

*Your
Name
is
Nectar*



Satsangs of Baba Somanath Ji

volume 3

translated by
Christopher and Suzanne McMahon

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For further information contact:

Som Ajaib Kripa Ashram

Guddella, Marimakala Palli, Kambadur Mandal

Anantapur District 515765, Andhra Pradesh, India

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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 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 nor 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 try to 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.
Your 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 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 *gāṇṭh* 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 real 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? Naturally, the worldly people who are already caught there will think, "Alright. We are trapped ourselves. Let's lure these other people into the snare with us as well."

**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 ever 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

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.

close or distant as we imagine Him to be. When the mind becomes still and concentrated within, then you will become His very form. Everything lies within; 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 snake’s 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. If we think that we have to scavenge about, begging for scraps of food, the Lord will let us go on begging. But if we remain steadfast in our faith and content in His will—remembering the Naam and singing the Lord's praise—then the Lord Himself will make some arrangement for our sustenance, while those

who roam from house to house like dogs will 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 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.

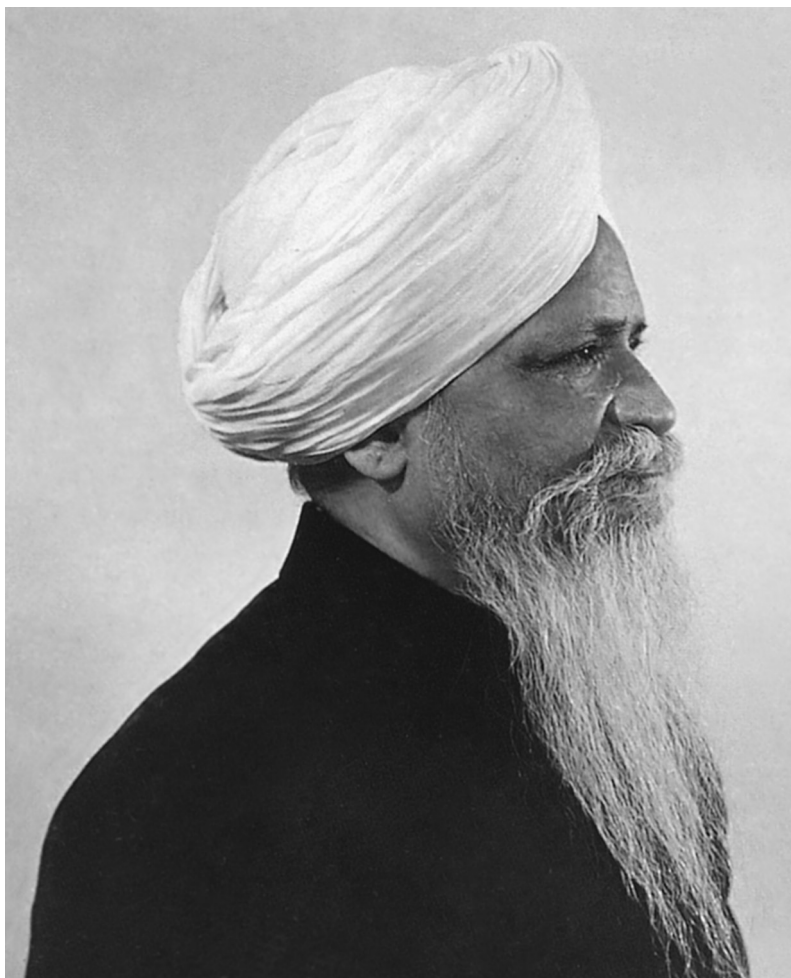
Some people try to become like the True Sadhus, simply by adopting some kind of special costume or custom. They imitate the Sadhus' outer behavior, but what is the outcome of their actions? Well, within, the hell worlds are waiting. Why? Because those unfortunate people have failed in two ways. They 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, we 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 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 who 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 allow His devotees to 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 is 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 don't 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 do 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 fiber of their being 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?

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

In 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 dying 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 to my teachings. The Lord is not far away from you. He will fill your heart with peace and sweep away all the hubbub of this world.

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, flimsy 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 accept what is offered.

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 village, riding

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

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 went with his royal guard to claim that girl and escort her back 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 her parents refused, the king seized her and started to drag her away. Her parents began to weep, but Akka Mahadevi said to them, "Why are you crying? I will happily go with the king." Then the king called for a palanquin and took 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 medita-

tion, 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 accept the offerings freely given. 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 will accept 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 while the yogi repeats the “hans mantra”: *so-ham ham-sā*.⁴ The

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.

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.

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 “*ādī*” indicates the primal form. You should perform your meditation on Naam in such a way that you merge into your Primal Form. But nowadays, 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

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 *gyānamaya* and *vigyānamaya* koshas and realizes the nature of the soul and Brahm (God).

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 kōū 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-minded people—flee from their company, by night and by day.

1 Guru Teg Bahadur, *Sādhō man kā māl 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 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 remain fruitless. So leaving all this aside, you should devote yourself wholeheartedly to the meditation practice.

**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 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 Equipose

**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 of 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*, *prāṇamaya*, *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 at all costs: “I am willing to remain hungry, but I do not want to die.” At that moment, your attention moves from the *annamaya 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 grave 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: “This 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 firmly 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 finally 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*. And finally, the soul sheds the veil of Bliss.² Then 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 as it enters the creation and the last covering to be shed as the soul turns away from the three worlds.

3 Kālī 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 Ganesha, 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,
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 doḡ 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 make 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 much more 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 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, endured a debilitating illness for three years. His organs were failing, and his condition was extremely painful. Even at the present time, you may have observed satsangis in this condition. 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 kabhī 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 is 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 to 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
the 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, they draw no distinction between men and women. They say 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.

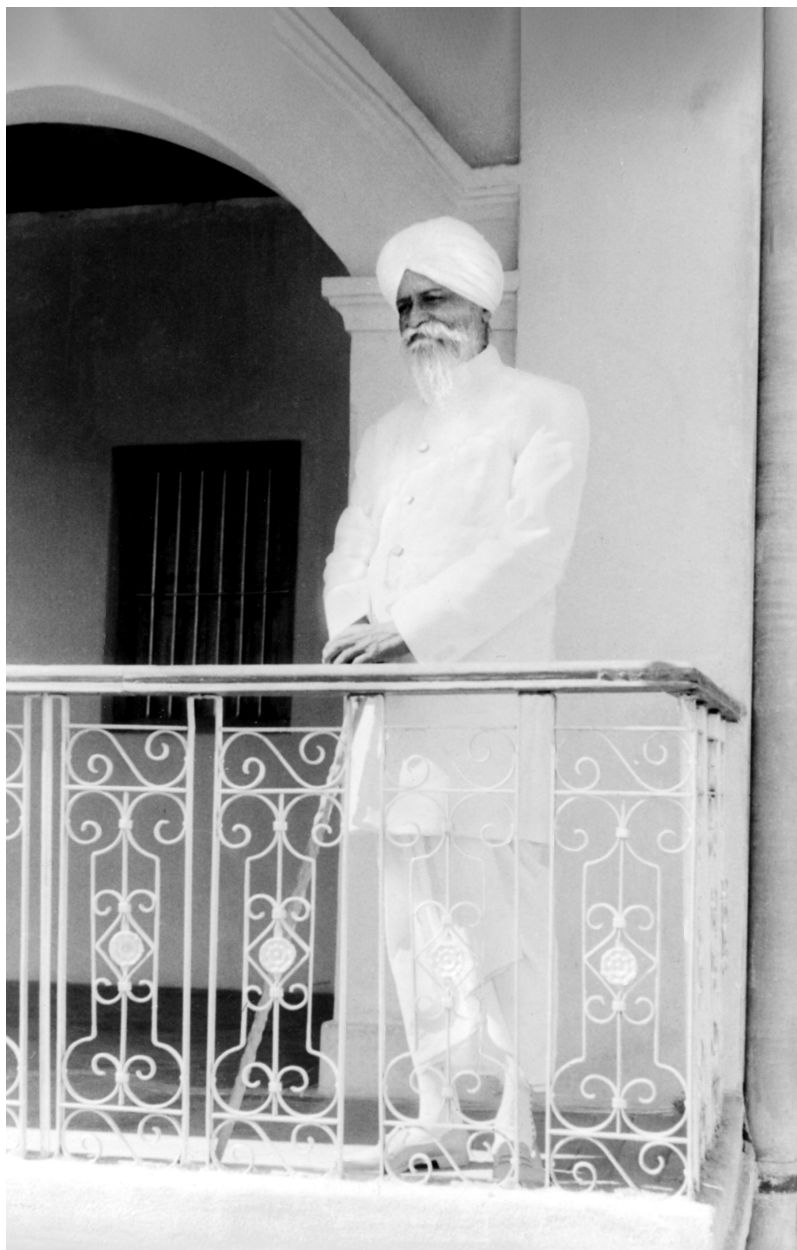
We people are always lost in the thoughts of Maya. But if we want to complete our gurubhakti, our devotion to the Guru, we should go on doing the Simran of Naam and the contemplation of the Guru day and night. In this way, our thoughts will be reversed, and we will remain perpetually anchored in the 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 māchhalā saṅsār 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 the 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 Raja of Mewar. But in spite of her noble status, she told the Raja 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 Ravidas, and he has granted me the Spiritual Knowledge. All the sickness and infirmity of spirit that bothered me before have 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 Harī jī sūñ, ab na rahūñgī aṭakī...*

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 chimta³ 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 Saints, 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 clapper with bells, similar to a castanet.

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 respected 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. [Tape ends.]

**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." Once a group of villagers had aroused the anger of Indra and were being drowned in a deluge of rain, but, seeing their sad plight, Lord Krishna saved them by lifting up the mountain Govardhan and holding it over the countryside like a giant umbrella. In medieval bhakti poetry, *nāgar* means "the charming, graceful one," often used for Krishna.

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 creation;
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, driven 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-assertion) is the driving force behind the entire process. Entangled in the workings of the *antahkarana*, we waste our whole life.

But there is another, stronger 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—then 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 must be 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 the 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 Dhyan. When you become absorbed in that Dhyan, 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 individual will become 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 *kafan* (sometimes called *kafanī*) 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 *kafan* (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 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, you rogue," 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 ingredients like 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 that I did on my son.” 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 ũnch 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 extracted from those seeds soars in value to five hundred

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*.

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 hands of the evildoers. The wicked ones hold the key, and by criticizing the Saint, they open 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 hands of the evildoers. Sometimes even the devotees of the Satguru become headstrong and try to snatch that key. We desire to unlock the treasure house ourselves, using the power of our own minds. But this is not possible. Satguru has explained to us the limits we must observe, and we have to 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. The evil-doers (*dusht*) that Paltu Sahib is referring to are those who have made duality (*dvait*) their deity (*isht*).

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 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

He says we should stop running after the sweet taste of the illusory worldly pleasures. He refers to all the difficulties we undergo in this world as the bitter cup, and when we are willing to drink that cup of suffering, we have become true spiritual aspirants. If we aspire for Godhead but still think there is no harm in hankering after all the worldly pleasures, how can we hope to meet with the Almighty Lord?

—Baba Somanath

Drink the Bitter Cup of Love

**First, break away from worldly attachment,
Then enquire about meeting the Beloved.¹**

This is the bani of Satguru Paltu Sahib Ji. He tells us, “If you wish to do the devotion of the Lord, first of all, give up your love of the world, your egotism, and your attachment to worldly pleasures. Then come and ask your questions about God.” Even if your within is full of dirt and garbage, you can still go to the Saint to ask about meeting the Lord. But the Saints know what lies hidden in our hearts, so He replies, “Friend, who do you really want to meet? What you wish for, you will receive.”

Many people used to go to Swami Ji to discuss spiritual matters. But one lady was living in Swami Ji’s home, and before you could talk to Swami Ji, you had to explain to her the purpose of your visit. She would ask the visitors, “Why have you come here?” They might reply that they needed His guidance on some work they had in hand. Or they would tell her they had come to talk with Swami about their meditations. Or they would say they had some pressing spiritual question to

¹ Paltu Sahib, *Pahile sansār se tori āvai, tab bāt piyā kī pūchiye jī...*

ask Him. So, she would listen to each one and then tell them, “That’s alright. But first, tell me a little more about the matter. Answer me truthfully. When you came here, what was your real desire?” That dear would likely reply, “My only desire is for the Almighty Lord.” Then that lady would probe deeper: “And what kind of Almighty Lord do you really want?” So, under her relentless questioning, any falsehood lurking within them would slowly come to the surface, and then she could decide whether or not to allow them an audience with the great Guru. The visitors who had come with ulterior motives would soon become ruffled by her scrutiny and feel uneasy. Then she would tell them, “Sorry. He has no time for you today. Come back another time.”

A few rare ones were lucky enough to come into Swami Ji’s presence, and then He Himself would tell them, “First, think over carefully what your inner mind is really craving. Once you know your own heart, you can speak to me of spirituality.” So, only a few rare ones came before Him—the true lovers suffering the pangs of separation and desiring liberation. Those fortunate souls asked Him about the spiritual Path and told Him of their deeply cherished hope. Then, Swami Ji would impart to them the knowledge of the God Way.

Most of us would say, “I wish for liberation. I want to meet the Almighty Lord and become free from the pain of birth and death.” But usually, that wish does not run very deep. Kabir Sahib says:

*The devotee who is only imitating others
cannot be dyed in the true color.*

Watching others, someone might think, “Come on. They are going to see the Guru. I will go also.” But such devotees

cannot meet the Almighty Lord. Therefore, Paltu Sahib tells us: “First remove the worldly thoughts from your heart; then, enquire about the spiritual secrets.”



Baba Somanath Ji

**You can't fit two swords in one scabbard,
No matter how hard you try.**

You have two swords but only one scabbard. Similarly, you have only one heart. How can you fill that one heart with the love of the world and the pursuit of spirituality? This world is the form of desire. This illusory creation is filled with expectation and discontent. But spirituality is desireless; it is content and asks for nothing. Desire and desirelessness—how can the two coexist? Craving and contentment cannot dwell together in one place, just as two swords cannot reside in one scabbard.

**Set aside the sweet cup of the world,
And drink the bitter cup of Love.**

Spirituality is not easily obtained. If you take gold to a goldsmith, first, he will rub that gold with a touchstone. How can he tell if that gold is 100% pure? If that gold is not absolutely pure, then when he rubs it with the touchstone, the line that gold makes on the stone will not match the line characteristic of pure gold. After the goldsmith has tested your gold with the touchstone, he will throw it into the fire and observe the result. If the color of the gold remains unaltered, then it is 100% pure. In the same way, when the purity of your heart is tested by happiness, sorrow, profit, loss, and all the other vicissitudes of life, if you do not waver and do not abandon the way of Truth and Oneness, then your spirituality is genuine.

He says we should stop running after the sweet taste of the illusory worldly pleasures. He refers to all the difficulties we undergo in this world as the bitter cup, and when we are willing to drink that cup of suffering, we have become true

spiritual aspirants. If we aspire for Godhead but still think there is no harm in hankering after all the worldly pleasures, how can we hope to meet with the Almighty Lord?

**O Paltu, when you cut off your head and offer
it to Him,
You are ready travel on the Path to the Beloved.**

In the end, He tells us, “Cut off your head and offer it to Him. Then take up the Path leading to God Almighty.” You will meet the Lord, but this is not a task to be undertaken lightly.

Similarly, when the soul becomes absorbed within, it is like pouring oil—that oil flows down smoothly in an unbroken stream. But when we pour water, it splashes and splatters into separate drops. So, until the soul unites with that Inner Power, we sometimes slip into forgetfulness, and our inner connection breaks. Sometimes the thoughts of the world crowd into our within and separate us from that inner Power. But the Saints and Mahatmas stay continually connected. They remain absorbed within. Their devotion is just like the flow of the oil that never breaks. Their Light has merged into the Greater Light within.

—Baba Somanath

The Unbroken Stream of Devotion

**O seeker, I no longer practice meditation; I don't
sit with closed eyes.¹**

This is the bani of Satguru Paltu Sahib Ji. Many people teach that God can be met through acquiring intellectual knowledge or practicing renunciation, yoga, repetition, or austerities. And the practice of meditation is considered to be the highest of all. But here, Paltu Sahib is telling us: “I no longer even practice the meditation. I neither close my eyes nor contemplate on the Lord within. I don't engage in bhajan and dhyan. I have left these practices behind.”

**When the contemplation becomes one-pointed, the
meditator becomes absorbed in the meditation.**

When the one practicing the meditation merges with the object of their devotion through the meditation practice—when the two become one—then who remains to do the

¹ Paltu Sahib, *Ham bhajanik meñ nāhīñ avadhū...*

meditation, and who will they contemplate on? It is just like when we travel home to our village. As long as we have not reached our destination and are still on the way, we continue traveling along the road. But once we have reached our village, when we have arrived at our goal, then the road has no more meaning for us—it has served its purpose.

Once the meditator merges into the object of devotion, then no more meditation remains to be done.

When the meditator and the object of the meditation become one, what further effort is required? As long as we are separated from the Lord and are filled with the intense desire to meet Him, we have to go on practicing meditation. But after we have merged with the Lord, then we have achieved the goal of meditation. So, what else remains to be done?

The wife who enjoys the love of her husband doesn't long for her parents' home.

When a wife loves her husband and enjoys being with him, why would she want to return to her parents' home? Her heart is with her husband; she understands his home as her own. She used to belong with her parents, but once her love becomes attached to her husband, she is no longer drawn to her former life. In the same way, before we become absorbed in the love of the Lord, we meditate on the Lord and remain engaged in the spiritual practices. But once we contact the Lord within and become His form, we leave off our previous practices; they have no more meaning for us.

**The anul bird lives in the sky;
It doesn't like to descend to the earth.**

The anul bird² always remains in the sky. The world has no attraction for that bird. It never descends to earth; it lives its whole life in the sky. In the same way, when the Conscious Power of the soul ascends within and meets with the Self-Existing Power of the Lord, why would it turn again toward this world?

**When a drop of water falls into the ocean,
it is no longer called a drop.**

When a drop of water or rain falls into the sea, it merges with the sea and becomes its form. Then, it is no longer a drop; it has become the sea. Likewise, the embodied soul, the jiva, is a drop of the Lord. When the soul of the jiva merges into the Ever-Present, All-Knowing Power of the Lord, then that Conscious Power of the soul is no longer separate from the Lord. It is no longer called a jiva.

**When a lump of salt is thrown into the water, how
can you take it back?**

When you throw a lump of salt into the water, the salt dissolves in the water and becomes the form of the water. Then, even if you want to, you won't be able to retrieve that lump of salt. It has vanished into the water and has become

² Indian traditional tales are filled with fantastic creatures from previous ages of the world and Saints often draw on ancient lore to emphasize important spiritual points. The device is a poetic allusion pointing towards inexpressible truths, not an objective description in the spirit of scientific enquiry.

the water itself. In the same way, the soul is called “jiva” only so long as it remains bound to the inert elements. When the soul abandons the egotism of the five gross, material elements and merges into its true form, it no longer has any sense of separateness. Uniting with the Lord, it becomes the image of the Lord.

**Day and night, the flow of the oil is unbroken;
The Light merges into the Greater Light.**

Similarly, when the soul becomes absorbed within, it is like pouring oil—that oil flows down smoothly in an unbroken stream. But when we pour water, it splashes and splatters into separate drops. So, until the soul unites with that Inner Power, we sometimes slip into forgetfulness, and our inner connection breaks. Sometimes the thoughts of the world crowd into our within and separate us from that inner Power. But the Saints and Mahatmas stay continually connected. They remain absorbed within. Their devotion is just like the flow of the oil that never breaks. Their Light has merged into the Greater Light within.

**The servant Paltu says, “The devotee whose love
comes and goes is only a quarter of a gyani.”**

Sometimes, our thoughts incline us towards acquiring spiritual knowledge or *gyān*. At that time, we think of ourselves as *gyanis* and engage in the study of sacred texts. But then, we are drawn back to our outer pursuits, and once again, we become the puppet of the world. [break in tape]

Our attention wavers. Sometimes, the wave of *gyān* comes

into our mind; sometimes, *gyān* is forgotten. Caught in such wavering, we can never perfect our *gyān*. We remain stuck fast in outer bookish knowledge and never gain a peep into the book of True Spirituality within.

Now, Paltu Sahib gives us the example of the hansa or swan. He asks, "Who taught the swan to separate milk from the water?" This knowledge is natural to the swan; it arises within unbidden. Similarly, when you sit for meditation, adopting a fixed position, then, with the grace of the Lord, the Inner Knowledge manifests by itself.

—Baba Somanath

True Knowledge Comes of Itself

What can you achieve through explanations? True Knowledge comes of itself.¹

No matter how much you may instruct others on spirituality, how will anyone understand your explanations? If someone's inner mind and intellect are wrapped up in the affairs of the world, if they have become the image of the world and are attached to things of this world, how can they grasp what you are saying? This subject lies beyond outer words, beyond the thoughts and waverings of the intellect. So you can explain to such people as much as you like, but what will you accomplish?

Therefore, in one place, Kabir Sahib tells us that even if you sit for ages explaining to a fool, your wisdom will be wasted. Further, He says: "Assess the worth of the sword, and let the scabbard lie."

Many gyanis take a vow of silence. But this silence, or *maun*, can also be full of falsehood. It's true these gyanis aren't speaking words outwardly. But when they ask for money, they show how much they need by counting on their fingers. When the

¹ Paltu Sahib, *Samujhāye se kyā bhayā, jab gyān āp se hoyā...*

opportunity arises to get more money, they may even break their silence and speak out loud. If they are hungry, they make a sign that they want food, and if they are thirsty, they make a sign for water. This is not the meaning of silence. Silence is when no thought or desire arises in the heart. That is true silence or *maun*. Such gyanis who maintain outer silence may refrain from speaking with their mouths, but the thoughts and desires are raging in their inner mind. Therefore, Paltu Sahib tells us that if we try to explain the inner spiritual mysteries to such people, how will they understand? They cannot grasp what we are trying to convey because they have not had that experience themselves; they have not yet reached that level.

**True Knowledge comes of itself.
Who taught the hansa to separate milk from
the water?**

Now, Paltu Sahib gives us the example of the hansa or swan. He asks, “Who taught the swan to separate milk from the water?” This knowledge is natural to the swan; it arises within unbidden. Similarly, when you sit for meditation, adopting a fixed position, then, with the grace of the Lord, the Inner Knowledge manifests by itself. You may try to accomplish this through your own efforts, but without the Lord’s grace, you will never achieve inner understanding. Kabir Sahib says:

*O, man! Why do you search for me outside?
I am dwelling within you.*

If you become absorbed in the inner Love, even for a moment, then that inherent knowledge manifests within you, and

your soul is attracted towards it. In this way, you can perfect your samadhi. Until you uncover that inner knowledge, even though the Conscious Power pervades your within, how can you perceive it? What proof do you have that it exists? If you do not get this direct experience, you will waste your whole life in inference and speculation.

So, in this example, Paltu Sahib asks, “Who taught the swan to separate milk from the water?” Nowadays, merchants mix water with the milk they sell so they can earn more profit, and the city government has tried to detect that water and remove it. But they can only inform us that the milk has been adulterated. Even though they can tell you how much water has been added, they can still not remove that extra water from the milk. Only the swan has this innate quality of knowing how to extract milk from water.

Similarly, devotees and spiritual aspirants can discard the water of the world and extract the essence—the Power of the soul—by using the Immaculate Power within. Those who remain absorbed in this practice are called *hansas*. Therefore, the Saints refer to the soul within us as the *hansa*, the swan. They also refer to those engaged in inner practices as *paramahansas*—the supreme swans.

**The anul bird lays its egg in the sky.
The hatched chick, remembering its true home,
soars heavenward.**

The anul bird is born in the sky; it lives in the sky; it takes all of its food and drink from the sky. When the anul bird lays its egg, that egg falls from the sky, and the chick is hatched as the egg descends. Then, when the chick remembers its home in the sky, instead of falling to earth, it automatically flies

heavenward. The Saints have witnessed this, but most people have never seen it. They think the anul bird is just a fairy tale.

In the same way, the soul has come down from the Realm of Truth and is a particle of Truth. The great souls—leaving the world and the worldly pleasures behind—fly back to the True Home, Sat Lok.

**Does anyone instruct the lion cub?
Still, without delay, the lion brings down
the elephant.**

Many people are so weak in their devotion that they say, “This is too hard. We can’t do it.” Friend, do you expect someone to sit on your head and make you do it? If you want to accomplish this work, it is up to you to make the effort. You can succeed only when you manifest that Power already residing within you. If you try to force the bullock forward by twisting its tail, how far can the poor animal go? No one can force you to do the practices; this is your responsibility.

