will speak of the glory of God’s Name and you will listen, or you will sing the praises of the Lord and I will listen. These are the wages I demand.” The businessman replied, “Maharaj Ji. How can I sing the praises of the Lord? Even my father and grandfather couldn’t manage such a thing. You tell me all about God’s glory, and I will agree with whatever you say.”

So the Sadhu took the bedroll and put the trunk on his head, and the businessman came along behind him. As they walked along the Sadhu said, “The Lord is so great. He is unique; there is none other like Him. He is merciful; He is everywhere, He

dwells within all. He is the One without qualities; His depths cannot be fathomed.” So in this way, he praised the Lord and spoke of His qualities to that businessman. And the businessman followed along behind saying “yes, yes” to whatever the Sadhu told him. That businessman felt very happy because the Sadhu was carrying his luggage for no fee. He thought, “What a fine thing this is! What a stroke of luck!”

When they finally arrived at the next village, the businessman said, “Maharaj Ji, this is the place. I have to visit another tenant farmer here. Please give me my bedroll and trunk.” The Sadhu answered, “As you wish,” and, taking the luggage from his head, he set everything on the ground. Then the Sadhu said, “Listen to me, brother. I want to tell you something. Eight days from today, you are going to die.” When he heard this, the businessman’s blood ran cold. “What are you saying? I am going to die?” The Sadhu told him, “Yes, definitely.” Then, weeping and wailing, the businessman threw himself at the Sadhu’s feet, saying, “Maharaj Ji, tell me some way to avoid this.” But the Sadhu told him, “You cannot avoid it. When the angels of death come for you, then you have to go. There is no way around it. I am warning you beforehand that you will die in eight days.” The businessman said, “No, Maharaj Ji. There must be something I can do. If I have to die at least give me your support and shower your grace on me.”

Then the Sadhu told him, “There is one thing you can do. When the angels of death take your soul out of the body and bring you before the Lord of Death, then Chitra and Gupta, the recording angels, will bring your account book and lay it before him. The Lord of Death will ask, “What good and bad deeds has he done in his lifetime?” Chitra and Gupta will reply, “My Lord, he has not performed any righteous deeds in his whole life. He has committed sin upon sin.” Then the Lord of

Death will fly into a rage and make ready to hurl you into the hells. But then they will tell him of this one small good deed you have done. You have spent these two hours with me in the remembrance of the Almighty Lord. At that time the Lord of Death will ask you, "Which do you want first, the benefit of those two hours in the company of a great Mahatma, or the punishment in the hells for a lifetime of sins?" Then you should tell him, "My Lord, first, please take me to that great Mahatma, through whose company I have received this boon."

Everything happened just as the Sadhu had described, and when the angels of death were taking the businessman to enjoy the fruit of his one good deed, they found that Sadhu dwelling in an inner region where they had no authority to enter. So they took the businessman to the boundary of that region and pushed him in. When they returned to the Lord of Death, he told them, "After two hours he will come back out. Go sit and wait for him." When the two hours had passed, the Angels of Death started shouting at the businessman, "Come on! Now your time is up." Then the businessman said, "Maharaj Ji, they are waiting for me." The Sadhu told that businessman, "Pay no attention to them. Just sit here quietly. Don't even glance their way." So the businessman didn't come back out, and since the angels of death had no right to enter that place, in the end, they had to go away empty-handed.

You reach the holy lotus feet of the Sadhu through great good fortune. Otherwise, how could you find Him in this dark world? So when, through His immeasurable grace, your destiny awakens and you come in the Sadhu's company, you should take full advantage of it. Unite with the Almighty Lord dwelling within you and become His very form. Your cycle of births and deaths will finally come to an end, and you will be freed from the wheel of transmigration.

Even though that great Power of Naam is upholding the entire creation, at the same time it is also the very Power sustaining our life within us. The yogis assume the Lord resides somewhere far removed—somewhere below us or above us or beyond us. And to find Him, they restrict the pranas, they endeavor to control the mind, and they perform all the yogic practices. Therefore, Kabir Sahib tells us that the Lord is ever-present, but we assume He is far away, and so we climb up to the top of the tall date palm tree to try to catch a glimpse of Him.

—Baba Somanath

Lamps Burn in Every House

Lamps burn in every house, but you cannot see them, O blind one!

When you gaze intently within, that Light will burst forth and the fetters of Yama will be severed.¹

This is the bani of Satguru Kabir Sahib Ji. He explains that within everyone a lamp is burning, and that lamp gives off a tremendous Light. Now the question arises, why don't we see that Light? When we close our eyes, we find only dense darkness. Every day we consume several pounds of food. But where that food ends up in our body, we have no idea, because there is only darkness within. Kabir Sahib Ji says, "Lamps burn in every house."

That Self-Radiant Light shines within everyone. Why is it hidden? He tells us: "When you gaze intently within, that Light will burst forth." When we practice our meditation daily—fixing our attention, and looking intently between the two eyes—then the Divine Light floods our within. And once we behold that Light, "the fetters of Yama will be severed." We will be freed from the snare of the angel of death, all the shackles of the body will fall away, and we will go forth untrammelled.

¹ Kabir Sahib, *Ghar, ghar dīpak barai...*

**There is nothing in speaking and listening;
there is nothing in outer practices.
The one who dies while living,
will never die again.**

He tells us that this is not a matter of empty talk. It is not a matter of idle listening—forgetting everything we have heard as soon as we hear it. It is not a matter of doing fruitless outer practices. Many great rishis retreated to the forests and performed austerities for thousands of years, but they did not accomplish the work of spirituality. They went on asking for the things of this world, and when they had their fill of this mortal realm, then they prayed for the pleasures of the heavens and requested the supernatural powers.

But the desire to solve the mystery of life and death did not arise in their within. Practicing the repetitions and the austerities, they even tried to create their own heavens, but they did not realize the self within. What does Kabir Sahib say? “There is nothing in speaking and listening; there is nothing in outer practices.” Instead of indulging in empty talk and vacant listening, instead of wasting effort in useless practices, you must learn to die while living. Then you will not have to die again and again.

Vedanta tells us that to achieve knowledge of Brahm, we have to listen to (*shravan*), think deeply about (*manan*), and meditate on (*vidyābhyās*) the precepts given in the sacred texts. But Brahm cannot be experienced or understood through these intellectual exercises. Likewise, we gain nothing from giving loud, bombastic lectures and talks. Some people think that by lighting the sacrificial fires and performing the rites and rituals prescribed in the Vedas, we gain spiritual merit. But none of these practices will bear fruit.

No other practice is effective except dying while alive. While still living in this body, unite yourself with the inner Naam, giving up all sense of “I-hood.” When only Naam remains—both within and without—then you will experience death in life. Otherwise, you go on revolving in the cycle of births and deaths. When you die while living, you experience the state of death while still in the body, and you come to know where the soul goes after death; you come to understand death’s nature. But if you do not solve this mystery of death, then when your allotted breaths are used up and your end time arrives, Kal will drag your soul forcibly from the body.

**The yogi thinks that God is something separate;
he says God’s home is far away.
Your Lord dwells within you, yet you are
climbing up the date palm to seek Him.**

Yoga means uniting two separate things. This principle of union functions throughout the creation. Because day and night are united, both are praised. The splendor of the night is enhanced through its contrast with the day. And the day is glorified when it follows the night. Both are linked together. The same is true of woman and man. The yogis also follow this principle of union or yoga by raising the pranas and fixing them in the space between the two eyes. They unite the mind with the pranas or vital airs through *purvak* (inhalation), *kumbhak* (retention) and *rechak* (exhalation). This joining of the mind and pranas is called pranayama.

The yogis make the assumption that the Lord is far away and that they can draw near to Him only through the yoga. They think that God is something separate from themselves

and that yogic sadhna is the means to unite with Him. But the Almighty Lord is not far away. In His eternal form, in the form of the Naam, He dwells within you. The Naam supports all the divisions and grand divisions of creation, the Brahmand, the heavens, and the hells.

Even though that great Power of Naam is upholding the entire creation, at the same time it is also the very Power sustaining our life within us. The yogis assume the Lord resides somewhere far removed—somewhere below us or above us or beyond us. And to find Him, they restrict the pranas, they endeavor to control the mind, and they perform all the yogic practices. Therefore, Kabir Sahib tells us that the Lord is ever-present, but we assume He is far away, and so we climb up to the top of the tall date palm tree to try to catch a glimpse of Him.

**The Brahmin priest goes from house to house,
granting initiation to the people.
The life-giving spring is within you, and you
have set up a stone to worship.**

Now the Brahmin also does not understand this reality. Miled himself, he misleads others. Going from house to house with his holy books and almanac, he sings the praises of the Lord and hands out mantras and incantations. And in this way, he earns his livelihood and fills his stomach. But that priest does not find the Lord within. Instead, he goes farther away from Him. The all-pervading conscious Power of the soul dwells within in its eternal form, and yet, he remains involved in the temples, and the idols, and the ritual worship and recitation.

Kabir says: Such is the Beautiful One, who dwells within all.

No yoga or recitation can win Him; sin and virtue have no meaning here."

Salonā means both “beautiful” and “salt.” So here, Kabir is telling us that the Beautiful One (*Salonā*) dwells within everyone, just like you find salt (*salonā*) in every kitchen. The sacrificial ceremonies, the recitations and rites and rituals, the yogic practices, pranayama, and the outer forms of worship—all of these methods have been invented by the mind. Why do we need to perform the virtuous deeds? Because we need to become free of our sins. What does Tukaram Ji say?

*We perform the righteous deeds,
And yet, we go on heaping sin upon sin.*

When we realize that All-Pervading Lord, then yoga and the recitations have no value; the righteous deeds and sins have no meaning. The yogic, the rites and rituals, the devotions of outer worship—all are based on the need to remove the sins through the performance of virtuous deeds, so that we can unite with the Almighty Lord.

What is the nature of a dream? Once we wake up, we realize: "Oh, I was just dreaming." But while we are still sleeping, we don't know it is a dream. It is only because we are fast asleep that we think the dream is a reality. As soon as we awaken from our slumber, the dream will vanish. Therefore, in order to wake up and shake off the dream of this world, we have to devote ourselves to the meditation of the Lord. But if we go on sleeping, what assurance do we have that this human body will come into our hands again?

—Baba Somanath

This Life is of Four Days Only

This life is of four days only; earn the reward of meditation and take it with you. Your body, your mind, and your wealth—sacrifice these to the Saint.¹

This is the bani of Satguru Paltu Sahib Ji. It has been said:

*What we see will be destroyed,
if not today then tomorrow.*

What is the nature of this earth life? Just like we dreamed one thing last night, and tonight we will dream something different, in the same way, our waking life is also in a state of constant flux. Every day we are changing, even though we are not aware of it. Today we are in one place; tomorrow we will be living somewhere else. Today we are eating one type of food; tomorrow we will be eating something different. Today we get together with one person and tomorrow we meet with somebody else. In this way, everything is in a constant state of change, but we don't realize it is all a dream. All the saints and mahatmas have explained that this dream has no innate

¹ Paltu Sahib, *Jīvan hai din chār, bhajan kari lījiye...*

reality of its own. We each perceive the world according to our own attitudes and feelings. Therefore, Paltu Sahib says that we wander on in this unsubstantial dream, frittering our life away. And one day, when that life ends, we must depart. There is no guarantee of the breaths. We do not know when we will leave the body. So while we are still in the body, we should do the work we have come for. What is our work? Doing the devotion of the Lord and meditating on His Naam, we have to free ourselves from the dream of this world. Withdrawing our attention from this perishable body, we have to meet with that True and Unchanging Lord and become His very form.

So much has been explained in the past—in the Vedas, in the Shastras, in the Puranas and all the other writings of the great mahatmas. Now in the present time also, this reality is being set clearly before us, and in the future, the same truth will be revealed. But still we remain lost in an unconscious stupor. What is the nature of a dream? Once we wake up, we realize: “Oh, I was just dreaming.” But while we are still sleeping, we don’t know it is a dream. It is only because we are fast asleep that we think the dream is a reality. As soon as we awaken from our slumber, the dream will vanish. Therefore, in order to wake up and shake off the dream of this world, we have to devote ourselves to the meditation of the Lord. But if we go on sleeping, what assurance do we have that this human body will come into our hands again?

It is only through the human body that we can gain right understanding. In the human body you can experience all the different states of consciousness: *jāgrat*—consciousness, or the state of wakefulness; *svapan*—semi-consciousness, or the state of dreaming; and, *sushupti*—unconsciousness, or the state of deep sleep. By making further efforts, you can

reach the state of *turiya*, super-consciousness. And finally, through exceptional effort, you can gain *mukti* or liberation. This can be achieved only through the Power that resides in the human body.

But when we sit for the meditation, our body, mind, and wealth become obstacles. The soul, giving up its true original form, seeks for happiness in these things of Maya. First the soul seeks happiness in the body. How the body comes into being—how and when it is formed—even the mother and father don't know, but after a child is born, they say, "This is my child." The child also does not remember its origin. But, becoming ensnared in egotism, the child claims the body as its own. The child has no knowledge of why it has come into the world or why it has received that body. The child doesn't know anything at all, but still it says, "This body is mine." And once the soul has become ensnared in the body, then, through the body it becomes further bound by the fetters of mind and wealth. Therefore, sacrificing these three fetters at the feet of the Guru, remove egotism and desire from your within, and do the meditation of the Lord. Only then the Power of the Lord will manifest within you, and you will attain salvation.

**Everything is in the hands of the Saint, whatever
He wishes comes to pass.
O Paltu, keep His company; even God obeys His
commands.**

He says that the secret of the inner way is kept in the hands of the Saints. Only through Their mercy and grace can we accomplish this work. Whatever the Saints do, no one can undo. Even the Almighty Lord acts according to the wishes of His Saints.

The Saints disdain the supernatural powers and have nothing to do with them.

To the Saint, the throne of Indra and the heavens of Vishnu seem no better than than a latrine.

The Saints are such exalted beings that we cannot understand them through our lowly intellect. But what do the Saints tell us? They remain aloof from the throne of Indra, the heavens and Vaikunt and all the dwelling places and enjoyments of the gods and goddesses. To them, the happiness of the heavens is like excrement. They regard that happiness with disdain because they themselves have experienced the True Happiness. And the Saints never perform miracles using the supernatural powers.

But the *madāris* (conjurers) perform various tricks. Some turn earth into coins; some take earth and change it into different colors. Some can pull a rabbit out of an empty basket or grow a mango tree from a seed on the spot. But then, the *madāri* goes around with his hand outstretched for money, begging from the crowd that has gathered to watch the show. So this is where the supernatural powers lead you. Using these powers becomes just one more pathway back into the wheel of transmigration. For this reason, Saints don't use the supernatural powers—the riddhis and siddhis. They pay no attention to them at all. In whatever condition the Lord sees fit to place Them, They accept that. They remain content and repeat the Name of the Lord. Guru Teg Bahadur tells us:

*Understand happiness and sorrow as the same;
Have no concern for honor and disgrace.*

Always remain tranquil. Weigh your heart in the scales, making sure you do not tip in one direction or the other.

Those who thirst for the Naam of the Lord do his devotion unceasingly.

O Paltu, compared to His devotion everything else is worthless; the Saints do not long even for liberation.

Maintain your longing for the Name of the Lord and do His devotion unceasingly. Never go away from Him. Constantly go on doing His devotion.

This is a matter of meditation and bhajan. There is no question of morning or evening—every moment, you should remain absorbed in the Name of the Lord. Remain absorbed in the Naam, or in the contemplation of the Guru, or in listening to the True Sound Current. One or the other of these three things should go on ceaselessly in your within.

—Baba Somanath

Remain Within the Three Lines

**Connect your surat with the Naam.
The body, mind, and wealth are of no use when you
have to fight with the angel of death.¹**

We cherish the pleasures of this world in our hearts. We are expecting those pleasures to give us peace and happiness, but instead, they fan the flames. Once we indulge in the pleasures, the desire for them flares up stronger. First, we fulfill one desire, but then more desires follow. We want children; then we want grandchildren. So the fire goes on increasing, and peace is nowhere to be found. All of the things in this created world are like the heat of the midday sun in summer. And so every person complains: “Oh! Life is very hard.” One person is suffering from one malady, and another person is suffering from something else. Tukaram tells us:

*The king worries about battles,
The pandit worries about the scriptures,
The youth is worried by desire;
And the pauper is the form of worry.*

¹ Swami Ji Maharaj, *Joṛo rī koī surat nām se...*

From the king down to the pauper, we see that deep inside, everyone is unhappy. Guru Nanak says:

*O Nanak, all the world is unhappy.
Only those who take the support of Naam find happiness.*

All this world is the form of suffering. If you ask the king, he is weeping within, and the poor person is weeping as well. The merchant is sad, trapped between profit and loss. And the laborer is sunk in sorrow. The family is a festival of weeping—the children, the household, and all the relatives are shedding tears.

Now you have been granted this very beautiful opportunity.

Come into the coolness and be saved from the heat.

He tells us about the inner coolness. The Power of Naam pervades your within. When you attach your attention to that Naam, you will achieve peace. Otherwise, the fire will go on raging. If you get a million rupees, the desire will come for ten million. And once you have that ten million rupees, the desire will flare up to become king. And when you have been crowned king, you will long to rule Indra's heavens. But in the end, death stands waiting for you.

Do the Simran and seva of the Satguru; take your mind away from the desires.

Now, what does He say? Do the Simran of the Satguru day and night, and apply your mind in Satguru's seva. When we perfect our Simran, then our seva will also become meaning-

ful. And when we do the true seva, then we will also engage in the Simran of Naam. But if our seva is superficial, done for show alone, then it only serves to increase our egotism. When someone is watching us, we rush about, dashing here and there doing the seva but when no one is about, then we go take a nap. And if we do a lot of seva, then we think “If it weren’t for me, how would this seva get done? Whatever is being accomplished, it is all because of me.” Day and night, the mind is filled with egotism.

When we perform the seva with self-interest, then our egotism goes on increasing; it doesn’t become less. We were supposed to become free of sense indulgence and evil deeds by doing the seva. But if instead, we go on increasing our pride and attachment to the world, that cannot be called seva. Therefore, Swami Ji says, “Do the Simran of the True Naam. Do the seva with your body, mind, and wealth. Serve the Guru in thought, word, and deed.” When you offer everything to the Guru, when you understand everything as His, not yours, then the Lord will have to manifest within you.