Now consider the example of the lion cub; no one teaches that cub what it means to be a lion. But within that cub, the inherent knowledge of a lion’s nature is already present. When the cub grows into a lion, it can bring down an elephant in an instant. In the same way, the Power of the soul is working within us. When that Power awakens, it drives away falsehood and illusion.

**O Paltu, study the ways of the Satguru.
What can you gain from outer explanations?
True Knowledge comes of itself.**

When you understand the ways of the Satguru—His conduct,

ways of dealing, gestures, and hints—then True Knowledge dawns within you of itself. The Satguru is merged in Truth. He is connected with the Power of the Sound Current, and that Power exerts an influence over the hearts of the people. He draws back the veil and reveals the Truth already lying within us. Even if we were to go on listening to spiritual talks and stories, day and night, what could we gain? We can acquire outer knowledge at the intellectual level, but our intellect is bound to the material world. It cannot soar to the higher realms and has no access to the Inner Wisdom.

At present, we know nothing of death. Even though we witness it with our own eyes, we still cannot understand what it is like. At the end time, everyone has to undergo this suffering. Therefore, Paltu Sahib warns us, "One day, you must leave. No one remains here forever."

—Baba Somanath

No One Remains Here Forever

**A letter has come from my Beloved; my Lord says,
“Your time is up. Don’t delay.”¹**

When the time of death approaches, the notices announcing its coming begin to arrive.² You start to feel ill. You get pain in your stomach. You get pain in your head. You get a fever. Some disease or other appears. To cancel these notices, you hurry to such and such a hospital; you run to such and such

1 Paltu Sahib, *Pāṭi āi more pītam kī, sāi turat bulāyo ho...*

2 Whoever takes birth in this mortal world will die when the appointed hour arrives. When the time of death approaches, the Lord sends a notice that this incarnation is finished and it is time to vacate the body, which is, at best, a rented house. In this hymn, Paltu Sahib is describing the frightful condition of the souls who have not solved the mystery of death in this lifetime. They are wrenched from the body by the angels of death at the last moment and taken before the Lord of Judgment, who is no other than Lord Kal himself, to answer for their deeds and continue their journey through the wheel of transmigration. But those souls who take refuge in the Perfect Saint and follow His instructions have no fear of death. When the moment comes to leave the body for the final time, they meet the Guru within and proceed to the real Home of the Soul in His company. Kabir Sahib tells us: “Death from which the whole world shrinks is welcome unto me; I rejoice as it is a harbinger of perfect peace and joy.”

a doctor. By any means possible, you want to ignore those notices and avoid responding to them. You try to deceive the messenger: “Oh, that man has been called away. He does not live here anymore. Please return this notice to the sender.” You will try anything to ward off the inevitable.

**First, you are in a small dark room;
Further, there is neither light nor lamp.
The angel of death seizes you by the arm;
And no one comes to your aid.**

In the end, when you don't reply, a warrant is issued to take you into custody. “No matter where he may be, seize him. We sent him so many notices, but still, he didn't come. So now we are issuing a warrant.” In this way, the angels of death arrive, and no one sees them coming. In that small, dark room, there is no lamp or light; there is nothing at all. In that darkness, the angels of death lay hold of your soul and drag you away, but no one sees your going and no one knows where the angels of death have taken you.

**In Sawan, the skies grow dark;
And the clouds pour down rain day and night.
The gusts of wind assail me from every direction;
And my heart is full of fear.**

At that time, the soul is greatly distressed. The pranas, along with the consciousness, are wrenched from the body, and in every cell, we feel such a stabbing pain that it seems like hundreds of scorpions are stinging all at once. In the month of Sawan, the clouds gather, and the storms rage day and night;

the rain pours down, and it becomes so black that a lamp cannot dispel the darkness. Difficult times come to us even while we are still living in this world. But at the time of death, the rain of misery thunders down on our heads, and we are plunged into densest darkness.

**Definitely, we have to go one day;
No one can remain here forever.
What will we take with us when it is time to
meet the Lord?
We have collected no wealth in our purse.**

Without question, whoever takes birth has to die one day.

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

We often recite the verse:

*Rama departed, and Ravana departed
with all their kith and kin.
At the end time, nothing remains;
This world is like a dream.*

At present, we know nothing of death. Even though we witness it with our own eyes, we still cannot understand what it is like. At the end time, everyone has to undergo this suffering. Therefore, Paltu Sahib warns us, "One day, you must leave. No one remains here forever."

When you go to meet the Lord, what will you have to show? Children, wealth, and possessions do not accompany you

there. Only your meditation, Naam Simran, and devotion will accompany you. But you have not accumulated any of this true wealth for your journey into the Beyond.

**Paltu Das says: When you come into this world,
your eyes shed tears.**

**And when the human birth goes out of your
hands,**

**It is you yourself who have wasted this
precious opportunity.**

What do we do in this earth life? We fill our bellies, and we go on weeping. We come into this world sobbing; when the child is born, at that time, it begins to cry. We go on crying till our last breath, and then we depart from this world weeping. No one escapes this lifelong lament. Whether you ask the king or the pauper, the tale is the same—everyone is weeping. Outwardly, we look alright, but within, everyone is shedding tears. Kabir Sahib says:

*We inquire about the well-being of others;
But no one remains in this world forever.
Everyone grows old and dies, but fear never dies.
So, where is the question of well-being?*

As long as we have fear in our hearts, we will go on crying. If you ask anyone about their condition, they will tell you, “What can I do? I have so many sorrows.” If you tell them they should put aside the things that are causing them unhappiness, they will whimper, “I cannot leave these things. How can I set them aside?” Suffering has taken a firm hold of them; no happiness

can be found. They clutch onto the things of this world that give rise to their suffering, mistaking them for the source of joy, but later, they get the result of their deeds. When we have itchy skin, it feels very soothing to scratch it. But afterward, our skin burns and becomes inflamed. Similarly, our whole life long, we are caught up in scratching the itch of the senses and worldly pleasures. But at our end time, we have to suffer in the fire.

The Saints explain how to experience this Truth within ourselves. When we follow their instructions, a glimmer of understanding dawns in our hearts, and as our inner access increases, our inclination toward Truth grows ever stronger. This transformation can be accomplished only through the alchemy of Satsang. In Satsang, our attention comes in contact with Truth, and we become wholly absorbed in that Inner Power. This is the greatness of Satsang.

—Baba Somanath

The Alchemy of Satsang

**My mind roams and rambles every moment.
It runs from place to place and does not stay
in its home, even for an instant.¹**

These are the teachings of Guru Ram Das Ji, the fourth Guru of the Sikhs. The basic teaching of all spiritual paths is that the mind must come under our control. Yogis endeavor to control the mind through the practice of pranayama. The gyanis try to accomplish this control through *brahmākāra vritti*, a deep state of meditation where the attention is focused on the Brahm (God) alone.²

Some devotees try to control their minds through internal meditation, while others try to subdue their minds by performing outer ceremonial and sacrificial rites and rituals. The japis (those who engage in the repetition of mantras), the tapis (those who perform austerities), the yogis, the sages, and the seers aspire to bring the mind to a standstill through their

1 Guru Ram Das, *Man khin khin bharam bharam bah dhāvai til ghar nahī vāsā pāīai...*

2 *Brahm* indicates the divine Universal Consciousness. *Ākāra* means shape and *vṛitti* means a wave of thought. So *brahmākāra vritti* literally means “the wave of thought that has the shape of the Divine.”

various practices. But mind is an immense power. The vastness of the Three Worlds is all an expression of the mind. Brahma, Vishnu, Shankar, Sarada (Saraswati), and Narada—the messenger of the gods—are all expressions of the mind, as are the 33 million gods and goddesses, the physical plane, the twenty-one astral heavens, and the seven nether worlds.

The goal of *Paramārth* (Spirituality) is to control the mind. *Param* indicates “the highest,” and “*ārth*” depicts wealth and prosperity from which we derive happiness. So, *Paramārth* is a word that describes the highest spiritual wealth gained by contact with that Immovable Power that abides forever. It has no connection with the fleeting joys of worldly possessions. As long as the mind is not under our control, we cannot experience that great spiritual wealth nor savor our contact with it. Therefore, He says that, under the domination of the mind, we are deluded and perpetually run about here and there. In an instant, the mind races from the depths of the seven nether worlds to the peak of the twenty-one heavens. Therefore, the question arises, “How can we control this mind?”

But when the Guru applies the goad of Shabd, the mind comes under control and returns to dwell in its own home.

There is only one means to bring the mind under control. Guru Ram Das tells us that the goad of the Guru’s Shabd that chastens the mind. The elephant driver wields the *ankush* or hook to keep the head-strong elephant moving along the right path. Similarly, to direct the obstinate mind and eradicate its wayward tendencies, we need the goad of the Shabd and Simran. The mind is constantly engaged in some sort of simran or remembrance. The simran of the world pulls the mind

outside. But the Guru's Simran severs that outer simran and connects the mind with the Sat Naam. As the inner, spiritual Simran increases, the remembrance of the world decreases, and the mind turns within.

**O Beloved Lord, grant me the company of the
Truth so that I may meditate upon You.**

Then He says that from the Satsang of the Saints, we learn about the importance of the Guru and Naam, the tricks of the mind, and the existence of God. In Satsang, we discover the means to control and introvert the mind. Therefore, He says, "O God, shower grace on me and grant me the Satsang of the Saints."

It is only in Satsang that we learn to discern Truth from falsehood. We come to know which things are false and which are true. As long as the power to comprehend what is true and what is false is not firmly established within us, we will not be attracted to Truth.

If our conception of the divine is just a product of our own imagination, then even if we sincerely engage in worship, recitation of scriptures, rites and rituals, and adoration of gods and goddesses, it will not bring us close to realizing the Truth.

The Saints explain how to experience this Truth within ourselves. When we follow their instructions, a glimmer of understanding dawns in our hearts, and as our inner access increases, our inclination toward Truth grows ever stronger. This transformation can be accomplished only through the alchemy of Satsang. In Satsang, our attention comes in contact with Truth, and we become wholly absorbed in that Inner Power. This is the greatness of Satsang.

**The disease of egotism has been cured;
And the soul has found peace, entering into
Sehaj Samadhi, the state of Natural Equipoise.**

As long as the sense of I-hood persists, then, even in the state of dreams, true joy does not arise. The Sound Current is the only weapon that can defeat the ego. Until the Sound Current of Sat Naam manifests within, the disease of egotism will not depart.

All the avatars of the gods who have incarnated in this world have demonstrated great righteousness, but even the avatars fundamentally act in the realm of ego. The history of Ramchandra is depicted in the Ramayana. He was a great soul, but we can see in his life that the sense of I-hood intruded from time to time.

When Sita was abducted by Ravana and dragged away to Lanka, Ramchandra set out in search of her. As he went from place to place, his travels led him to the domain of King Bali, which was called Kishkinda.³ Sugriv, the younger twin brother of Bali, was living in exile on the nearby Rishyamukha Mountain. Earlier, angered by a misunderstanding, Bali had driven Sugriv out of his kingdom, abducting Sugriv's wife in the process. At that time, Sugriv had fled to the sanctuary of Rishi Matunga, who had an ashram on that mountain. That rishi already had a grievance against King Bali because he had once polluted the ashram's sacred precincts.⁴ At that time, the

3 Kishkinda is the kingdom of the vanaras (literally, "forest dwellers: vanaras are portrayed as monkey-like beings in the Ramayana). It is traditionally identified to be the region around the Tungabhadra River (earlier known as Pampa Sarovara) near Hampi in present-day Vijayanagara district, Karnataka.

4 Once when Bali was fighting against the demon Dundubhi, he grabbed the demon by the horns, hurled him through the air, and sent him crashing to his death. Unfortunately, the demon landed right on the rishi's ashram, defiling the spot with his blood and infuriating Matunga Rishi.

rishi had laid a curse on Bali, saying that if Bali ever showed his face on Rishyamukha Mountain, he would be killed, and, fearing for his life, Bali never went near that place. Therefore, the Rishyamukha Mountain retreat was a place of safety for Sugriv in his exile, and he was residing there, along with his trusted friend Hanuman.

When Lakshman and Ramchandra came to the area searching for Sita, they visited the Rishyamukha Mountain. And seeing the arrival of these illustrious visitors, Sugriv and Hanuman came and fell at Ramchandra's feet.

Then Sugriv explained to Ramchandra how the dispute had arisen between him and his twin brother, Bali. Sugriv offered to assist Rama in recovering Sita from Ravana if he would help him overcome Bali. Hearing his words, Ramchandra took a vow on the spot, saying, "I will kill Bali and give the kingdom of Kishkinda to you." But Sugriv told him, "Maharaj, Bali cannot be killed just like that. He is so strong that, tucking Ravana under his arm, he dunked him in countless oceans. He is such a mighty being. Conquering Bali is not such an easy matter. He has received a boon from Lord Brahma that any opponent who comes forth to do battle with him will lose half of his strength to Bali. In this way, Bali's strength is always doubled when someone confronts him in open battle. And as a consequence, no one can kill him in direct combat. If he is to be vanquished, it will have to be by stealth."⁵ Hearing his words, Ramchandra replied, "I will devise a plan to defeat him."

Then Rama and Sugriv traveled together to Kishkinda. Near the city, there was a thick forest of trees. First, Ramchandra hid

5 Bali was granted this boon by Lord Brahma after sitting in long and arduous penance. Bali was already enormously powerful, with the strength of many thousands of elephants. And with the attainment of Brahma's boon, Bali appeared to be invincible. It was said that no one could defeat him in head-on battle.

himself in ambush behind the screen of their foliage. Then Sugriv, standing before the city gates, issued a challenge to Bali, calling him out into the open to engage in hand-to-hand combat. In an angry rage, Bali surged forth, and the two brothers commenced to fight with each other. But Sugriv and Bali were identical twins, and in the battle that ensued, they were indistinguishable from each other. And as the fight progressed, Sugriv was getting soundly thrashed by Bali.

After a while, the two combatants agreed to a pause. During that break in the battle, Sugriv made his way stealthily to the place where Ramchandra was concealed and weeping told him, “Maharaj, I told you earlier that Bali is a mighty being, and it is only because of the assurance of your assistance in this fight that I could dare to stand before him. Now I am in great difficulty.” Then Ramchandra replied, “You two look just alike, and since I could not tell who was who, I was in some confusion about who to shoot and who to spare. So now go back and engage with him a second time. Before the battle, Hanuman will place a garland of flowers around your neck so I will be able to distinguish you from Bali. In this way, I will know my target.”

Once again, the battle resumed, and from his place of concealment, Ramchandra loosed the arrow from his bow, piercing Bali through the heart. Then, when the mighty Bali fell to the earth, Ramchandra came out of hiding and approached the place where he lay. Seeing him, Bali spoke these words to Ramchandra, “My Lord, you have been called as the avatar of Parbrahm. You are the one who protects the world. The Vedas, Shastras, and other holy scriptures all say that you are the embodiment of Truth. So why did you kill me by stealth? And further, it is said that those of the kshatriya caste⁶ must

6 The warrior caste to which Ramchandra belonged

adhere to a strict code of ethics. When they do battle, they always call out their enemies openly and fight them in face-to-face combat. With this vile deed, you have not only acted in opposition to your dharma as a kshatriya, but you have also betrayed the Truth of Parbrahm. If you wanted to kill me, it was your duty to first inform me that you wished to do battle with me. You owed me at least that much.”

Then Ramchandra replied, “You committed a despicable sin. Therefore, I had to kill you.”

Bali enquired, “What sin have I committed?”

Ramchandra told him, “You forcefully abducted your brother’s wife.”

Then Bali said, “Maharaj, this was a family dispute. He is my brother, as I am his. This was a matter for the two of us to settle between us. But, if you wished to intercede, you should have approached me directly and told me to my face that what I had done was not justified. You should have told me why you wished to kill me. You should have challenged me honorably to a fight. Why did you shoot me from concealment? You understood me as your enemy and made Sugriv your dear friend. It seems to me that the real injustice, in this case, is that, even though you are an avatar, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, still, you harbored this feeling of enemy and friend.”

Bali’s assertion was true, and Ramchandra could not refute it. So, admitting his mistake, he then conceded, “In my next incarnation, I will come into this world as Krishna. At that time, you will be reborn as a hunter and will slay me as I have slain you.”

What is the meaning of telling this story? It shows us plainly that Ramachandra was still in the grip of egotism, and that egotism led him to show partiality in his decisions. This same tendency is revealed in the lives of all the avatars.

As long as the veil of “I and mine” remains over the soul, even if one is a god, goddess, or avatar, liberation can never be possible. That veil of egotism sits between the soul and liberation. The aim of all spiritual endeavors is to remove egotism from within, and when this veil parts, your liberation is achieved.

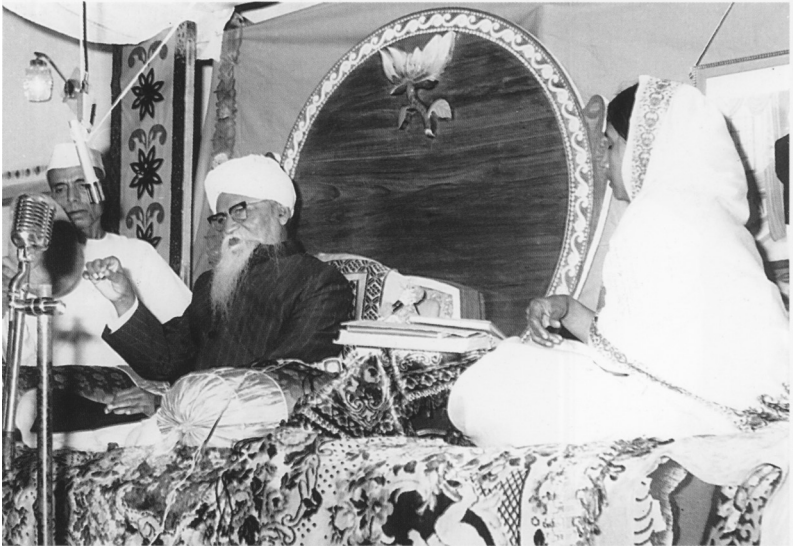
**This house is heaped up with countless gems,
jewels, rubies, and emeralds;
But the wandering mind cannot find them.**

The entire universe, with its divisions and grand divisions, is housed within this human body. The Lord Himself is also within this human body. When we ask anyone where God resides, they will naturally reply: “He is within me.” The soul, the Almighty Lord, the gods and goddesses, Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesh, all are to be found within this human body.

This body is a treasure house filled with priceless gems of spiritual experience. Even though this is so, we still run about outside collecting worthless shells—all the useless objects of matter and Maya. The worldly sense pleasures are contemptible; they have no value. These very pleasures are the cause of sickness and disease. They are not less than death. Yet day and night, under the domination of the power of illusion, we chase after them. In this regard, it has been said:

*The child you are searching for
is tucked under your arm;
Yet you are beating the drum in the city
sounding the alarm.*

One lady went to a festival and, entranced by what she saw, forgot that she had her child safely secured under her arm. In this forgetfulness, she cried out, “O, my child is lost.” She searched throughout the festival grounds and finally went to the police station to report the missing child. But the police officer looked at her and said, “Your child is not lost. He is right there, tucked under your arm.”



Baba Somanath Ji with Shri Pushpamma

Similarly, even though everything is within you, still, you worship the gods and goddesses and chase after the pleasures of the world day and night. You have become so entangled in these extroverted pursuits that if someone asks you if you ever go to Satsang, you just make excuses.

One person replies, “What can I do? I have no time for it.”

Another said, “I have to work the night shift, so I am not free in the evening.”

And a third person answers, “I work the day shift and become so exhausted that I have no energy left after work to go for the Satsang.”

A fourth replies, “Well, I was all ready to go to Satsang when some friends dropped in unexpectedly. So, what could I do? They kept talking and talking, and by the time they left, the Satsang was over.”

Just think about it! How can we compare chit-chatting with our friends with attending the Satsang? The mind finds one reason or another to excuse its behavior; under the control of illusion, we have become involved in worldly indulgences and remain stuck in a state of forgetfulness. A spiritual treasure house lies within this human body, but we can discover it only by introverting our attention and going inside.

**When the water diviner finds the hidden water,
you can sink the well without delay;
In the same way, the Satguru shows you where the
spiritual treasure is hidden.**

When you dig a well and strike water, you can draw up the water immediately. Similarly, when you go into the refuge of the Satguru and learn the technique He teaches, you can behold the Divine Power without delay. But this will happen only when you practically apply yourself to the meditation. You will not get the Lord’s darshan through mere talking.

Eating (*āhār*), procreation (*maithuṅ*), fear (*bhay*), and sleep (*nidrā*), these four activities are innately rooted in our within. When we go out to catch the bus, we fear it may not arrive on time or stop at the place where we will be waiting. Further, we are afraid that someone might pickpocket us on

the way to the bus stand. Fear always occupies our attention in one way or another.

We worry that our foot may slip as we walk along. Fear is the common experience in the realm of the Negative Power; eating is natural to all living beings, as are procreation and sleep. It is not only in the human form that these four activities dominate; they are also present in the lower life forms. One finds them in animals, birds, insects, worms, and all sentient beings.

The human birth is wasted when the mind remains occupied with these four activities. What attention have we given to the unique quality of humanity that distinguishes us from other species? We spend our time eating, drinking, and sleeping. We make our way through life, and then we die. Such a human birth is accursed.

Someone may ask, "How many children do you have?" One person replies, "I have a dozen children." Friend, what type of accomplishment is that? Someone else replies, "I have twelve children." Twelve children or a dozen, what difference does it make? Either way you are in the same boat. No matter how many children you claim to have produced, what is the value of such proclamations? Where is the greatness in these accomplishments?

We have to ask ourselves, "Who am I? I have incarnated into this world again and again, but where have I come from? Where is my True Home? What are these worldly shackles that bind me, and how can I become free of them?" Only in the human form can you find the answers to these questions.

If we don't go into the shelter of the Guru with total sincerity, then we have no hope of finding the inner pathway that leads to the Lord's feet. We can meet Him only by meditating

according to the Guru's instructions. But if we have not done the meditation and gained the direct inner experience, then curse on such a life. It is of no consequence.

**Cursed, cursed are the lives of those people who
do not find such a realized Satguru.
We have obtained the treasure of this human birth
because of our past good deeds;
But we throw it away in exchange for mere shells.**

This most auspicious time has come into our hands, and we have received the human body. But having been granted such a beautiful opportunity, we have become the slaves of the sense pleasures that are no more than worthless shells.

No one has ever been able to fulfill all their worldly ambitions. We reach the end of this earth life, but our worldly desires never come to an end. And after we depart from this material plane, the worldly affairs go on just as before—they are never completed. Some people die in the middle of building a new home. Others die during their own marriage celebration. Death takes us in one way or another, and all the unfinished works remain just as they were at our departure time.

**O Lord God, please be merciful to me; shower
Your grace, and make me meet the Guru.**

Now, the devotee offers a prayer before God Almighty: "Oh Lord, be merciful and guide me to the Guru. If one meets the Guru, then one will contact God." But who can meet with God? Only the Gurumukhs. How many hundreds of thousands of people come in contact with the Guru? But only a

few take to the Path and achieve perfection. The rest remain as they were before.

**Servant Nanak has attained the state of Nirvana;
Meeting with the Sadhu, he sings the glorious
praises of the Lord.**

When we take refuge with the Sadhu or Guru, devote ourselves to the seva, and repeat the Simran of Naam, we can achieve liberation in this very lifetime.

The Satguru looks on all with the same balanced, gracious sight, but we receive the fruit of his Darshan according to our receptivity. Some people say, "I only want the worldly possessions," and they will receive what they ask for. If someone says, "I desire liberation," well, everything is available in the court of the Satguru. We receive the gifts from the Guru's bounty according to the desires that we cherish in our hearts.

—Baba Somanath

According to the Love in Your Heart

**Only the one who lives in the Guru's Will can be
called a disciple, a friend, a true relative.
Those who follow their own will, O brothers,
suffer the pangs of separation and gets kicked
and knocked.¹**

These are the teachings of Guru Amar Das Ji, the third Guru of the Sikhs. He says, “Whoever molds their life according to the precepts of the Guru, that person is a disciple and a devotee. That person is my true relative and friend.”

The real disciple always gives the words of the Master foremost importance, integrating his precepts into every aspect of life and acting according to his commandments. Only such a follower—who reveres and obeys the teachings of the Guru—is worthy to be called a disciple.

As long as our mind has not developed the natural inclination to act according to the words of the Satguru, we may have become the Guru's disciples outwardly. Yet, the power

¹ Guru Amar Das, *So sikh sakhā bamdhap hai bhāi je gur ke bhāṇe vich āvai...*

that dominates over us will be the mind. This proves we are not yet genuine disciples of the Guru but are still disciples of the mind.

First of all, the mind will tell us, “You should accept the Guru’s teachings. Take the Naam initiation and do the meditation.” So, following the mind’s advice, we take initiation and start our practice. But then, after some time, the mind will counsel us, saying, “You aren’t getting any benefit from this practice. You’ve worked so hard and gotten nothing. Give it up now.” And then we give up our meditation. Why does this happen? Because our mind is the power ruling over us—we are following the mind instead of the Guru.

The Guru’s words are the primal mantra.

The Guru’s form is the essence of meditation.

The Guru’s grace is the foundation of liberation.

The cornerstone of all mantras is obeying the Guru’s instructions. As long as we are not capable of following the teachings of the Guru, the master of our within will be the mind and intellect. If we act according to our mind’s advice and follow the spiritual path at its behest, then who are we really obeying? At any time, the mind’s counsel may make us disdain the Guru’s teachings and can divert us from the Path.

Therefore, He says that a person is a disciple, a friend, a relation, and a devotee who has attached their heart to the Guru’s teachings. That dear one who does not transgress the bounds of his teachings is the worthy child of the Guru.

The person who follows his own will and acts according to the dictates of his mind remains disconnected from the Path of Spirituality and, in the future, will endure beatings from the angels of death.

**O brothers, without the True Guru, they never
attain peace;
Again and again, they repent and regret.**

Up until now, no one has achieved the bliss of the highest spiritual status without the Satguru, nor can they hope to do so in the future. If you wish to experience supreme happiness, then you can only do so by taking refuge with the Satguru. Without going into the refuge of the perfect Satguru, you cannot experience pure spiritual bliss. It will remain inaccessible to you.

**O brothers, happy are the servants of the Lord;
The sins of countless lifetimes are eradicated.
The Lord Himself makes this union.**

The devotees of the Lord are eternally happy. Their sins of many past births are eradicated. Their souls become immaculate and pure. They unite with the Truth and become the form of Truth. For such dear ones, birth and death come to an end. But as long as we are not united with the Truth, falsehood reappears and reasserts. And trapped in that falsehood, we must endure endless suffering in the cycle of birth and death.

**The world is deluded by doubt, and all these
worldly relations are like chains upon the soul.**

Through the body and senses, we are chained to our family and relatives, but we ourselves have forged these bonds. Just to fulfill our sensual desires, we have developed relationships with all these outer things, and they become the source of our enslavement. Swami Ji Maharaj tells us:

*The first chain is the body; the second is the spouse.
The third is the son, and the fourth is the grandson.
From your grandson comes a great-grandson,
and the chains have no end.*²

Many people beg for a son to be born in their family. They think that if there is no male heir, who will represent the family name in future generations? What nonsense! When you have not understood your true name, how can your son preserve its honor in the future? What does it mean to understand your true name? You must develop self-knowledge. If you yourself have not understood your true spiritual heritage, how can your son add to its glory in times to come?

And what is our real heritage? We are the same essence as that of God. Whoever receives the pure Simran of the True Lord and practices it sincerely removes the sins, impurities, and duality from their within and realizes that they are part of God Himself—His obedient child, His true spiritual heir.

But we have forgotten our true nature. Everyone forms outer relationships and becomes entangled in family affairs according to their own way of thinking. Of our own volition, we trap ourselves in this net. No one else has created this bondage.

And then, to justify our attachments, we say, “Now I am a householder, and it is my religious duty to follow all the rules and regulations of the family life. I have reached the stage of *grihastha āshrama* (the time of life for earning a living and raising a family)³ and must fulfill the obligations and uphold the traditions of family life.”

2 Swami Shiv Dayal Singh, *Sar Bachan Nazm Yanī Chhand Band*, Bachan 15, Chitāvanī bhāg dusrā, Shabd 7

3 The system of Hindu dharma defines four *āshramas* or stages of life: *brahmacharya* (education/celibacy), *grihastha* (householder), *vānaprastha* (retired, “forest dweller”), and *sannyāsa* (renunciate)

My friend, you say you are following the religious traditions laid down by your forefathers. You say it is your duty to follow the prescribed rules and regulations. You say you must fulfill your dharma. But that “dharma” is of your creation; it has no inherent existence of its own.

It is the same with those who say that the dharma or duty of the renunciate is to leave home and go and reside in the jungle. This is the *sannyasa āshrama*. The renunciates vow to endure hunger or go from house to house with a begging bowl to get food. They say it is their dharma to do so. But all these practices we promise to follow have been defined according to our own understanding of dharma.

Some people say, “I am a devotee of Vishnu.” They understand Vishnu as the greatest of the gods and think that worshipping him is the real religion. There are devotees of Vishnu and devotees of Sri Vishnu. There are several sects of Vishnu’s followers. Each has its own practices, and each believes its own is the only true religion. There are also the worshippers of Shiva, the Shaivites. They have their own customs and believe they are following the true religion.

But in reality, the true religion is the one in which the soul becomes luminous within, and vaporous fantasies are dispelled. When one is permeated by and absorbed in the Truth, that can be called the true dharma. As long as this fundamental understanding of dharma is not achieved, our coming and going in this world continues, and the waves of pain and sorrow that wash over us can never be stilled.

**Without the Guru, the chains cannot be broken;
The Gurumukhs find the door of salvation.**

Unless you go into the refuge of the Guru, you will not find

any other power that can free you from the clutches of Maya. The Guru tells us, “Shabd is within you. Invert your attention and unite with it.”

**One who performs rituals without realizing the
Guru’s Shabd will take rebirth over and over.**

If we give up the path of Sant Mat, if we abandon the meditation practice, and, in its place, we take up the performance of karmic rituals, even if we respect those rites and rituals and remain absorbed in their practice day and night with deep devotion, still we cannot break free from the bonds of this world. Instead, they will only entangle us further because all the outer actions, whether good or evil, create karmas. It is just like shackles made of iron and shackles made of gold—both are equally binding.

Now, many people understand themselves as householders. They follow the dharma of the householder’s life, based on the teachings laid down in the Shastras, and, in this way, they think they can achieve liberation. They declare the *grihastha āshrama*, the householder’s way of life, to be the highest dharma of human existence, but they have no real understanding of the householder’s dharma. They consider themselves householders based on some ideas gleaned from the scriptures, but to discover how the ideal householder behaves, we have to look deeper.

One time, some sadhus came to a mahatma to ask a question concerning how the path of the householder compares with that of the renunciate. That mahatma was himself a householder, and his wife was a devoted companion who was even more advanced on the spiritual path than he was himself.

So, when those sadhus arrived at his home, and everyone was seated, they asked him: “Which is greater, the path of the renunciate or the path of the householder?”

He did not reply immediately but instead called out to his wife, saying, “Bring drinking water to welcome our guests.” At the time she heard him calling to her, she was pounding some rice and other grains with a large pestle, and at the very moment she heard his voice, the pestle she was using was in its upstroke of pounding the grain in the mortar, and, without hesitation, she left the pestle hanging in midair while she went to fetch the water. She had so much faith and trust in her husband that she implicitly acted according to his words. The company of such a devoted wife is one way to liberation, and if married couples live together in this manner, then the householder’s life is the greatest of all.

But if they cling to their ideas and wishes, they will clash and end up confused and upset. They will not have any peace in the householder’s life. Likewise, there is no happiness to be found in the renunciate’s life if we engage in quarrels and wrangling with others. This way of living leads to suffering, whether we are householders or renunciates, and one day, we will depart from this world empty-handed.

Many people consider themselves very spiritual and think they are fulfilling the dharma of the renunciate, but unfortunately, they have not grasped the basic principles of detachment. They do not realize they are stuck fast in attachment and are no different from worldly people. But if they cultivate inner detachment, the renunciate’s life can be a helping factor for spiritual progress. And the householder’s life can also be a boon if both husband and wife are unified in their approach to life. The wife accepts the husband’s orders, and the husband remains absorbed day and night in the Almighty

Lord, the True Husband. If this mode of life is followed, the householder's way is the best.⁴

It makes no difference if the Gurumukhs are renunciates or householders; they merge into the Lord and attain liberation.

But day and night, the manmukhs remain involved in the fantasies of their own minds; their egotism leads them astray, and they perish, caught in the net of karma.

**The world is entangled in egotism and
possessiveness, O brothers;
But no one belongs to anyone else.**

The entire world is caught in the trap of egoism and perishes in its grasp. The truth is that we bring such a death upon ourselves. We proclaim, "I am the greatest of all," or "All this belongs to me." These words are death itself. Saying "mine, mine," we incarnate in this world; saying "mine, mine," we depart. It is this sense of I-hood and possessiveness that is the cause of our being trapped in the cycle of birth and death.

What is the fundamental aim of all spiritual endeavor? Liberation from the trap of "I and mine." And there is only one method to achieve this goal. Within us is the Light of

4 Here, Baba Somanath Ji is speaking according to the customs and culture of his time, and the Saints often use the metaphor of the wife and husband to describe the love between the soul and the Almighty Lord. The Saints respect all cultures and take the souls from the line of least resistance. The critical point here, whether living in a traditional or modern culture, whether following the householder's or the renunciate's lifestyle, is that we should live in harmony with our fellow beings. Sant Kirpal Singh Ji has told us, "Put in one ounce of love in all your affairs, even the mundane affairs; you will have your happiness. All these strifes are going on for want of love. And the main thing is: Love knows giving. Love knows service. Love knows sacrifice. If we learn that subject, everything comes in." Kirpal Singh, *The Light of Kirpal* (Sanbornton, NH: Sant Bani Ashram, 1980) p. 118.

the Shabd, and when our attention becomes absorbed in that Shabd Power, no trace of egoism remains. Then, all the impressions of birth and death are eradicated, and we attain liberation. But as long as our within remains filled with the sense of “I and mine,” be it gross or subtle, the thought of liberation does not even arise.

**The Gurumukhs attain the Mansion of the Lord.
Singing the glories of the Lord, they reach their
own True Home.**

The Gurumukhs follow the path according to the teachings of the Saints and return to the True Home from which they have come. Within this human body, they control and concentrate the mind. Then, catching hold of the stream of the Sound Current emanating from above, they merge into it and follow it back to the source from which it originated. All others come under the enchantment of the senses and the inner mind, and, trapped in the worldly karmas, they remain stuck fast in the cycle of birth and death.

**Those who understand achieve self-realization,
and the Almighty Lord becomes theirs.**

Many people claim that after death, they will attain the heaven worlds. They think they are free to live any life they want, and then, by practicing some rite or ritual, they will become entitled to enter the celestial realms. But this is all a product of their imagination.

Whatever we do in this world, we will reap the fruit of our deeds. If we do bad karmas and then think we can dwell in the heavenly abodes after death, well, this can never come to pass.

If, for instance, the worm living in the neem tree is intoxicated by the bitterness of its leaves and bark, how can it appreciate the sweetness of sugar cane? Similarly, those who, day and night, remain engrossed in doing the evil karmas die with the impressions of those actions imprinted on their mind.

**The True Guru is forever merciful, O brothers.
Without good fortune, what can anyone obtain?**

We may call that Power the Guru, the Almighty Lord, or the Naam. These words all refer to the same thing. That Power is the form of grace.

Why doesn't everyone receive this gift? Because it can only be obtained through good fortune. Until we receive the Divine grace, we cannot meet the Guru. Even if the Guru is living in our own home, our mind may not accept him. What can He impart to us if that good fortune is not written in our fate?

**He looks alike upon all with his glance of grace;
But we receive the reward according to our love
for the Lord.**

The Satguru looks on all with the same balanced, gracious sight, but we receive the fruit of his Darshan according to our receptivity. Some people say, "I only want the worldly possessions," and they will receive what they ask for. If someone says, "I desire liberation," well, everything is available in the court of the Satguru. We receive the gifts from the Guru's bounty according to the desires that we cherish in our hearts.

At the time of Gorakhnath, there were two parties of Nathpanth yogis. One party consisted of those who were

disciples of Jalandharnath, and the other party was comprised of followers of Machindranath, which included Gorakhnath and others.

Once, the two groups of disciples met in a large assembly to confer because both of their gurus had fallen into dire straits. Jalandharnath's disciple, Raja Gopichand, had buried him alive in a well because the guru would not instantly grant the king's wish for the secret of immortality. Machindranath, Goraknath's guru, had become infatuated with one queen in Bengal, and deluded by his mind, he was hopelessly ensnared in that attachment.

As they discussed how they could help their gurus, the followers of Jalandharnath started taunting Gorakhnath because of his guru's lapse of conduct. They said insultingly, "Just see how your guru has become ensnared in this worldly attachment. Even though he has supernatural powers, he is still roaming about here and there, caught in the outer enjoyments."

Eventually, both gurus were rescued successfully, and preparations were made for a large, two-day feast to celebrate their safe return. The first day was to be hosted by Jalandharnath and the second day by Machindranath, and, because of the rivalry between the two groups, they each wanted their guru's feast to be the most magnificent. Sadhus from all over the country gathered there to join in the festivities.

On the first day, when Jalandharnath was the host, everyone attending enjoyed a delicious meal. But on the second day, as the time for Machindranath's feast approached, there was no sign of any cooks or the vessels required to prepare the food. Nevertheless, at noon, Gorakhnath came before the gathering and told the sadhus to sit in lines so that the meal could be served. They all sat down, and after the leaf plates were distributed, Gorakhnath announced, "Brothers, this is a

wish-feast. Whatever you would like to eat, think of it in your mind, and that food will appear before you on your plate.”

Now, at that time, one sadhu named Kanipa, a follower of Jalandharnath, realized that Gorakhnath was going to glorify his guru and restore his honor by using his supernatural powers to serve a marvelous feast to all the guests. Kanipa harbored ill will towards Machindranath and Gorakhnath, and he thought, “I should do something to embarrass them. I will not imagine delicious food. Instead, I will think of something disgusting and see what happens.”

So, what did Kanipa wish for? He thought, “On my plate, a black cobra should appear.” As soon as the thought crossed his mind, a cobra appeared there before him, sitting on the leaf plate. Seeing this, Gorakhnath told Kanipa, “This was very poorly done; you had a low, despicable wish, and your wish has manifested here. Henceforth, you and all who follow you will always have to carry a snake with them. Now take what you have wished for and depart.” And even up to the present time, each of the yogis in that sect, besides wearing earrings in his pierced ears, also drapes a cobra about his neck.

The purpose of telling this story is to demonstrate how the Guru’s grace manifests according to our desires.

Your feelings determine the fruit of your devotion.

We worship God according to our conceptions of Him, and we get the benefit of that devotion according to the feelings in our hearts.

God dwells within us according to our love.

The Lord reveals Himself to us according to our love for

Him. The Satguru offers the same balanced glance of grace to all, but we will benefit from it according to the quality of our devotion.

O water, where does your color come from?

Water is colorless, but it takes on the color of whatever we mix into it. Similarly, the Almighty Lord is pure and all-pervading and looks upon all with the same balanced, gracious vision. But each one benefits from His grace according to their understanding and capacity.

O Nanak, when the Naam comes to dwell in the mind, self-love is eradicated from within.

The grace of the Satguru is the most important thing. For those in whom the Naam has manifested, their egoism disappears, and they achieve liberation in this lifetime. They become worthy vessels for the true grace of the Guru. But until we attain this state, the Sound Current does not become strong within us, and we remain subservient to the law of karma.

What is the true mantra? Spirituality is taught in many different forms, and so many mantras are prescribed. But the words spoken by the Guru constitute the highest teaching of all—the primal mantra. Only when you accept the Guru's words will your devotion become fruitful. But if you do not accept his words as all in all, then even if you go on performing the spiritual practices for a hundred years, you can reap no benefit.

—Baba Somanath

Guru's Words are the Primal Mantra

**Who should I serve? What should I meditate on?
I go and enquire from the Sat Guru.¹**

I have submitted to the will of the Sat Guru and have removed self-love from my within. This is the bani of Guru Amar Das, the third Guru of the Sikhs. In this one verse, He has clarified the essence of spirituality. The Guru's words contain all the wisdom of the four Vedas, the six Shastras, and the eighteen Puranas.

So, first, the disciple enquires from the Guru, "Who should I serve?" What seva should I offer, and what repetition should I practice?" This is the disciple's question.

Then the Satguru replies, "Accept the will of the Guru. Go into His shelter with loving devotion, and whatever order He gives, enshrine that order in your heart." He further instructs the disciple, "You must remove all sense of I-hood from your within." Once we accept the Guru's words in our hearts and remove our sense of ego, we should act according

1 Guru Amar Das, *Kis hau sevī kiā jap karī satagur pūchau jāi...*

to His instructions. He tells us to practice our meditation every day with regularity.

The Guru's words are the primal mantra.

The Guru's form is the essence of meditation.

The Guru's grace is the foundation of liberation.

What is the true mantra? Spirituality is taught in many different forms, and so many mantras are prescribed. But the words spoken by the Guru constitute the highest teaching of all—the primal mantra. Only when you accept the Guru's words will your devotion become fruitful. But if you do not accept his words as all in all, then even if you go on performing the spiritual practices for a hundred years, you can reap no benefit.

**By performing seva according to His instructions,
Naam has come to reside in my mind.**

**Through God's Name alone, I have obtained
happiness and am adorned with the True Word.**

What instruction does the Guru give us? What does He reply to our enquiry? He tells us that the true service to the Guru is to accept His words and engage in meditation day and night. Then His Naam will manifest within us.

What is the nature of the Naam? It is the same without and within. That Naam permeates every particle of the creation. When you merge into that Naam, all traces of egotism, all pride of the body, and all thoughts of the world are driven out. Naam is perfect happiness and bliss. By merging into that happiness, you become the form of happiness. You will not

find it by searching outside, repeating empty words, or engaging in intellectual wrestling.

Many people fall into this error. They start lecturing to others, "This is how to attain liberation. You should mold your mind in this way. The nature of Naam is like that. You should do the repetition in such and such a way. This is how it should be." They make a great fuss and get trapped in all sorts of discussions and disputes. The result is that they make no progress in their own meditation. The inner door does not open for them because meditation is the only method to go within.

**O my mind, day and night, remain wakeful and
meditate on the Lord.**

**Protect the crop lest the cranes descend and
plunder your fields.**

What a clear explanation! When you become firm in your meditation, you will discover that the impressions of countless ages are stored within you. Therefore, you should always remain vigilant. You should be like a farmer who has planted a new crop in his field. He always remains on guard. He fences in that area and stays constantly vigilant. Otherwise, birds and animals will eat up those newly sown seeds, destroying his whole crop.

In the same way, when you have sown the seed of Naam in the field of your heart, you must guard that field constantly through meditation. Remain awake day and night. Stay alert, and keep your love absorbed in the Shabd Naam. Otherwise, the scavengers of lust, anger, attachment, greed, and egotism will plunder your crop. Therefore, you must always be on the lookout.

The mind's desires are all fulfilled when love for the Shabd overflows within.

Whoever does constant devotion with fear and love beholds the Lord close at hand.

We should fix all our hopes on Shabd, which reverberates throughout the entire creation. At present, our desires are drawn to the illusory things of this world, but our worldly desires can never be satisfied. If one desire is fulfilled, ten more arise to take its place. We go on asking for one thing after another. We cannot sleep at night because of worry. Our thoughts are consumed with whatever they lack, and sleep flies out the window. If we fully concentrate all our longing on the Shabd Naam, we can achieve a little peace. But until we manifest the Naam within, we will find no other means to eradicate desire.

You may practice yoga, you may perform ritual offerings, you may light the sacrificial fire and do austerities, you may fast, you may turn the rosary made of 17-sided rudraksha beads,² and you may bathe at the holy places of pilgrimage, but all these efforts are in vain. Even with so much effort, your practices will yield no result.

The desires of the mind can be finished off only by contact with the perfect Shabd Naam within you. When your desires are merged into the Shabd, then they become the form of Shabd and desire is finished off forever. Further, He says that both fear and love are necessary. Until we cultivate a deep reverence for the Guru, our love cannot become complete. Kabir Sahib tells us:

² The *satarah mukhi*, or 17-sided, rudraksha beads, and their accompanying mantra, are thought to be particularly auspicious.

*If we do the devotion just imitating others,
We can never be dyed in the true color.*

Someone may say, "Come on, we're going to Satsang," and we tag along. In this way, we attend the Satsang, but what do we gain from it? Nothing at all. We sit watching all the other people who have come for Satsang. We spend an hour or two there and then come back home empty-handed. We don't bring any spiritual wealth back with us.

Therefore, Guru Amar Das tells us that we should do our devotion with both fear and love. But what kind of fear does He mean? Everyone is afraid because of their evil deeds. They feel guilty and want to hide their sins. They think, "If someone sees what I am doing, what will happen?" The thief is afraid. The adulterous woman is afraid. Those who tell lies are always afraid. We want to hide our wrongdoing from others. This is not the fear Guru Amar Das is referring to. Such fear only leads you into greater sin.

So, what fear do we need to cultivate? We should always go on thinking, "God is everywhere. If I do any evil deed, my Satguru will be watching me." We should always be afraid of transgressing against the Truth. Now we say, "Satguru knows my innermost heart. He is ever-present."

But do we think He is ever-present? If we are stealing things from others, then we can't really believe He is always watching us. We say, "The Guru will never see me here. I have closed the door. No one will know what I am doing." We have no fear of the Guru. We think we have pulled the wool over His eyes. If a five-year-old child is standing in front of us, at that time, we cannot do any false or evil deed. What do we say at that time? "This child may go and tell someone

what I am doing. My reputation will be ruined, which will not be good.” We are worried this child will reveal our secret. But if we are more afraid of that child than we are of our Guru, how can we ever remove the evil deeds from our hearts? Therefore, fear is necessary. When such fear of the Guru comes into the heart, we start to develop real love for Him. When we develop both these qualities, love and fear, then our devotion will become successful.

**All doubt flees from the body when the mind is
constantly imbued with the True Name.**

He says that when the True Shabd is revealed within, when our mind merges into that Shabd, no place remains in our heart for illusion and error. But until Shabd manifests within us, that illusion cannot be dislodged. Our hearts remain filled with illusion, while on the surface, we go on praising the greatness of Shabd. But we are just repeating what we have read or heard. This is all pretense.

When the True Shabd dawns within, it drives out all illusion. Then, we don’t need to rely on the testimony of others. If you introspect your heart, you will see clearly whether it is filled with the Light of Shabd or the darkness of deception.

**Then, we meet with the Immaculate Lord, the
ocean of all virtues.**

When your soul contacts the True Shabd, then that immaculate Power manifests within. This is the Power of Truth, the Treasure House of Grace, the Ocean of all Virtues.

**Those who remain awake are saved;
Those who sleep are plundered.**

Here, He conveys a fundamental truth to us. Whoever stays awake can achieve liberation in this lifetime. But those who remain sunk in ignorance and sleep will be sent into the hells.

**They don't recognize the True Name, and their life
passes away like a dream.**

Even though the overflowing treasure house of Shabd lies within you, still you have no awareness of it. You have not done the meditation or manifested that Shabd within yourself. This whole world is a dream; lost in that dream, you waste your human birth and depart empty-handed.

When the parents decide to have a child, they have no idea what soul will come into the mother's womb. And that soul has no idea what household it will be born into or who its parents will be. It all appears to be happening almost by chance. And before you know it, that child is born.

Then, right away, the mother says, "This is my child." And then the father asserts, "This is my child." But that soul does not belong to either of them. Neither the mother nor the father can lay greater claim to the child. Therefore, we can say that the child has been born out of duality. And that duality predominates in the child. His whole incarnation springs from duality. As he goes through his life, all his deeds arise out of duality. And in duality, he finally departs from this world at the time of death. His whole life was just a dream.

Yesterday, we were one thing; today, we are another, and tomorrow, we will be something else yet again. Throughout

childhood, youth, and mature years, our bodies keep changing. Finally, reaching old age, we depart from this body altogether. The whole drama of life is only a dream. But in our ignorance, we people constantly mistake this dream for reality. Therefore, we have no inkling of the true state of affairs.

Only the Gurumukh, who has become absorbed in the True Naam, can be called a real human being, and that rare soul sees beyond the shadow of a doubt that this world is a dream. This is the condition of the Gurumukh. But, as for the rest of us, we remain sunk in the illusion—we do not even realize we are dreaming.

Only when we wake up will we say, “Oh, that was all just a dream.” Then, the truth becomes clear to us as well. When we are still trapped in that half-conscious dream state, how can we call it a dream? At that time, we insist that it is all real.

**The guest who comes to a deserted house will
depart empty-handed, just as they came.**

**In the same way, the life of a manmukh passes by
uselessly.**

What face will they show in the next world?

Once, a recently married man was going to make his first visit to the home of his wife’s family. As he was traveling along on the train, he started daydreaming. He imagined what a fine reception he would receive when he arrived. He thought, “Now, I am going there to visit them. My mother-in-law and wife will come out to greet me. All the members of the household will come and pay respect to me. They will welcome me and entertain me. They will make me comfortable and serve me delicious food.”