Once there was a man who abandoned his hearth and home and went to one monastery to serve the Guru residing there. When night fell, both Guru and disciple ate their meal and then spread out their bedding to sleep. Outside it had started to rain, and the Guru Ji inquired, “Is it raining outside? Take a look and see.” The disciple immediately replied, “Yes, Maharaj Ji, it is raining.” The Guru said, “How can you tell if it is raining? You didn’t even look outside.” The disciple answered, “One cat is sitting beside my bed, and it is soaked with rain. When I stroked my hand over its back, I could tell that it is dripping wet. So that’s how I know that it is raining.” Then the Guru told him, “Please extinguish the lamp.” The disciple replied, “When all the oil is used up, that lamp will

go out by itself.” Then again, the Guru said, “Please close the door.” And the disciple replied, “I have already taken care of two jobs. Why don’t you do this one yourself?” Such seva isn’t worthy of the name. That disciple’s seva was superficial and half-hearted. True seva is something different.

Swami Ji says that we must first remove desire from our within. Desire means lusting after the things of this world and enjoying the worldly pleasures. Your seva will bear fruit only when you remove all this desire from your within and become absorbed wholeheartedly in the Naam.

**Keep the mind and senses under your control;
drink a draught from the Guru’s cup.**

Swami Ji words are so simple, but only when we still the mind and rise within will we understand what He is saying. Otherwise, we read through His banis, but don’t grasp their deeper meaning. He tells us plainly that we have to bring the mind and senses under control by withdrawing from the body, restraining our wandering attention, and fixing our mind and senses at the still point within.

To achieve this purpose, bring the image of the Guru before your inner eye and contemplate on it in such a way that you do not remain—only the Guru remains. Then your heart will be flooded with Light, and the rain of Nectar will shower down. When you drink that Nectar, your thirst will be quenched, desire will be eradicated, and the fire of the world will be extinguished.

Swami Ji speaks to us very simply and clearly but—because of our inner turmoil caused by ignorance, attachment, desire for worldly honor, and fear of censure—we cannot fully fathom His meaning.

Making your home in the Naam, ascend within and leave behind the realm of mind.

Now the Path lies straight before you. Your thoughts have merged with the Naam, and you have become the form of Naam. And the Naam will take you back to the place from where it emanates. All the questions of this world have been left behind.

Do the meditation, give up laziness, and escape from this village of Kal.

This is a matter of meditation and bhajan. There is no question of morning or evening—every moment, you should remain absorbed in the Name of the Lord. Remain absorbed in the Naam, or in the contemplation of the Guru, or in listening to the True Sound Current. One or the other of these three things should go on ceaselessly in your within.

When Ramchandra was exiled to Panchavati, he and Lakshman and Sita all worked together to build a hut there in the forest. At that time, Ravana's sister, Shurpanakha, happened to wander by. She reported to her brother, Ravana, that a beautiful lady had come to dwell in the forest, and she suggested he come to see her for himself. When Ravana came to Panchavati and saw the beautiful Sita, he resolved to abduct her. Ravana's maternal uncle was a demon named Marichi; he had mastered the art of changing his body into countless different forms. So, Ravana commanded Marichi to change himself into a golden deer and go to Panchavati forest: "Ramchandra Ji will chase after you to kill you, and Sita will be left alone in the hut. Then I will capture her and bring her back to Lanka." So Ravana, disguised as a wandering sadhu, hid himself in the

forest, while the demon Marichi, in the form of a golden deer, strolled back and forth in front of the hut. Sita spied the golden deer and was enchanted.

The incarnations have great attainment, but even they are subject to the mind and are drawn to enjoy the attractions of this world. So, seeing the deer, Sita said to Rama, “Lord, this deer is very beautiful. Kill it for me and bring it here. Its hide is like gold. When we return to Ayodhya, I can show it to my father-in-law and all the family.” Then, taking his bow and arrows, Rama followed after the golden deer, and the deer ran ahead of him, leading him deeper and deeper into the forest. Finally, when Rama shot that deer with an arrow, the demon Marichi cried out imitating Rama’s voice saying, “Lakshman, Lakshman, I am surrounded by demons. Come quickly to my aid.”

Ramchandra had left Lakshman at home guarding Sita. When that voice fell on Sita’s ears, she said, “Lakshman, the Lord is in great difficulty. Go to him quickly.” But Lakshman replied, “He is Triloki Nath, the Lord of the Three Worlds. This is all some demonic deception. Remain where you are; you are safe here. No harm will come to the Lord Ramchandra.” But when Sita returned a sharp rejoinder, Lakshman became angry and exclaimed, “May you remain a demon’s captive for six months.” Then he took up his bow and arrows and prepared to set out. As he was leaving, he traced three lines in the earth with his bow right in front of the door of the hut, and he told Sita, “If anyone comes here, do not cross these three lines.”

Now the fake sadhu Ravana was hiding nearby in the forest, and when he saw Lakshman depart, he approached the hut. Standing outside, he called out, “*Bhikhsham dehī*. Give me alms.” When Sita appeared at the door to offer a donation of food to the wandering sadhu, then Ravana said, “I will

not accept a donation offered from afar, as though I were a common beggar. Come outside of these lines and serve the food to me properly.” Then he began to writhe on the ground as though he were suffering a paroxysm of hunger. Seeing his condition, Sita crossed over the protecting lines to offer the food to him. As soon as her foot strayed outside the protecting circle, he seized her and carried her away. This is the story of Rama and Ravana.

Sita stands for the soul within us. Ravana is egotism and pride. “*Laksh*” means line or mark, and “*man*” means mind. So our mind should always remain with three lines drawn on the earth by Lakshman. Those three lines—constant repetition of the Simran, contemplation on the Guru, and absorption in the Sound Current—restrict the mind and form a protecting hedge around the soul. If that soul, Sita, remains within the protection of those three lines, then Ravana, cannot harm her. But if the soul steps outside of the protection of Lakshman’s three lines, then Ravana, will throw her over his shoulder and carry her away.

**Moment after moment pray before the Guru;
He will take you out of this body of flesh.**

Remain absorbed in the contemplation of the Guru with every breath. Pray before Him and implore Him to rescue you from this place of Kal. Everything in this world is the property of Kal; this world is the city of Kal. Withdraw your soul from Kal’s realm, and implore the Guru for His mercy.

**There is no other method than this; repeat the Naam
from morning to night.**

No other method works; no other practice grants liberation. The Way is only one, and it is called the Path of the Saints. Guru Nanak says:

*He was when there was nothing; He was before all ages began;
He existeth now, O Nanak, and shall exist forevermore.*

Before the yugas began that Truth existed, and it exists today also. And in the future, it will remain ever the same. No one can change it. No “guru” fashioned it. It has been true from time immemorial. This Path was made by God Himself. Day and night, every moment, whether the mind takes to it or not, go on repeating His Name.

**Lovingly keep the company of the Sadhu.
Stay away from the worldly people: both the
high-born and the commoner.**

Now, what does He tell us? With love in your heart, keep the company of the Sadhus. Don't go there with thoughts of the world filling your mind: “What is going on back in my home? I just walked out the door and headed for the Satsang, but now I wonder if everything there is alright.” And don't go to Satsang to split hairs and stir up trouble: “Why are you doing it like this? Why are you doing it like that? Such and such a person shouldn't be coming here.” When we go to the Sadhus, we should bring with us only our love and devotion. Kabir Sahib Ji tells us:

*When you go to meet the Saint,
Leave behind Maya, attachment, and pride.
Then with each step you advance towards Him,
You receive the fruit of millions of yagyas (ritual sacrifices)*

No other righteous deed in this world will count. Therefore, with love and devotion go into the company of the Saints. Give up all thought of the world and its desires, and with focused attention, sit before Him. Throw out your desires, one by one. Otherwise, you will be left holding a big, heavy bundle.

Radhaswami says: Attach yourself to the True Naam.

In this way, purify your life. Keep your thoughts connected with the Naam day and night. Then that True Naam will manifest in your within, and you will become the form of that Naam. Becoming detached from this world, you will be freed from the cycle of 84 lakhs births and deaths.

He tells us that we can call that power as Shabd, or Naam, or the Inner Sound, or the Voice from the Sky. But just like the rust can only be removed when a sword or knife comes in contact with the whetstone, in the same way, the sinful impressions of ages upon ages can only be removed from the mind when it comes in contact with that power of Shabd. The mind becomes pure and that Shabd, which is the form of purity, then attracts the mind to itself.

—Baba Somanath

Transformed from Poison into Nectar

**The mind rushes in all ten directions.
How can we sing the Lord's praise?
The senses remain engrossed in the pleasures;
lust and anger constantly torment us.¹**

This is the bani of Shri Guru Amar Das Ji, the third guru of the Sikhs. He says that mind is the cause of both bondage and emancipation. When the mind is stable it leads us toward emancipation; when the mind is wavering it keeps us in bondage—trapped in the wheel of 84 lakhs births and deaths. Until the mind becomes stable, it cannot remember the Lord. The fundamental practice of bhakti or devotion is to still the mind. But when that mind is running in all the ten directions, how can it remember the Lord and do His Simran? That very mind is rushing after the sense pleasures, and, absorbed in those pleasures, it has become bound to this world. The Lord's unchangeable form, the Naam, dwells in our within, but until we introvert and meet with that form, that Naam, we cannot sing His praises; we cannot engage in His sweet remembrance, even if we practice millions of other methods. Our mind

1 Guru Amar Das, *Manūā deh dis dhāvādā...*

remains immersed in the enjoyment of the senses. In order to indulge in lust, anger, and the other sense pleasures, we remain engrossed day and night in the foul deeds of this world. So how can the mind become fixed within; how can we devote ourselves to the Simran of the Lord's Name?

Hail! Hail! Sing the praise of Sehaj, the State of Natural Equipoise.

In this age, the Lord's Name is bestowed on the rare ones.

Following the Guru's Path, imbibe the Divine Nectar.

Now the question arises: "Is liberation possible?" Since the mind runs after the world and remains stuck fast in it, we assume that liberation is unattainable. But now Guru Amardas tells us, "Go into the shelter of the Satguru." With love, faith, and devotion act according to the Guru's instructions; perform the practices of the Sehaj Yoga, the Natural Way to God. Fix your thoughts on the qualities of the Lord; then the dirt of the mind and the unclean thoughts will all be removed. When the mind ceases to waver, the consciousness will be purified, and you will unite with the Naam. When that state of Sehaj manifests within, the outer world falls away by itself, and the mind remains still.

We can easily obtain all the other things through making efforts, but the Naam of the Lord is a rare thing in this world, and it can only be attained with difficulty. Tulsidas says:

*It is difficult to explain, it is difficult to understand,
and it is difficult to practice with discrimination.*

We have gotten the Guru and the initiation. But until we manifest the all-pervading Power of Shabd in our within, the

mind will not become still. We have already overcome two difficulties; we have already obtained two rare things. First, we have met the Guru outwardly, and further, He has given us the Naam initiation. But until we achieve the third thing—until we introvert through meditation, meet the Guru within, and manifest the Glory of Naam—some doubt will remain.

**Remembering the Shabd, make the mind pure
and glorify the Lord.**

He tells us that we can call that power as Shabd, or Naam, or the Inner Sound, or the Voice from the Sky. But just like the rust can only be removed when a sword or knife comes in contact with the whetstone, in the same way, the sinful impressions of ages upon ages can only be removed from the mind when it comes in contact with that power of Shabd. The mind becomes pure and that Shabd, which is the form of purity, then attracts the mind to itself.

**Following the Path of the Guru, we gain
self-realization and dwell in our True Home.**

When we give up the path of the mind, then the Path of the Guru opens before us. The soul gains right understanding and acquires self-knowledge. It learns of its True Home and finally reaches that Realm of Truth, Sat Lok, Sach Khand.

**O my mind, remain forever dyed in the love of
the Lord, and extol His majesty.**

Now He says, “Oh my mind, there is no fixed time for devotion and meditation on the Lord.” We sit in the morning at such and such a time, or in the afternoon, or the evening. But

these times are only given so that we can form the habit of doing the practices. Truly speaking, there is no fixed time for love. He says, “Oh my mind, lovingly, day and night, remain dyed in the color of the Lord’s Name, so much so that you become His very form, so much so that no color of the world enters in your within.” No other thoughts will arise in your within, wherever you look, you will remain absorbed in His Samadhi. This is called the state of Sehaj, or Natural Equipoise. Whether you are sitting, standing, eating, drinking, or walking about, at all times the Sound is calling you. Becoming absorbed in that Sound, perform your worldly works.

**The Immaculate Lord is eternally the Giver of
Happiness;
He grants you the fruits of your heart’s desires.**

The Lord is pure; He is the eternal Ocean of Happiness. Whatever you wish for, you receive. But what do we say? “Without our efforts, the work cannot go forward. I have to do the work myself.” But if instead, we entrust all works to the Lord, then He Himself will take care of everything.

One night while Tulsidas Ji was sleeping, two thieves came to steal things from his house. In the state of sleep, Tulsidas was absorbed in the form of the Lord and was resting in His Naam. When we people sleep, we are absorbed in the sleep of ignorance, but when the Mahatmas sleep, they become absorbed in Light and Bliss. So that night, in this way, Tulsidas was absorbed in the Bliss of the Lord. Those thieves thought, “Now he is asleep, let’s go steal everything.” But in the meantime, Rama and Lakshman, armed with bow and arrow, had come to protect the house. When the thieves arrived, they saw that two young men were standing guard, so they decided to come and try again later. In this way, the thieves came back

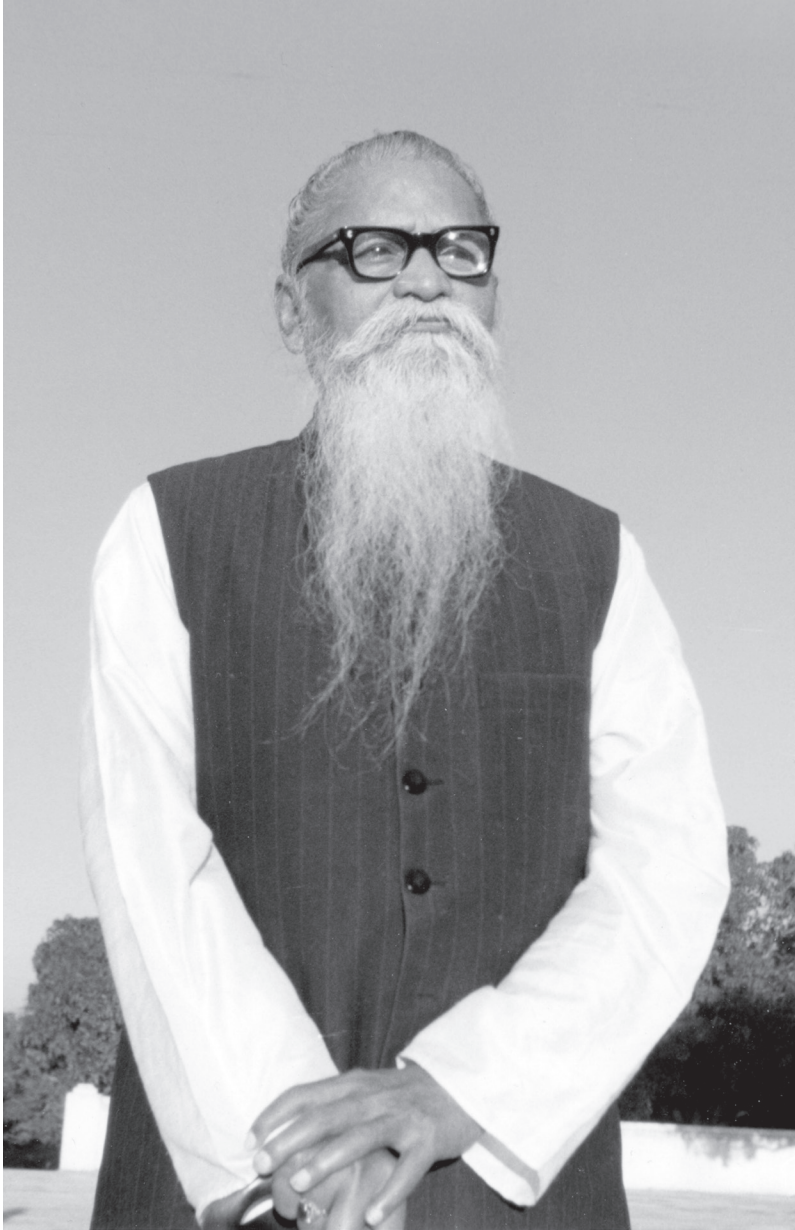
three or four times, but the two young men were always standing there, guarding the house. Finally, when morning arrived, the two thieves went and fell at Tulsidas' feet, saying: "Maharaj, to tell the truth, we came to your house last night to steal your possessions, but you have very strong guards. We came four times, and every single time they were standing ready, armed with bow and arrow."

Hearing their story, Tulsidas realized that the two young men were really Rama and Lakshman. At that time, with tears flowing from his eyes, Tulsidas said, "You people are truly blessed, because without any effort, without doing any meditation or devotion, without undergoing any hardship, you have had the darshan of Ramchandra." From that time forward, those two thieves remained in the home of Tulsidas under his protection. So in this way, if you entrust all your affairs to the Lord, He Himself will take care of all your works.

**From a lowly one, I have become exalted, entering
into the refuge of the Lord.
He has lifted up the sinking stone; true is His
greatness.**

Now what does he say? I was a lowly one, a debased sinner, but coming into the shelter of the Lord, I became the highest of all. I was a stone. He ferried a sinking stone like me across to the other shore. This is all His greatness and glory.

**From poison, I was transformed into nectar.
Following the Path of the Guru, I have obtained
wisdom.
From bitter herbs, I have turned into sandalwood,
and His fragrance permeates my within.**



Baba Somanath Ji

He says, “I was a poisonous serpent, but the poison was transformed into nectar.” There is one bitter medicinal herb called *āk* (*Calotropis gigantea*). He says, “I was that bitter herb, but now I have turned into sandalwood. In the same way, I had the nature of the crow, but now I have become a swan. By whose greatness was all this achieved? Only through the glory and greatness of my Satguru.”

**This human birth is very difficult to obtain.
We must earn the privilege of coming into this world.
By perfect destiny, I have met the True Guru,
and now I meditate on the Lord’s Name.**

Explaining further, he says that the human birth is precious. Even all the gods and goddesses are longing for the human body, yet for them also it is very hard to obtain. The Lord has graciously given you such a beautiful human body. But even when we get the human body, it is still very difficult to find the true Guru. Some gurus tell us about the gods and goddesses; some gurus whisper a mantra in our ear; some give us holy scriptures to read, this and that thing. Some gurus teach us how to use the supernatural powers and mantras to raise ghosts and demons, or how to walk on water, or how to be saved from the fire, or how to fly in the sky. You can locate such gurus who practice and teach the supernatural powers. But in spite of all that, you will still go into the hells. Therefore, Guru Amardas tells us that it is very difficult to find a True Guru, and even if you find the Perfect Satguru, practicing the meditation is also very difficult.

**The manmukhs are deluded. Attached to poison,
they lose this precious birth.**

Caught up in the dealings of Maya, constantly controlled by ignorance and delusion, the manmukhs are wasting the precious human birth. They prepare the poison themselves, and consuming it, they die. All the things we see with our eyes are a type of poison; we take that poison and die from it.

The Name of the Lord is an eternal Ocean of Happiness, but we do not love the True Shabd.

Now what does He tell us? The Naam of the Lord is an Ocean of Happiness. But those who have no love for the Naam and are attached instead to the worldly things are just like the moth who is attracted to the lamp. Burning itself in that flame, it loses its life. In the same way, attracted to the worldly things, we burn in their flame and die.

Everyone chants “Hari, Hari” with their mouths; but only the rare ones make Hari dwell within their hearts.

O Nanak, those who enshrine the Lord’s Name in their within gain emancipation.

Outwardly, all the world repeats the many names of God—Rama, Vittal, Hari, Gobind, Krishna, Radhesham, Shivshankar—but until we repeat God’s Name within our hearts, it won’t be possible for us to meet the Lord. When we play a record of bhajans on a phonograph, that record is also singing the praise of Ram. But the record does not have any idea what is going on or whose praise it is singing. It is just the same when we repeat the name of God with our mouth only. Until we connect our mouth with our heart, even if we went on repeating “Ram, Ram” for a hundred years,

we would get no benefit from it. Only the rare ones do the remembrance of the Lord with their hearts. When the Naam manifests in someone's heart, then they will achieve liberation; but until that connection between the mouth and the heart is established, liberation remains far away. When your heart is engaged in the remembrance of the Lord, then the mouth and heart will chant in unison.

Controlled by attachment, we create new karma, and the noose of karma is in the hands of Kal. Once he puts that noose around your neck, no one can remove it. The hunter captures an animal and puts it in a cage. He intends to kill that animal and eat it—maybe today, maybe tomorrow. But the poor animal doesn't know what fate is awaiting it and is content to remain in that cage. In the same way, putting the noose around the neck of the jivas, Kal laughs with delight.

—Baba Somanath

The Noose of Worldly Attachment

Fear of public shame spoils all our work; we are caught in the noose of worldly attachment.¹

This is the bani of Param Sant Satguru Hazur Radha Swami Ji. We cannot see the fear of public shame with our eyes, but it lies hidden in everyone. To a greater or lesser degree, egotism and the desire for honor are always present, throwing obstacles in our path. Because of the fear of public shame, we shy away from countless good actions. We are embarrassed to practice the Simran and meditation of Naam. We worry about what our family and relations, our friends and acquaintances, will say. We waver in irresolution; we stray far away from the Truth. If we go to a place where we receive respect, honor, and position, we gladly accept all that; we think such a spiritual path or gathering is good. But if we go somewhere where we have to give up our ego and desire for honor, then we will not be pleased—we will avoid that place.

Everyone's heart is filled with attachment; this world is the form of attachment. When we become attached to something, we are willing to sacrifice our whole life to keep possession of it. The power of attachment chains and imprisons the

¹ Swami Ji Maharaj, *Lāj jag kāj bigārā rī...*

whole world. All the jivas are locked in the prison house of attachment. Wherever we may go, attachment is there, ready to receive us. It lures our attention into all the things of this world. And to acquire those things, we disregard our own welfare and pursue that attachment single-mindedly. The power of attachment is a potent force in everyone's heart, but we do not comprehend its nature. Attachment is ignorance and darkness; it is the cause of birth and death.

**Attachment to the family has debased you;
The high-born maiden has been given in
marriage to Kal.**

Because of attachment, you carry the load of the entire family. You are not even concerned with what becomes of your body. You think, "No matter what happens to me; my family's honor must be preserved." In this pursuit, you sacrifice your whole life to the last breath. But when you consider the situation carefully, you will understand these worldly relations are not permanent. You don't have any idea where these family members came from in the first place, or where they will go at their end time. And after they leave this world, what assurance do you have that you will ever have any connection with them in the future? But still, you are anxious not to displease them. Your heart is filled with attachment to family, desire for respect and honor, and fear of public shame. But after passing your whole life in this way, you will depart empty-handed at your end time.

Old and young people alike take out life insurance policies for the sake of their children. Those people are anxious to die quickly, so that their children may receive that money. They were given this precious human body to accomplish their own work, but instead, they became entangled in their children.

Such attachment is all ignorance and foolishness. This false love and friendship with the family is the power that destroys our life. Kal has imprisoned us in attachment. Day and night, we are wrapped up in worry about our families. Many people cannot even sleep at night because of worry. Why? Because this world created by Kal Purush attracts all the jivas and ensnares them in its web.

**Karma has placed a noose around your neck,
and Kal laughs with delight.**

Controlled by attachment, we create new karma, and the noose of karma is in the hands of Kal. Once he puts that noose around your neck, no one can remove it. The hunter captures an animal and puts it in a cage. He intends to kill that animal and eat it—maybe today, maybe tomorrow. But the poor animal doesn't know what fate is awaiting it and is content to remain in that cage. In the same way, putting the noose around the neck of the jivas, Kal laughs with delight. Those jivas don't realize they are captives, and, remaining ensnared in the attachment to the family and relatives, they become the prey of Kal.

**Now your love has become stuck fast in the body;
all thought of death is forgotten.**

For this reason, you do not grasp the reality, and you do not remember that you have to die one day. Your heart is full of family pride, and you cling fast to the worldly relatives. Day and night, you strive to please them; you are content in your bondage. In the midst of all this commotion, you throw away your human birth. The worldly relations are for a few days only, but you have never given this a thought. Many of your relatives have already departed from this world. Your mother

and father—who spent their lives enjoying the things of this world and worrying about family honor and status—have passed on. And ever since your childhood, you too have been tied up in the family affairs.

Your life is being consumed in all these attachments, but you never think of your end time. You go to some astrologer and tell him, “Pandit Ji, look at my astrological chart and tell me the time of my death. Tell me what is going to happen in my life.” Hearing your words, that pandit realizes he has found a fool who is fair game. So, he will look at your chart and speak of *mīn* (Pisces) and *makar* (Capricorn) and *kumbh* (Aquarius), and finally, he will say, “You shall live to be a hundred, but I see very serious obstacles blocking your way. These obstacles can only be removed by burning the sacrificial fire and performing the rites and recitations. But you should not worry. I can see to all this for you. Bring me 1000 rupees, and I will arrange everything.” That pandit does not know when you are destined to die; he does not even know when he will die himself. But he makes his living by arranging for rites and rituals to ward off death.

And we foolish people think that in this way we can change the span of our lives. Friend, your breaths are numbered, but that pandit does not know the count. Because we remain mired in worldly affairs, we do not see the relentless approach of death, and we do not fear it. Day and night, we cling fast to the deep darkness of this world. Our whole life is lived only in relation to this world. We understand ourselves as this body and we poetically style ourselves as the “puppet of love².” But if we were to look more deeply, we would find that puppet is

2 That is, we follow the dictum of “eat, drink, and be merry,” thinking there is no reality beyond this physical existence. We say: “है ये जग मीठा, अगला कसिने दधि? *This world is sweet. Who has seen the next?*”

a storehouse filled with filth and urine. But we only look at the outer covering of skin, the “plaster” spread on top. Some people have black skin; some have white skin. We vary in shape. Some are large; some are small. We regard ourselves as beautiful, or strong, or wise or wealthy, and so on. We mistake the surface appearance for the Reality that lies within.

**You have exhausted yourself in pride and egotism;
you carry a heavy burden upon your head.**

He says, you have wasted your life in pride and vanity, and you have collected a big load of sins. If someone tries to enlighten you, at that time you agree with their words and nod your head: “Yes, yes!” But when you enter into the labyrinth of your heart, you are again misled. And clinging constantly to the outer world, you remain stuck there. You never give a thought to your real self.

**You got this human form but lost the game of life.
You didn't destroy your love for the world.**

He says that you have acquired the human body with great difficulty, and now is your time to triumph over Kal and Maya. Maya and this human body are sitting together, engaged in a game of chance. Out of fear of Maya, a few rare people hurry into the shelter of the Satguru, take initiation from Him, do meditation day and night, and make this body successful. But all the other ignorant jivas are lured to their downfall by the honor and prestige of this world. Being powerless before the pleasures of the world, they gamble with Maya, and they always lose the game. Then, when Maya emerges victorious, she seizes all the wealth of their breaths, and they dragged away in defeat.

Everyone craves material wealth—spouse, children, grandchildren, and all the things of this world. And when we acquire more of these things, we say, “I have won. I am very fortunate. The Lord has given me all this.” Friend, your benefactor is Lord Kal. Why do you think he given you all these things? Just think of the festival of Bakra Eid³. The Muslims people care for their goats and feed them nourishing food every day. They measure those goats around the middle to see how fat they have grown and how much meat they have on their bones. Then when the holy day of Bakra Eid arrives, all those goats are slaughtered.

So, in this same way, we are the “goats” of Kal. He feeds his “goats” on wealth, possessions, spouse, children, grandchildren, houses, and cars. Stuffed with this “food,” the jivas become intoxicated, and one day they will be slaughtered like goats. We came into the human body to win the game of life, but when we depart in defeat—Kal and Maya devour us. Why does this happen? Because our love is attached to the world. We came to destroy our desires, but instead, we have increased them.

Radhaswami says, “Think this over now, and make some effort to change.”

In order to awaken us, Swami Ji Maharaj Ji tells us, “Now devote some attention to your own condition. What has happened has happened. But for the future remain vigilant.” In your heart, keep repeating the Simran day and night. Don’t forget it even for a second. Such remembrance brings success.

3 Bakra Eid or *Īd al-Adhā* is the “Festival of Sacrifice” that commemorates Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his son in obedience to God’s command.

**Improve yourself in the Guru's company, drink
he limitless nectar of Naam.**

What does it mean to improve yourself? Giving up the love of all the world, manifest the Love of the One Guru in your heart. Guru is Naam, and Naam is Guru. When the Love of the Guru manifests in your heart, that Inner Power will connect you with the Naam. Naam is a Sea of Love. It is True and Eternal. That Power of Naam does not take birth or die. When you merge with that unwavering Power, you will become free from the wheel of Kal. This method is so simple. But what can you achieve without effort? Tulsidas has said:

*This world holds all the treasures,
but without good fortune they remain beyond our reach.*

No matter how much knowledge you receive, still the mind remains dull. When you listen to the Satsang, the mind seems to absorb that spiritual instruction. But when the Satsang is over, and you leave that place, you find your mind is unchanged. When you throw a stone into the water, it appears to split the water in two as it skims across the surface. But once that stone sinks below the surface, the water becomes as smooth as it was before. In the same way, when the Guru throws the stone of true instruction into the water of our hearts, for that brief moment, it appears that we have gained a glimmer of understanding. But it is difficult to maintain that understanding because we are attached to the world, to the pleasures, to the family and relations, and we do not want to give them up.

*Who is the one that keeps bringing obstacles before us?
It is the mind. Assuming the form of mother or wife or
father or grandson or wealth, the mind tries to lure us
away from the Path of Spirituality. Sometimes this very
mind takes the form of our enemy; sometimes it takes the
form of our friend. The whole world is the form of mind.*

—Baba Somanath

All the World is Blind

**The Guru says all the world is blind.
No one grasps the secret of the Inner Path.¹**

This is the bani of Param Sant Satguru Hazur Swami Ji. He says that all the world is blind. Why? In the beginning, the Almighty Lord put the Path to meet Him within us and then He sent us into this world. And if our inner eye opens, then we will reunite with the Lord. But through millions of yugas and incarnations, we have been running outward. Lord Kal has placed the curtain of mind and Maya over the soul and has cast it into the outer world. And becoming extroverted, the soul is always hurrying forward, never looking back to realize the True Home that it left so long ago.

Everyone is wandering outside aimlessly. No one catches hold of the Shabd within.

It is just like the water and the waves. Our entire lifespan is consumed counting the waves. Millions of yugas have passed in this way. But what is the nature of a wave? It is composed of water. And if we are under the illusion that the wave is

¹ Swami Ji Maharaj, *Guru kaheñ jagat sab andhā...*

something substantial in itself, if we forget the wave is only water, if we think of the wave as something separate from the water, then we do not understand its real nature.

In the same way, all the jivas, becoming infatuated with the pleasures created by mind and Maya, rush about in the external world and waste their allotted span of life. Under this illusion, the jiva says, “Who is equal to me? What shortcoming is there in me?” We may think this, we may think that, but when the breaths finish what remains? Only a heap of earth, nothing more. We have become so identified with this heap of earth that we think it is our true self. And in our ignorance, we assert: “Who can compare with me?”

The mind is enthralled by the taste of the worldly pleasures; controlled by karma, it remains stuck in worldly pursuits.

The mind is stuck fast in the worldly pleasures, so much so that it cannot free itself from them, even for a second. As soon as we wake up in the morning, the worldly affairs rush in upon us, and we carry them with us all day long. After eating, drinking and wandering about here and there, in the evening, we return home, have our food and fall asleep. In the morning, we wake up and begin all over again. And because of this attachment to the world, we constantly remain involved in the bad deeds. The veil of ignorance has been cast over us, and we don't even attempt to lift that veil.

Sanchit, prālabdh, kriyamān, and āgamyā—these four types or karma are covering our soul. If we remove all thought of past and future karmas from our heart and focus on maintaining purity in the *kriyamān* karmas—the karmas we are creating in the present moment—then the cause of past and future

karmas will be removed. But if instead, we become trapped by our previous bad *kriyamān* karmas and continue on in the same way as before, then the past and future karmas cannot be removed. Our load of sins goes on increasing, and we are making our way back into the wheel of eighty-four lakhs births and deaths.

Held fast in Kal’s snare, the jiva has given up in despair and has become utterly defiled.

What is the snare of Kal? It is this very karma. The soul is trapped in the snare of karma.

The Guru proclaims ceaselessly: “Search for the Shabd within.”

The Satguru constantly tries to make us understand. What does He tell us? “Brother, take your mind away from the disturbance of this world, from “I and mine,” from enjoying the sense pleasures, and fix it within at the point between the two eyes. When the mind becomes concentrated, that Inner Power will call you of itself. That Power is the Sound Current, the Word, the *Ākāshbāñī* (Ethereic Song). Concentrate your attention on that Sound Current—do not look this way and that.

But the jivas do not heed the Guru’s teachings, so how can the eye of the heart be opened?

Why don’t we obey the Guru’s words? Why don’t we give up the path of the mind? Until we obey the Guru’s instructions, the eye of the heart will not open. The words of the

Guru are the only key to open the door that leads within. Therefore, it is said:

The Guru's words are the primal mantra.

The Guru's words unlock the inner door. If we do not obey Him, the Inner Way will remain closed.

Only some rare worthy one stands firm on the support of the Guru's words.

As soon as the rare, worthy disciples hear the Guru's words, they take them to their hearts. The instant they hear those words they act upon them. But the unworthy disciples take the Guru's words as ordinary and carelessly discard them. There are three grades of worthy disciples—high, middle, and low.

Who are the worthy disciples of the highest order? Guru Amar Dev tells us:

*O Nanak, whoever has met the Satguru;
their karmic accounts are all settled.*

Whoever has once attained the inner darshan of the perfect Satguru, whoever has learned the inner secret, their work is accomplished. This is the highest grade of worthy disciple. Such a disciple is like the pearl oyster who swims to the surface of the water and opens its mouth to receive the raindrops that fall during the *svāti nakshatra*. As soon as it catches that swati raindrop, it closes its mouth, and from that drop, it creates the priceless divine pearl in its within.

Then comes the worthy disciple of the middle grade. This grade of disciple is like the drop of water on a lotus leaf. The water falls on the leaf of the lotus and sparkles like a pearl.

But that water drop is not a true pearl. It gradually evaporates and disappears, leaving nothing behind.

The lowest grade of worthy disciple is like the water thrown on heated iron. That water bubbles up like pearls but turns instantly to hot steam that burns the face of the one who has thrown that water.

So, Swami Ji Maharaj says that as soon as those rare worthy disciples hear the Guru's words, they mold their lives according to His instructions. They act on His words and do not allow their minds to wander here and there. They never listen to the advice of the mind.

Whoever stands firm on the Guru's words, the mind plays tricks and sets traps to ensnare them.

What does Swami Ji Maharaj tell us? When the disciples become determined to follow the Guru's instructions, at that time, the mind readies all his forces. The mind will increase or decrease whatever thing the disciple considers dear and precious.

For instance, someone may love their child. If suddenly that child dies, then the disciple will lose faith in the Guru and say: "Just look at my Satguru. Now He cannot even save my child from death, so in the future how will He save me from Kal? I am through with Him; let Him go His own way."

Someone else may desire to hoard up millions of rupees. But if instead of gaining, they suddenly lose all their fortune, then they will say, "So many times I have beseeched my Guru for riches, but what has He given me? Nothing! If He cannot fulfill this small request, how is He going to grant me emancipation when the time comes? I should give up the Guru." In this way, the mind troubles the disciples with its devious counsel and doesn't allow them to do the Guru's devotion.

If after all this, we still don't obey the mind, then he afflicts us with incurable diseases. If someone seeks the aid of a doctor but gets no relief, then the mind says, "Your Guru is not able to remove even this ordinary illness. How will He deliver you from Lord Kal, the Power who devours all? Give up such a Guru." And bringing some doubt or other before us, the mind lures us away from the Path of Grace that leads to deliverance from his domain.

Kal devises his plans and sets the game in motion; he employs every ruse to lead the jiva astray.

If all his other efforts fail to divert us, then the mind comes and stands before us as an enemy. Challenging us to battle, he strives to defeat us. And in the end, if he emerges victorious, then we cry, "So this is what it has come to! The Guru could not manage even this much for me. Now I am done with Him!" So in this way, the mind puts some worldly thought before us—some egotism, some profit or loss, some sorrow or happiness—and tries to throw us down from the Spiritual Path.