As he went along, he was picturing all these things in his mind as though they were real. But when he arrived there, what did he see? The house was shuttered, and there was a lock on the door. The whole family had gone off to another village for a visit, and the house was empty. And so, he had to return home disappointed and upset.

Our whole life is no more substantial than that man's day-dream. When we are born into this world, our family distributes sweets, light lamps, sing songs, and plays musical instruments. Everyone is rejoicing.

But later, as we make our way through life, we waste every moment in duality, and, at the time of death, we have to depart empty-handed. We get a beating from the angels of death, and then we are thrown back into the cycle of 84 lakh births and deaths.

We have gained nothing from human birth and are wasting our precious time in the useless pursuits of daily life. Even dogs have children and look after their families. This responsibility is not so demanding that it should consume all our time. We should give some thought to our soul's welfare and endeavor to free ourselves from this cycle of birth and death.

There is more to life than just eating and drinking. Therefore, Guru Amar Das says, "O manmukh, you have wasted your precious birth in useless, meaningless things. When you go into the next world at death, how will you dare to show your face?"

**The Lord Himself is all in all; those who are
caught up in ego, what can they say of Him?**

Now what does He say? “O Lord, You are all in all.” Superficially we have learned that God is Omnipresent, and everyone repeats, “The Lord is within me. He is present everywhere.” But when a person who is still controlled by the ego utters these words, they shed no glory on the Almighty Lord. The wisdom of the Gurumukhs is contained in such utterances, but everyone repeats them without any understanding of their deeper significance.

When we recognize the Guru’s Shabd, the disease of pride is eradicated from our within.

When we experience the True Shabd of the Satguru, then we will see that a veritable treasure lies heaped up within us. Unless we experience this for ourselves, what have we accomplished by taking the Naam initiation? Many people say, “I have been initiated forty years. My mother and father are also initiates; my whole family is initiated.” My friend, why do you talk about how long you have been initiated? Our aim is to remove all ego; no I-hood should remain within us. Then all worry or sorrow are finished off. Only then do we become the real initiates.

I fall at the feet of those who serve their Satguru.

Finally, Guru Amar Das tells us: “Day and night, such Gurumukhs are true, and they serve the Satguru. I fall at the feet of such devotees.” The Gurumukh is God Himself in human form; there is no difference between the two. Again and again, I bow before such a devotee.

**Nanak says, "I sacrifice myself on those who
have become the form of Truth in the Lord's
True Court."**

That devotee who has united with the Almighty Lord becomes the form of Truth. I wish to sacrifice myself on such a Gurumukh.

The Almighty Lord not only pervades the entire universe, He is also the Power behind everything that exists. He dwells within Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, and all the other deities, and they draw their power from Him. The whole of creation came into being with the support of that Almighty Lord. If He were to withdraw His Conscious Power, even for a fraction of a second, this body would crumble into dust.

—Baba Somanath

The Witness of All

My Lord is the witness of all and everything.¹

This is the bani of Satguru Kabir Sahib Ji. He is explaining to us about the relationship between God and this created world. He tells us: “My Almighty Lord is *sarvasākshī*, the Witness of All.” He is everywhere—in the food; in the water; in the grass; in the wood. He pervades all the five elements and everything else in this world. He is omniscient and omnipresent. God is a Power and the soul is the same Power as that of God. But in order to understand that Almighty Lord, we need a subtle and conscious inner eye. He dwells within us in His Eternal Form. He is the boon companion to all. But because of our strong attachment to the things of this outer world, we cannot perceive Him.

**He pervades Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, and Ishwar,
yet He remains unseen.**

The Almighty Lord not only pervades the entire universe, He is also the Power behind everything that exists. He dwells

¹ Kabir Sahib, *Sab kā sākshī merā sāñh...*

within Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, and all the other deities, and they draw their power from Him. The whole of creation came into being with the support of that Almighty Lord. If He were to withdraw His Conscious Power, even for a fraction of a second, this body would crumble into dust.

**Consider the five and the twenty-five;
They have misled the whole world.**

He tells us that we have the five senses and twenty-five prakritis. With the intellect, we can easily understand the five senses. But the twenty-five prakritis, subtle elements compounded in varying proportions, lie beyond the grasp of the intellect. These twenty-five prakritis combine in seemingly countless variations and determine the individualized makeup of every human being, every creature, and every object. One father may have five or ten children. And each of those children comes into this world with a different combination of prakritis that determines their individual natures.

Even the unconscious material objects are fashioned according to the prakritis. So, while the intellect easily comprehends the five senses, it remains baffled by the nature of prakriti. Even the great meditator souls that have access to the higher realms cannot totally reverse the effect of prakriti when they are functioning in the region of the three worlds. Some trace of their prakritis remains, even if only in minute amounts.

We read the writings of Kabir Sahib, who teaches about the path of Surat Shabd Yoga, and when we read the writings of Swami Ji Maharaj and Tulsi Sahib, we find their teachings are exactly the same. But the prakritis of each Saint that incarnates in this world are different, and if we examine the

writings of these great Souls closely, we will see that they have framed their teachings according to their individual personalities and mentalities. The teachings never change, but they will be presented in varying forms according to the prakritis of various Mahatmas. Therefore, He says we need to understand the nature of the five senses and the twenty-five prakritis. And realizing their reality, we should rise above them and become absorbed in the Naam.

These forces that have brought us into this world do not leave us. They have made their home in our within, and we cannot change them. The only way to change them, to become free of them, is to rise above their sphere of action and leave them behind because when we are functioning in this mortal world, those prakritis that are present to a greater or lesser extent within everyone will become active at the appropriate time.

Akār, Ukār, and Makār—His Home lies beyond the sacred syllables of “AUM.”

Akār, the letter “A”; and *ukār*, the letter “U”; and *makār*, the letter “M”—these letters form the three syllables of the sacred word “A-U-M (*Onkār*). But the Power of the Almighty Lord lies beyond these sounds. He is not in the *Onkār* or *soham* of the yogis. For the yogis, *onkār* is the sound of Brahm, and *soham*² is the sound of Shakti or Maya.

2 Here, Baba Somanath is referring to “*soham*” or “*sohang*,” the sound emanating from the throat chakra, the seat of Shakti. Yogis practicing pranayam contemplate on this sound. It is distinct from the “*Sohang*” of the Saints—“I am Thou”—that reverberates in Bhanvar Gupha, the fourth inner plane of the soul’s ascent within. The “*soham*” or “*sohang*” of the yogis is just a distant echo of that higher Sound.

**Consciousness and semi-consciousness,
unconsciousness and superconsciousness—
He dwells above these four states.**

Now, what does He tell us? Day and night, we remain involved in different states of consciousness: *jāgrat* or waking (consciousness); *svapan* or dreaming (semi-consciousness); *shushupti* or deep sleep (unconsciousness); and *turiya* (super-consciousness). The dwelling place of the Lord lies far beyond these states.

**He exists without the presence or absence of
qualities: *rajas*, *tamas*, *sattva*, and *nirgun*.**

The material world is created, maintained, and destroyed through the three syllables of AUM—*akār*, *ukār*, and *makār*. The syllable “*akār*” is the seat of Brahm, the creator; the syllable “*ukār*” is the seat of Vishnu, the preserver; and the syllable “*makār*” is the seat of Shiva, the destroyer. The three states of consciousness in the creation up to Trikuti are also inherent in the three syllables of AUM: *jāgrati* (the waking state of consciousness, identified with Vishnu); *svapna* (the dream state of semi-consciousness, identified with Brahma), and, *sushupati* (the unconscious state of deep sleep, identified with Shiva).

Further, these three syllables of the primal mantra “A-U-M” and the gods who reside in them also correspond to the three *gunas* or qualities. Brahma has the quality of *rajas* or activity, Vishnu has the quality of *sattva* or purity, and Shiva has the quality of *tamas* or inertia. These three qualities fill our within.

Since we have not yet been able to understand the workings of all these profound powers or forces that control creation,

we take birth over and over again and keep on wandering about outside. This is no trivial matter. Understanding these powers and realizing the soul that lies beyond their domain is not easy. Not everyone is fit for this undertaking.

**Physical, astral, causal, and supercausal—
obtaining these bodies, we get lost in the
pleasures.**

Now, having explained the gunas thoroughly, Kabir goes on to tell us about the four bodies. All of the centers located below the eyes are the seat of the physical body. Above the physical body lies the astral region, where the astral body functions. This is the subtle region of the gods and goddesses, the heavens, Vaikunt, and so forth. The causal body is the form of Brahm. And the supercausal body lies beyond in the region of Parbrahm. These four bodies are veils that obscure the soul. And blinded by these veils, the yogis, ascetics, and even the great rishis get waylaid over and over again.

The Saints teach us the easy and natural Path to God. But following the other paths, the aspirants are led astray. When they rise above the physical world and enter into the subtle, astral regions, they offer their devotion to the gods and goddesses—Vishnu or Shiva or Ganesh or Lakshmi or Sharda Devi (Saraswati). In return, these deities grant them supernatural powers. Then, the devotees fall prey to ego. “I am a great Mahatma.” As a result, the attention becomes entrapped in the astral body, and they have to incarnate once again into this mortal world.

Beyond the astral region lies the causal. You may call it the causal body, or you may call it the form of Brahm, or you

may call it the dwelling place of Brahm; they are all one and the same thing. Brahm is the ruler of this region, and through Brahm, this whole creation came into being. But the causal body is also just a veil over the soul. Passing beyond the causal region, we reach the supercausal plane, where the supercausal body forms yet another covering to be removed. This realm is called Daswan Dwar or Mansarovar in the terminology of the Saints.

Know the essence does not lie in *vishwa*, *taijasa*, *prajna*, or *ātmā*.

The soul has four powers or attributes: *vishva* or “earth,” the quality of the consciousness in the physical body; *taijasa* or “radiance,” the quality of the consciousness in the astral body; *pragya* or “wisdom,” the quality of the consciousness in the causal body; and *ātmā* or “soul,” the quality of the consciousness in the supercausal realm. These are also four names of the soul. The soul has been described as the support of the world, *vishwambharam*. In the form of *taijasa*, radiance is present in all. And *pragya* is the wisdom that arises spontaneously from our within. These are all the powers of the *ātmā* or soul.

***Para*, *pashyanti*, *madhma*, and *baikhri*—don’t pay any attention to these four sounds.**

Now Kabir Sahib tells us that four sounds arise from the body: *parā*, *pashyanti*, *madhyamā*, and *vaikhrī*. The sound arising from the navel is *parā*; the sound originating from the heart is *pashyanti*; the sound produced in the throat is *madhyamā*; and the sound produced with the mouth is called *vaikhrī*. So, in the

lower chakras of our body, these four sounds are going on. But the soul, the real motivating Power, remains separate from all this hubbub. Until we get some experience of that True Power, we cannot rise above. And this is not a small thing. Many say, “My mind doesn’t take to it; my attention doesn’t become concentrated.” Friend, how will the mind take to it when your within is filled up with these lower things? You have to become separate from these four sounds.

You can acquire a little bit of outer knowledge and learn to give lectures. You can start calling yourself a mahatma. You turn the rosary for a few rounds and leave it at that. But this does not make you a True Mahatma. What is there in giving lectures? If you practice it every day, you become good at it. But the Reality within you lies beyond all the worldly knowledge, and when you experience the Power of the soul—untrammelled by this outer world—then all of the noise and confusion of this world evaporate. Otherwise, your progress will be stopped at one point or another.

**Look beyond the five koshas;
Don’t take them for the True Essence.**

Now He addresses the subject of the five koshas or sheaths: *annamaya*, the food sheath; *prānamaya*, the sheath of the vital airs; *manomaya*, the mental sheath; *vigyānamaya*, the sheath of knowledge, with two aspects, *gyān* and *vigyān*; and, lastly, *anandamaya*, the sheath of bliss, the final gossamer-thin kosha covering the soul.

Many people focus their attention on the *annamaya* kosha. They pass their life thinking that eating food and satisfying their hunger is the most important thing. But if one day they

don't get any food, and someone comes and tells them—"I will serve you food, but you must sacrifice your life."—they won't accept that. At that moment, their attention moves upward from the *annamaya* kosha into the *prānamaya* kosha, which now becomes their primary focus. Then they think: "Oh, no! Perhaps I may starve, but I am not willing to give up my life's breath in this way, just for a meal." The immediate preservation of the *pranas* or vital airs in the body becomes more urgent than staving off hunger.

What about when the attention moves from the *prānamaya* kosha into the *manomaya* kosha? The *manomaya* kosha, the kosha of the mind-stuff, is characterized by strong beliefs and intense emotions. When focused on the *manomaya* kosha, a person may be willing to lay down their life for a cause they believe in strongly. But sadly, we sometimes see that when people commit some irredeemable error, then under the grip of strong emotion centered in the *manomaya* kosha, they become ready to take their own lives, and in this way, suicides result.

After this comes the *vigyānamaya* kosha, the sheath of knowledge. This kosha has two aspects: *gyānamaya*, concerned with knowledge of the material planes, and *vigyānamaya*, concerned with enlightenment in the spiritual planes. When we focus our thoughts on the All-Pervading, All-Knowing Power, we realize: "I am in everything. I am the witness of everything." Then we become free from the power of the mind-stuff and contact the power of Brahman. Here, the *manomaya* kosha is destroyed, and we transcend into *gyānamaya*.

Then, from the *gyānamaya*, we become absorbed into the *vigyānamaya*. How does this happen? When we realize that the Power of the Almighty Lord is the cause of all that exists,

when we focus our thoughts on that Power and become absorbed into it—this is called *vigyanamaya*. But the *vigyanamaya* kosha resides in the domain of the buddhi or intellect, and the Power of the soul lies beyond all the koshas. It is something separate from them and has no connection with them at all.

Understand the nature of these ten: five *gyān indriyas* and five *karma indriyas*;

So, we have seen that a collection of powers has been amassed in this human body. Besides all these powers, there are also five *karma indriyas* (the organs of action that interact with the material world) and five *gyān indriyas* (the organs of sense that gather information from the material world). The five *karma indriyas* are the hands, the feet, the rectum, the genital organ, and the mouth. The five *gyān indriyas* are the ears, the eyes, the nose, the tongue, and the skin.

The distinguishing factor of the *indriyas* is that they cannot work independently. The eyes can see the thing we need, but they cannot lift it. This is a drawback, and we need to use one of the *karma indriyas*, in this case, the hands, to pick the thing up and carry it along with us. The eyes can distinguish good things from bad things, but until they get the help of the *karma indriyas*, they can't take hold of anything. The ears may be able to hear a sound, but they won't be able to see what is making that sound. And while the ears can hear and the eyes can see, the work of distinguishing good fragrances from bad odors belongs to the nose.

In this way, no one *indriya* can perform all the tasks; the *karma indriyas* can act, and the *gyān indriyas* can gather

information, but they have to cooperate to get anything accomplished. Kabir Sahib says we should rise above the ten *indriyas*—the five *karma indriyas* and the five *gyān indriyas*—and not be bothered about them.

Chitta is a quality of the inner mind.

Know that the True Essence is not found there.

Now, He explains about the four aspects of the *antahkarana*, or inner mind: *manas* (thinking faculty), *buddhi* (reasoning intellect), *chitta* (recording and storing information), and *ahankār* (egotism: ‘I know’). These are the four powers or characteristics of the inner mind.

One German man used to come to the ashram; he would visit in the evening for Satsang. He was the manager of a factory in the area, and he lived in the cantonment in Bangalore. Suddenly, one night around eleven o’clock, a doubt came into his mind. He thought, “What are the functions of *chitta*, *manas*, *buddhi*, and *ahankār*? There is only one *antahkarana*. Why have these four powers been created? What do they do?” Our Punjabi brother, Hansraj, was living there also. So, he went and awakened Hansraj, and both of them drove here by car.

When they arrived, I asked them, “Why have you come here at this time of night?” The German man presented his query: “Baba Ji, what are the functions of *manas*, *buddhi*, *chitta*, and *ahankār*? The *antahkarana* (inner mind) is only one, but it has these four aspects. What are their different functions?” Now, if I had brought out some holy book or scripture, how could I have explained to him? He would have just raised more objections and arguments. So, I said, “Okay. First, the thought

arose in your within to come here. This is the work of the *manas* (mind). Then, you came up with questions. “I will ask him this. I will ask him that.” This is the work of the *buddhi* (intellect). So first, the thought occurred to you to come here; this was the *manas* (mind). Then you thought, “I will ask Baba Ji this question and that question.” This thought came from the *buddhi*. Now you are listening to my answer and making note of it. This is the work of the *chitta* (attention). Then, when you feel satisfied that your doubt has been resolved, this feeling of satisfaction is the function of your *ahankār* (egoism: ‘I know’).”

All four of these powers reside in the *antahkarana* (inner mind). Sometimes the *manas* (mind) thinks of a plan of action and gets started with it. Then, the *buddhi* (intellect) considers the pros and cons of the plan and decides to stop the work. But then the *manas* (mind) becomes obstinate, ignores the *buddhi*, and forges ahead with its idea. So, in this way, day and night, a struggle is raging in our *antahkarana* (inner mind). Therefore, Kabir Sahib tells us that the soul is watching this play. The soul is the witness of the four aspects of the mind, the three gunas, and the four states of consciousness. The soul witnesses the entire workings of Brahmand. If the soul were not overseeing the process, nothing could be accomplished.

Now examine *kuram, ses, kirkīlā, dhananjay, and devdatta.*

Here, He tells us about the secondary pranas: *kuram, ses, kirkīlā, dhananjay, and devdatta*. These are all defined in the Shastras and are also powers working in the body. There are 84 *vāyus*, or pranic currents, of which ten are the most

important. Five of these have major functions: *prāṇa*, *apāna*, *vyāna*, *udāna*, and *samāna*.

The *prāṇa vāyu* helps respiration and is located between the two eyes; the *apāna vāyu* is located in the region below the navel and helps the excretory system; the *udāna vāyu* is located in the throat and helps with swallowing; the *vyāna vāyu* aids the circulatory system and pervades the body like an ethereal element. The *samāna vāyu* is located at the solar plexus and spreads food throughout the body, balancing the actions of the other *vāyus*. The remaining five have minor functions. *Kuram* opens and closes the eyes; *devdatta* causes yawning and brings on gentle sleep. *Kirkilā* causes sneezing, *ses* (*nāg*) produces belching, and *dhananjaya* controls assimilation throughout the body via the heart. These ten *vāyus* are constantly working within everyone.

Don't consider the fourteen organs and their fourteen rulers as the Hidden Power.

Now, Kabir Sahib has told us there are fourteen *indriyas*: that is, the five *karma indriyas*, the five *gyān indriyas*, plus the four aspects of the *antahkarana* or inner mind, which is sometimes called the sixth *gyān indriya*. And there are fourteen *indras* or rulers. Each *indriya* has a corresponding ruler (*indra*) that governs it: the skin by the wind, the hand by Indra,³ the foot by Vishnu, and so on. But the Highest Power, the True Power, the Power of the soul, does not reside in them. That Power dwells beyond them.

3 Indra (upper case) is the King of the gods, the Lord of Heaven, while an *indra* (lower case) is a power or "ruler" of an individual *indriya* (sense).

Tat, Tvam, and Asi—understand the meaning of these words.

Now, to explain the fundamental principle of the one *Onkār*, Kabir Sahib presents the three concepts that make up the *Mahāvākhyā*,⁴ or “Great Saying,” *Tat Tvam Asi*, which literally means—You Art That. “*Tvam*” means “you,” referring to the soul. “*Tat*” means “that,” referring to *Onkār*. And the word “*Asi*,” meaning “are,” equates the two. The soul realizes that *Onkār* is an entity and thinks to itself, “I am that *Onkār*,” that is, the soul realizes its divine nature. This is the real meaning of “*Tat Tvam Asi*.” But the true Power of the soul lies beyond this stage; *Onkār* is only a waystation.

Kabir Sahib tells us that we have both *vākhyā* (word) and *lakshyā* (the meaning that can be inferred from that word). Whatever can be spoken with the mouth is called *vākhyā*. When a person speaks about something, they choose a word, a *vākhyā*, to indicate that thing. Once that word is spoken, we hear it with our faculty of hearing. Then, we can infer the meaning of the word (what that word is referring to), and that meaning is called *lakshyā*. So Kabir presents the words— “*Tat Tvam Asi*,” You Are That—and hearing those words, the meaning comes into our mind. The soul has realized that it is *Onkār*. But this is not the final goal; the goal still lies far ahead.

We split hairs over inferences; we say *jahad* is *ajahad* and vice versa.

4 *Mahāvākhyas* (Great Sayings) are sayings drawn from the Upanishads that express principles of non-dualistic Vedānta.

Using words, we try to gain knowledge of God through implication and inference.⁵ But only through real inner experience can we gain True Knowledge of the *Anahad Dhvani*, the limitless Sound of the Almighty Lord that pervades and enlivens the entire universe.

**When you meet with the Satguru, He reveals the
True Sound, and you can distinguish the
essence of Shabd.**

Having said all this, now He tells us the fundamental principle. You should meet a perfect Guru who teaches the path of Surat Shabd Yoga and who can give you a connection with the True Shabd. The disciple needs to cultivate complete love for the Guru and to practice the meditation according to His instructions; only then is it possible to contact the Shabd and complete the spiritual work. But if instead, you try to rely on

5 Baba Somanath Ji is pointing out that the outer words that can be written or spoken have no innate meaning and do not furnish us with direct knowledge. Outer words convey meaning through implication and inference, inclusion and exclusion. In Vedanta, such implied meaning (*lakshana*) is of three types. In *jahallakshana*, “exclusive implication,” the literal meaning of a word is rejected, and an implied meaning is substituted to get the correct meaning. In the phrase “the village on the Ganges,” the implied word “bank” is added, and “Ganges” is removed to achieve the correct meaning; that is, the village is located on the bank, not on the Ganges itself. In *ajahallakshana*, “inclusive implication,” the literal meaning is retained, but what is implied is also added. In the phrase “the red is running,” the meaning implied is “the red horse is running.” “Red” is retained, but the implied word “horse” is added to complete the correct meaning. *Jahad-ajahallakshana* is exclusive-inclusive implication. In the phrase “this is that Mohan,” you are implying that the Mohan you met earlier is the very same Mohan you are encountering at the present moment. “Mohan” and “Mohan” are identical, and both are retained. But the earlier time/place when you met “that” Mohan and the present time/place when you are encountering “this” Mohan are different, so both are rejected.

your limited intellect, you will find it unequal to the task. When the intellect cannot even deal with the complexity of this created world, how can it lead you into the Higher Realms?

Kabir says: "They are the Perfect Ones, who free others and sing the praises of the Lord."

After explaining all these things to us, Kabir Sahib tells us about the One who has manifested the Power of Perfection within Himself. He who has become separate from the created world, and who can separate others, He is the Perfect One.

No one can describe this experience of the Infinite. It has no limits. When we see the Lord within ourselves, as clearly as we see the outside world, this is a surest sign of True Darshan.

—Baba Somanath

The Signs of True Darshan

Whoever loses the little self becomes a dervish.¹

This is the bani of Satguru Paltu Sahib Ji. He is telling us about egotism—the sense of self. He says that *ahankār*, or egotism, is the source of the entire creation. Egotism is the cause of birth and death. Under the influence of ego, we go on creating karmas. The whole world is dancing to the tune of the ego.

Therefore, He tells us that the foundation of spirituality is becoming free from the thralldom to the petty ego. You must cast off the false sense of self. Otherwise, no matter how many righteous deeds we may perform, they are all rooted in egotism. Outwardly, our deeds are righteous, but inwardly, we are harboring some selfish motive.

Therefore, Paltu Sahib Ji says, “Whoever eschews egotism becomes the true dervish, the true sadhu, the true practitioner, the true spiritual seeker.” The one who gives up “I and mine” can be called a sadhu. Someone may perform countless outer rituals, hoping to reach Vaikunth and the other heaven worlds, but even if they ascend to those celestial realms, still they cannot escape from the domain of ego. Such people cannot be called sadhus. They remain inmates

1 Paltu Sahib, *Ḳhudī khoya ko hovai soī hai durves...*

in the prison house of this mortal world, and when the fruits of their righteous deeds are depleted, they must take birth and return again to this arena of action.

The dervish becomes purified within and is blessed with the darshan of the *Nabī* (Prophet).

The dervish always cultivates a state of perfect inner purity. When you do not allow any evil to come near you, this is called continence. Many people think continence refers to controlling only one sense organ. However, if we control one sense organ and allow the other four to run riot as before, our within will remain full of defects. This cannot be called continence. When you control the mind and senses; when you constantly remember God Almighty in your heart; when your soul regains its pristine purity and merges into the immaculate Naam—this is true continence. Through that purity, you can discover the Almighty Lord within yourself. Your heart has become unalloyed, and when you achieve this purity, there is no need to cry out for the Lord; He will come there of His own to give you His darshan.