If the jiva falls short in the Guru's devotion, Kal stirs up trouble in so many ways.

The mind never lets us wake up in the morning and sit for meditation—this is the greatest obstacle. And if by some means we overcome this obstacle even a little bit, then the mind will come up with some other way to interfere. But this obstacle is the greatest of all, and every disciple is troubled by it right from the very beginning.

There is a saying, "If the goat is spared at Eid, then it will become a fakir at Muharram." First of all, there is no chance

of that goat being saved. Eid is a Muslim festival to commemorate Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his beloved son to God, and all the goats are sacrificed during that festival. Muharram, the first month of the Islamic New Year, is celebrated after Eid. So now the goat makes a vow to Imam Hussain, a martyr who is commemorated during Muharram observances, "Oh, Imam Hussain! If you spare me during the Eid festival, then at Muharram, in your name I will become a fakir, a devotee." But how will that goat be spared? All the goats will be slaughtered at the Eid festival, and so it has no chance of becoming a fakir at Muharram.

It is the same with the mind and the disciple. The mind will never allow the disciple to meditate. But if by chance the mind allows us to do a little meditation, if it leaves the outer tastes a little bit, if it gives up its egotism for a short while, even then it will not allow us to perfect the meditation. It will bring fresh obstacles in our way.

He may come as a friend to mislead us; he may come as an enemy to threaten us.

Sometimes the mind will reason with the devotee: "Why are you involved in this struggle? Give it up. What are you getting from it? Has the world gone away? What are you trying to accomplish? What is this Radhaswami? What is this meditation? Will you gain anything at all by sitting with your eyes closed?"

Sometimes, in the spirit of friendship, the mind will offer you advice. If you do not listen to him, then he will set himself up as your enemy. By some means or other, he has to lead you away from the practice of devotion. Sometimes the mind works as your mother, sometimes as your sister, sometimes as your auntie or as some other relation.

There was one satsangi here who was ready to go to Punjab to take initiation from Hazur Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj. When he gave up eating meat and fish, his mother would quarrel with him about it every day. Then she sent him to his native village and told his brothers and other relatives in the village to serve him meat and fish. But he wouldn't eat that. Finally, when the time came for him to set out for Punjab, his mother told him, "If you go to Punjab tomorrow, I will take a rope and hang myself." He thought, "If I leave now, my mother may kill herself." And so he did not go at that time. But later, when his mother went on a visit to some other place, he was able to travel to Punjab to receive Naam initiation from the Master.

Who is the one that keeps bringing obstacles before us? It is the mind. Assuming the form of mother or wife or father or grandson or wealth, the mind tries to lure us away from the Path of Spirituality. Sometimes this very mind takes the form of our enemy; sometimes it takes the form of our friend. The whole world is the form of mind.

Sometimes he afflicts us with sickness.

He has spread traps of every description.

If the disciple resists all the minds persuasions and still remains firm in the devotion then what does the mind do? He afflicts the disciple with some incurable disease.

The jiva never tastes the Shabd and always remains in suffering and sorrow.

So what happens? The soul of the disciple does not turn within. It does not establish a connection with the Guru and does not attain the inner nectar. Remaining extroverted, that soul wanders lost in the outer world.

But if the Guru showers His grace, the jiva gains salvation, riding on the current of Shabd.

There was a dear one here who came from Pandharpur. Once he said to me, “Baba Ji, this devotion you are doing is very good. I also used to perform these practices regularly. But now I have given them up. When my daughter died five years ago, on that very day I left this all aside. I gave it up.” So I told him, “Friend! What connection is there between the death of your daughter and the emancipation of your soul? Even if you die yourself, never give up the Path.” For a few days, we people maintain the spiritual practices. Then we think, “We’ve had enough. Our purpose is fulfilled. Let’s give this up now.” Can this type of devotion be called spirituality?

When the jivas drink the nectar of Shabd, the fire of this world can no longer burn them.

When the Satguru is gracious on you, when the Guru manifests in your within, when you withdraw your thoughts from the world and view it with detachment, then your thoughts will merge into the Shabd. Now when you close your eyes and sit in meditation, the mind is not sitting still. It is wandering about somewhere outside. Until the mind establishes the inner connection, how will you hear that Shabd? If the mind is wandering outside, then who is present there to listen to that Inner Sound.

For this reason, He says, “When the perfect Satguru is gracious, He manifests before the devotee. Then all the attractions of the world fall away, and the mind remains fixed within.” When the moon rises in the night sky, the moonbird is irresistibly drawn to it; in the same way, when the Guru manifests in our within, the mind becomes absorbed in His form.

Then the Shabd comes of itself because the primal form of the Guru is the Shabd. This is all the grace of the Guru. Many people say, “I have two children. This is the Guru’s grace. My horse has won the race. This is the Guru’s Grace.” Friend, what is the meaning of all this? These worldly things are not the grace of the Guru; they are all the grace of Lord Kal.

When once we become absorbed in the Shabd and become the form of that Shabd, then the fire of the world cannot burn us. All the worldly cravings and desires are extinguished. While our within remains filled with the desires of “I and mine,” we go on burning in that fire of the world. But once the mind becomes absorbed in the Shabd, then that worldly fire has no more power to do us harm.

*Desires are like the sweepers' and tanners' wives;
Desires are the lowliest of the low.
You would have become the Lord Himself
if desires had not come in between.*

Desire for the world possesses us and drives us on from place to place. We carry that desire with us day and night and create karmas to fulfill it. But when our desire becomes absorbed in the Naam, then what is left to drag us about in the world and keep us burning?

**Everything of the world appears flawed and false.
Only the devotion to the Guru is True.**

Those souls who remain absorbed in the Naam day and night regard the world as a debased place. They understand the bonds that keep us shackled, and they see clearly the nets that Kal has spread. Now our love and affection for this outer world is so strong that we cannot leave it, so how can our love

become attached to the Lord? Love is only one. Either you can attach it to the Naam, or you can attach it to the world.

Going into the shelter of Radhaswami, the jiva swims across the ocean of existence.

Whoever does the practice of surat and Shabd will cross over the ocean of existence.

Now the world appears real to us; spirituality seems to be just make believe. We put our trust in our own inferences and imaginings. We hold them to be valid, but we have never tested our assumptions practically in our within. Sometimes our opinion shifts a little this way, sometimes a little that way. Maybe this is true; maybe it's not. We always remain in the realm of speculation and cling fast to our latest belief. But when all at once, the arrow of Shabd strikes our heart, then all our love is for the Shabd — nothing else remains.

—Baba Somanath

Nothing Else Attracts the Heart

**Shabd made kings abandon their kingdoms;
Shabd made them fakirs.¹**

The words of the Guru are infused with power. He has no riches, or worldly possessions, or any other outer thing. What does He have? Kabir Sahib tells us:

*One word of Sat Guru contains limitless meaning.
Gods, men, sages and angels,
none have fathomed its depth.*

In His one word, there is so much power that great yogis, kings and emperors have relinquished luxury, comfort and enjoyments, to become wandering fakirs. Why did they give up everything? Because of the power hidden in the words of the Sadhu Mahatma Satguru. His one word is filled with the power of His renunciation and love of the Lord.

So, this is the bani of Paltu Sahib Ji. He says that Shabd makes rulers renounce their kingdoms; Shabd makes kings into fakirs. Gopichand, Bhartrihari, and the King of Balakh Bukhara all renounced worldly pleasures only because of the power in the words spoken by the Sant Sadhu.

¹ Paltu Sahib, *Shabd chuṛāvai rājya ko, shabdai karai fakir...*

Shabd made them fakirs; Shabd united them with the Lord.

For one who has become attached to Shabd, nothing else attracts the heart.

It is only Shabd that made kings give up the splendor and luxury of their worldly kingdoms, and Shabd alone united them with the Lord. This is the Power of Shabd.

Sacrifice everything to the Guru, giving up reliance on all the gods and goddesses, on worldly wealth and possessions, on spouse, children and grandchildren, on your own body and strength. When you have abandoned everything, where can you look for help? Take the support of the One Shabd. There is no other support you can rely on, no other refuge you can turn to.

When Raja Gopichand gave up his kingdom and became a renunciate, he went to his mother begging for alms. His mother told him, “O Gopichand, you are no longer my son; you are no longer the king. Now you are a yogi, and you have come to my door, begging for alms. Whatever I give you, you have to accept that.”

Then Raja Gopichand said, “O Mother! It is only on your advice that I have renounced all the glory of rulership and have put on the garb of a yogi. Whatever counsel you offer me, I will obey your words.” It was only because of his mother’s advice that he forsook his worldly kingdom and took up the yogic path. Finally, Gopichand came to the feet of Jalandhar Nath and accepted him as his guru. And receiving the charged words from Jalandhar Nath at initiation, he achieved enlightenment.

The One Shabd is all in all. Once we receive the Shabd, nothing remains to give or to take. But we have to devote

ourselves to that Shabd. Until the arrow of Shabd strikes the heart, we will not pierce through the illusory veil of this world. Now the world appears real to us; spirituality seems to be just make believe. We put our trust in our own inferences and imaginings. We hold them to be valid, but we have never tested our assumptions practically in our within. Sometimes our opinion shifts a little this way, sometimes a little that way. Maybe this is true; maybe it's not. We always remain in the realm of speculation and cling fast to our latest belief. But when all at once, the arrow of Shabd strikes our heart, then all our love is for the Shabd—nothing else remains.

**Those who are wounded by the arrow of Shabd
truly begin to live.
Their work is accomplished, but the worldly
people weep and mourn.**

When our life currents withdraw in meditation, this is called dying in the Shabd. Now, we might ask why anyone would go to the Guru if they are going to die. But Paltu Sahib replies: “After all, what is death?” Your body is composed of five material elements. Do these elements die? Do earth, water, fire, air, and ether ever die? These elements are fixed, and in some form or other, they continue—they do not die. And the soul itself is immortal. Nothing dies in nature. Our belief in death is really just our own ignorance of the facts. Paltu Sahib declares: “When the arrow of Satguru’s True Word destroys our ignorance and kills our sense of ‘I and mine,’ then who will revive them? Who will bring them back to life again?” That soul’s task is complete. What difference does it make if the dogs of the world bark, if the worldly people weep and moan?

At the time when Paltu Sahib was residing in Ayodhya, the renunciates living there decided to burn him alive. Ayodhya was the city where all of Ramanand's disciples were staying. When Paltu Sahib proclaimed the truth, it made all of these disciples uneasy and afraid, and they began to oppose Him. In the end, they burned Him alive. At that time, He told them, "Brothers, I have completed my work. Now you may set me on fire or do whatever you may want."

**We wander in the world with that wound,
and the wound of Shabd is fatal.
Dying we take on a new life.
Bowing down, we rise up again.**

Once you have been pierced by the arrow of Shabd, you will carry that wound with you wherever you may wander in this world. When that arrow of separation strikes your heart, that pain drives out the worldly thoughts. When you are absorbed in that intoxication, it may appear to the worldly people that you have some problem. They say, "He has gone mad. Before he was sensible, but now he has lost his wits. What has happened to him? His brain is afflicted." This and that. But that devotee has become absorbed in the intoxication of love. For this reason, Kabir Sahib says:

*The elephant saunters by at its own gait;
If the dogs bark, let them bark.
You must remain absorbed in the remembrance of Naam;
If the worldly people complain, let them complain.*

The devotee is absorbed in Naam Simran and the intoxication of love within. The worldly people can bark if they

like, according to their own understanding. But the devotee pays them no heed.

**O Paltu, when the arrow of Shabd pierces the heart,
Shabd makes kings abandon their kingdoms;
Shabd transforms them into fakirs.**

When the arrow of Sat Naam strikes someone, it pierces right through them. They never forget that wound—they do not possess the power to forget.

**When my soul merged with the Shabd,
I became absorbed in bliss.**

Paltu Sahib says: “The Power of my consciousness, of my attention, has united with that Shabd and has become the form of Shabd. And now the blissful nectar of Shabd has manifested in my within.” But until the soul establishes a connection with that Inner Naam, the bliss of Shabd will not manifest, and you cannot experience the happiness of the union with the Shabd.

**Merging I have gained bliss; water mixes with
water.
One cannot be distinguished from the other;
mixing together they become inseparable.**

What is the nature of the union between surat and Shabd? Where is the proof that it has occurred? What happens when water mixes with water? Can anyone say that this is the water that was here before, and this is the water that has been mixed in with it? No one can prove which water is which.

In the same way, even though our soul is the form of Shabd and the Almighty Lord is also the form of True Shabd, still, we do not see Him because the veil of mind and Maya has been placed between the soul and the Almighty Lord. But when that veil is ripped in two, and the soul merges into the Shabd, then who will be able to claim that they are two separate things? No one will say: “Here is the True Shabd and there is that jiva who has been caught in birth and death, revolving in the wheel of eighty-four.” When the rain falls and merges into the water of the ocean, can anyone say this is the rainwater, and that is the ocean water? Can anyone distinguish one water from the other? No one can separate them—it is an impossibility.

This lawless country has become a peaceful kingdom; the chieftain bows before the King². The subjects enjoy happiness and comfort, and the ten doors are thrown open.

He says, “I became free when I have surrendered control of the mind and senses.” What do we gain from such release? We gain the kingdom of Naam, where the Almighty Lord rules, and everyone enjoys bliss and happiness under His reign. The greatest happiness lies in having such a ruler: “*Rājya*,” the King’s realm, bestows “*rāji*,” happiness and well-being on the subjects. In our within, the soul is eternal and self-existing, complete in its own Power. So, Paltu Sahib tells us: “When my attention became linked with that Shabd, then I gained freedom from the lower influences.” Further, He says, “The King of Kings, the Almighty Lord, has come and taken me under His protection. The ten doors stand open, and there is no

2 The little self bows before the Almighty Lord.

more fear of thieves and looting.” But what is our condition at present? At every door, a thief is posted. The nine doors are swarming with thieves. And those thieves are plundering all our wealth and carrying it away.

All obstacles are removed, and the duality of the senses is abandoned.

You reclaim your true title; the thieves meet with the dogs.

He says that those thieves who enter our within through the ten senses have given up their looting. When the thieves are getting nothing to satisfy their hunger, they go on stealing things. But when they begin to get everything they need, just sitting in one place, why would they need to steal? When the soul unites with the Power that satisfies all desires, then what happens to the senses? They also become absorbed in that Power. They become intoxicated in that bliss. He tells us: “The thieves have met with the dogs.” He is calling the passions of ignorance, lust, anger, etc., as the dogs. When the thieves (the ten senses) join with the dogs (the passions), that is, when scattered attention becomes one-pointed at the seat of the soul, then it becomes absorbed in the true Shabd.

O Paltu, the Satguru has cut my fetters.

My surat has united with the Shabd, and I have attained bliss.

In a moment, the mind goes below the seven nether regions. In one moment it flies beyond the heavens to the Almighty Lord. The heavens and Vaikunth are of no consequence to the mind. The mind is such a mighty force that only very rare devotees can capture it; only the beloveds of the Guru, who have been blessed with the Guru's grace, succeed. If the Guru is gracious, then you take the culprit into custody; otherwise, it is not an easy thing to rein in the mind.

—Baba Somanath

Mind is a Bold Youth

**You cannot catch hold of the mind;
He is a bold youth who is up to no good; he is a
mischievous rascal.
The mind is a cunning friend; he will seize you
by the throat.
O Paltu, in a moment, he flies a thousand miles
without wings.¹**

The basis of all spirituality is to catch hold of the mind. Controlling the mind is called spirituality, devotion, God Himself. Until you bring the mind under control, you cannot accomplish anything at all. The mind is not a small power. The mind is the king and the subject. The mind is the ant and the elephant. Mind is Lord Indra, the heavens, and Lord Vishnu's paradise—Vaikunth. Everything is the play of the mind. The mind dwells below the seven nether regions; the mind soars above the twenty-one heavens. The mind is active everywhere.

To control such a mind is called bhakti or devotion. Whoever seeks to control the mind through the practices of bhakti, comes to understand the nature of the mind. The mind has involved everyone in the outer practices. It has involved

¹ Paltu Sahib, *Man nā pakarā jāy, bahādur jvān hai...*

some in repetitions, rotating the rosary in their hands, and some are wandering from place to place completing the outer pilgrimages. The mind has led some to give up food and remain hungry; the Jains sometimes go three months at a time without eating. This is all the work of the mind. It entangles us in one practice or another; it leads us here and there. The mind makes one person into a king and another into a beggar; it makes one into a sadhu and another into a scoundrel. It sets one person up as a thief and another person as a banker. This is all the mind's play. Controlling the mind is called devotion, but this is no simple matter. When you try to capture the mind, it becomes both the thief and the one chasing the thief. When the mind becomes both, how will you lay hold of it?

No one has ever created a power that can travel through space with the same agility as the mind. We have voyaged to the moon, we have created atom bombs, we can sail on the sea, and we have constructed airplanes to fly in the sky. But no one has ever been able to invent anything capable of defeating the mind, nor will they do so in the future. In a moment, the mind goes below the seven nether regions. In one moment it flies beyond the heavens to the Almighty Lord. The heavens and Vaikunth are of no consequence to the mind. The mind is such a mighty force that only very rare devotees can capture it; only the beloveds of the Guru, who have been blessed with the Guru's grace, succeed. If the Guru is gracious, then you take the culprit into custody; otherwise, it is not an easy thing to rein in the mind.

**You have brought lust, anger, sleep, and hunger
under your control.**

**You have conquered greed, attachment, sorrow,
and happiness.**

But in just a moment, the mind races a thousand miles away.

O Paltu, you have not laid hands on the one who is running the show.

Many people bring the senses under their control. They replace anger with the practice of forgiveness. They become free of greed. They embody all the noble virtues. But to capture the mind is particularly challenging because the mind is highly elusive. The virtues are qualities of the mind, not the mind itself. The mind arouses the quality of lust, and then the desire to indulge arises. The mind incites the quality of anger, and then we pick up a stick to beat someone. The mind encourages the quality of greed, and we begin telling lies and snatching the property of others.

The mind itself is the commander of all of these qualities. You can perfect your practice of true bhakti only when you succeed in catching hold of the mind. No doubt there is some benefit to be gained from developing all the noble qualities; but as long as the mind roams free, one day, it will demolish everything that you have accomplished. We can collect all the virtues, but we have still not yet laid hands on the mind who is giving orders to all the others.

**Even if you measure all the four directions and plumb the depths of the ocean,
Even if you weigh all the mountains and count every drop of water —**

He says, “You can measure the four directions. You can calculate the width and breadth of the seven seas; you can plumb their depths and measure out all the ocean’s water; you can weigh the massive mountains in the scales.

**You have conquered the whole world, but you
have neglected your real task.**

**O Paltu, you have not subdued the one that
weighs forty seers.**

You are able to measure all of the things of this world, but you have not gained control over the one who weighs 40 seers. Forty seers equals one maund, and, in Hindi, the word for a maund is “*man*.” But the Hindi word for mind is also “*man*.” So He says, “The mind (*man*), the one that weighs 40 seers (*man*), has not come under your control.”

What are the forty seers that Paltu Sahib is referring to? The twenty-five prakritis, the five sense enjoyments, and the ten organs of sense make up the forty. These are attributes of the mind and yet the mind permeates them all. Until that one mind (*man*) comes under your control, even if you measure all the oceans and weigh all the mountains—what difference does it make?

Knowingly, they leap into the firepit.

**How can you stop someone who is willing to take
the beating?**

All the jivas build the firepits with their own hands, and they themselves leap into that fire. No one is doing anything to them from outside. They themselves kindle the fire, and they themselves burn their lives to ashes. How? From our childhood, we have been stoking the fire of desire. And as that fire goes on increasing and increasing, it takes on the image of the world. We have been lighting the fire of self-importance over caste and clan; the fire of the sense pleasures and spouse, children and grandchildren; the fire of caring for the family and maintaining family honor; the fire of falsehood and

deception. We ourselves set all these fires ablaze. We even understand that this burning fire of desire is harmful and that we will receive no reward for the worldly things at our end time. Seeing all this clearly, still, we devote our whole lives to our own destruction.

**You have been thrashed many times, but still, you
are not afraid.
O Paltu, this mind is a cobbler and goes on
tanning skins.**

We have incarnated into this world countless times. Sometimes we came as the insects, sometimes as vegetation, sometimes as creatures of the sea, sometimes as beasts of the jungle, sometimes as human beings, sometimes as gods and goddesses. We have taken on form after form, too many times to be counted. Overwhelmed by the whirlwind of Maya and burning in the fire of desire, we destroy our lives. In the inner realms, we have to pay the karmas that we have created; we have to endure the beatings and torments of the angels of death. And then, when we once again go into the womb of the mother, we go through untold suffering there as well. When we come out at birth, then we go on paying our karmic debt, and the cycle of sorrow and happiness continues.

Therefore, He says: “You have endured so many blows, but still you are unashamed.” When you come into this world, you forget all about the time you have suffered. What is the reason? For the sake of physical and mental pleasures, you have forgotten the Eternal Happiness, and in this way, you earn more suffering.

And we go on happily enduring these beatings. No matter how many blows fall, still we don’t remember. When a baby

is born, the mother and father rejoice, “A child has been born to us. Distribute sweets. Make all the arrangements. Hire a band to play. Invite everyone for a feast.” The baby has had to endure so much hardship on its journey into this world, but the parents are celebrating and don’t understand the suffering it has been through. Further, He tells us that the mind is a *chamār*—a cobbler—and is skilled at working with skins. What is the real meaning of *chamār*? We people think that a *chamār* is one who makes shoes and other leather goods from tanned skins. Friend, the real *chamār*, the mind, is sitting within us. And the mind remains infatuated with all the outer things—the skins. Therefore, Ramdas Swami says:

*These eyes of flesh cannot see Him;
You can behold the Lord only with the eye of knowledge.*

Abandoning those eyes of flesh, look with the eye of knowledge, the Shiv Netra; then your conscious self will enjoy His darshan within. Only when we close these eyes of flesh will the eye of knowledge start to function.

As long as our attention is extroverted, we go on looking only at the skin; we see nothing but the destructible things of this world. We are looking only with our outer eyes, not with our conscious seeing faculty. And if we don’t open our inner divine eye in this lifetime, then we depart from this world no different from when we arrived. The beating goes on and on.

It is easy to jump into the well; it is easy to fight on the battlefield.

It is easy to hunt the lion; it is easy to leap into the fire.

But no matter how much courage you show in outer things, it is all in vain.

O Paltu, whoever slays the mind is a mighty warrior.

It is not difficult to die—you can fight on the field of battle, grapple with a lion, leap into a fire, or jump into a well. But to conquer the mind is extremely difficult. One Saint has said, “If anyone tells me that they have brought the mind under their control, I am not ready even to listen to them, because this is not possible.” The mind is such a formidable power that it does not easily come under control. But when the Lord showers His immeasurable grace on His devotees, then, day and night, they remain absorbed in the devotion. Without His grace, we can achieve no peace. But when His grace descends, the mind gets stilled, becomes concentrated within, and unites with the Inner Power of the Lord. Then the mind leaves the turbulence of this world behind.

We people want to have our meals three times a day and four times if the opportunity arises.

*We stuff so much food down our throats
that we choke on it.*

And on top of that, we have tea, and fruit, and other snacks. There is no account of how much we have eaten. And then we stretch out to sleep like Kumbhakarna. We don't get up in the morning to meditate, but when it comes time for tall talk, we can bring heaven and earth together. The Almighty Lord is formless and without attributes. He is inaccessible and unknowable. He is Sat—the Truth; He is Anami—the Nameless One. We say that when we go into a state of deep sleep, we meet with the Anami, but this is not the true Anami—this is only the anami of overeating. It is not an exaggeration to say that controlling the mind and practicing the devotion is beyond the reach of such people.

Day and night, you weigh out short measure. The allotted breaths of your lifetime are a priceless treasure, but you squander them dealing in the material things of this world. Yesterday is gone, today is passing by, and tomorrow will evaporate in its turn. Monday goes, Tuesday goes; the moments ebb and flow while you go on weighing out falsehood; you can't put aside your cunning. All the 24 hours of the day, you heap falsehood upon falsehood. How can you be liberated? You have not learned to measure out true weight. You are always harming yourself—earning bad karmas through your deceitful dealings—but still, you won't abandon your old ways.

—Baba Somanath

Tilting the Scales

**The banyas do not leave their bad habits;
they tilt the scales and always give short weight.¹**

This is the bani of Sant Paltu Sahib. Baniya² refers to a caste of merchants and shopkeepers, but here Paltu Sahib is also alluding to the literal meaning of the word *baniyā* “one who is created.” So, when our soul incarnates in this world, we get caught up in the business of give and take. And we bring with us our karmic account of credits and debits—past actions that will have to be liquidated in this lifetime. The jiva takes up the human body, created through the union of mother and father, in order to do the transactions of Truth, but still persists in double dealing. Therefore, addressing that incarnated soul, Paltu Sahib says: “O, Baniya! You have still not given up your old habits.”

The shopkeepers are also called banyas—baniya is their caste. What do those banyas do? To cheat their customers, they put light weights into the weighing pan and give short measure. Or they may place a scant measure of vegetables in the other pan, and then, when they hold the scale up to

1 Paltu Sahib, *Baniyāñ bāni na choṛai, pasanghā māre jāy*

2 Baniya is a merchant caste made up of shopkeepers, traders, bankers, financiers, and, in modern times, owners of commercial enterprises. In earlier times, they were viewed as somewhat less than above board in their business practices.

balance the two pans, they inconspicuously press a finger on the beam balance to make the two pans level. But when those shopkeepers are buying goods, they do just the opposite. They will try to press down on the pan holding the weights so that the other pan will have to be loaded with an excess of grain or goods to balance the scale. This is called tilting the scales.

Within you, there is also a scale. Using that scale, you weigh out truth and untruth. That scale is called discrimination, and with it, you can differentiate the real from the unreal. So, Paltu Sahib says, “O, Baniya. Even now, you persist in your old ways. You are still trying to tilt the scales.” He is telling the incarnated soul, “You think only of your own advantage and try to usurp the rights of others. For ages and ages, you have indulged in this practice. You press your finger on the beam balance to tilt the scale. You cling to your craftiness; you are still unwilling to give it up.”

They press a finger on the weighing beam; they don't even know how to give full measure.

Day and night, they cheat their customers; it is their time-honored practice.

Day and night, you weigh out short measure. The allotted breaths of your lifetime are a priceless treasure, but you squander them dealing in the material things of this world. Yesterday is gone, today is passing by, and tomorrow will evaporate in its turn. Monday goes, Tuesday goes; the moments ebb and flow while you go on weighing out falsehood; you can't put aside your cunning. All the 24 hours of the day, you heap falsehood upon falsehood. How can you be liberated? You have not learned to measure out true weight. You are always harming yourself—earning bad karmas through your deceitful dealings—but still, you won't abandon your old ways.



Early Photograph of Baba Somanath Ji

**No matter how much the proper way is explained,
still a fool does not change.**

**Falling into the trap of greed, you endure untold
suffering.**

When you set up a shop, the local authorities issue you a license, they also give you all the things you need to run an honest business. They install an accurate scale and weights at your shop. They warn you about proper practices. But with all that, you slip back into your old ways.

The Vedas, Shastras, Puranas and other holy books, the Upanishads, the Smritis, and the philosophical treatises on *Nyāya* and *Mīmāṃsā* (schools of orthodox Hindu philosophy), etc.—why were these ancient texts created? They all explain about making the mind still; they all seek to impart right understanding. But the foolish mind does not grasp the truth. No matter how much you expound on the subject, with all that, the mind will not understand.

**Your mind has become shameless; it takes no
pride in honest labor.**

**You have not understood the secret of the Lord
who created you.**

This mind is shameless and does not look to its own work. Indulging in criticism, backbiting, and bickering, it shirks its duty. And in this brazen mood, it does not shrink from deception and trickery. What can be done with such a hardened rogue?

The Lord gave you this beautiful human body and endowed you with the faculty of discrimination. He always provides food to nourish you, and He even furnishes you with comforts and conveniences. That very Lord sits within you and looks to all your needs, but you have no knowledge of Him.

**Paltu says: "Revolving again in the wheel of 84,
you will be beaten with shoes.
The banyas do not leave their bad habits; they
tilt the scales and always give short weight.**

What fate awaits you? Revolving again in the cycle of 84 lakh births and death, you will be beaten with shoes; you will get kicked and knocked. The angels of death will seize you and not let you go.

In this upper-story shop, the wise customers make good deals and gain a lot of benefit. They purchase valuable merchandise. But the other poor, ignorant fellows don't even understand the value of these goods or what price to offer. The common method of bargaining for the right price (bhāv) won't work here. In this shop, it is only through love (bhāv) that you can buy the true merchandise and merge into the Oneness of the Lord. But the worldly wise know nothing of this method of bargaining and so they lose this priceless opportunity.

—Baba Somanath

The Competent Trader

**O renunciate! The one who walks on the Path is
the beloved of the Lord.¹**

This is the bani of Kabir Sahib Ji. So many practices have been put forward as pathways to the Lord's door—devotion, reasoning, renunciation, rites and rituals, fasting and so forth. In their devotion, practitioners have adopted countless different garbs in pursuit of holiness. Every being on this earth is engaged in the remembrance and devotion of God Almighty, each according to their own background and understanding. Many revere time-honored traditions, scrupulously following practices and prescriptions handed down from generation to generation. But Kabir Sahib reveals the True Path to us in simple words:

*The one who follows the teachings is my own son;
The one who speaks of the teachings is my dear relation;
But the one who lives the life of Truth is my Guru;
I will never abandon His company.*

For countless ages, our attention has been stuck fast in the gross material things of this world. Day and night, we remain

¹ Kabir Sahib, *Avadhū chāl chalai so pyārā*

intoxicated, chasing the false happiness they afford—but since everything in this mortal world is destructible, that happiness is short-lived. And when death overtakes us, the soul, enslaved as it is to fleeting outer phenomena, is dragged back inexorably to the material plane, taking birth again and again in the wheel of transmigration.

To become free from the material world and escape from this endless cycle, to attain Truth and achieve immortality, you must go into the shelter of the Satguru. He will reveal the inner secret to you and teach you the meditation practice that leads to the True Lord. Then it becomes the duty of the disciple to walk on the Path shown by the Guru. You must maintain unshakeable faith in the Guru's words and perform the meditation practice with unbroken regularity. Until you become fixed and firm in your practice, you cannot rid your heart of worldly fantasies or the love for outer pomp and show.

Many people are inspired to take up the bhajan practice, but their faith is unsteady, and they are lax about following the Guru's instructions. The result is half-hearted, superficial efforts. You point your gun at the target, but your shaky hand discharges the gun in another direction, and the bullet goes wide. What is the result? You accomplish nothing at all.

Instead, we must follow the Guru's instructions whole-heartedly, fixing the inner gaze at the still point between the eyes and repeating the Naam Simran mentally without a break. Because our mind is now engaged in the outer Simran (remembrance) of the world, it has become extroverted. Until we take the support of the inner Simran, we cannot rid ourselves of this worldly simran. It is a natural quality of the mind that it can focus on only one thing at a time. It may be fully absorbed in one type of remembrance, but if you offer it a different remembrance, it will quickly forget all about the first.

Now, caught up in the simran of the worldly pleasures, we remain far away from the true essence of the All-Pervading Spirit. But if the Satguru connects us with the True Naam, then the thoughts of the mind are gradually replaced with the Simran of the Lord. When that Naam Simran becomes perfect, then all fantasies of the world, all assertions of the petty ego, and all cravings for the sense pleasures are banished forever. As we go on doing the Naam Simran, our within gets illumined with Light. All remnants of ego are shed and the soul shines forth, rising into pure Consciousness and merging into the All-Conscious Shabd. That Shabd transports the soul to the source and fountainhead of the Divine Melody itself. This primal Path is simple and true. It is not manmade. It is the Path laid down in the beginning by the Creator Himself to reunite the lost souls who are yearning for Him.

**Day and night, remember the bodiless Naam;
never let the connection break.**

Kabir Sahib Ji explains to us, but we grasp His meaning according to the stage of development we have reached, according to the degree of right understanding we have cultivated. He says, “Day and night, remember the bodiless Naam.” Constantly, without a break, repeat the Naam Simran and rise above the body. Because Naam is bodiless, it has no connection to the material coverings whatsoever. The True Naam cannot be spoken with the mouth; it cannot be repeated by the physical tongue or any other outer means. Sat Naam is bodiless (*videh*). It originates far beyond the realms of the bodily coverings. Repeating the Simran, extricate the soul from the trammels of the flesh, and merging into the Naam, travel to the regions of Pure Spirit.

Never let your concentration waver even for a fraction of a second; keep your consciousness anchored in the Naam Power. When you repeat the Simran over and over, you will become its very form. This is the purpose of Simran. Through constant simran of outer things, the world has so much taken possession of us that we have become the image of the world. The soul has forgotten its true origin and has become trapped in the realm of Maya. We must reverse this process with the Simran of Naam. As we go on repeating the five Holy Names, we take on the color of Naam, and all thoughts of the outer world vanish into thin air.

Do not forget the Naam, even in dreams; maintain your promise every moment.

Now, He tells us: “What to speak of the waking state, never let the remembrance of Naam Simran slip away from your thoughts, even in dreams.” Once the Simran has become constant and automatic, it echoes even in sleep. The Naam reverberates even in the dream state. It is said that the true Rama lies beyond all utterance. The perfect Simran goes on without repetition. When you become the form of Simran, when the little self is forgotten in the remembrance of the Lord, know that your course of Simran is complete.

Now, we sit for meditation and repeat the Naam Simran. But the mind refuses to cooperate. It doesn't want to concentrate within, and if we manage to tame it briefly, some random thought arises and drags it back outside. Sometimes sleep and laziness attack us. Sometimes our back hurts, or mosquitoes keep biting us. One way or another, our meditation is spoiled, and we give it up. This cannot be called real meditation.

We should go on repeating the Naam Simran and become the form of Naam. Then we will have no awareness of

troublesome mosquitoes or aches and pains in the body. As long as our within is filled with poisonous thoughts, as long as we remain the image of the mind, we will be pursued by adversity. But when we lay down the burden of our little self and merge into the Naam, all our trials and tribulations will cease.

From among all the sadhus, choose the One who practices the secret of the Shabd.

Go in the company of that Sadhu who practices the meditation of Shabd. When one lantern is lit, it casts a shadow of darkness beneath it. But when two lanterns are lit together, each one dispels the darkness beneath the other, and it is all light. Therefore, if you are practicing the Simran of Naam, go in the company of a Sadhu who is adept in that practice. The Sadhu's heart is pure and will purify your heart as well; your devotion and love will increase many-fold. So never give up the company of the Sadhu. We are dyed in the color of the company we keep, and the Sadhu will remake us in His own image.

Take a worldly example. One evening you run into a friend who is fond of the cinema, and he says, "I hear there's a great picture playing at the cinema house. Let's go see it together." Now you were not thinking of going to the cinema, but under the influence of your friend, you decide to go, just to keep him company. You think there will be no harm in it.

But mind is such a powerful force that wherever you go, your within is filled with the impressions of that place, and you take that influence with you when you return home. You can't remain unaffected. So, when you go to the cinema, all the images and songs and dances fill up your mind, and you can't get rid of them; they come up in your mind over and over again. This is the mind's natural quality.

Similarly, someone who has the habit of drinking liquor may invite you to their home. They offer you a glass of wine, but what to speak of one glass, by the time you leave them you have had four. Intoxicated from this indulgence, you go on repeating it, and before you know it you have cultivated the habit of drinking.

Therefore, Kabir Sahib Ji enjoins us: “Always keep the company of the Sadhu who does the meditation of Naam. If you remain in His company day and night, then your heart will become pure, and you will progress in your meditation by leaps and bounds.”

Kabir says, “Listen, O renunciate! Seize the lifeline of Sat Naam.”

Understanding the Sadhu as your dear relation, treasure the True Name in your heart, and anchor your thoughts in Sat Naam. One Naam pervades—both within and without. But because the veil of mind and Maya has been thrown over the soul, you have become extroverted. You have turned away from the real Naam and now have to search within to rediscover its celestial strains. But once your inner eye is opened, you will see clearly that the same Naam pervades the outer and the inner worlds alike. That Naam is eternal. Once you contact the All-Pervading Naam within, you will see the same Power working outside as well. You will proclaim with Guru Nanak Dev:

*Wherever I look, I see the Merciful Lord,
Who is compassionate on the poor ones.*

Wherever I look, I see my God standing there before me.