Rain pours down without clouds or sky.

What are the signs of True Darshan? Paltu Sahib says that when we rise into the inner realms, the rain showers down without clouds or sky. We are drenched in the inner nectar of Naam. This is a one sign.

Without heat, the flame glows. Without a tongue, Sound fills the air.

In that place, there is no heat; there is no cold. The Celestial

Name resounds, but no tongue is speaking. These are also signs. Someone may tell you, “I see God everywhere.” But if you ask them, “Friend, what are the signs of having His Darshan?” They will say, “There are no signs. God pervades everywhere. That God dwells within us.” But such vague words only demonstrate that they have not risen to the place where God manifests. Just repeating what we have heard from others proves nothing. We have to see the Lord for ourselves.

**The heart soars up to *Lahūt* (Sunn), the region
without space or form.**

**Whoever destroys the sense of self attains the
Kaaba—the True House of God.**

No one can describe this experience of the Infinite. It has no limits. When we see the Lord within ourselves, as clearly as we see the outside world, this is a surest sign of True Darshan.

**Paltu says: When you remain engaged in His
Remembrance, worry is reduced to ashes;
Whoever loses the little self becomes a dervish.**

Fikar is the word for worry, and *zikar* is the word for repeating the Naam Simran. When you go on repeating the Simran of Naam (*zikar*) without a break, your heart becomes free from all worry (*fikar*). When your heart is cleansed of the sense of self, then you merge into the Almighty Lord and become His form. This is referred to as *prataksh pramān*—the direct experience of the Lord.

That bird comes in the evening and flies away the next morning. And yet, no one has fathomed its secret. During the hours from dusk till dawn, when night falls and the darkness of ignorance prevails, the bird of the soul comes down into this world; and when the Light of spiritual awakening dawns, that bird again takes flight and soars back to its True Home. But up until now, no one has been able to describe the manner of its coming and going.

—Baba Somanath

The Bird that Sings Within

**No one can tell me about the bird that sings
within.¹**

Kabir Sahib tells us of a bird that is formless and endless, beyond the limits of the intellect. Even though that bird is sitting within this body singing its sweet, enchanting melody, no one can discover that bird or give us any news of it. People can tell us what they have heard about Shiva, Rama, and Krishna. They can repeat what they have been told about the heavens above and the hells below, on and on. But my friend, we are concerned with what actually lies within; we are searching for the knowledge of the soul. We are not looking for some god outside ourselves—we are in search of the God who dwells within all and is one with all. Therefore, Kabir Sahib says, “A bird is singing within this body, but no one can tell us its secret.”

**That bird is neither colorful nor colorless;
It has no outline or form.
That bird sits sheltered in the tree of Naam.**

¹ Kabir Sahib, *So panchī mohi koī na batāvai, jo bolo ghaṭ māñhī re...*



Baba Somanath Ji

What does that bird look like? It is neither colorless nor colorful. It has no outline or form. Where has that bird taken up residence? It is sitting in the shade of the Lord's Name. It has taken the support of the Naam.

The bird is perched in that tree.

Dancing from branch to branch, it nibbles its food.

A bird is perched in the tree of Naam. The bird flutters about in the branches, eating and drinking.

**No one else recognizes it or knows what has
inspired its song.**

In the deep shade, the bird nestles in the foliage.

Who is this bird? What is its nature? How does it come to be sitting within the body? And from where does its sweet song arise? No one has unraveled these mysteries.

We know about the gods and goddesses. We say: "This god is the true one, and he will give us some reward for our devotion." But such gods and goddesses are just outer concoctions. We ourselves commission images and idols of the gods. Then, we accept one of those gods as our own deity. With deep devotion, we perform the rites and rituals; then, we stretch out our hands and entreat that god for blessings. But the whole time, the stone idol of that god just sits there; it never even moves.

So, we ask, "What about the bird sitting within us? From where does its song arise? What kind of bird is it? How can we meet it?" That bird is truly Divine. All the outer gods and goddesses we create are just figments of our own imagination.

Now Kabir Sahib asks, “What *bhāv*² inspires that bird to lift its voice in song? From what wellspring of love does that song arise?” In the created world, the five elements mix together to form the 52 letters and all the outer languages through which we express the love and longing in the human heart. Using these outer languages, the great mahatmas, moved by their own *bhāv*—their own inner feeling of deep devotion to the Lord—composed all the sacred texts: the Vedas, Shastras, Granths, Puranas, and many more.

When Vyasa received inspiration, he penned the eighteen Puranas³ according to his own inner inclination. When inspiration arose within the rishis and munis, they composed the Upanishads, imparting their own wisdom. Likewise, in the Bhagavad Gita, Shri Krishna, intoxicated in the love of the Almighty, addressed Arjuna’s questions, revealing his own divine nature.

Similarly, we worldly people are also motivated by deep inner feelings built over many past lives, but our *bhāv* directs us to the world and not to God. When we take up the human form, our emotional and mental makeup guides and influences our course of action in this world. We derive a fleeting happiness from worldly things and, therefore, devote all our energies to collecting wife, children, money, and possessions. This is where we have focused our love and longing.

But Kabir is speaking of the highest manifestation of Love. He asks, “What *bhāv* has inspired the bird’s song?” That song

2 *Bhāv* is a deep feeling or mood that arises from ingrained emotional tendencies. It is related to *sañskāra*—the impressions coming from past lives. In classical Indian music, *bhāv* is also an essential element—the predominant feeling that endows any composition or performance with life. The *bhāv* Kabir Sahib is speaking of is love.

3 All of the eighteen Puranas are traditionally ascribed to Maharishi Vyasa.

springs from the true *bhāv*. The bird sits sheltered amongst the verdant foliage within, basking in the Self-Existing, Radiant Power of Naam, lost in unbroken contemplation. Bathed in bliss, it flutes its eternal Melody of Love, pouring forth its song in a language and *bhāv* far beyond the reach of human understanding.

**It alights in the evening, and in the morning, it
flies away again.
The bird keeps its secret hidden within itself.**

That bird comes in the evening and flies away the next morning. And yet, no one has fathomed its secret. During the hours from dusk till dawn, when night falls and the darkness of ignorance prevails, the bird of the soul comes down into this world;⁴ and when the Light of spiritual awakening dawns, that bird again takes flight and soars back to its True Home. But up until now, no one has been able to describe the manner of its coming and going.

**That bird is only one, not ten or twenty;
And it tastes the nectar of two fruits.**

That bird is only one, but it partakes of two different kinds of fruits. When it comes into this world, it gains nourishment from the physical fruit of Maya and also tastes the divine fruit of inner spiritual experience. That bird of the soul consumes both fruits but is not bound. All the trouble arises from the mind. It darts here and there, tasting the fruit of this world. Without the support of the soul, the mind would die; on its

4 That is, the soul incarnates in the darkness of the material plane.

own, the mind could not enjoy the worldly pleasures. So, the mind feasts on the worldly fruit and becomes stuck fast in that enjoyment, forgetting that it draws all its power from the soul.⁵

But when the mind realizes its true nature, the worldly pleasures lose their charm. Once it tastes the sweetness of spirituality, it finds the worldly fruit insipid, and—breaking all its attachments—the mind soars home to its native place.

It dwells in the Inaccessible, Limitless, Infinite Realm—no one marks its comings or goings.

The bird of the soul comes from the Inaccessible, Unbounded, and Infinite Realm. Its nature is beyond understanding. No one sees it arrive or depart. When someone departs from this world, what do we people say? “Oh, that person has died.” The body has died, but the soul is immortal. And where it

5 The Saints often describe this situation with the example of the fly and the honey: “Master Sawan Singh Ji used to say that this world is not bad but do not make it your own. He used to say that the meditator lives in this world like the water fowl lives in the water, but whenever he flies, he flies with dry wings. In the same way, even though the meditator lives in the world, he is unaffected by the dirt of the world. He used to say that the mahatmas live in this world like that fly who comes and sits on the bowl of honey and tastes the honey and flies away without getting her wings or legs in the honey; whereas the worldly people live in this world like that fly which goes and sits in the center of that bowl of honey. Neither are they able to eat that honey nor are they able to get released from that bowl, because whenever they try to get their legs out of that bowl of honey, their wings are stuck in it, and whenever they try to get their wings out of the honey their legs are stuck in there. So finally, they die in that honey without tasting it. He used to say that in fact Saints are the only ones who enjoy life in the true sense because the love for Almighty Lord has been awakened within them, and because of the support of that love they enjoy the world and they do their work.” Sant Ajaib Singh Ji, *Light of Ajaib: Questions and Answers from Sant Bani Magazine*, v 2, April 1984, “On Fear and Love” p. 20: https://www.mediaseva.com/books/LightOfAjaib_V2.pdf

has gone, no one can say. And when a baby comes into this world, we say, “Oh, now a child is born.” But we do not know what soul has come into our household. We say someone has taken birth or someone has died. But we have no knowledge of where that soul dwelt before it came into the world and no idea where it goes after death. It comes and goes so quietly that no one marks its passage.

Kabir says: Listen, O brother sadhu!

This is the unfathomable story.

Let the wise ones seek to know where that bird dwells.

He says, “O Sadhu! This matter lies beyond the realm of intellect.” Even after Kabir Sahib has explained so beautifully, this mystery still lies beyond the grasp of the intellect. But when the intellect ceases to exist, when it merges into the One Lord and becomes one with the Light within, then true understanding dawns. This matter cannot be comprehended by idle imagination or feeble reason.

He says, “O Pandit! O Gyani! What can the outer Vedas and Puranas and holy books teach you? Search for the bird that dwells within you. Delve deep and discover its secret. When you gain such enlightenment, your wisdom will be perfected; your knowledge will be complete. But when you don’t unearth the treasures hidden in your own house, what wisdom can you impart to others?”

Unless we wholeheartedly follow the meditation technique taught by the Master, we cannot walk on the Inner Way. Our condition is like that of the old woman who was sitting before the cook stove, saying: "O cook stove, make the curry. Prepare the gulab jamuns, the puris, and the khir." She sat giving orders but the stove didn't make any food for her. Nothing happened at all, and that old woman went on sitting—staring at the ashes in the cold grate.

—Baba Somanath

A Matter of Doing, Not Talking

**Many people try to foretell the future,
But none have unlocked its secret.¹**

This is the bani of Satguru Charandas Ji. He tells us that many people try to look into the future. One person may predict that great happiness will come to you this month. Another may promise that, if you follow their instructions, you can reap rich rewards and even gain access to the heaven worlds. Someone else may suggest that by spending your wealth on rites and rituals, you can remove difficulties that would otherwise block your way in life.

All these soothsayers hold out false hope of achieving future happiness. If we allow such erroneous impressions—garnered from surmise and guesswork—to take root in our hearts, we will end up squandering our lives in meaningless endeavors. They may assure us that they have only our best interests at heart and that their advice is for our benefit. But my friend, what tangible good can come from following their suggestions? They go on telling us, “I am only concerned for your welfare. If you follow

¹ Charandas, *Honhār ko bahut batāve, pai tā ko kachu marama na pāvaiñ...*

my advice to the letter all will be well.” But their assurance that we will benefit from their instructions rests on mere mental conjecture, with an admixture of self-interest. And when we eagerly follow their questionable advice, our acquiescence rests on nothing more than a vague and unsubstantiated hope that all the rigmarole they are telling us is gospel truth. But they cannot present even one scrap of concrete evidence that their predictions and instructions are founded in reality.

**What is destined to happen will happen;
No one can alter the course of destiny.**

Now, what is Charandas Ji explaining to us? Whatever is meant to be will be; we cannot rewrite destiny. No one can change the future or modify those life events that unfold in the Will of God. Whatever has been ordained by the flowing pen of destiny will come to pass. The laws of the created world are fixed. No one can steal the sunshine from the day, drive the darkness out of the night, or make the afternoon like the morning. The times of day each have a set role in the natural order. Similarly, the karmic laws are inexorable and inescapable. Our past deeds mold the pattern of our lives, and according to our fate, we undergo pain, pleasure, profit and loss to clear our karmic debts. According to our fate karmas, we become kings, emperors, or paupers. Whatever is written in our destiny will manifest; no one can alter its course by even one jot.

**Some seek to unravel this mystery, but their efforts
are all in vain.**

**Abandoning their faith in the True Path, they take
up the coward's way.**

We should set aside all worry about the future and cultivate firm faith in the Guru, but we place our trust in astrologers instead. Many people receive initiation into the Naam and become satsangis. They go into the Satguru's refuge and listen to Satsang daily, but despite all this, they still cling tenaciously to their belief in astrologers.² And when an astrologer comes to the neighborhood and starts reading peoples' charts and talking of the future, these innocent souls accept all the mumbo-jumbo unquestioningly and allow themselves to be led further and further away from Satsang, Satguru, and Sat Naam.

Would it not be wiser to first ask that astrologer about their own condition? They have given up their honest professions and spend their time consulting astronomical tables and making predictions to dupe those who fall into their net of deception. These tricksters then spread out their hands before the people and relieve them of their hard-earned cash. They pick the people's pockets and create false expectations, laying out before them a rosy future and assuring them that everything will be just fine.

2 When an aspirant is initiated into Surat Shabd Yoga, their karmic accounts are transferred from the hands of Dharm Rai, the Lord of Judgment, into the hands of the Satguru, the Lord of Compassion. Then it is up to the Satguru how those karmas will be finished off. For this reason, the destiny of an initiated soul may be modified by the Satguru as He sees fit. "Generally, in the life of an initiate, he'll find many changes in his life. His life history according to astrology does not stand true. Those who have transcended the starry skies are under the control of One Who goes beyond those planes; there astrology does not stand true—things are changed. Many things are omitted, sometimes some things are delayed, some things are minimized." Kirpal Singh, *The Light of Kirpal* (Sanbornton, NH: Sant Bani Ashram, 1980) Chapter 5, "Who Are You? Where Are You? Where Are You Going?" p. 36.

To those predicting the future, I would say, “First, give some thought to your own future instead of making predictions about others.”³

Many people from all walks of life place their trust in such astrologers. Once, a king began to wonder about his end time, and after summoning a renowned astrologer to his court, he asked that man, “How many days are left to me in this world? Will I enjoy a long life?”

Eyeing him, the astrologer realized what a windfall had come his way. He thought to himself, “Now my prey has fallen into my trap.”

But outwardly, the astrologer replied to the king, “What can I say on this matter? It is too painful to talk about.”

The king insisted that he tell him what he foresaw about his remaining life span, but the astrologer replied, “No, Your Majesty. This should remain hidden; I cannot speak of that which I know. Whatever is in the Will of God, let it come to pass.”

But the king was not to be put off so easily, and drawn in by the astrologer’s cryptic words, he pressed on: “No, this will not do. Tell me all that you foresee.”

Finally, with seeming reluctance, the astrologer said heavily,

3 The Saints do not condemn astrology. They simply say that, while the laws of astrology are valid, such laws do not apply to the disciples of the Satguru. And in this Satsang, Baba Somanath Ji is also emphasizing that, unfortunately, not all those who practice astrology are proficient in that discipline—many have turned it into a mere money-making scheme. Sant Kirpal Singh tells us: “Astrology is a regular science, but few there are who are really conversant with it. This requires a clear mind vision. Moreover, it affects those who are under the influence of the Stars; but those who transcend the starry sky or are taken under the care of Masters who transcend the starry sky, the predictions in their cases do not stand correct.” Ruth Seader, ed., *The Teachings of Kirpal Singh*, v 3: *The New Life*, (Sanbornton, NH: Sant Bani Ashram, 1977) p. 72-73.

“Your Majesty, it pains me to speak these words, but in just eight days, you are destined to die.”

From that time forward, the king was as good as dead. He gave up food and drink and closeted himself in his private chambers. He ceased attending the audiences in the royal court and could not be persuaded to show his face in public.

Now, his prime minister was greatly alarmed at this turn of events. He thought, “What has brought about this sudden change in the king’s behavior? He was not showing any signs of ill health. He was not suffering from any fever. So, what has happened to bring on this strange display of weakness and despair?”

The minister went to the room where the king was secluding himself, and directly enquired from him: “Your Majesty, what is the cause of your sad condition? Open your heart and confide in me the reason for this change that has come over you. Once I understand the nature of your difficulty, I can summon the finest Ayurvedic physician in the kingdom to treat you. I urge you to let me render this humble service to you.”

The king languidly replied, “Of what avail would it be to bring a physician to my bedside? It is God’s Will that I should depart from this mortal world within eight days.

Hearing these words, the minister was stunned: “Where on earth did you get such an idea, my Lord?”

So, the king explained to him, “I happened to speak with a skilled astrologer yesterday, and through his craft, he divined my impending doom.”

The minister enquired from the king, “Who is this fellow? Where does he stay? Which village does he belong to?”

When the king told him where the astrologer was to be found, the minister immediately summoned that man to the

royal palace. And when the astrologer arrived, he was respectfully seated in the royal court. He thought his plan was proceeding well and that he had been called to the palace to help save the king's life.

Addressing him, the prime minister asked him, "Is your prediction about the king's impending demise correct?"

The astrologer replied mournfully, "Yes, my prediction is accurate."

Then, the minister pressed him further: "Are you sure that the king is going to cast off the mortal coil within eight days?"

With a heavy sigh, the astrologer replied, "There is no doubt of it."

By this time, the king was also listening to their conversation. The minister then enquired, "My good man, can you tell me how old you are?"

Surprised, the astrologer stammered out, "I am now 50 years old." On hearing these words, the minister whipped out his sword and, quick as lightning, struck off the astrologer's head.

Alarmed, the king asked his minister, "Mantri Ji, what have you done?"

The minister replied, "Maharaj, this astrologer just told us that he was only 50 years of age, about the same age as you. In the normal course of things, there was no reason for him to think that he would die today. But if he had the power to see the future and alter its course—if he could foretell your death—then why didn't he see his own death waiting for him here in the palace and take steps to ward it off?" These words broke the astrologer's spell over the king.

The minister explained further: "This astrologer's predictions were all based on guesswork and speculation. It was just a fantasy concocted by his mind, with an eye to profit from

your trust in him. But I had no faith in his words. He told you that you would die within eight days, but the evidence of my own eyes convinced me that nothing was wrong with you. You are in vigorous health, and this is not your time to depart from this world.”

The numbing fear of death that had taken hold of the king released its hold on his heart, and he returned to his former robust self. He was not destined to die in the prime of life.

In this way, the astrologers and soothsayers create doubts and uncertainties in our minds. Then they suggest a dubious remedy for the dilemma they themselves have spun out of thin air and hope to make a lucrative profit through all this double-dealing.

Therefore, a Satsangi should remain strong and affirm: “My soul is Truth. Both within and without, there is One Essence. The soul transcends the duality of happiness and sorrow. It does not die, nor does it take birth.”

When this type of firm confidence and determination arises in our inner mind, all these outer, worldly inferences and conjectures can have no power over us. Many people believe in the astrologers’ predictions, but they are susceptible to such suggestions only because they have forgotten the Truth.

**With no understanding of domestic duties, they
adopt the householder’s way;
Then, discouraged, they put on the renunciate’s
robes, but devoid of devotion, they earn no profit.**

Whether a person is a householder living the family life or a sadhu wearing colored robes makes no difference. Both ways are noble dharmas if we discharge our legitimate, outer duties with detachment and proceed on the God Way. But if we

abandon detachment and become ensnared in the outer world, we will sink and drown in our self-created fears and anxieties.

Householders are burdened with a load of worry and tension. Every aspect of their lives is filled with uncertainty. They are concerned for the welfare of their children, worried about the loans they have made and the debts they have incurred, and constantly troubled about feeding their families and keeping a roof over their heads. On top of all that, their minds remain uneasy over their black market dealings, and they lose sleep over the income tax and sales tax snatched from their hard-won wealth. They entered the householder's life with only a tenuous grasp of its duties—not fully understanding the load they would have to carry—and now the worldly affairs consume all their time and attention.

And what can be said of those who adopted the garments and lifestyle of the so-called renunciate sadhus? Many of those poor fellows expected a free ride but find themselves burdened down with work they had not anticipated. Meditation goes by the wayside, and they earn no spiritual merit. Instead, to earn their livelihood, they devote all their time to ensnaring the unsuspecting people in a storm of falsehood. Constantly, they go on plotting: "How can I take advantage of this person? Who else am I going to entrap today?" Their main concern is to secure an idle and luxurious lifestyle. All their thoughts are for worldly ease and comfort.

Thus, we can see that both the householder and the renunciate are constantly possessed by fear, worries, doubts, and concerns; both are chasing an illusion of happiness and peace that cannot be achieved by outer activity.

**Even though our past actions remain hidden from us,
we have to reap their consequences in the present.**

The karmic debt we have accumulated in our past lives is beyond reckoning, and those karmas have shaped our present incarnation. In our present life, we continue creating karmas and undergoing their reactions. If we introspect our hearts carefully, we will see that, according to our own actions, we will receive the appropriate reward or punishment. When our actions in past lives have sketched out our destiny in this life, what is the point of asking the astrologers about our future? Whatever karma we have created, we ourselves will have to undergo the reaction, be it pain or happiness.

If we still insist on taking our troubles to the astrologers, what can they tell us? They will pour over their ephemerides, and, according to what they discover, they will prescribe remedies to attract positive forces or repel negative ones. But, in the end, we cannot escape the consequences of our past deeds. Whatever is written in our destiny will come to pass—sure and certain.⁴

**We may call it fate, or we may call it destiny;
Either way, our current course has been set in
motion by our past deeds.**

4 The Saints tell us that astrology is an exact science and that astrologers competent in that body of knowledge can discern the broad outlines of a person's destiny. However, as Baba Somanath Ji is pointing out, not all astrologers are competent. Worse, some may even seek to exploit the fears and uncertainties of the innocent people for profit, suggesting that the future can be modified. But more importantly, the initiates who have come into the shelter of a Param Sant are beyond the influence of the stars. On the Third World Tour, Master Kirpal Singh was asked if it was all right for initiates to study astrology. He replied: "You can study anything you want. The stars only control those who are under the starry sky. Those who have risen above the stars (or are under the protection of a Master who has risen above the stars) aren't affected." Kirpal Singh, *The Third World Tour of Kirpal Singh, 1972: As Taken from the Pages of Sat Sandesh* (Sawan Ashram, Delhi: Ruhani Satsang, 1974) Part IV, "In the West and South, Cincinnati," p. 115.

Now, when the time comes to balance the karmic accounts, those who have grasped the laws of karma take comfort from understanding that they are reaping the results of karmas they have done in the past.

If they receive a windfall of wealth and property, they will rejoice in this good fortune, understanding that it has been written in their fate because of some generous past action. And when difficulties and troubles beset them, they will concede that this misfortune was written in their *pralabdh* karma because of some previous moral misstep.

Further, the saints and seers advise us that, just as we are reaping the reaction in the present based on actions we have performed in the past, so whatever deeds we are doing in the present, we will reap the fruit of those deeds at some future time.

But good and bad karmas are chains forged of gold and iron. Both are binding, and the question arises: How can we extricate ourselves from the shackles of karma altogether?

Doership is the root of all action, and if we are constantly mulling over our past and future karmas, focusing only on our petty selves, we will remain entangled in the karmic conundrum.

We would benefit more by setting aside our I-hood and becoming absorbed in the Almighty Lord who dwells far beyond the arena of action and reaction—then whatever is destined to happen will happen, but we will not feel its pinching effects. Therefore, Tukaram says:

*Your fate that unfolds in this lifetime
is born of your actions from the past.*

There is no need to ponder over the matter further; we can

gain nothing by splitting hairs.⁵ Whether you are a yogi, a king, or a pauper, whether your life is filled with happiness or sorrow—you will definitely have to undergo the reaction of your past deeds.

Once, Gorakhnath visited the city of Ujjain. And when Raja Vikramaditya, the ruler of the time, received word that Gorakhnath—a great Mahayogi adept in spiritual wisdom—was gracing the city with his presence, he was eager to have the darshan of this illustrious guest and set out to visit him.

When Gorakhnath got word that the king was coming to meet with him, he thought, “He is a very noble personage. He is a brave warrior, a great scholar, and a wise and truthful king. I must receive him with due respect.”