O, Niranjan, Immaculate Lord, your family is the true one.

Kabir Sahib Ji asks, “Who are the real relatives of the soul? Who are your true friends and family?” We pass our life with our outer relations and companions—our children, our family, our aunts and uncles, and so on—thinking they are the source of happiness. We all live together under one roof and take our meals together. The whole household is in a constant state of activity and unrest. We think this is the normal state of affairs.

But if we look at the reality, we see that the soul stands all alone. This creation was fashioned through the action of Maya on the five material elements. We take birth from someone’s womb, and that person is our mother. Our father is also there in our home, along with our brothers and sisters and other relatives. Later on, we make friends, we take a spouse and have children and grandchildren. Maya spreads her wares, and the fair is open for business.

But who is the real relative of the soul? Kabir Sahib tells us that *Niranjan Nirākār*,² is the soul’s only true friend and relation. *Nirākār* is the Formless Power, the One without *ākār* or form. He is the relative of the soul. *Anjan* means stain and *Niranjan* is the one without stain of any kind. He is the *Svayambhū*,

2 The term *Niranjan* (the one without stain) deserves further explanation. In Sant Mat, it is used extensively to describe the Satguru, as well as the Almighty Lord Himself. Regarding the Satguru as *Niranjan*, in the chapter “The Nature of Oneness,” in *Godman*, Master Kirpal quotes from the Gurbani: “Satguru is *Niranjan* (pure, immaculate); do not consider Him as a human being. [सतगुरु नरिजनु सोइ ॥ मानुख का करि रूपु न जानु ॥ SGGS, p 895].” The term “*Jot Niranjan*” (the light without stain) is applied specifically to the Lord of *And* or the Astral Plane. Speaking of *Jot Niranjan*, Master Kirpal Singh tells us: “Each of these planes has its individual presiding deities: *Jot Niranjan*, for example, is the Lord of *And*, the subtle or mental plane, and is the creator of the material and physical universe, which is next below in the hierarchy.” Kirpal Singh, *Spirituality: What it is* (Anaheim, California: Ruhani Satsang, 1981) p 83.

Self-Existing Lord. Maya is the stain or *anjan*; so, the Immaculate Power, untainted by Maya is called *Niranjan*. He is your supreme wealth. He is your relative and your true family as well.

In the colorful palace, the havildar and the subedar are always in conflict.

Kabir Sahib Ji says: “Within is a colorful palace (*rang mahal*)—a wondrous, Self-Existing Temple of Delights.” And in that place a contest is in progress. There the *havildār* and the *subedār* are ever ready to plunge into a fight, and the crowds have assembled to watch their never-ending jousting.

Who are these combatants and what is their dispute? Nowadays, a *havildār* is a sergeant who supervises ten or twenty constables.³ And in the Temple of Delights, the *havildār* is the official who gives out the *havāla* or authorization. He is assigned with issuing the approval for those entitled to rewards. He proclaims: “You are walking on the true way. I have verified the proofs of your righteous deeds. I authorize you to receive this and that.” But unfortunately, he pays little attention to the actual evidence, and his judgment is arbitrary at best.

In this palace, there is also a *subedār*; Kabir is not talking about some outer *subedār*. Here, he is the representative of righteousness and insists that a person must have actually performed *subh karma* or good deeds before a reward is granted. The *subedār* is issuing commands, but the *havildār* is ignoring him, and so they go on quarreling, while everything in the colorful palace appears to be going topsy-turvy.

3 Through time the exact definitions for *havildār* and *subedār* have varied, but in modern times, the *havildār* is roughly equivalent to a sergeant, who could be more susceptible to bribes and bending the rules, while the high-minded *subedār* is a commissioned officer who might frown on such practices.

**The Saints sit in the dust under the burning sun.
Why is it thus, O Creator?⁴**

Outwardly, the Sadhus may sit in the dust, under the burning sun, but within, they have lost themselves in the Power of Radiant, Scintillating Light. Who else could that Radiant Power be but the One who has fashioned this creation according to His Will? And that Creator also dwells within you.

In the eyes of the world, Sadhus are a sad lot, taking shelter in the bushes when it rains, numb with cold in the winter, sitting in the blazing sun covered in ashes in the summer. No one asks about their well-being. We equate them with beggars and the so-called sadhus with which the world is flooded. We people say, “They have abandoned worldly affairs and are like ghosts. They have nothing of value. If we go to them, they will just beg alms from us, so it is better not to go at all.”

**The prostitute is draped in delicate, costly fabrics;
she wears necklaces of pearls and red coral
around her neck.**

But we are looking at everything backwards; our point

4 In this hymn Kabir is addressing an age-old question: Why do the righteous suffer while the wicked flourish? He offers the example of the prostitute living in luxury while the Saint engaged in devotion or the righteous wife dedicated to her husband may be undergoing great hardship. The Adepts of Sant Mat explain clearly that, at present, we are reaping the fruit of our past actions. And our present actions form the seeds that will fructify at some later date. Both the wicked and the righteous are undergoing the reactions of their past deeds and forging their futures, for better or worse, through their current deeds. The seeming inequities that we observe are brief and illusory but, to those ignorant of the inexorable laws of karma, the so-called injustice in the present moment can be baffling.

of view is all wrong. We despise the Sadhus, and waste our time chasing after dancers and prostitutes. The prostitutes wear the finest clothes and are wrapped in sumptuous veils, while the True Sadhus, who remain absorbed in the meditation on the Almighty Lord, barely have clothes to put on their backs.

The whole world is upside down—we take true for false and false for true. The prostitute is dripping in jewels. Around her neck she wears golden necklaces set with diamonds, pearls, and elaborate beadwork; and yet she plies a lowly trade.

**For the faithful wife, even rough cloth is hard
to come by; her food is simple and plain.**

The faithful wife does not have fancy clothes to wear. She eats plain, simple food. And in the meantime, the wrongdoers are enjoying all the luxuries the world has to offer. But within, the faithful wife is filled with inner peace and contentment, while the hearts of the false ones burn in the fire of desire.

**The hypocrites are honored in this world;
they reject Truth and embrace falsehood.**

The so-called sadhus make a false show of devotion. They grow long locks or shave their heads clean. They keep fasts and perform so many other practices for outer show. And seeing their devotions, the people heap honor and respect upon them, when all the while, the real Sadhus are dying of hunger.

Once such a sadhu visited a town and boasted to the people there, “Before coming here, I was performing austerities in the Himalayas. And when I was doing my practices, the tigers and lions and bears would come and sit beside me. But

I was so absorbed in my devotion that I wasn't afraid. I paid no attention to them and didn't even know when the wild beasts would come and go."

In that town, there was a Vedanta Society, and the members provided a room for that sadhu to stay in. Unfortunately, that room was full of mosquitoes, and all night long, they went on biting that sadhu. So, when morning came, he announced to the townspeople that he was leaving. Puzzled, they asked him if there was any problem, and he blurted out, "Yes, there are too many mosquitoes here." Surprised, they replied, "You were telling us earlier that you had no fear of tigers, lions, scorpions or snakes. Are you going to run away from a few mosquitoes?" Apparently, his austerities made him fearless in the Himalayas, but didn't have the same effect in the town. Such sadhus are always ready to brag and make a show, but within they are hollow. Their hearts are full of sadness, and they have no peace.

The discriminating ones recognize the True Sadhus, but the fools cling to falsehood.

Some discriminating people can discern the Truth. They believe in the true Sadhus and honor them. But the weak-minded people—those who lack judgment—give honor and respect to falsehood. They publish articles in the newspapers. This mahatma is very good. He has given this fine talk or that fine talk; he has done all sorts of wonderful things. Or they say such and such swami has come. He is "Shri" this and "Shri Shri" that and "Shri Shri Shri" something else. They add so many "Shri's" to his name—a thousand wouldn't be enough. This is nothing more than advertising; just empty words. But what is the real condition of such mahatmas and swamis? If we were to get a glimpse of their inner state, it would leave us speechless.

**Kabir says, lay your prayers before the Sadhu;
take hold of the Shabd that is genuine.**

Kabir Sahib Ji proclaims that the *dhunātmak* Naam within you is true. It is genuine. Connect your thoughts with that Naam and become its very form. Then you can escape from the cycle of birth and death.

**Truly speaking, this world is rushing towards death.
It is the form of falsehood.**

This world was created out of falsehood. Our heart is engaged in the dealings of falsehood day and night. When our end time comes, we die in falsehood. Just consider this carefully. From our childhood all the way up to the present time, our whole life has been founded on falsehood. From the time we get up in the morning till we go to bed in the evening, we are amassing falsehood heaped on top of falsehood. When we go into the world, we fill our within with untruth, and bring the load home with us when the day ends. As long as we are busy with untruth, the world rewards us with a lot of honor and respect. But if we speak the truth, then a battle royal ensues. Speaking on this subject, Kabir Sahib tells us plainly about this world and the nature of falsehood:

*In reality, we are rushing towards death,
And the world has placed its faith in falsehood.*

If you speak the truth, then everyone in the world will blaze up in opposition; but they dance with delight to the tune of falsehood.

This body is a strange and wonderful town; but only the rare devotees purchase the true merchandise.

In the town of the body, we people wander around blind. We do not grasp the truth. Understanding falsehood as truth, we go about our daily affairs. We are surrounded by illusion. And in this town, there is a bazaar. In that marketplace, only a few rare ones can make good deals and gain real benefit; all the rest squander their life-breaths purchasing the worthless goods of Maya. And at the end time, they leave empty-handed. Only a few buyers engage in profitable trade.

Three merchants have opened a shop and have filled it with the five and twenty-five.

Three merchants have opened a shop in this town. What merchandise do they deal in? They are selling five subtle elements and twenty-five prakritis. These three merchants have piled their warehouse to the ceiling with worldly goods.⁵ And who are these three merchants? They are the three *gunas*—*rajogun* (activity), *tamogun* (inertia), and *satogun* (purity). Brahma, who governs *rajogun*, forms the “A” or *akār* in the sacred word AUM. Brahma is the power that gives *akār* or form to the whole created world. Vishnu, who governs the *satogun*, forms the “U” or *ukār* in AUM. We call Vishnu the preserver of the world. He keeps the creation running and cares for everyone’s well-being. [And Shiva is the “M” or *makār* in AUM.] He is in charge of *tamogun* (inertia) and oversees the creation’s destruction.

5 The five subtle elements or *panch-tanmātra* (sound, touch, form, taste and odor) as opposed to the five gross element or *panch-bhūt* (earth, water, fire, air and ether).

So, these three merchants are always busy within us creating new merchandise for their shop. First of all, a desire arises in the mind (*manas*). This desire is generated by Brahma, the creator. Then Vishnu, the preserver, acting through the intellect (*buddhi*), takes charge, examining the desire in great detail and determining what materials are needed to fulfill it. Those desires he deems worthwhile are acted on and brought to fruition. Once the desire is fulfilled, then Shiva, the destroyer, makes that desire vanish. So, first a desire arises, then the intellect evaluates that desire and executes a course of action, and finally, when the process is complete, that desire disappears.

In this way, these three merchants carry on their business. What is this merchandise they are peddling? Their shop is filled with countless wares fashioned from the five subtle elements and the twenty-five prakritis.

**When sugar and camphor are mixed together, you cannot tell one from the other.
So how can you separate them out again?**

Shopping in this bazaar is a tricky business, because two types of goods are being sold. On one hand, you have all the gross material goods of the physical world, manufactured from the five gross elements, the five subtle elements, the three gunas, the twenty-five prakritis, and the action of the *antahkarana* (inner mind). And on the other hand, you have the goods of the Conscious Power—chastity, contentment, bliss, and constant Simran. They are a completely different class of goods.

But both types of goods—inert and conscious—are sold in the same bazaar, and they look so much alike that the undiscerning jiva becomes confused and cannot tell one from the other. In this muddled state, we forget our universal nature, and

the petty individual ego boastfully asserts: “I am.” This is the result of mixing up the wares. But when the goods are sorted out, when the conscious is separated clearly from the unconscious, then self-knowledge dawns within us. Understanding our real nature, we attest to the Truth: “I am soul, a drop in the ocean of All-Consciousness.” Now both types of goods are piled up together—the awareness of consciousness and the illusion of inert matter. And it is very difficult to separate the two because—just as when camphor⁶ is adulterated with sugar—the two types of goods can appear the same, even though their natures are vastly different.

So, we must strive to discern the conscious from the inert. Otherwise, when we are practicing our meditation or when we are doing our seva, our individual ego will creep in, and we will start thinking, “I am the greatest of all.” We must exercise discrimination and, like connoisseurs, separate the sugar (false, material goods), from the camphor (the precious merchandise of True Consciousness). Only when we rid ourselves of unconsciousness can we become fit to take up the true seva. If we perform the seva while we are under the illusion of gross matter, then we will push ourselves forward. We will think we are the greatest sevadars of all. It is very difficult to separate Truth from falsehood

**But there is another shop tucked away on an upper floor.
Since the front door is on the street level and the shop
is on the story above, the customers are puzzled.**

Now there is another shop in this marketplace, hidden away on the first or second floor. But the front door is on the

⁶ Camphor is used in devotional rituals and is much prized, but traders often adulterate it to expand the quantity and increase their profits.

ground level. So, when the customers enter the shop, they get confused. They don't know to go upstairs. They don't see any merchandise displayed, and voicing their disappointment, they leave empty-handed. Many people enter on the ground floor, eager to purchase the merchandise of devotion and renunciation. But they find the ground floor empty and deserted. They don't climb to the upper story, where an abundance of goods is displayed. Disgruntled, those customers go away and tell everyone: "Don't bother to go there. That shop is empty, and there is nothing to buy."

You must climb to the upper story; then you will find the door into the wonderful shop. That shop is well-stocked with priceless merchandise, but the customers who get stuck on the ground floor never reach there and are the great losers.

**The wise customers make good trades,
but the fools don't even know how to bargain.**

In this upper-story shop, the wise customers make good deals and gain a lot of benefit. They purchase valuable merchandise. But the other poor, ignorant fellows don't even understand the value of these goods or what price to offer. The common method of bargaining for the right price (*bhāv*) won't work here. In this shop, it is only through love (*bhāv*)⁷ that you can buy the true merchandise and merge into the Oneness of the Lord. But the worldly wise know nothing of this method of bargaining and so they lose this priceless opportunity.

**He makes Sar Shabd the weighing pans and
inserts the balance beam of Truth.**

⁷ Baba Somanath is making a pun here. The word *bhāv* means both "love" and "the going rate."

What scale do they use to weigh out goods in this upper-story shop? You know how the shopkeepers weigh out goods in the bazaar. In order to cheat the customers, they put the goods in one pan of the scale and stealthily press down on the balance beam of the scale to make the goods seem heavier than they are. Then quickly they pile up extra weights in the other pan, so they can overcharge their customers. But Kabir tells us that in this shop, such subterfuges are not permitted. The Sar Shabd and the Sat Shabd form the pans of that scale, and the balance beam is Truth. You can purchase these goods only when they have been weighed out properly, with the beam level and the two pans perfectly even. He is telling us that we can purchase the wealth of Naam, only when the mind becomes perfectly still, balanced between the two eyes. This is how the merchandise is sold in the upper-story shop.

If we sit for meditation every day with regularity, we can test this for ourselves. When you fix your attention at the still point between the eyes, the Power of Truth comes to your aid, and you will achieve perfect equilibrium. But until you contact that True Power within yourself, everything remains unbalanced.

**Within the body, the Satguru is a Competent Trader.
He sees that true measure is given.**

So, Kabir Sahib explains that no power is equal to the Satguru:

*There is no relative so dear as the Satguru;
No benefactor so precious as the Sadhu.
There is no well-wisher so great as Hari;
No caste like the servants of God.*

The Satguru is our closest relative, the Power works on our behalf, both here and hereafter. The Guru is not the outer physical body. The Guru is the Self-Existing Power within.

That Power who removes the darkness of ignorance from our hearts and unites us with the Truth is the real Guru. The true business we have to transact, is winning the grace of such a Guru; until we strike that bargain, our trade can never flourish.

The Satguru acts as a broker, a go-between. A broker understands both the buyer's point of view and the seller's point of view. If the buyer and the seller bicker and break off negotiations, then there will be no sale. So, you need a broker to mediate... [end of tape]

Kabir says, "Listen, O brother sadhu. Only the rare ones strike such a bargain.

If the Guru ferries you across, you will attain liberation; otherwise, no soul can cross the ocean of existence on their own."

Biographical Notes
and
First Line Index to the Banis

Biographical Notes on the Authors of the Banis

AKKA MAHDEVI (c. 1130–1160) was a renunciate sadhu born in the village of Udutadi located in the Shikaripur taluk of Shimoga district, Karnataka. Akka means “Elder Sister,” and Mahadevi means “Great Goddess.” She worshiped God in the form of Lord Shiva, who she called *Chennamallikarjuna*, “Lord, White as Jasmine.” She was a prominent figure in the Lingayat Shaiva sect known as the sharanas (those who have surrendered) and composed 430 Kannada poems called vachanas, a form of spontaneous bhakti poetry, also authoring two short works on spirituality called *Mantrogopya* (The Secret Mantra) and the *Yogangatrividh*. (The Threefold Aspects of Yoga.)

The traditional story goes that the king of the region, Kaushika, fell in love with Akka Mahadevi and the girl agreed to marry him on three conditions: “First, no matter how many sadhus come to our door, and no matter how much wealth I give them in alms, no one should stop me. Second, whenever I am sitting in meditation, you should not disturb me. And finally, you must respect my spiritual quest.” The king promised to abide by all three conditions, but over time, one by one, he broke all three. Akka Mahadevi abandoned the palace and adopted the life of a renunciate sadhu. She had turned her back on the world and attached all her love to the Almighty Lord. She wrote in her vachanas: O, Father! Without Your Love, joy is misery. O, Father! If I have Your Love, misery is joy to me.” *Appā! Ninna prēmavillade santōṣavū duḥkhavē. Appā! Ninna prēmavidhare duḥkhavū santōṣavē nanage*. When her mother asked how she would survive, Akka Mahadevi said simply: “If I am hungry, I will wander from door to door, if I am thirsty, I will drink from the lakes and

rivers, and when tired, rest in the broken-down ruins of temples and monasteries. If I am not concerned about how I will live today, why should I worry about tomorrow?"

BASAVESHWARA, also Basava or Basavanna, (c. 1131–1196) was born in Bagewadi, a town in Hungund taluk in Bagalkot district (former Bijapur district) of Karnataka. He played a significant role within the Lingayat community and wider society as a philosopher, poet, statesman, and social reformer. As a youth he spent twelve years studying at the Sangamesh Monastery at Kudala Sangama, where Eeshanya Guru imparted free education, disbursed free food, and dispensed free medicine to people of all religions. This was a huge influence in the life of young Basava. He stayed with the Guru for 10 years and learned the Vedas, Puranas, and Shastras, as well as Sanskrit and Kannada. His education led him to a universal outlook, and he strongly opposed caste, creed, and gender discrimination. Because of his commitment to ahimsa (non-violence) he condemned both human and animal sacrifice.

When his education was complete, he then took up a position in the court King Bijjala I of the Kalachuri dynasty, and through hard work and aptitude rose to the position of Administrator of the Royal Treasury. In that role, he established the Anubhava Mantapa (Pavilion of Experience), an assembly where people from widely divergent socio-economic and religious backgrounds could sit together and openly discuss the spiritual, philosophical, and practical aspects of life, seeking first, unity in the diversity of beliefs and backgrounds, leading to unity with the Almighty Lord. Basaveshwara requested Allama Prabhu, a great scholar of the time, to serve as the first president of Anubhava Mantapa. Besides discussions, the reading of poetic compositions became an important part of the proceedings and was an invaluable aid in rising above superficial differences to find the common divine

thread shared by all. Basaveshwara himself penned many Kannada poetic compositions called vachanas. In his writings he expressed his devotion to God in the form of Lord Shiva, Sangameshvara, “Lord of the Meeting Rivers,” which beautifully captures the essence of Basava’s experience of the Divine as the confluence of spiritual energies and the unity of diverse paths. As he wrote in his vachanas: “Just as rivers flow together at the confluence, so my mind merges in you, O, Sangameshvara.” *Nadigaḷu saṅgamavāguvudu hege? Nanna manassu ninnakḷegē saṅgamavāguvudu.*

CHARANDAS, also Charan Das, (1703–1782) was born in a Brahmin family, in the village Dehra in the Alwar District of Rajasthan. His parents were devotees of Lord Krishna. When his father left the earth plane, the family shifted to Delhi where Charandas spent the rest of his earthly sojourn. In adolescence, he was prone to wander throughout the countryside seeking isolated spots where he could sit for meditation. It was on one such excursion to far-flung regions that he encountered an obscure sadhu name Baba Shukdev Das, who initiated him into the mysteries of the beyond. After his initiation, Sant Charandas continued to live in Delhi and meditated for about twelve years in a nearby cave outside of the city. He authored several books on the spiritual path, the most prominent being *Bhaktisagar* (Ocean of Bhakti) that dealt with the theme of devotion to God, which can only be successful by becoming free of the ego: “Those who were filled with pride were robbed of their wealth. Those who became egoless reached the abode of Lord Hari.” *Abhimānī mūñje gaye lūṭ liye dhan bām, nirabhimānī ho chale pahuñce hari ke dhām.* During his lifetime, his reputation for purity and piety spread far and wide, and even King Muhammadshah of Delhi became his disciple and donated several villages to him. Also counted among Charandas’ disciples were Sahajo Bai and her sister Daya Bai, who wrote hymns extolling the greatness of their Guru.

GARIB DAS (1717–1778) was born to a family of prosperous Dhankhar Jats in the village of Chudani, District Jhajjar, Haryana, India. According to his own account, his spiritual journey started when “Almighty God” Kabir came to meet him and gave him initiation at the age of 10 years. It is said that Kabir took him to Sat Lok, where he found Kabir sitting on the throne. After achieving spiritual enlightenment, he composed hymns describing the spiritual journey and emphasizing the divine nature shared by all life: “God sees everyone with equal mindedness, He is in every heart and soul; There is no difference between the high and the low.” *Ekai najar nirañjanā, sabhahī ghaṭ dekhai; ũñch nīch antar nahīñ, sab ekai pekhai*. His works were later collected in the holy book *Garib Dās kī Granth* (The Writings of Garib Das).

He is not to be confused with Garib Das (1846-1918), the devoted initiate of Swami Shiv Dayal Singh and beloved brother disciple of Baba Jaimal Singh.

GURU NANAK DEV (1469–1539) was born in Rai Bhoi di Talvandi (now Nankana Sahib, Pakistan), near Lahore. His family were Khatris, a Hindu merchant caste, and as a youth, Nanak worked in his father’s shop. Later in life, Nanak married and settled in Kartarpur, where he earned his living by farming. He had two sons: Sri Chand, who rejected his father’s Path and took instead to asceticism and pranayama, and Lakhmi Das, who had no interest in spiritual matters at all. Guru Nanak’s teachings, stressing the oneness of God and salvation from rebirth through meditation on the divine Naam, are encapsulated in His writings, particularly the timeless Jap Ji: “There is One Reality, the Unmanifest-Manifested; Ever-Existent, He is Naam (Conscious Spirit), the Creator; pervading all; without fear; without enmity. The Timeless; the Unborn and the Self-existent; complete within Itself; through the favor of His true Servant, the Guru, He may be realized.” *Ik Onkār, Sat Nām, Kartā Purakh, Nirbhau, Nirvair,*

Akāl Mūrat, Ajunī Saibhang, Gur Prasād. Guru Nanak undertook many journeys, over a period of 30 years, to spread the teachings of the Naam and the liberation of the soul, often accompanied by His faithful companions, Bhai Bala, a Hindu, and Bhai Mardana, a Muslim. His four major tours took Nanak: northward into and across the snow-capped Himalayas where He met the Lamas, the Siddhas and the Naths, the Tibetans and the Chinese; eastward into the modern states of United Provinces, Bengal, and Burma; southward through India as far as Sangla Dwip (modern-day Sri Lanka); and finally, westward, to the middle-east countries of Baluchistan, Afghanistan, Persia, Arabia as far as Mecca, and Jerusalem, Turkistan, Egypt, Turkey.

Sikhism is founded on the teachings of Guru Nanak and the nine Gurus who succeeded Him in a direct line (those whose writings are included in the Guru Granth Sahib are listed below in chronological order):

GURU ANGAD DEV (1504–1552) was born in the village of Matte-di-Sarai (now Sarainaga) in the Muktsar district of Punjab. While on pilgrimage to the shrine of the Hindu goddess Durga, he attended the Satsang of Guru Nanak and was so enthralled with the Guru and his message that he left off all thought of idol worship. He took initiation from Guru Nanak and devoted the rest of his life to the Guru's service. His original name was Bhai Lehna, but Guru Nanak recognized in him a worthy successor, with a claim to his spiritual riches and styled him *Angad*, "my own limb," indicating that He and Guru Angad had become one, with no difference between them. Angad Dev is credited with having formalized the Gurmukhi script, which was used for the writing of the Punjabi language. He assembled the writings of Guru Nanak and added 63 hymns of His own to the collection.

GURU AMAR DAS (1479–1574) was born in the village of Basarke, which is now part of the Amritsar district in Punjab. He spent the greater part of his life going on pilgrimages and attending to outer rituals, and he reached the advanced age of 70 without ever accepting a Guru of his own. Then one morning he heard his nephew's new wife, Bibi Amro, who happened to be the daughter of Guru Angad, reciting a hymn from Guru Nanak's Jap Ji and was profoundly moved. In this way, he came in contact with Guru Angad Dev and received initiation from him.

He served his Guru selflessly, and Guru Angad formed him into the perfect disciple. Before He departed from this world in 1552, Guru Angad bestowed on Amar Das the task of initiating the souls into the mysteries of Surat Shabd Yoga. Guru Amar Das was the embodiment of humility. When Guru Angad's sons kicked him off the dais while He was giving Satsang, He massaged their legs and told them: "I hope my old, brittle bones have not bruised your tender feet."

GURU RAM DAS (1534–1581) was born as Jetha Mal Sodhi, in Lahore (now in Pakistan). Jetha was orphaned at the age of seven and was raised by his maternal grandmother. He encountered Guru Amar Das when the family shifted to Goindwal around the year 1546. Guru Amar Das accepted him for initiation and became his spiritual preceptor. Jetha later married Guru Amar Das' daughter, Bibi Bani, and through dedicated meditation and seva, became the form of his Guru, so much so that Guru Amar Das renamed him Ram Das (servant of the Lord) and authorized him to carry on his work, initiating the seekers after Truth and giving out the message of liberation in

the Satsangs. Following the orders of His father-in-law, Guru Ramdas left Goindwal and founded a new town that came to be known as Ramdaspur (later Amritsar). There He began the construction of the Harmandir, the Golden Temple. Sri Chand, Guru Nanak's son, was still living at this time, and, overcome with remorse at opposing his father, came to pay homage to Guru Ram Das. When Sri Chand arrived in the Guru's darbar (court) his ego again attacked him, and he asked Guru Ram Das why He had grown such a long beard. Guru Ramdas replied, "To wipe the feet of great devotees like you." Then, with all humility, He rose and respectfully wiped the feet of the son of the great Guru Nanak.

Guru Ram Das is not to be confused with Ramdas Swami (c. 1608-1682), the Maharashtrian mahatma whose disciples included Chhatrapati Shivaji, the legendary Maratha king.)

GURU ARJAN DEV (1563–1606) was born in Goindwal, Punjab and was the youngest son of Guru Ram Das and Bibi Bani. During His lifetime, He completed the construction of the Golden Temple at Amritsar and also founded the town of Tarn Taran. He compiled the Granth Sahib, a compendium of the writings of the Saints, both Hindu and Muslim including His own compositions; and carried on the mission of liberating the souls from the bondage of the three worlds. He was unjustly imprisoned and executed by the Emperor Jehangir, but before departing from this world He appointed His son, Hargobind, as His successor. Throughout His severe trials, He remained in the Will of God: as He wrote in the Adi Granth: "Your Will is sweet, O Lord." *Miṭhā lāgai terā bhāṇā Rām.*

GURU TEG BAHADUR (1621–1675) was born in Amritsar, Punjab, as the youngest son of Guru Hargobind, the sixth Guru in the lineage of Guru Nanak and in 1664, he became the successor to Guru Har Krishan. Growing up in the household of Guru Hargobind, he was immersed in a noble atmosphere from the very beginning, and, as a child often withdrew from the outer world to enjoy the bliss of the inner regions. When he grew into a young man, he served under the command of his father and showed himself to be a fearless warrior, and his name means “brave sword.”

He was a learned spiritual scholar and composed numerous hymns that were added to the Guru Granth Sahib, compiled earlier by His grandfather Guru Arjan Dev. Guru Tegh Bahadur ran afoul of the Mughal authorities when He provided aid and shelter to Hindu holy men from Kashmir. These holy men sought refuge after refusing Emperor Aurangzeb’s order to convert to Islam. The emperor then arrested Guru Teg Bahadur and imprisoned Him in Delhi. Aurangzeb demanded He convert to Islam. But Guru Teg Bahadur steadfastly refused his request, saying: “I will sacrifice my head but not my religion.” The emperor then demanded that He show a miracle to demonstrate His power, but the Guru said His God had no use for such cheap tricks of magic. He was beheaded in Chandni Chowk, and the Sisganj Gurdwara was later erected at that site to memorialize His martyrdom. Before His death, He authorized His son Gobind Rai, later known as Guru Gobind Singh, to carry on as His successor.

JAGJIVAN DAS (1727–1761?) was a householder Saint who lived in the village of Sardaha (district Barabanki) near the Ghaghra River (located in modern-day Uttar Pradesh). He

showed signs of spiritual precocity from a very early age. It is believed that his Guru was Bulla Sahib, a Gurumukh disciple of Yari Sahib, though according to Satnami tradition, his Guru is mentioned as Maharaja Vishveshwara Puri. Jagjivan became successful in both *swarth* (worldly life) and *paramarth* (spiritual life), pursuing the householder's dharma along with perfecting the inner technique he had learned from his Guru. His prominent disciples included Dulanadas, Gosaindas, Devidas, and Khemadas. He authored over a dozen works on spirituality, including *Agh Vināsh* (The Destruction of Sin), *Maha Pralay* (Grand Dissolution), and *Gyan Prakāsh* (The Light of Wisdom), which explored themes of cosmic cycles, morality, bhakti, and liberation of the soul. Jagjivan Das stressed the need to search for God within instead of adhering blindly to narrow religious dogma and performing outer rites and rituals that promise much, but yield little. He tells us: "We cannot gain enlightenment by imitating others—in this way we only become more deeply enmeshed in illusion." *Dekhī karai būjhi nahin āvai, bharama bhulāne soī*. The Satnami sect of Hinduism is based on the teachings of Jagjivan Das.

KABIR SAHIB (c. 1398–1518) is renowned as the Poet-Saint of Kashi. His name means "Great One." He earned his livelihood as a weaver, and much of the imagery in his poetry reflects his humble occupation. He compared life to a weaver's loom. The warp threads represent birth, and the weft threads represent death. The shuttle moving back and forth symbolizes the cycle of life and death. Kabir urged people to weave the fabric of life with love, compassion, and devotion. A Muslim by birth and education, Kabir became a disciple of the Hindu Saint Ramananda, and his whole life was spent in tearing down the barriers between Hindus and Muslims and demonstrating the inner Truth common to each religion. In His writings Kabir tells us that the Lord is not found outside: "O man, where do you seek me? Look! I am

right beside you. I am neither in temple nor in mosque: I am neither in Kaaba nor in Kailash.” *Moko kahāñ dhūndhe bande maiñ to tere pās meñ, nā maiñ deval nā maiñ masjid nā kābe kailās meñ.*

He then goes on to say that He is to be found within: “If you become a true seeker and search for me within, then you shall find me instantly, in just the blink of an eye.” *Khojī hoyā to turate milihuñ, pal bhar kī tālāsh meñ.* He was a contemporary of Guru Nanak for over forty years and is said to have met with Him at least once. Kabir Sahib was the author of the creation story *Anurag Sagar* (Ocean of Love) and of numerous hymns on wide-ranging spiritual topics. He was the first Saint to manifest in the mortal world and incarnated in each of the four yugas.

MALUK DAS (1574–1682) was born in Kada, near Prayag (modern-day Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh) and was an exponent of the bhakti movement flourishing at that time. He emphasized the inner Path to God realization, along with themes of social equality and religious tolerance. When one of Aurangzeb’s officers approached Him asking for initiation, seeing the love and longing for God in the officer’s heart, He readily granted the supplicant’s request. After accepting the officer as His disciple, Maluk Das gave him the name Meer Madhav, a combination of the Muslim name Meer (Ruler or Mahatma) and the Hindu word Madhav (an epithet of Krishna meaning: “Lord, Sweet as Honey). Maluk Das’ heart was open to all without any distinction of caste or creed. He believed that there is no high or low in the house of the Lord.

Maluk Das put all His faith in the Almighty, knowing He would take care of his devotees. Once when He was traveling alone in a remote area, He encountered a band of dacoits and recited this couplet: “The python doesn’t plow; the bird doesn’t work. Maluk Das says: The Lord provides for all.” *Ajagara ka-*

rai na chākārī pakṣhī karai na kāma, Dāsa Malūkā kahata hai, saba ke dātā Rāma. Moved by His faith and fearlessness, the dacoits spared Him and implored Him to shower mercy on them..

MANKUTIMMA, or Crazy Timma, (1887–1975) was born in Mulbagal, Kolar, Kingdom of Mysore (now Karnātaka state). Mankutimma is the pen name used by Dr. D. V. Gundappa (DVG), an eminent Kannada writer, poet, and philosopher. He wrote many aphoristic Kannada poems, including *Mankuthimmana Kagga*, published in 1943, which is often referred to as the Bhagavad Gita in Kannada due to its profound philosophical insights. Dr. Gundappa chose the pen name Mankutimma for its charm and whimsy; it summons up an image of a dull, ordinary fellow, lost in a haze of ignorance, and he humorously referred to his own masterwork (*Mankuthimmana Kagga*), as “A Foggy Fool’s Farrago.” His poems embody the essence of leading a balanced life, advising us to be humble, gentle, and strong simultaneously. One of the popular poems from the *Kagga*, “*Hullāgu Bettadaḍi*,” conveys this spirit: “Be a gentle blade of grass when you are at the foot of the mountain and a fragrant jasmine flower when you are at home. Be strong like a rock when fate pours torrential rains of difficulties on you. Be sweet like sugar and jaggery to the poor and weak. Be one with all, O Mankutimma.” Baba Somanath Ji had great love for Mankutimma and often commented on his verses in Satsang.

MIRA BAI (c. 1498–1547) was the daughter of the Raja of Merta, and she married the crown prince of Mewar. From her early years, Mira was a devotee of Lord Krishna, but after the death of her husband in battle, her in-laws, according to tradition, raised serious objections to her devotional practices, even trying to assassinate her on multiple occasions. Once, on a pilgrimage to Kashi, she met Sant Ravidas Ji and became his

devoted disciple, adopting the inner Path to God realization. As Ravidas Ji was a low caste cobbler, this new development further antagonized her noble relatives. She eventually left the royal household and settled in a more congenial environment for her practices, possibly in Dwarka. Her life was marked by love for her Guru Ravidas and fearless disregard for social conventions that limited her devotion. Mira Bai composed numerous devotional hymns, singing Her gratitude to the Almighty Lord: “I have won the treasure; I have attained the precious jewel of the Lord’s Name.” *Pāyo jī maine, Nām ratan dhan pāyo.*

PALTU SAHIB (c. 1710–1780) was born in the village of Nanga-Jalapur near Ayodhya in the district of Faizabad-Oudh and was a grain trader of the Kandu caste. His soul was thirsting for the Lord and in his search for God realization he left no stone unturned. To reach his cherished goal, he became a disciple of Govind Das, who had received enlightenment from Bhikha Sahib. According to Govind Das’ teachings, the whole wondrous creation and the regions of Truth are contained within the human body, and the key to spiritual awakening is to tap inside and connect with the Inner Power coming down from the Highest Realms. After Paltu Sahib received initiation into this Path, he devoted himself wholeheartedly to the inner practice and quickly attained perfection.