At that time, Gorakhnath was suffering from a bad cold. His body was burning with a high fever, and his limbs trembled with severe chills. He thought, “If the king comes here to meet with me and sees me shivering and shaking like this,

5 Sant Ajaib Singh used to tell a story of Rabia Basri that emphasizes this point: “Rabia Basri was a very famous Saint among the Muslims and once some Satsangis came to Her and they said, ‘Well, tell us something about the will of God.’ Rabia Basri said, ‘Since you have brought up this subject, it is better if you say something about it.’ One of them said, ‘Whatever pain God gives to you, you should accept that, and patiently bear it.’ Rabia said, ‘Well, that is not the correct attitude for the lover Satsangis, because in this statement there is still some smell of egoism. In this statement it seems that you are saying, *I am bearing* or *I am suffering* the pain which God has given to me.’ Then the other dear one said, ‘It is better to accept the pain given by God without any complaints or feeling bad about it.’ Rabia said, ‘Even in this statement there is some smell of egoism. So, you should say something else.’ But those people did not have anything else to say so they requested Rabia Basri to say something about the will of God. She replied, ‘A dear satsangi, a lover satsangi, should not even know when the pain came—in the will of God—and when it went away. He should always remain happy in whatever is given to him, and he should never be aware of what is happening with him and what God is sending to him.’” Ajaib Singh, *Sant Bani Magazine*, May/1985, “Beyond Hell and Heaven,” p. 25.

it will not look good. How can I show him proper respect during his visit?” He looked around him and, seeing a shawl lying on the ground nearby, he decided to transfer his cold over to that shawl while Vikramaditya was with him.

When Vikramaditya arrived, Gorakhnath was sitting comfortably, not bothered by any symptoms of fever or trembling. So, he and the king sat together undisturbed and talked freely for a while about spiritual matters. But at the conclusion of their meeting, when the king was preparing to leave, he said to Gorakhnath, “Maharaj Ji, I have one question. I noticed something strange about the shawl lying over there on the ground. It kept heaving about all the time that we were talking. Is there perhaps a dog or a litter of puppies lying beneath it? Or is the shawl draped over some person who is tossing and turning in their sleep? Why is this shawl shaking so?”

Gorakhnath replied, “No, no one is lying beneath that shawl. It is only that I have been suffering from a bad cold, and when I learned that you were coming here to visit with me, I transferred my cold over to the shawl for a little while. I did not want my shivering and thrashing about to cast a shadow on our meeting.”

King Vikramaditya then enquired, “Maharaj Ji, if you possess such spiritual power that you could transfer your cold to the shawl for this brief interval, then why can’t you free yourself from the malady permanently?”

So, Gorakhnath explained to the king that his physical suffering resulted from his own past karma, and only he could bear the karmic reaction he had incurred—the debt could not be transferred to someone else. Similarly, every sentient being must undergo the pleasure or pain meted out by fate because: “As you sow, so shall you reap.”

But the satsangis are dedicated to a higher spiritual goal;

they practice true living, and their attention is riveted in the Lord's Name. So, when they have to undergo suffering due to past karmas, even though they feel that reaction, it is to a lesser degree—the thrust of a sword is reduced to the prick of a pin.

The actions we perform today will follow us into the future—some even bear fruit instantly.

Now, Charandas Ji tells us about the *kriyamān* karmas. Four veils of karma are thrown over the soul—*sanchit*, *prālabdh*, *kriyamān*, and *āgami*.

These four types of karmas produce indelible impressions within us that remain until they are compensated for by an equal and opposite reaction.

For instance, sometimes we perform a meritorious deed but find that it leads only to failure and disappointment instead of producing the beneficial result we expected. In such an instance, we are undergoing the consequence of some *sanchit* karma lingering from the past that has been written into our fate for this life.

Then, we have the *prālabdh* or fate karma that determines the home we are born into. We may be born into the holy household of a sadhu or mahatma or into the luxurious mansion of a wealthy banker or businessperson. Our *prālabdh* karma also determines the shape, color, and appearance of the physical body for this lifetime.

And the *kriyamān* karmas result from the deeds that we do every day.

Finally, the *āgami* karmas can be understood by way of an example. Someone realizes: “Now I have become old. My health is failing, and I don't have much time left, but I want to be sure that my children enjoy a comfortable life when I

am gone.” So, what does that person do? They make a will, leaving hundreds of thousands of rupees to their children. And when they die a few days later, all that wealth is transferred to their heirs.

As the end time approaches, many people worry about their children’s future and bequeath their estate to them so they can live a good life: “My son will need a nice house.” If there are many children, they may need three or four houses.

Actions taken as death approaches will fructify at some future time and fall within the sphere of *āgami* karma.⁶

But our ultimate aim is to become free from all four types of karma. If we direct our thoughts toward Truth, our I-hood is gradually eradicated, and our individual desires lose their potency. When all our actions are performed without ego or desire, we become “karma-less” or *neh-karma*. This is the goal of spiritual sadhana.

Until we have cast off the four karmic veils, our soul cannot get in touch with the Oneness that is its true nature. But this is no ordinary subject. To fathom it requires deep dedication and unwavering commitment; you can’t succeed with a wishy-washy attitude. But those rare and fortunate souls who break

6 Generally, the Saints define three classes of karmas: First, the *sanchit* karma, a vast storehouse of karmas accumulated from past lives; second, the *prālabdh* or fate karma that brought us into this incarnation; third, the *kriyamān* (or *āgami*) karma created in this life that will bear their fruit either immediately or at some time in the future. Generally, *kriyamān* and *āgami* are used as synonymous terms, but *āgami* karmas are sometimes treated as distinct from the *kriyamān* karmas when the emphasis is on the reaction coming at some future time. Here, Baba Somanath Ji is giving an example of a person who wills their property to their children as death is approaching. This action occurs right at their end time and so, by definition, the reaction will not occur in the current incarnation. Instead, that karma will fructify in some future birth. Similarly, Saints tells us that our final thoughts at the time of death exercise a disproportionate impact on the future journey of the soul, propelling it into the higher realms or dragging it down into lower life forms. This is the working of *āgami* karma.

through those inner veils can turn their thoughts within and merge into the Holy Naam. If it were easy to accomplish this task through superficial efforts, everyone would have already succeeded by now. But it is only when the Almighty Lord inspires us from within to seek Him that we find the courage and determination to collect our scattered thoughts and invert our attention inward. When we become fully absorbed in Him, all our worldly fetters will fall away.

Some hurl insults at others; some kick and beat them roundly.

Some are devoted to feeding those in need; some bow their heads in reverent devotion.

Some resort to thievery and gambling, while others are controlled by anger.

Now, Charandas Ji explains how we people conduct ourselves in this world. Some people are always ready to criticize. They hurl abuse and condemnation at their fellow beings or attack whoever is unfortunate enough to come in their way, using their power to frighten and intimidate those who are weaker than them. However, many people care about the well-being of others and make charitable donations to alleviate the suffering of those living in poverty. Others who are devotionally minded worship God through religious rites and recitations. Further, he tells us that some people resort to thievery, while others have fiery tempers and pick fights with their fellows.

**Both good and bad deeds fructify in due course of time,
O Charandas, Sage Sukadeva has explained this.⁷**

⁷ Sage Sukadeva was the Guru of Charandas Ji.

We reap the reaction of our deeds. If we insult someone and they reply in kind, then the insult is doubled. Kabir Sahib tells us:

*When someone maligns you, the insult is one;
But if you reply in kind, it multiplies beyond count.
Kabir says: If someone speaks harsh words to you,
don't respond; then, that insult remains only one.*

If we keep on trading insults, we set in motion a chain of action and reaction. Two insults become four, then eight, and on and on, with the result that a discussion disintegrates into a brawl, with people kicking and beating each other.

And as the abuse mounts up, each party is caught up in a spiral of revenge that knows no end. We beat each other black and blue, and all we gain from this undignified display is a load of bad karma that we will have to pay for in the future.

Then, we seek a remedy from astrologers and soothsayers with the vague idea that they can help us solve our problems and change our future. But instead of freeing us from the difficulties we have created, they play on our susceptibilities and create false hopes within us for their own profit.

We must emerge from this mental fog and leave doubt and delusion behind. Then, we can focus our thoughts within, absorbing our attention in the Naam, which is the source of peace and happiness.

**Observe the spectacle of this creation unfold;
Understand the duality of high and low as
an illusion.**

The entire world is an arena of action and reaction, where the

jivas remain captive. Observe this spectacle with discrimination and understand its nature.

*The king worries about his battles.
The learned worry about the scriptures.
The youth worries about desires,
and the poor worry about everything*

All the sentient beings are subject to the law of karma. We go on discussing our predicament but remain stuck fast in speculation and misunderstanding about its true nature.

We have the hopes and aspirations that our future can magically improve, and we waste our entire lives in misguided, wishful thinking.

When astrologers broach the subject of the future, they hedge their bets. They will say, “This is likely to happen, but I see obstructions in your path, so events may take a different turn.” They clothe their predictions in such devious language that no matter what actually happens, they can say: “I told you so.”

There was once an astrologer who gave a stone to each person who came to him. He would tell his customers that if they took that stone home and worshiped it for a certain number of days according to his instructions, their task would be accomplished.

So, one person received such a stone and took it home, but then, after a short time, he returned to the astrologer and informed him that his technique did not work:

“Maharaj Ji. I worshiped the stone just as you instructed, but I did not get any benefit from it.”

The astrologer replied with a slight chuckle, “I can see the problem clearly. I gave you that stone to help you with

your endeavor. But now look what has happened? Instead of serving you, that stone is stubbornly sitting on top of your task and is weighing it down. No wonder you have not succeeded.”

Then, another customer came to the astrologer with a problem, and the astrologer also gave him a stone. That man took the stone home with him and immediately succeeded in his work. When he reported this happy turn of events, the astrologer told him, “It is no surprise. Previously, there was an obstacle standing in the way of your progress. But now I have knocked that obstacle out of the way with my stone, and you have achieved your aim.

So, the astrologers have an answer for everything. But what can be gained through stones and clever talk? Nothing at all.

**Millions of theories abound, but the Saints’
teachings encompass all wisdom.**

**O Charandas! The law of action and reaction rules
the created world, thus, says the Sage Sukadeva.**

Out of millions of musings about what the future may hold, only the Saints’ explanation stands up to examination. We will receive the fruit of our own actions. We see the truth of this every day with our own eyes. All other attempts to explain why events unfold as they do are based on guesswork and fall short of the mark.

**The nature of the mind is *gyān*, through which we
see the hand of the Almighty working.**

Now, He says, “What is the nature of the causal mind? It is the

gyān or True Knowledge through which we observe the God Power in action.”⁸

**When we merge with the Brahm, the Universal
Mind, our fears are all dispelled.**

So, now he explains that by following the spiritual teachings of the Saints, we merge into the form of Brahm, the Universal Mind. When all desires are removed, the soul merges into the Divine Light and becomes the form of Light.

**The ocean of existence is burning with fear, yet the
wise are untouched by its fire.
Fear assails the false ones, but vanishes before
Truth without a trace.**

8 The mind has three aspects: physical, astral, and causal. The physical mind aids us in acquiring outer knowledge on the theory of spirituality through scriptures and other holy books. And once the spiritual aspirant puts that theory into practice, achieves a little concentration, and begins to taste the inner bliss, the astral mind pursues that ineffable experience with the same enthusiasm it previously lavished on worldly enjoyments. But it is only when the soul reaches the causal plane, the realm of the causal or Universal Mind, that it gets a glimpse of True Knowledge—an active experience of the Ultimate Reality with two distinct aspects: *Gyān* and *vigyān*. In *Naam or Word*, Master Kirpal Singh, defines the properties of these two cosmic states: “In the Bhagavad Gita, we come across two terms: *Gyān* and *Vigyān*. The knowledge of that One life principle, called Paramatma or God, actively operating in all living creatures that appear and disappear like so many bubbles, is called *Gyān*; and the realization that the said live principle is the material and efficient cause of all that exists is known as *Vigyān*. A person possessed of *Gyān* or *Vigyān* then actually sees nothing but God in His creation and creation as established in God; that is to say, the two as identical and not separate from each other—God in man and man in God—which is akin to the pantheistic view of religion (identification of God with the Universe).” Kirpal Singh, *Naam or Word* (Delhi, India: Ruhani Satsang, Sawan Ashram, 1970) p. 287-288.

The Ocean of Existence is surging with waves of fear. Fear dwells within one and all. Fear pervades every aspect of our lives as we go about our worldly duties. Fear exists between friend and foe. Fear dominates our give and take with others. Even the act of eating and drinking is filled with fear. At all times, the invisible presence of fear is at work within us.

The Power of Naam lies beyond fear. Until we have manifested the Naam within, we will go on thinking: “What is going to become of me? What is going to happen to my children? How will my caste and community survive? How am I going to maintain my give and take with others? Will I make a profit, or will I suffer a loss?” These thoughts are all due to the presence of fear within us—fear is part and parcel of our lives.

We can see that the entire world lives in a state of perpetual fear. The proof is all around us. Whether it is day or night, whether it is summer or winter, fear is ever at work. We are always seeking to secure the comforts of the body but are haunted by the fear of death and decline that await all mortal creatures.

We are all the puppets of fear. Only those who contact the Truth within and become One with it can become fearless. Otherwise, the whole mortal world is held fast in its cold grip.

**Only by practicing meditation can we ascend and
reach Parbrahm, the realm of the Supreme Lord.
Run to the feet of the Satguru and become free of
all your suffering.**

What gift does the Guru give you? What wisdom does He impart? Most of us have no understanding of the Guru’s greatness. We have no conception of what wealth he wishes to bestow on us.

If we go to a king to receive supari,⁹ will we ask him to give us something stale and tasteless instead? In the same way, when we go before the Satguru, the Sat Naam, or the Sat Purush, who is the Owner of all Creation, will we ask Him for ephemeral worldly trinkets of no value?

When you come into the refuge of the Guru, ask Him only for the gift of Holy Naam, which is the high road to union with the Almighty Lord.

Then, whatever teaching He gives you, live up to that. Follow His instructions implicitly.

If we receive the Naam from the Master but do not tread on the Path He has shown us, what was the use of taking initiation? Suppose someone purchases a train ticket to travel to another village. But instead of going to the train station at the scheduled departure time, they sit at home thinking, “I’ve purchased a ticket. Why should I have to go all the way to the station? The train should come here and pick me up.” But a train or plane will not collect you from your house just because you have a ticket.

Once, two people planned to travel to their native village and met at the railway station. Now, that railway station had a restaurant, and after they purchased their tickets, they went to have a snack while they waited for the train.

They told the waiter: “Bring us some dosa, pakora, and bhajia.” But while they were waiting for their order, their train arrived, and its departure was announced.

One man said, “That is our train. Never mind the food. We had better board our train now before they leave without us.”

But the other man replied, “Well, if the train has come, so

9 Supari is a flavorful mixture of areca nut and herbs, wrapped in fresh betel leaves.

what? We've already purchased our tickets, so how can the train depart without us?"

No doubt, the tickets were in their pockets, but while they sat eating, the train pulled out and left them behind, so they had to return home disappointed.

Similarly, we have received Naam initiation from the Master and have our ticket back to our True Home. But merely having the ticket does not mean we have reached our final spiritual destination. Once we have our ticket, we still have to board the ship or railway car; that is, we have to meditate and reach the still point between the two eyes behind where our spiritual journey begins. Otherwise, we'll be left behind.

Only when we reach our final destination—when we cross over into Parbrahm and travel on to the Home of Truth—can we say we have used our ticket well and realized its full value.

But if we take initiation and then just sit idly without doing any meditation, if we buy our ticket but don't board the train, then what hope do we have of reaching our final goal? If we ignore our true work and waste our lives engrossed in worldly activities, what can the Guru do for us? What can the Naam do for us?

Without effort, you can gain nothing, so be wholly devoted to meditation.

Gaze within and contemplate on the Inner Light again and again.

Unless we wholeheartedly follow the meditation technique taught by the Master, we cannot walk on the Inner Way. Our condition is like that of the old woman who was sitting before the cook stove, saying: "O cook stove, make the curry. Prepare the gulab jamuns, the puris, and the khir." She sat giving orders

but the stove didn't make any food for her. Nothing happened at all, and that old woman went on sitting—staring at the ashes in the cold grate.

In the same way, we can't enjoy the fruit of meditation through imaginings and empty words. This is a matter of doing, not talking. Only when we meditate regularly and accurately, according to the instructions given by the Guru, can we derive any real benefit. Even if your father and mother were to depart from this world while you were sitting for meditation, you should still not leave off your practice until you have completed your allotted time.

Charandas proclaims: Awake and proceed with unwavering resolve.

Abandon all laziness, and do not lose yourself in the poison of worldly pursuits.

In the end, He enjoins us: "O Friends, arise in the early morning hours and sit for meditation." Become lovingly absorbed in the practices of Simran and Dhyān; never waver in your determination.

Do not give in to laziness. Never criticize anyone. Leave aside all disputes and arguments, and keep your head when others praise you. In the Inner Sanctuary of your heart, only you and the Naam should remain. Then, forgetting all your sense of self, become wholly absorbed in the Divine Bliss.

Absorbed, day and night, in the contemplation of the Almighty Lord, the Sadhu has united with the Formless One. He is tatvā gyānī, the knower of Absolute Truth. His heart is perpetually illumined with the Divine Light. His knowledge comes from direct inner experience. The noble words that proceed from his mouth are full of Truth, and he inspires others to seek for Truth within themselves.

—Baba Somanath

The Qualities of the Sadhu

The Sadhu controls the body through sadhanas; he abandons laziness and pointless debates.¹

This is the bani of Sahajo Bai, a True Disciple of Charandas Ji. Her profound words are full of love and wisdom, and in this bani, she describes the signs by which we can recognize the real Sadhu.

What are those signs? First and foremost, the Sadhu is one who has discovered the mystery of the Divine deep within the human body. All the divisions and grand divisions of the Universe are hidden within its folds. Guru Arjan Dev Ji says:

*Naam supports the divisions and
grand divisions of the creation.
Naam supports the heavens and nether worlds.*

Naam upholds the entire creation. Naam is the support of our very soul. The body also exists only with the support of Naam. Whoever discovers the treasure of Naam in the body and, taking its support, escapes unscathed from the prison house of this world—such an exalted soul is called a Sadhu.

¹ Sahajo Bai, *Sādhā soī jo kāyā sādhai, taji ālāsa aura bāda bibāдай...*

When we sit for meditation, we are constantly ambushed and overpowered by sloth, sleep, and illusion. The negative tendencies and impressions arising from our past deeds dog our footsteps and refuse to leave us.

The soul longs to practice the Bhajan and Simran, but the mind remains the slave of sleep, comfort, and ease. And so, a perpetual tug of war is raging within us. Over and over, the mind emerges victorious, and the poor jiva sinks into slumber.

But we need to fight back when the mind tries to lull us to sleep. We should never give in to its dictates. This struggle has been going on since the beginning of time, and whenever we have obeyed the mind, the consequence has always been misery and suffering. Therefore, Sahajo Bai tells us that Sadhu always controls his thoughts and remains engaged in meditation. Ignoring the lure of laziness and sleep, he surrenders his whole heart to the Lord. Such a devotee is worthy to be called a Sadhu.

Another impediment encountered on the way is useless debate. Those who lack true understanding are always ready to engage in argument and hairsplitting. For the Sadhu, pointless debate and its inherent duality of winning and losing is a waste of precious time and a positive hindrance in the spiritual way. On close examination, we see that debate has no inherent value. These intellectual wrestlers have not seen the Truth. All their arguments rest on inference and supposition. The real goal is not to discover the Truth but to defeat others and declare victory for yourself.

**The Sadhu becomes determined, ignoring the
changing panorama of world activity.
He is not anxious for praise nor afraid of slander.**

Once and for all, resolve to invert your attention and meet the Lord within. Leave no room in your heart for anything apart from your cherished goal. Remain unruffled when others praise or criticize you. Patiently endure the sufferings of the body. Turn your back on worry and confusion. Your one desire should be to connect your whole being with the Holy Naam. Kabir Sahib tells us:

*If you have the desire to meet the Lord,
then keep the flame of love
perpetually burning in your heart.*

If you want to meet with the Lord, then, day and night, keep your attention fixed on Him. In this way alone can you become a True Sadhu. Otherwise, the world is filled with so-called sadhus who only act and pose—they can be found in the hundreds, the thousands, the millions.

**The Sadhu is full of patience and forgiveness;
He has subdued the five senses and killed the mind.**

Our hearts should be overflowing with true forgiveness. Unless we look mercifully upon others, we cannot break free from the cage of egotism, and the fire of anger within us cannot be extinguished. Kabir Sahib tells us:

*The earth bears the digging.
The forest bears the axe.
The Sadhu bears the harsh speech of others;
no one else can endure it.*

We may dig deep into the earth and heap burdens upon it, but the earth will never retaliate. Going into the forest, we may

recklessly hack down the trees, and those trees will never utter a word of complaint. But only the Sadhus can bear the harsh words of the worldly people without a murmur.

Until forgiveness takes root within us, we cannot rid ourselves of egotism, enmity, and all the other bad qualities. So, forgiveness is the highest virtue of all.

Next, we have to deal with the five senses that receive input from the outer world in the form of sound, touch, form, taste, and smell. Our ears hear sounds. Our eyes see forms. Our nose smells sweet fragrances and foul odors. When we eat or drink, our tongue senses sweet and sour tastes. And our skin senses hardness and softness, pleasure and pain. In this way, the five senses give us information about the world around us and play an important role. And our mind is meant to be their sovereign. In the natural order of things, the senses should serve the mind while the mind remains aloof from their influence. But at present, the mind is dragged helplessly by the senses into the arena of outer sense pleasures. If we would only seize the mind and bring it under our control, order would be restored, and the senses could no longer run the show.

But how to control the mind, that is the question. As long as we do not understand where the mind resides and how to rein it in, the mind will never obey us. And if the mind does not come under our control, the senses will continue to run riot.

Then, no matter if we go about with a downcast gaze to avoid seeing the beautiful forms in this world; no matter if we avoid listening to worldly music and hear only songs in praise of God; no matter if we give up indulging in the delicious foods, subsisting on bland, dry fare or even giving up food altogether and remaining hungry; it will make no difference. How can such austerity bear any fruit when, at any moment, the senses may break loose and overpower the mind?

We cannot achieve lasting success until we abandon all desire, which is the root cause of all our trouble.

So, for this reason, Sahajo Bai tells us that if we once take a firm hold of the mind and bring it under our control, all the senses will automatically become tame and manageable. Rahimdas² says:

*Focus fully on the primary task at hand,
Then all your works will be accomplished with no effort.*

If we succeed in the most important task of controlling the mind, we automatically accomplish much more. Once the wayward mind has been restrained, then the senses, which are naturally subject to the mind, will be subdued as well. Therefore, Sahajo Bai enjoins us to kill the mind and five senses. But what does She mean by “killing the mind”? She warns us that we must restrain the mind; it should not be allowed to roam about unfettered. When the mind calms down and reposes in stillness, this is the meaning of killing the mind.

**The Sadhu renounces falsehood;
Only true words pass his lips.
He keeps His attention fixed firmly at one point,
not allowing it to wander this way and that.**

Now Sahajo Bai talks about body, mind, and speech—we must practice Truth in all three.³ If we speak a lie with our tongue, that falsehood spreads throughout our whole body. So, first of all, the words we speak should be truthful. And what will be the result? Truth will suffuse our whole body.

2 Rahimdas was one of the “Nine Jewels” or ministers in the court of Akbar the Great.

3 *Kāyā, mansā, and vāsā/vāchā*

Through the words you speak, your whole body is either purified by Truth or polluted by falsehood—the choice is yours. If you want to manifest Truth, then whenever you express yourself, you should take that opportunity to practice speaking only true words. But if your tongue is speaking truthfully and you are still harboring falsehood in your heart? Then, your outer words will only create more falsehood because your inner condition is false. Both your heart and your words must be anchored in Truth. Then that Power of Truth will overflow within you, washing away all falsehood and illusion. But if we remain bereft of Truth, how can we hope to harvest the fruit of bhakti?

Only through the True Guru and the True Name can the soul meet with the Immaculate Lord, who is the form of Truth or *Sat*. The word Guru denotes a True Power, and that Power is called *Sat Guru*. And what is the meaning of *Sat Naam*? It is the True Name of the Lord, forever One and Unchanging. And the soul's real essence is Truth. But through constant contact with untruth, we have taken on its form. To cleanse ourselves of falsehood, we must practice Truth, and the first step toward that goal is to speak truthfully. Never utter a false word. Truth is unchanging, deathless, and eternal.

When our soul merges into that Truth, it becomes unshakable; it is no longer dragged here and there. But while falsehood lurks within us, no matter how much we may speak the true words outwardly, it will make no difference. Our wavering attention will not collect at the still point, and the inner Divine Door will not open.

**The Sadhu's body resides in this world, but His
mind dwells with the Lord within.
He is indifferent to the pleasures of the senses.**

Many people are confused about how to live a life of truthfulness. They say, “We are householders, after all. We must fulfill all the duties of a householder; we have to live amidst our children, family, and other relations. How can we develop the quality of truthfulness under such circumstances? How can we become successful in the way of Truth?” People often have this doubt. They present their objections as though they were a given fact that can’t be questioned. They say, “This is just the way it is.”

But the Saints have proved otherwise. They practice the meditation as requested by the Guru while fulfilling all the duties of the householder’s life. They have inverted their attention within and have discovered the Truth. Therefore, they look at the outer world from a different angle of vision.

They say, “The body functions in this physical plane, but the mind has to invert within and connect with the Shabd Power. So, remain in your homes. Perform all your outer duties faithfully, but keep your attention attached to the Truth within.”

[Break in the audio.]

[It is all a question of controlling the mind. There was once an old woman who had] a goat and a pet monkey. One day, while she was preparing a meal, she picked up a jug and went outside to fetch some water.

Now, her pet monkey was feeling hungry. Seeing her go out, the monkey thought, “This is my opportunity.” He slipped the rope from around his neck and hopped about the kitchen, greedily gobbling up one dish after another. Then, before the old lady returned, the monkey loosened the goat, fastened the rope back around his own neck, and sat looking on innocently.

When the old woman returned to the kitchen with her water, she found the monkey sitting tied up just as she had left

him, but the goat had somehow broken free and was roaming around the house. Seeing the mess in the kitchen, she became angry and, picking up a stick, began to beat the poor goat. And all the while, the monkey sat chuckling to himself: “I ate all the food, but now the goat is taking the beating.”

So, the goat is like the body, and the monkey is like the mind. The meaning of this story is that the monkey mind happily commits all the sins, but the body must endure the punishment.

It is a question of keeping a tight rein on the mind, who is the real mischief-maker. We should fulfill our worldly obligations and responsibilities, but all the while, our thoughts should remain fixed in the remembrance of the Almighty Lord.

From within, we should always remain indifferent to the worldly pleasures. We should be in the world, yet out of it—only then can we taste the Inner Bliss. But as long as our within is filled with the desire for the sense enjoyments, we will not be able to develop detachment from the physical world.

**The Sadhu practices abstinence and truthfulness;
He is filled with virtue from head to toe.
His body, mind, and speech impart bliss to all
around Him.**

Now, Sahajo Bai says that a Sadhu is one who has conquered the senses. He has become the form of Truth. His whole body is filled with nothing but Truth. Without and within, He knows nothing but Truth. Once we realize there is no difference between within and without, falsehood and illusion fly away, and we see all the creation as One.

But at present, we are trapped in duality, so for us outside

and inside are two different things. We perceive the outside world as real and think of the inner realms as something insubstantial. This is the influence of duality. Duality is the very nature of the physical world, and so no wonder. Bound to this physical world, we see everything through the prism of duality—day and night; truth and falsehood; impermanent and eternal; male and female; attached and detached; auspicious and inauspicious.

We perceive everything in opposing pairs, and the fabric of the destructible world is woven from these two strands. *Du* means two, and because of this two-fold or *duharā* nature of the creation, we use the word *duniyā* to mean “world.”

Some people also call the “world” *sansār*. When we take birth in this world, doubt or *sansā* enters our hearts. We forget the reality and, mistaking the shadow for the substance, begin taking action in this world to allay our doubts and fears. But those very actions create karmas, which further bind us and give rise to countless desires. As a result, we spend our earth life caught up in a never-ending cycle of action and reaction. This is why we call the world *sansār*—the place of doubt.

And further, the created universe is referred to as *prapanch*. This word is made up of two parts: *pra* (that which is transcendent or beyond) and *panch* (five)—“the transcendent soul is combined with the five.” And what are these “five”? The five elements and further the five senses. Coming into the creation, the transcendent soul loses its freedom, trapped in the net of five elements and five senses. For this reason, the created universe is described as *prapanch*.

Once the soul becomes liberated from the working of the five senses and the perception of duality, it regains its pristine purity and reunites with the One Unchanging, Omnipotent Lord. When no difference remains between the body, mind,

and speech—when they are permeated with Truth and become unified—we will not have to search for the happiness that eludes us. Our True Nature is Bliss, and that Bliss will manifest within us of itself.

He contemplates on the Formless One;

He is the knower of Brahm.

The words He speaks are filled with nectar.

Absorbed day and night in the contemplation of the Almighty Lord, the Sadhu has united with the Formless One. He is *tatvā gyānī*, the knower of Absolute Truth. His heart is perpetually illumined with the Divine Light. His knowledge comes from direct inner experience. The noble words that proceed from his mouth are full of Truth, and he inspires others to seek for Truth within themselves.

He has realized the One and loves no other.

Sahajo bows at His holy lotus feet.

The Sadhu has become absorbed in the One Lord and loves Him alone. The two have become One. Through the alchemy of love, the Sadhu has become the very form of the Lord, and no difference can be found between them. Sahajo Bai says, “I bow in adoration at His feet.”

Through the Sadhu, the God Power has manifested in the human body as an individual personality, and beyond the confines of that body, that same True Power exists without limit or form. This is the only difference. It is just like when you are preparing fresh ghee. If you pour some of that ghee into a jar to cool, it will solidify and take on the form of the jar, while

the unpoured ghee will remain liquid and pourable. But both substances are ghee; the only difference is the outer form.

**He has gone beyond all duality;
He has enmity for none.
Sahajo says: The Sadhu is free from all desire.**

She says the Sadhu is free from duality. When duality is active within us, we see our fellow beings as friend or foe. But when we rise above duality, we see all as one, so we no longer feel enmity towards anyone. This is but natural. And further, She tells us that the Sadhu is desireless; he is not involved in the play of the senses.

**His state is immaculate.
He dwells in contentment and tranquility.
He is not dependent on anyone else.**

The Sadhu is the form of contentment. His consciousness shines pure and radiant. He doesn't spread his hands before others. Having merged with that Immaculate Power, all his desires are fulfilled.

**Established in True Knowledge, He is absorbed in
Divine Contemplation.**

Sahajo Bai says that the Sadhu has become firmly established in the Inner Knowledge and has lost himself in contemplation. He has become absorbed in the Naam. In the words of Guru Amar Das:

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

We have to surrender all sense of “I and mine” and become the form of the Guru. This is the meaning of contemplation. Contemplation is made up of three parts—*dhyātru*, *dhyāna*, and *dhyeya*. *Dhyātru* is the one doing the contemplation, *dhyāna* is the act of contemplation, and *dhyeya* is the object of the contemplation.

Sahajo says: The Sadhu has surrendered to the Lord, giving up all desire for name and fame.

The Sadhu is free of petty egotism, for he has become the form of God. There is not a trace of I-hood within him.

**In sleep, he is dead to the world;
In the waking hours, he sings the praise of God.**

After we have our evening meal, we fall asleep, and at that time, our soul withdraws to its home at the back of the eyes and then sinks down to the lower chakras. In the state of deep sleep, we have no awareness of self at all. We forget about the body; we forget the oscillations of the mind. It is like death in life. The Saints teach us that those who die to the world can invert and go within.

In the same way, when our consciousness sinks into sleep each night, we should completely forget the outside world and rest peacefully. And when we awake, we should rise refreshed and anchor our thoughts in the Name of the Lord.

**His discourse is filled with stories of the Lord;
He does the devotion without expecting any
reward in return.**

If that devotee comes into conversation with others, all his speech is devoted to describing the sweet mysteries of bhakti, and he only wants to hear talk of the Lord. The one who practices devotion without thought of self is called a Sadhu. In the Shri Guru Granth Sahib, it is written:

I bathe your feet and imbibe that holy water.

Why do we drink that *charanamrit*, the nectar of the Holy Lotus feet of the Sadhu? Because there is indescribable purity in that water. It is the purest of the pure.

But many so-called sadhus roam from house to house, charging money to allow people to wash their feet. This is not what is meant; drinking such water has no value. Only the True Sadhu, who has become one with God, can impart benefit to others.

**Both his body and mind are free from anxiety
and distress.**

He has overcome all obstacles.

No anxiety remains in his body or mind. All the obstacles have been removed from his within.

**O, Sahajo, the Sadhu has surrendered to the Lord;
He has no greed for gold or women.**

She says that the Sadhu belongs to God, and God belongs to him. He has become desireless, so what thought of women or wealth could arise? The sense pleasures have no hold on him. Kabir Sahib tells us:

*I do not turn the rosary nor run after the Lord,
nor do I recite "Rama, Rama."
My Lord comes to me without my asking;
Reposing in Him, I attain peace.*

I don't turn the rosary or recite *Rama, Rama* with my mouth. The Lord Himself runs after me, and now I repose in bliss. When you unite with the Almighty Lord, you are not bothered by the world—the thought of the world does not even enter your mind. But until you attain this state, the mind will never cease its restless wandering.

**This noble soul has deep understanding;
His eyes are pools of mercy.**

He has attained True Knowledge, and His eyes shine with wisdom and goodness.

**O Sahajo, His consciousness is awakened, and His
words are filled with coolness and comfort.**

His consciousness has become one with the conscious God Power within. His utterances are filled with peace and consolation, and they spread coolness to the heated hearts.

**Through sadhana, He has controlled the body, and
His thoughts remain in check.**

The Sadhu has put an end to the mind's waywardness and has perfected the meditation practice. Now, he remains in perpetual equilibrium at the still point within.

**O Sahajo, the Sadhu restrains His mind and does
not run after the senses.**

The Sadhu has brought the mind to a standstill, and it can no longer rush headlong after the senses. The ever-active mind has finally come to rest.

When we take to the Guru's Path, we turn our backs on sins or virtues. We need only devotion to the One Naam. Righteous deeds lead us to the heavens, and sins cast us into the hells. But the true devotees give no thought to either realm. They have become absorbed in the True Happiness. What do they have to do with heavens and hells?

—Baba Somanath

The Month of Agahan Has Arrived

**Now Agahan, the sixth month of the year,
has arrived;
Sin is destroyed, and filth is cleansed away.¹**

This is the bani of Satguru Hazur Radha Swami Ji. In their writings, Saints and Mahatmas often include a *Bārahmāsā*, a poetic cycle built on the twelve months of the year that describes the different stages and experiences of the human incarnation. Some of these great souls include all twelve months in just one hymn. Other Saints compose separate hymns to describe each of the twelve months. Swami Ji has composed a separate hymn for each month and, describing the month of *Agahan* (November-December), He refers to it as the sixth month of the year.

Why does He call it the sixth month? The New Year begins at different times in different parts of India. In Maharashtra, the New Year starts in *Chaitra* (March-April). In Rajasthan, the Marwari New Year is celebrated in *Kārtik* (October-November). According to the English calendar, January is the first month

¹ Swami Ji Maharaj, *Āya mās Agahan ab chaṭhā...*

of the year. But Swami Ji is writing according to the reckoning used in Agra, Braj, Mathura, and Vrindavan, where the year begins in the month of *Āsārh* (June-July). According to that reckoning, *Agahan* is counted as the sixth month of the year. In Maharashtra, *Agahan* is referred to as *Mārgashīrsha*.

Speaking of *Agahan*, Swami Ji tells us that “*ag*” means “sin.” In the month of *Agahan*, remove the sins from your soul. Becoming pure within, ascend to the realm where the soul attains salvation.

**The mind has been purified, and the attention
is stilled;
Lust and anger have departed, and the senses are
of no consequence.**

Swami Ji tells us that the mind has now become free of its base inclinations. It is only because of the mind’s impurity that the attention wavers. Once we cleanse the mind, the attention settles peacefully at the still point between the eyes. Lust, anger, sense indulgence, and the other evil tendencies cease to function. From where do lust and anger draw their strength and power? From the impurity of the mind. When the impurities are removed from the mind, lust, anger, and all the other passions lose their force and cool down naturally.

**Leaving the earth behind, the soul rises into the
astral realm;
Catching the Shabd, it ascends to Trikuti.**

He says that leaving this body, the soul climbs to the astral realm. Catching hold of the Sound Current flowing down from Trikuti, it rises upward to the causal region.

**In the company of the Shabd, the soul now revels
in continual bliss;
It witnesses the wonder of the divine spectacle.**

When the Shabd and surat meet, the mind and intellect experience such an intoxicating delight that they cease to work—they become paralyzed. The inner scenes cannot be described by comparing them to anything in this mortal world. Only those who have enjoyed this experience can understand what it is like. When the mind becomes pure, and the soul meets with the Shabd, it is something without parallel. It lies beyond the power and scope of human language.

**Leaving this worldly home behind, the soul finds
its True Home;
Losing this world, it gains the Satguru.**

This house of the material body has been fashioned by mind, Maya, and the senses. Once the mind becomes purified, it longs to return to its origin, and turning away from the material world, it joins the soul in its inner ascent.² The soul's nature is purity, and leaving the mind behind in Trikuti, it surges forward to merge into the Pure Shabd. Abandoning this dwelling of gross matter, the soul soars heavenward to its original home in Sat Lok, the Realm of Truth. The Home of the Soul and the home of mind and Maya are not the same. The home created by mind and Maya is supported by egotism—the sense of “I and mine.” When the soul is freed from ego and unites with Shabd, its attachment to this world is broken forever.

2 The home of the mind is Trikuti, and reaching that level, the mind merges back into its source. But the origin of the soul is higher still. Leaving the mind, the soul continues its journey into Parbrahm and the regions beyond.

**Since I have taken refuge in the Satguru,
I hear the melody of Sat Naam resounding in the body.**

How was this state attained? He tells us: “When I went into the refuge of the Guru with wholehearted devotion, then I took the support of Sat Naam. And meditating on Sat Naam, I have become the form of Truth.” The foundation of all devotion is taking refuge in the Guru. Until we go into the Guru’s shelter, our egotism will not leave us. Until we remove the veil of egotism, we cannot experience that Self-Existing Power.

**Hail to the Satguru. Hail to His Blessed Company;
through His greatness, I have achieved this status.**

When the soul attains this state of Inner Bliss, it cries out: “Hail to my Satguru, who has shown me the True Path. Through His mercy, He has made me reach the Realm of Truth. He is blessed. He is worthy of praise. No matter how much I sing His Glory, it will never be enough.” Kabir Sahib tells us:

*If I make paper of all the earth,
And from the vegetation fashion a pen,
If I change all the seven oceans to ink,
Still I cannot describe His greatness.*

He says: “Even if I use all of Brahmand, the earth and its nine divisions³ as my paper, even if I make ink of the seven oceans, even if I fashion my pen from all the vegetation in the creation,⁴ in the end, all these materials will be used up.

3 The Puranas mention *jambudvīp* (one of the *saptadvīpas*, or seven continents, of Puranic cosmology), which is divided by mountain ranges into nine latitudinal strips.

4 “*Athārah bhār vanaspati*” means “18 loads of vegetation.” The expression indicates all the vegetation existing in the creation.

But the praise of the Guru has no end, for He is limitless. All these other things in the creation will crumble to dust, but His Power has no end. The Guru who has manifested such a Power within me and has made me meet with the Almighty Lord, I am grateful to Him, over and over. Only through His greatness have I attained this state.”

When we thank someone in Hindi, we say *dhanyavād*. In earlier times, *dhanyavād* conveyed: “May you be blessed!”—an acknowledgment of our indebtedness for some great favor bestowed. But what has happened to that deeper sense of gratitude? Nowadays, we have adopted the English phrase “thank you,” and we use it very casually. We say, “Thank you” if someone hands us a pen. “Thank you” and *dhanyavād* both express gratitude, but how does using “thank you” for insignificant things like a pen relate to the profound gratitude inherent in the word *dhanyavād*? This is what we have come to.

The Saints have described their experience in their banis and other writings, and many people wish to translate those writings into English and other languages. But how do we capture the profound spiritual experience those writings describe? How will we distinguish our gratitude to the Almighty Lord for His Grace and Mercy from the mere formality of acknowledging that someone has handed us a pen? What words can we draw on? If we translate the acknowledgment that someone has given us a trifling object like a pen with “thank you,” then what word will we choose to convey our boundless gratitude to the Lord for granting us the human birth and the means to liberation? If we translate literally, word-for-word, without thought for the deeper meaning, then the inherent Truth, the fathomless depth, and the heartfelt sincerity of the original will be obscured.

Once, Maharaj Sawan Singh Ji was giving Satsang and used the English word “teacher” when referring to the Satguru.

One initiate of Baba Jaimal Singh, named Inder Singh, spoke up and said, “Don’t use the word ‘teacher.’ Please, say ‘Guru’ instead.” On hearing this, Maharaj Ji said, “It shall be as you wish.” The word “teacher” does not bestow any glory and honor on the Guru. A teacher gives instruction at some college or school, which is a very ordinary thing, but the word “Guru” resonates with depth and gravity. The word “Guru” has great spiritual significance, but what spiritual significance is there in the word “teacher?” A teacher is a schoolmaster. How can this compare with the ineffable greatness of the Godman?⁵

**Attending the Satsang, I have accomplished my work.
My sins have been destroyed, as though I had
consumed datura.**

Now He says: “Attend the Satsang of the Sant Satguru.” What is the meaning of Satsang? Gratitude is important, but the greatness of Satsang is much more. What is the principle of Satsang? That perfect being—the Satguru—is the form of Sat Purush. By going into His congregation, all the shortcomings in your heart are removed. When the mind becomes pure, and love is awakened in your soul, then through that love, your soul can contact the Naam; this is the meaning of going in the Satsang. True love dawns in your within, and through that love, you meet the Almighty Lord. This meeting with the Truth is called Satsang.

5 After India achieved independence from British rule, the architects of the new republic cautioned against the slavish adoption of English words and customs, and Baba Somanath’s words are an effort to reawaken in the people at large an appreciation for the richness of their own ancient heritage.

Swami Ji says we become free from sin by going in the Satsang. The root of sin is our sense of “I-hood.” When we listen with our undivided attention to the Satsang of the Guru, we become like people who have taken datura; to others, we will appear to have gone mad. Datura is an intoxicating drug. When someone grinds the seeds of the datura plant and drinks them in a beverage or smokes them in a hookah, they lose their wits, and their behavior becomes very bizarre.

Does Swami Ji mean the Guru gives the Satsang to make the disciples like users of datura? No, it is not like that. He is telling us that when you become intoxicated in the Guru’s Satsang, you appear to have gone mad to the worldly people, but in reality, you have come in contact with Truth. You have become absorbed in Inner Bliss. When you do not follow the ways of the world, people will call you crazy; when you adopt the Path of the Guru, as far as the worldly people are concerned, you have become a madman.

Sins and virtues have both been destroyed, and the spirit of devotion fills my heart.

In the heart of the devotee, neither sins nor virtues remain. We have been taught that we must perform some righteous deed to atone for our sins. But if we are no longer involved in sin, what is the need to perform those righteous deeds? What benefit would we gain? Their only purpose is to remove our sins. When we take to the Guru’s Path, we turn our backs on sins or virtues. We need only devotion to the One Naam. Righteous deeds lead us to the heavens, and sins cast us into the hells. But the true devotees give no thought to either realm. They have become absorbed in the True Happiness. What do they have to do with heavens and hells?

**Now I have come into the Satsang of the Guru;
And I hold fast to His holy feet.**

When you have gained admittance to the Guru's Satsang, let only the Guru's lotus feet dwell in your heart, all the hours of the day and night. "Whenever I look within, I see the Guru's feet manifested there." This is called gurubhakti—devotion to the Guru—and gurubhakti is no small thing. Kabir Sahib tells us:

*In the first birth, we practice devotion to the Guru,
And in the next birth, we get the Naam.*

Without even completing our course of devotion to the Guru, we still think we are fit to take the support of Naam and ascend within. Many people believe they can follow the Shabd without practicing the Simran and the contemplation. The Shabd is a Conscious Power. Until you have removed the gross tendencies covering your soul, how can the Shabd pull you within? For this reason, in one place, Swami Ji Maharaj tells us:

*If someone tries to become absorbed in the
Shabd without first doing the devotion,
Understand that person as a fool.*

How can the Shabd accept you if your devotion to the Guru is wanting? Therefore, He says: "First perfect your love for the Guru; manifest the Guru in your within." The Guru is the Power of Shabd. When you manifest the Guru within yourself, you can contact the Shabd and forge that inner connection.

But the fool abandons this connection with Shabd and establishes a connection with the mind. He thinks, "What more is needed? I have received the Naam initiation. That's enough.

There is nothing else to obtain from the Guru. The Guru gives the Naam initiation, and I have already received that. There's nothing more to it."

**I serve His holy feet and drink the *charanamrit*;
I live by eating the prashad of the Guru.**

Now, He explains the meaning of going into the Guru's refuge. Many people think: "I always remain with the Guru. I always carry out whatever tasks He gives me to complete. Therefore, I am a devotee of the Guru." Friend, you cannot perfect your gurubhakti through these outer activities. When the Inner Guru manifests to you, when you constantly enjoy His company within, when you drink the *charanamrit*—the nectar of the Guru's feet—and when you partake of the Guru's prashad, then you are worthy to be called the Guru's devotee. You may say: "I do all these things. I take the prashad given by the Guru. I wash His feet and drink that holy water, that *charanamrit*. After doing all this, how can my devotion be incomplete?" The truth is you have only drunk the outer nectar of the Guru's feet. You must concentrate at the still point between the two eyes and manifest His feet in your within. When you contemplate on the inner feet of the Guru, when you drink that inner nectar, then you can perfect your devotion. Tulsi Das tells us:

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

When the Guru's radiant feet illumine your within, you should become absorbed in those feet. Then the inner nectar, the real *charanamrit*, will shower down. And when you have tasted that

nectar even once, all your suffering in birth and death comes to an end. Drinking that *charanamrit*, you become a fit vessel for the Guru's grace.

What is true prashad? We eat the halva, munch on puffed rice, or enjoy some sweet sugar candy and say we have taken the Guru's prashad. Friend, this puffed rice prashad is distributed outwardly, but how many know that the Guru distributes another prashad within? What does Swami Ji tell us in this regard? When this nectar from His holy feet rains down on the soul within, then the devotee becomes worthy of receiving the Guru's grace—the true prashad. When you rise above the practices of the outer world and immerse yourself in the inner practices, then He showers His grace upon you. This grace is the prashad you are seeking. When your whole life is transformed into the form of grace, this is called prashad.

**I have His darshan and listen to His holy words;
Remembering them again and again, I cherish
them in my mind.**

When you listen to His every word with reverence, holding His words in your heart and contemplating on them day and night, then you can be called a devotee of the Guru. But now your within is filled with mental wrangling, with love and hate, with praise and derision, so what room is left for the Guru's words? What can you accomplish like this? Nothing at all.

As soon as you hear the Satsang, you have already forgotten it. When you are leaving the Satsang, you do not remember even one word of the bani; you are vacant within. By the time you reach home, nothing remains in your heart from the

discourse; your heart is empty. In the Satsang, you should rivet your attention on having the Guru's darshan. What do you gain from His darshan? The filth of your heart is cleansed away. When you hold His image in your heart day and night, when you dwell constantly on His words, remembering them over and over, then the waves that arise in your within will be stilled; the oscillations of your mind will cease. What does Kabir Sahib tell us?

*Everyone discards gross Maya;
But who can slip out of Maya's subtle nets?
Whoever breaks free from subtle Maya,
Millions of their births are crowned with success.*

We remove the outer, gross forms of Maya through having His darshan. The subtle, inner Maya—the inner wavering and unsteadiness of the mind—can only be removed by hearing His words and singing His praises. And when your soul becomes immaculately pure, you become capable of merging into the Shabd. This path is so simple, but walking on it is extremely difficult.

**Carefully sifting out the spiritual from the gross,
I grasp the Essence and draw my sustenance
from it.**

His words are so clear, but only when we make ourselves worthy of hearing them will the nectar and bliss they describe manifest in our hearts. Now Swami Ji says, "How can you understand His greatness and discern the inner meaning of His words?" When you become separated from the gross

tendencies of the outer world, listen to the words of the Satsang with deep reverence, and lovingly cherish those words in your heart, then all the thoughts and worries of the world will be banished from your within. This is called listening to Satsang.

It is just like using a winnowing basket. First, the stalks are threshed to loosen the grain from the husk and straw. Then, the grain is poured into the winnowing basket and is tossed rhythmically into the air. The light, hollow chaff is blown away by the wind, and the fine sand and dirt collect in one corner. As the bigger stones rise to the top, you pick them out and throw them away, till finally, only the pure grain remains.

In like manner, you should pour the spiritual grain of the Guru's words into the winnowing basket of your heart. Let all the worldly thoughts and sense pleasures that have filled your heart blow away in the wind. Pick out the big stones and discard them; the gross physical attachments are the big stones. And finally, remove the fine sand and dirt of the subtle attachments through hearing and singing His praises. Then only the grain will remain—the Essence of Essences. Nourish yourself on that food.