Speaking of his rapid spiritual progress, Paltu wrote: “Another Paltu earned the karma, but it was written in my account by mistake. The devotion that belonged to a Great Soul was bestowed on a sinner.” *Karama rahe dui likhai patra ekai mañhai, mahā puruṣha kai aṃsa diyā pāpī kañhai.* Gobind Das was extremely pleased with Paltu and made him His successor, giving him the commission to grant Naam initiation to seekers after Truth. In His Satsang, Paltu explained that the Way of the Saints was an inward Path based on love and unity, and He was ever ready to

awaken souls who had a sincere longing for God-Realization. In later life, He moved to Ayodhya, a very traditional religious town in Uttar Pradesh, where He quickly gained a reputation for being bold and outspoken. He was fearless in pointing out the futility of the orthodox rites, rituals, and superstitions that dominated the devotional culture of the time. His forthright words enraged the local pandits and upset the orthodox devotees who thought His teachings were heresy. Paltu met His death when He was sitting in His grass hut one morning for meditation; a band of fanatic religious zealots crept up, bolted the door, and set the hut ablaze.

RAVIDAS, also Raidas, (c. 1450–1520) was a cobbler Saint of the Chamar caste, born in Benares. He earned his living by mending people’s old and worn-out shoes and spent all his spare time in meditation. Like his contemporary, Kabir Sahib, he is believed to be a disciple of Ramananda. He taught the kinship of all humanity and the deep inner unity of all religions. Most importantly, He emphasized merging back into Godhead by following the Inner Current of Light and Sound, referred to in the various traditions as Naam, Word, Kalma, and so forth. He wrote many hymns elucidating the principles of Sant Mat, explaining that the soul and the Almighty Lord are of the same Essence: “You are me, and I am You—what is the difference between us? We are like gold and the bracelet, or water and the waves.” *Tohī mohī mohī tohī antar kaisā, Kanak kaṭik jal tarang jaisā*. Among His disciples were included Sant Mira Bai and Raja Pipa.

SAHAJO BAI, also Sehjo Bai, (c. 1725–1805?) came from a Dhusar family of Rajputana, Rajasthan. Her family had a close connection with Sant Charandas Ji, and she received initiation from him at an early age. The story goes that, on the occasion of her marriage, Charandas Ji spoke to her movingly about the

impermanence of worldly bliss. Sahajo Bai, touched and inspired by his words, abandoned her bridal adornments and chose instead a life dedicated only to the devotion of the Lord. The term *sehaj* signifies “naturalness” or “ease” and that quality permeated Sahajo Bai’s life and work. Following the technique taught by Charandas, Sahajo achieved perfection and expressed Her gratitude toward Her Guru in *Sahaj Prakash*, a collection of eighty-five heartfelt verses. Sahajo has said: “If I grind all the mountains into powder and dissolve that powder in the ocean to make my ink. And if I make all the earth my writing paper, still it could not contain the praises of the Guru.” *Sab parvat syāhī karūñ gholūñ samundar jāy; dhartī kā kāgad karūñ guru astuti na samāye.*

SWAMI JI MAHARAJ, also known as Shiv Dayal Singh, (1818–1878) was born in Agra to a Khatri family who were devotees of Tulsi Sahib of Hathras. He received initiation from Tulsi Sahib at the age of six, later spending seventeen years in meditation in a dark, back room to reach the inner spiritual goal and to prepare for the work that lay before him. He began holding public Satsang at the Mai Than Gurdwara and later transferred His discourses to the family residence on Panni Gali. He revived the teachings of Kabir and Nanak for modern times and explained profound truths to the general public in very simple words, accessible to all. He wrote extensively on the subject of spirituality, and, because of the religious tolerance predominating at the time, He was able to describe openly many features of the inner way that had to be shrouded in hints and inferences. Swami Ji used the term “Radhaswami” to describe the relation of the soul to God and explained it in these terms: “Radha is the name of the Primal Soul, and Swami is the name of the Shabd that leads to the True Abode. The Path of Surat Shabd and the Way of Radhaswami, recognize them both as the same for there is no difference between them.” *Rādhā ādi surata kā nāma, Svāmī ādi*

śhabda nija dhāma. Surata śhabda aura rādhāsvāmī, donoñ nāma eka kara jānī. His writings, both poetry and prose, were collected in *Sar Bachan* by Rai Saligram after Swami Ji's departure from the physical plane. His work was carried on in the Punjab by His beloved Gurumukh disciple, Baba Jaimal Singh Ji.

TULSI DAS (1511–1623), born as Rambola Dube in the town of Soron (Delhi Sultanate, now in the Uttar Pradesh), was a Vaishnava Hindu saint and poet. It is said that he did not cry at his birth, but spoke the name of Ram, hence his given name of Rambola, “the one who utters the name of Ram.” As a child, Tulsidas displayed an early interest in learning and literature. He studied Sanskrit grammar, the Vedas, and various philosophical texts under the guidance of his guru, Narharidas. Tulsidas' encounter with Lord Hanuman and his divine vision of Lord Rama's enchanting form further deepened his devotion. In Ayodhya, he began composing the *Ramcharitmanas*, a retelling of the Sanskrit Ramayana in the vernacular Awadhi language to make that beautiful story accessible to common people and to fill his own mind with the remembrance of the Lord. At the end of Bala Khand (the volume on Rama's youth) he writes: “To purify his own tongue, Tulsi has sung the praise of Shri Ram. Otherwise, the story of Ram is a limitless ocean which no poet has ever been able to cross.” *Nija gira pavani karaṇa kārana rāma Tulasī khayō. Raghubhīra charita apāra bāridi pāru kabi kauneñ lahyō.*

TULSI SAHIB (1763–1843), originally known as Amrit Rao and later Sham Rao, was a Brahmin by caste. He hailed from a noble lineage and was the eldest son of the Peshwa of Pune. His whole interest was in spiritual matters and he had no worldly ambitions. Renouncing his birthright as the eldest son, he ceded the throne to his younger brother, Baji Rao Peshwa. When Guru Gobind Singh traveled in South India, he came in contact with

the Peshwa family and initiated Ratnagar Rao, and later authorized him to give sincere seekers initiation into the inner way. Tulsi Sahib must have contacted him at this time and received the secret of the Naam from him. He settled in Hathras, about 35 miles north of Agra. Tulsi Sahib knew that without the guidance of such a Master, true liberation from bondage was unattainable, regardless of one's status or attainments. He made rapid headway on the inner Path and his Guru found him fit to continue the work of giving Naam initiation. All His writings and hymns express His gratitude to his Master, who blessed Him with Naam and transformed His life. His best-known work was the *Ghat Ramayana* (The Inner Journey of Lord Rama), an inner version of the Ramayana epic in which he presents characters like Dashrath, Ram, and Sita as symbolic forces and currents; these characters represent deeper spiritual realities, and their stories serve as metaphors to demonstrate the inner journey towards the Kingdom of God and the reality that God is found within, not outside: "The one who turns inward discovers their True Self." *Jo apane añtarātmā kī or barhtā hai, vaha apane āpako pātā hai*. When Tulsi Sahib departed from the physical plane, He passed his spiritual mantle on to Swami Ji Maharaj of Agra.

First Line Index of the Banis

Volume 3

Avadhū chāl chalai so pyārā / O renunciate! The one who walks on the Path is the beloved of the Lord; Kabir Sahib, Satsang 40, “The Competent Trader,” p. 321

Kusal kahāñ se pāiye nāgini ke parsang / How can you obtain happiness in the company of the cobra? Paltu Sahib, Satsang 19: “In the Company of the Cobra,” p. 141

Khālā kai ghar nāhiñ bhakti kai Rām ki / The Lord’s devotion is not a visit to your auntie’s house; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 17: “Doing the Devotion is Not Child’s Play,” p. 125

Guru kahe pukār pukār / The Guru exhorts us again and again; Swami Ji Maharaj, Satsang 1: “Amass the Wealth of Devotion,” p. 1

Guru kaheñ jagat sab andhā / The Guru says all the world is blind; Swami Ji Maharaj, Satsang 36: “All the World is Blind,” p. 287

Guru bina kabhī na utare pār / Without the Guru, you will never cross to the other shore; Swami Ji Maharaj, Satsang 18: “Drenched in a Rain of Nectar,” p. 133

Guru bina kaun ubāregā / Except for the Guru, who can bring about your deliverance? Swami Ji Maharaj, Satsang 29: “Fast Asleep in Ignorance,” p. 223

Gyān kā chāndnā bhayā ākās meñ / The moon of knowledge has risen in the sky; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 14 : “The State of Natural Equipoise,” p. 101

Gyān nā dhyān nā, jog nā jugati hai / Not through rote learning or contemplation of idols; not through yoga or other artifice; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 27: “Stand at the Door and Wait,” p. 207

Ghar, ghar dīpak barai / Lamps burn in every house; Kabir Sahib, Satsang 31: “Lamps Burn in Every House,” p. 247

Chora mūnsi ghar pahunchā mūrakh paharā dei / The thieves have snuck inside and are looting the house, while the fool is standing guard at the door; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 24: “Your Wealth is Being Plundered,” p. 189

Jīvan hai din chār / This life is of four days only; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 32: “This Life is of Four Days Only,” p. 253

Jo kou chāhai abhay pad, jāi karai satsang / Whoever wishes to become fearless should go into the Satsang; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 10: “Freedom from Fear,” p. 73

Joṛo rī koī surat nām se / Connect your surat with the Naam; Swami Ji Maharaj, Satsang 33: “Remain Within the Three Lines,” p. 259

Dās kahāi ke ās nā kijiye / If you call yourself a disciple, then surrender your desires; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 28: “The Most Powerful Mantra,” p. 215

Dekho ik baniyā baurānā, gyān kī kare dukānā / Just look—some mad merchant has opened up a shop of Spiritual Knowledge; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 9: “The Shop of Spiritual Knowledge,” p. 67

Nāgini paida karata hai āpui nāgini khāy / The serpent Maya gives birth to her offspring, and then she devours them; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 15: “The Serpent Who Devours All,” p. 111

Palṭū nīch se ūñch bhā, nīch kahe na koyā / O Paltu, when the lowly one gains high status, no one calls him lowly anymore; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 23: “No Austerity Equal to Truth,” p. 181

Pūrab meñ rām hai, pachim khudāy hai / It is said that Ram dwells in the East and Ҡhuda in the West; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 2: “No Place Without Him,” p. 2

Fakīr ke bālke gusā nā kījīye / Shame on you, O foolish fakir! Don't get so angry; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 8: "Please Give me Some Fire," p. 63

Baniyāñ bāni na chordai, pasanghā māre jāy / The baniyas do not leave their bad habits, they tilt the scales and always give short weight; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 39: "Tilting the Scales," p. 315

Bhakt se droh kari kou nā bachā hai / Those who oppose the devotees cannot be saved; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 11: "The Lord Protects His Devotees," p. 81

Bhūle man ko samajhāya lījai / Going in the Satsang, make your forgetful mind understand; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 26: "Make Your Forgetful Mind Understand," p. 201

Man nā pakarā jāy, bahādur jvān hai / You cannot catch hold of the mind; he is a bold youth; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 38: "Mind is a Bold Youth," p. 307

Manūā deh dis dhāvadā / The mind rushes in the ten directions. Guru Amar Das, Satsang 34: "Transformed from Poison into Nectar," p. 269

Mātā bālak kāhai rākhtī prān hai / Wherever the mother may be, her attention remains riveted on her child; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 5: "As the Calf Runs After the Cow," p. 41

Māyā kī chakkī chale pīsi gayā sansār / The mill of Maya grinds on and on, reducing the whole world to flour; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 13: "The Millstone of Maya," p. 97

Mero man lāgo Harī jī sūñ, ab na rahūñgī aṭakī / My heart has become so enthralled with the Lord that I am no longer bound to this world; Mirabai, Satsang 21: "My Sleeping Fate Has Awakened," p. 157

Rām ke nām se bulnā nāhiñ hai / Do not forget the Name of Rama; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 22: “The Labyrinth of Kal,” p. 163

Re man māchhalā sansār samude / O mind! You are like a fish swimming in the ocean of this world; Ravidas, Satsang 20: “The Bitter Fruit,” p. 153

Lakh chaurāsīh bhramate bhramate / Wandering ceaselessly through the 84 lakh species; Guru Arjan Dev, Satsang 30: “The One Good Deed,” p. 235

Lāj jag kāj bigāṛā rī / Fear of public shame spoils all our work; Swami Ji Maharaj, Satsang 35: “The Noose of Worldly Attachment,” p. 279

Shabd chuṛāvai rājya ko, shabdai karai fakir / Shabd made kings abandon their kingdoms. Shabd made them fakirs; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 37: “Nothing Else Attracts the Heart,” p. 299

Satguru saran gaho mere pyāre / O dear one, go into the shelter of the Satguru; Swami Ji Maharaj, Satsang 6: “Manmukh and Gurmukh” p. 49

Santan kiyā vichār, pujave ko doy haiñ / The Saints consider two things worthy of our worship; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 16: “The Two Things Are Worthy of Worship,” p. 117

Santosh ke dhare se khāy gaj peṭ bhari / The elephant stands patiently and eats its fill; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 3, “The Cornerstone of Devotion,” p. 27

Sādh bachan sāchā sadā jo dil sāchā hoyā / The words of the Saint are eternal Truth for one whose heart is true; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 25: “The Dead Tree Blossoms,” p. 195

Sādho dekh karai nahīñ koī / O Sadhu, don’t do the devotion just looking at others; Jagjivan Sahib, Satsang 4: “The Folly of Imitation,” p. 33

Sādho man kā mān tiāgau / O Sadhu, forsake your pride of mind;
Guru Tegh Bahadur, Satsang 12: "Playing the Difficult Game," p. 89

Hoya rajpūt so chaṛhai maidān par / If you are a real Rajput, then
you will surge onto the field of battle; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 7: "The
Children of the True King," p. 57

About the Translators

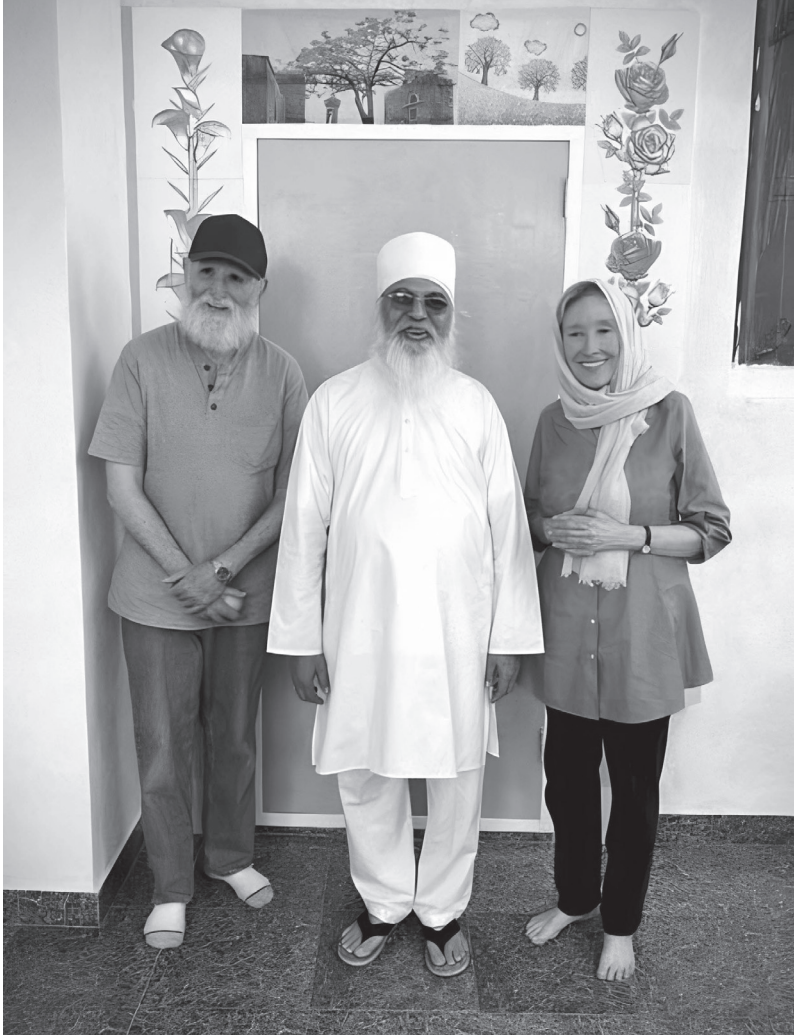
Christopher McMahon studied in Bangalore at Friends World College, where he received a B.A. in Indian Philosophy. While studying there, he had the good fortune to come to the feet of Baba Somanath Ji and was initiated by Him in 1971. From 1971-1976 he spent six months each year living with Baba Somanath at Sawan Durbar Ashram and traveling with Him to Satsang centers throughout South India. During that time, Baba Ji told Christopher that it would be useful for him to learn Hindi, and he completed the intensive summer course at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1972.

After Baba Somanath's departure from this world in 1976, he found the same Power working in Sant Ajaib Singh of Rajasthan and was a tireless sevadar at Sant Ji's yearly Bombay programs in remembrance of Baba Somanath from 1978 till Sant Ji left the body in 1997. He is now continuing his spiritual journey, attending the programs of Satsang, Seva, Simran and Bhajan held by Baba Ram Singh, a Gurumukh disciple of Baba Somanath and True Lover of Sant Ajaib Singh.

Christopher is retired, after a 22-year career as a wholesaler of essential oils, and lives with his wife Suzanne in the beautiful Pacific Northwest of the United States.

Suzanne McMahon was initiated by Sant Kirpal Singh Ji in 1970, and, by His grace, was fortunate to be one of the blissful but disheveled disciples who followed the Master around the United States during the 1972 World Tour; those three months with the Master laid the foundation of her life. When Sant Kirpal left this physical plane, she was drawn to the feet of His Gurumukh disciple Sant Ajaib Singh.

In 1974 she completed her B.A. in German and Comparative Literature at the University of Texas, Austin, where she began her pursuit of Hindi. She then went on to study Hindi and Urdu at the University of Heidelberg on a Fulbright fellowship; and, the following year, continued her studies in Delhi on an American Institute of Indian Studies scholarship. It was during this stay in India that she was blessed to attend Sant Ji's first love-filled Bombay program, and, in subsequent years, she had the privilege of participating in that program of Satsang and meditation each year to help with the seva. In 1984, she and Christopher were married in Sant Ji's presence.



Christopher and Suzanne with Baba Ram Singh Ji at Guddella

Between 1994-2004 she served as South Asia Librarian and Head of the South/Southeast Asia Library at the University of California, Berkeley, where she received an M.A. in Hindi in 1997. She is now retired and has the opportunity to travel to India each year to participate in Baba Ram Singh's programs for the foreign dear ones at the Channasandra and Guddella ashrams.