**Brother, from that nourishment, I grow
strong and hearty;
The fear of Yama and public shame has left me.**

When the soul receives the inner sustenance of Sat Naam, day and night, then the true nectar of the Guru's love will manifest in the heart. Once the soul grows strong and healthy, then the fear of the world, the worry about public shame, the blind adherence to tradition—all these weaknesses—will leave you. What is the meaning of weakness? First, we think,

“I could never do that. I’m too afraid of what people would say.” Then lust and anger appear. They seize us and pull us in whatever direction they want. This is called weakness. Kabir Sahib says:

*The lustful, the angry, and the greedy ones
cannot practice the devotion.
Only some brave one can do it,
leaving aside all thought of caste and color.*

The power of the Guru can manifest only when you remove your egotism and pride of the body. This pride became your companion at the time your body was formed. Sometimes, when you sit in Satsang and hear the words of the Guru, for that brief time, your pride is suppressed, and you become a devotee. But after the Satsang is over, the mice and rats of ego and pride dig their way back out and steal all the benefit.

**Understand devotion to the Guru as love for the Guru;
Penetrating my mind, that love permeates my surat.**

When such devotion to the Guru enters your heart, you can rest assured your gurubhakti is complete. Your soul can merge into the Shabd. Otherwise, you remain a devotee of the mind. Mind and Naam cannot coexist. The thief and the wealthy man cannot live under one roof. If you are a thief within, how can the True Shabd accept you?

**My devotion is complete; it is firmly established
within me.
Absorbed in the devotion, I have become mad in
His Love.**

In this way, true devotion awakens within you. Your course of devotion is complete, and you are no longer tied to this world. Freed from all attachment, you have become mad in His love.

Just as the husband is dear to the wife, just as the water is dear to the fish, so the Guru's form is dear to the devotee.

What can we compare to the love that true devotees have for the form of the Guru? He says that just as the wife loves the husband and is engrossed in his form, just as the fish loves the water and cannot live without it, in the same way, the devotees should love and cherish the Guru within. We say that the water and the fish are one because water is the life of the fish.

When the devotees manifest such love in their hearts for the Guru, this is called gurubhakti. If we compare our own devotion to the Guru with this true gurubhakti, we will see how far short of the mark we fall. But we people think, "Why should we introspect ourselves? If our devotion is complete, that's fine. If it isn't, never mind."

You should attend the Satsang in such a way that you achieve true benefit.

Now, he sums up by saying that we should attend Satsang in such a way that we gain something real. Otherwise, we just listen to the discourse and return to our home. Friend, tell me, what took place during the Satsang? We say the Satsang was held at Worli or some other location. But the question is not what happened at Worli or some other outer place. The question is, what happened within you?

We say, “*Satsang, Satsang.*” We attend Satsang every day, but we take no benefit from it.

Now consider Swami Ji’s words—they are very apt. We go on saying, “*Satsang, Satsang.*” We attend every day, but we take no benefit with us when we leave. We get up, and when we brush off our garments, we brush off everything we have heard. We leave all the benefit right there at the Satsang place and return home empty-handed.

Great is the glory of Satsang, but only the deserving souls recognize its worth.

He says that the glory of Satsang is indescribable and infinite—beyond the confines of mortal words. Swami Ji says that only the rare, deserving souls can comprehend it. If one is not deserving, then how can they understand? There is a saying: “Playing your veena before a bullock.” How can the poor bullock appreciate the veena’s dulcet tones? It is like performing Nandi puja (worship of Shiva’s Bull) in the *Shambū* temples.⁶

Everyone goes to the Satsang as a matter of routine; But the benefit of Satsang manifests only in the deserving ones.

We wish to take advantage of the Satsang, but we cannot do this fully until we make ourselves deserving. Only the deserving ones reap the benefit.

6 Nandi is the gate-guardian of Kailash (Shiva’s heaven) and is also the vehicle of Lord Shiva.

**Over and over, they come before the Satguru but
don't take His words to heart;
They never lose themselves in His darshan.**

We say, "Let's go to the Satsang." The children, the old people, the neighbors, everybody goes. But what do they gain? It is like going to a fair; everyone attends, and then they return home. What did the Satsang mean to them? For them, it was just another get-together. They think: "Everybody is going. I'm going to go too." You dress up in good clothes, attend the Satsang, and then head back home. Some people want to sit at the front of the congregation, thinking: "I am a prominent satsangi." Friend, what difference does it make if you sit in the front or the back? Where you sit is not the point. The point of going to Satsang is to grasp the meaning of the Satguru's teachings. We sit right in front of the Satguru at the Satsang. We attend every day; we are never absent. But if the Guru's words don't penetrate into our hearts, what benefit can we receive? We think: "I have been initiated for so many years. I am a very old satsangi. I was initiated by the previous Guru. I am somebody." My friend, if you have not ascended into the inner realms, what difference does it make if you were initiated by the previous Guru or by the Guru who came before Him? You say you are old satsangis. The old satsangis get eaten up by the worms and ants.

**What can the Satguru and the Satsang do for them?
How can such jivas cross over the ocean of existence?**

He says, "What can the Satguru do for these undeserving jivas? What benefit can they derive from the Satsang? They will drown in the ocean of this world."

Water dissolves rock candy but doesn't affect a stone.

When such an unconscious person comes into the Satsang, what is their condition? Swami Ji says it is like throwing a stone into the water. The stone does not dissolve; it doesn't absorb even a drop of water. The stone remains a stone. But if you throw rock candy into water, that rock candy mixes with the water and makes the water sweet. It dissolves completely.

This is the case of the deserving person who goes into the Satsang. That devotee is like rock candy dissolving in water. But the undeserving person remains like a stone; the water does not affect the stone at all.

**When we have the Satguru's company outwardly,
nothing should be more dear to us than Him.**

Here, he describes how to benefit from the Guru's outer company. The physical connection we establish outside with the Guru should be such that we see no one but Him. Not seeing anything else in this world but the form of the Guru is called outer Satsang.

**Then, the devotee can become absorbed in the
inner Satsang;
The surat ascends into the inner sky, from where
the Shabd is calling.**

Then, the devotee's soul becomes concentrated and establishes a link with the Naam—the form of Oneness. Connecting with the Naam, it becomes the form of Naam. This is the inner Satsang. If we do not have love for the outer form of the

Guru, how will we develop love for His inner form? If there is no water in the well, from where will the bucket be filled?

**The sky of Sahans-dal Kanwal is reverberating,
and thunder roars in the Gagan.
Taking its seat upon the throne, the mind
becomes enraptured.**

Then, your soul rises into the inner sky of Sahans-dal Kanwal. You hear the thunder sounding in the Gagan of Trikuti. If you become absorbed in this Sound, the inner scenes will open before you. But if instead of going inside, you only sit outside and talk about the inner realms, what is the use of such idle talk?

**The surat gains access to Sunn or *Lāhūt Lā-Muqām*;
Nāsūt (physical plane), *Malkūt* (astral plane) and
Jabrūt (casual plane) are left far below.**

The Sunn region is also called *Lāhūt Lā-Muqām*. Going beyond the plane of *Sahans-dal Kanwal*, you reach the plane of Trikuti. Then, as you merge deeper into the Shabd, the region of Sunn appears.

**Now the surat opens the door to *Hāhūt* (Maha Sunn)
and secures ingress to *Hūtal Hūt* (Bhanvar Gupha)
and *Hūt* (Sat Lok).**

Going further still, you reach Bhanwar Gupha, which the Sufis call *Hūtal Hūt*. Then comes *Hūt* or Sat Lok and the sound of *Haq-Haq* (Truth); entering into this realm, we become the form of Truth.

Hūt (Sat Lok) is the final stage of the Fakīrs.
The surat circumambulates the throne of Sat Purush.

Sat Lok, also called *Muqām-i-Haq*, is the realm of the True *Fakirs*. Sometimes, people use the word “fakir” as an insult. Someone says: “You’re nothing but a fakir.” The other person takes offense: “Who are you calling a fakir?” Then, they come to blows over it. But what is the true significance of the word “fakir”? Becoming free from all care and taking on the form of Truth. When the soul leaves the nine doors and sheds the physical, astral, and causal bodies, then it reaches the True Home. This is called liberation.

**The Surat catches the strains of “*Allahū*” in Trikuti;
 And “*Hā*” (*Hū*) pervades the region of the Void.
 On reaching Bhanwar Gupha, the soul discerns the
 Sound of “*Anahū*.”
 The melody of Sat Naam, “*Haq-Haq*,” resounds in
 Sach Khand.
Sant and *Fakir*, two words for One Power;
Haq and Sat, two names for One Realm—indivisible
 and imperishable.**

In Hindi, we call this Power “*Sant*.” In Muslim terms, that is, in the Urdu language, we call it “*Fakīr*.” Two different words in two different languages, but the Power is the same.

So, we have to invert the mind and attach it within. When the mind stops racing here and there outside, when it is no longer filled to overflowing with worldly thoughts, when it becomes still and remains connected to the Naam—that is what is meant by turning the rosary.

—Baba Somanath

Rotate the Rosary of the Mind

**Listen to the Guru's words, and fix your attention
in the Satsang.¹**

This is the bani of Param Sant Satguru Huzur Radha Swami Ji. He tells us that this world has been fashioned by the working of opposing powers—Truth and untruth, eternal and changeable, invisible and visible, day and night, auspicious and inauspicious, that is, *gurmat* (the Path of the Guru) and *manmat* (the path of the mind). Controlled by ignorance, we have remained attached to the phenomena of destructible Maya for millions of yugas and millions of incarnations. Yet, over and over, all the illusory objects have vanished into thin air, and we ourselves have been destroyed. Since time immemorial, we have gone on revolving endlessly in the ever-turning wheel of births and deaths. The root cause of all this is duality. In a creation born of the union of two opposing powers, we have become hopelessly trapped in the wheel of transmigration.

Now, to free ourselves from that wheel, to escape from the

1 Swami Ji Maharaj, *Guru bachan kaheñ so sun re...*

endless cycle of reincarnation and the torments of Yama, we have gone into the refuge of the Satguru. For countless ages, we have passed our earthly incarnations bowing to the dictates of the mind. And in this servitude, we have squandered lifetime after lifetime. Now the opportunity has come when we can forget the world forever. Meeting with the Beloved Lord, we become His very form. In this way only can we shake off our shackles and escape from the cycle of birth and death.

Therefore, we have come into the Satguru's shelter. And the Satguru has told us of the Unchanging and Immortal Power that resides within us. Now, we have to unite with that Power. Then the restlessness of the mind will be stilled. The pride of worldly possessions, the vanity of the body, and the arrogance of "I and mine" will all be removed. Then that Immovable, Conscious Power will manifest within us, and the soul will achieve liberation.

So, here Swami Ji Maharaj says that we should take the Satguru's words into our hearts and understand them as Truth. We should mold our minds according to His instructions. This effort to transform the mind is called sadhana, and the Guru explains to us the correct method to adopt. Unless we obey the Guru's words, no matter how many other practices we may perform—still all our efforts will only lead us back to mind and Maya. Therefore, the Guru's words form the root of all mantras.

The Guru's form is the foundation of contemplation;

The Guru's lotus feet are the essence of all worship.

The Guru's words are the root of all mantras;

The Guru's grace is the source of emancipation.

When we enshrine the Guru's words in our heart, then our practice will bear fruit. When we go on performing the practices, little by little the darkness of ignorance will be dispelled, and the radiance of True Naam will flood our soul. All the thoughts of the mind will be banished, and the soul will find salvation. This is the meaning of Truth. This is the meaning of sadhana. All the other sadhanas that exist in this world are invented by the intellect—they do not arise from actual inner experience of the Truth. Therefore, the Guru teaches us the highest method of all. We should understand the Truth of His words and strive to act in accordance with His instructions.

This is the real meaning of Satsang. Satsang is not just sitting and listening to some stories. Our within cannot be illumined just by hearing the histories of the past mahatmas. When the Conscious Power of the soul spreads out in this unconscious material body, the soul itself takes on the quality of unconsciousness. And in this unconscious state, the soul becomes trapped in the outer world by mind and Maya. It cannot become freed from that bondage of illusion through mere words. Therefore, day and night, we must keep the company of Truth. Satsang means that the Conscious Power of the soul remains in contact with the Power of Truth.

*If I were to forget You, O Lord, even for a moment,
It is like fifty years to me.*

If we let the remembrance of the Naam slip away from our hearts for a moment, it is as though fifty years have passed. So, Satsang means remaining connected with the True Naam. We should immerse the soul in the company of Truth.

**You have received the Eternal Naam;
Focus your surat within and catch hold of the
Inner Sound.**

Naam is Unchangeable Permanence; it never decays. Daily we should meditate on the Naam and connect our thoughts with that Immortal Power. It is very difficult to get the Naam initiation. And once we have been granted that boon of Naam, we will find that practicing the meditation every day is not easy. It is an uphill task. Tulsi Das says:

*It is difficult to explain, it is difficult to understand,
And it is difficult to practice with discrimination.*

First of all, to explain the nature of Naam is very difficult because the Naam Power is *nirākār*—it has no form. Naam is not like anything in this world and so it is not possible to understand through examples and comparisons. It stands alone—separate from all.

Naam lies beyond the grasp of our intellect, and our heart is ignorant. And yet, the Guru must explain to us in some way that will inspire us within. He must make accessible to us that which is inaccessible. He must present the unknowable in a way that will enlighten our intellects and kindle love in our hearts. For this reason, it is said that to explain the Naam is very difficult.

Someone may give a talk about the lives and teachings of the past saints. They take their discourse from some sacred scripture: this saint said such and such; his teachings benefited many souls; and he traveled far and wide for the sake of the dear ones. But this is all hearsay. The person speaking has no proof or experience of the events they are relating;

their sermon is nothing but empty talk. Only when the person speaking has some spiritual experience within can their words touch the soul. And, thus, we can see how difficult it is to explain the nature of Naam.

Even if someone can explain, still understanding is also difficult. Our intellect is unconscious and can only understand from its own level. It is not ready to hear the Truth. Only when we listen to the words in Satsang with an open heart and mind can we understand what is being said. When someone speaks of the Truth, we have to hear those words in the same spirit. Only then can those words take root within us. Only then can we appreciate the true import of the Satsang.

So, we can see that it is difficult to explain, and it is difficult to understand. But once someone has explained the Truth to us, and we have accepted that Truth into our hearts, still we must do the meditation practice with discrimination. Devoting ourselves to that practice, we must witness the Truth within ourselves, which is the most difficult of all. The dear ones listen to the Satsang, but once the Satsang is over, only a few rare ones remember what the Guru has said. Everyone else dusts off the Guru's words even before they leave the Satsang place. Once again, Maya throws the veil of illusion over their hearts, And, in that condition of forgetfulness, they go back to their homes. When they are sitting in Satsang, they will say, "Oh, this Satsang is very good."

My friend, the very good Satsang is the one we take home with us. If we discard the teachings of the Satsang and go away empty-handed, where is the value in that? When we go into a shop, we may see some very useful item. But only if we purchase that item and put it to use will we get any benefit from it. If we leave it sitting in the shop, how can it do us any good?

So, it is difficult to explain the Truth and difficult to understand it. But once we do get some understanding, we must also put that Truth into practice. Only then can we achieve success. Then the Satguru imbues our soul with the Immortal Power of Naam—the Name of the Lord that never decays. And when we receive this blessing of the Guru's grace, we should anchor our attention within and catch hold of the Divine Sound showering down from above.

**The Guru will lift your soul into the Inner Realms;
Prepare yourself now to go with Him.**

If you rise up to the level where the Satguru resides, He will unite you with Himself. The Guru is the Shabd, and the surat is the disciple. When your conscious attention becomes fixed at the point between the two eyes, you will cross over into the astral plane. There the Guru is waiting to greet you and merge your soul into the Shabd, which is His True Form. And as soon as you unite with the Shabd, all the gross unconsciousness that was lingering in your within is driven away.

**Your attention is spread to every corner of the
material world;
The Guru will remedy this shortcoming.**

Now, He says, "You are so attached to the worldly objects that you have become the image of the world." Now, what is our condition? If an old broom is sitting outside our house and someone tries to take it away, we will say: "Hold on there! That broom belongs to me." Just see how trapped we have become. Every cell, every vein in our body is attached to the

world. The Satguru must liberate the soul, but it has become inextricably bound to the gross, material objects. After all, it is just an old broom!

In order to divert our attention away from these material objects, the Guru uses so many means. We may have to suffer hardships. We may have to deal with worldly problems. We may have to endure disgrace. We may lose our wealth or experience so many other deprivations. But if we are the true beloveds of the True Guru, we will benefit from this adversity. We will understand it as the Guru's grace. We will turn away from the world and search within ourselves for the Reality.

When the soul becomes attached to the Guru within, no matter what difficulties assail us in this outer world, we will remain unperturbed. The Almighty Lord is *Beparvāh*—the One Without Worry. He is never disturbed; He remains separate from all and worry-free.

Now, if you introspect your own heart, you will see where you stand. Your heart is so bound up in the worries of this world that it is difficult for you to become free from them. But the washerman's duty is to clean the clothes.² First, he applies soap to remove all the dirt. If the clothes are cleaned in this way, well and good. But if those clothes are still dirty, even after applying soap, then he will toss them into the cauldron

2 Nowadays, washing machines are becoming more common in India, but at the time when Baba Somanath Ji gave this Satsang, traditional dhobis were numerous, and the work of those dhobis was arduous. Depending on how soiled and stained the clothes might be, they would apply soap, boil the clothes, use brushes and bleach, and, finally, whirl the clothes over their heads and slap them down vigorously on large stone slabs to remove the dirt. Just as those washermen would accept the clothes of both the gentleman and the oil merchant, so the Saints are ready to clean the souls of the virtuous and the sinners alike by any means necessary.

and boil them with some strong detergent or bleach. And finally, he will beat those clothes on the rocks until their natural radiance shines through. In the same way, the Satguru is like a washerman, and the mind is like the dirty clothes. He will use any means necessary to clean those dirty clothes and make them spotlessly white.

**He will capture Kal and put an end to him;
Then He will rid you of arrogance and conceit.**

But the Satguru does not stop there. He separates the soul from the power of Kal and unites it with the Almighty Lord; He transforms the soul into the image of the Lord. Many people think that the word “Kal” refers to death. When someone dies, they say, “Oh, he has entered the domain of Kal. His time came, and now, he is a denizen of that realm.” Dying is called “going into the domain of Kal.” They present as a kind of victory, but this is all flummery.

But the real Kal is with us every day. Our whole existence is spent in the domain of Kal. Kal governs both day and night, and, within those two divisions of time, we are subject to the three states of consciousness—*jāgrata* (waking), *svapna* (dreaming), and *suṣhupti* (deep sleep). For twelve hours we remain awake, and during those twelve hours we take care of all our give and take, all our eating and drinking, all our worldly affairs.

In that *jāgrata* or waking state, we go on from morning till night, engaged in countless underhanded dealings; our false deeds are beyond reckoning. Most people in the world are caught up in this sinful existence, mistaking untruth for truth. We don’t realize that we are involved in falsehood, that

we are committing sins. All our focus is directed to collect more money by any means, fair or foul. And for all the twelve waking hours we are lost in that storm of falsehood. Then at night, when we lie in the *svapna* or dream state, figures from the account books swirl in our heads, because that is what we have been engaged in all day long. But in that groggy state, everything is confused, so, when the soul drifts into dreams, then all the activities of the day resurface in a jumbled way. And later, when the soul falls into the deep, heavy sleep of *sushupti*, we don't even know who we are or where we are. We have no recollection of the world at all. Our soul is sunk in deep darkness. In this way, Kal has thrown the veil of these three states of consciousness over every soul.

But when we cross beyond these three states, we enter into an awakened state of clear consciousness. There the outer sun and moon do not measure out day and night. When the radiance of the soul itself shines forth, this is called the *chetan avasthā*,³ the super-conscious state. Therefore, He tells us that when we cross over the three lower states of consciousness and rise into higher consciousness, these veils of Kal are removed from the soul. As the soul ascends higher and higher, the arrogance of “I and mine,” is eradicated. The friction between mine and yours fades away. Here, Swami Ji Maharaj assures us: “He will rid you of arrogance

3 The fourth state of consciousness is described by the yogis as *turiya pad*, where the soul rises above the gross physical senses and the *antahkarana* or higher mind. In Sant Mat, *turiya pad* is the eight-petalled lotus located above the *antahkarana*. When the soul rises above the body to the threshold of the astral realm, it is greeted at *turiya pad* by the Radiant Form of the Satguru. Here, Baba Somanath refers to the fourth state as *chetan avasthā*, meaning the various states of higher consciousness experienced by the soul on its ascent through the astral, causal, and super-causal regions, as it journeys to the Realm of Truth—Sach Khand.

and conceit.” When He disentangles the soul from the three lower states of consciousness, and unites it with True Consciousness, then no room for “I and mine” will remain. This is the true victory over Kal.

**Fix your consciousness firmly within;
Then you will be freed from the wheel of
eighty-four lakh forms of life.**

Swami Ji has described how the Satguru aids and supports the jiva. Now, He explains the duty of the disciple: “You should keep your thoughts firmly fixed on the Sat Naam given to you by the Satguru. Never let your thoughts stray away from the Lord’s True Naam.”

Two powers are at work—forgetfulness and wakefulness. Wakefulness does not mean waking up from the state of sleep. The true meaning of wakefulness is to never let the heart forget the Naam of the Lord, even for a fraction of a second.

**Rotate the rosary of the mind repeating the
Simran of the Lord.
Take the Guru’s key in your hand.**

Here, He gives a further instruction to the disciple—rotate the rosary of the mind. The rosary He is referring to is not made up of string and beads. At present, the mind is stuck fast in the world. So, we have to invert the mind and attach it within. When the mind stops racing here and there outside, when it is no longer filled to overflowing with worldly thoughts, when it becomes still and remains connected to the Naam—that is what is meant by turning the rosary. Once the mind inverts

within, our Simran becomes true. But when the mind is still roaming about outside, whose simran are we engaged in?

We repeat the Simran half-heartedly, just like a rite and ritual. But Simran becomes truly beneficial only when the mind remains focused within. When the Simran is done with the mind, the simran of the world that is swirling within us will cease. This is why Swami Ji tells us to turn the rosary of the mind. He says that if our remembrance is absent-minded and wishy-washy, our effort will bear no fruit. When we follow the technique that He has taught us, our efforts will stir the Divine Grace. And what does He tell us? First, engage the mind fully in the Simran, only then will your attention remain fixed inside. All the dirt of the mind can be washed away.

Attune yourself to the Limitless Shabd.

Pierce through the clouds in the sky of Trikuti.

Then the Limitless Shabd Dhun will manifest. Focus your attention in that Dhun to such an extent that you become the form of the Dhun. Set aside all the distractions of the mind: “Now, I am listening to the Sound. Now, I am seeing this or that.” Listening to the Inner Sound with total absorption, become the form of the Sound itself. Then what will happen? The Conscious Power of the soul will rise within and, crossing beyond the inner sky, it will proceed further and further, till it finally merges into Truth and becomes the form of Truth.

**Loose the arrow of yearning, listen to the deep,
rumbling Sound within.**

Ascend to the pool of Mansarovar.

Viraha or yearning means that you do not want to be separated from the one you love even for a moment. Except for the thought of the Beloved, you do not let any other thought enter your heart. When you remain absorbed, day and night, in the remembrance of the Beloved, this is called *viraha* or yearning. If you will remain attached to the Naam with deep inner yearning, that Naam, that Sound, will transport you to the region of Daswan Dwar and the pool of Mansarovar.

**Become established at the peak of Sunn;
And listening to the Dhun, proceed onward
to Sach Khand, the Realm of Truth.**

Climbing beyond the pool of Mansarovar, reach the peak of Sunn and become established there. Then travel onward towards Sat Lok, from where the Primal Sound streams forth unendingly, and merging into that Sound, follow it back to its Source.

**Sail on through the regions of Alakh and Agam;
And come to rest in your True Eternal Home—
Radhaswami Dham.**

Beyond Sat Lok, you cross over the regions of Alakh and Agam. And, finally, you enter Radhaswami Dham, also called *Anāmi* (Nameless) or *Akeha* (Unspoken) because that region lies beyond all names or speech. Now, the soul is freed forever from the mortal world and the tyranny of Kal. It comes to rest at last in its own True Home, the Source from where it sprung.

**Perform this arti every day with regularity;
And the Guru will shower His grace and mercy
upon you.**

Now, He tells us to perform the arti. The word “arti” is made up of *ā*, meaning “come” and *rat*, meaning “repeat.” So, when we perform the true arti, we must come (*ā*) away from the world and repeat (*rat*) the Name of the True Lord within. This is the real meaning of arti. So, Hazur Radha Swami Ji is telling us: “Perform the arti every day with regularity. Then you will achieve salvation through Satguru’s grace.”

This is the Path of Liberation, and by following it, we can meet the Lord within. By walking on this Path, we become free from the sea of existence and the wheel of eighty-four lakh births and deaths. Until now, no one has achieved success on the spiritual Path without the Satguru, nor will they be able to do so in the future. Search through the four Vedas, the Shastras, the Puranas, and all the holy scriptures. You will find that they all proclaim that liberation is achieved only through the Guru.

—Baba Somanath

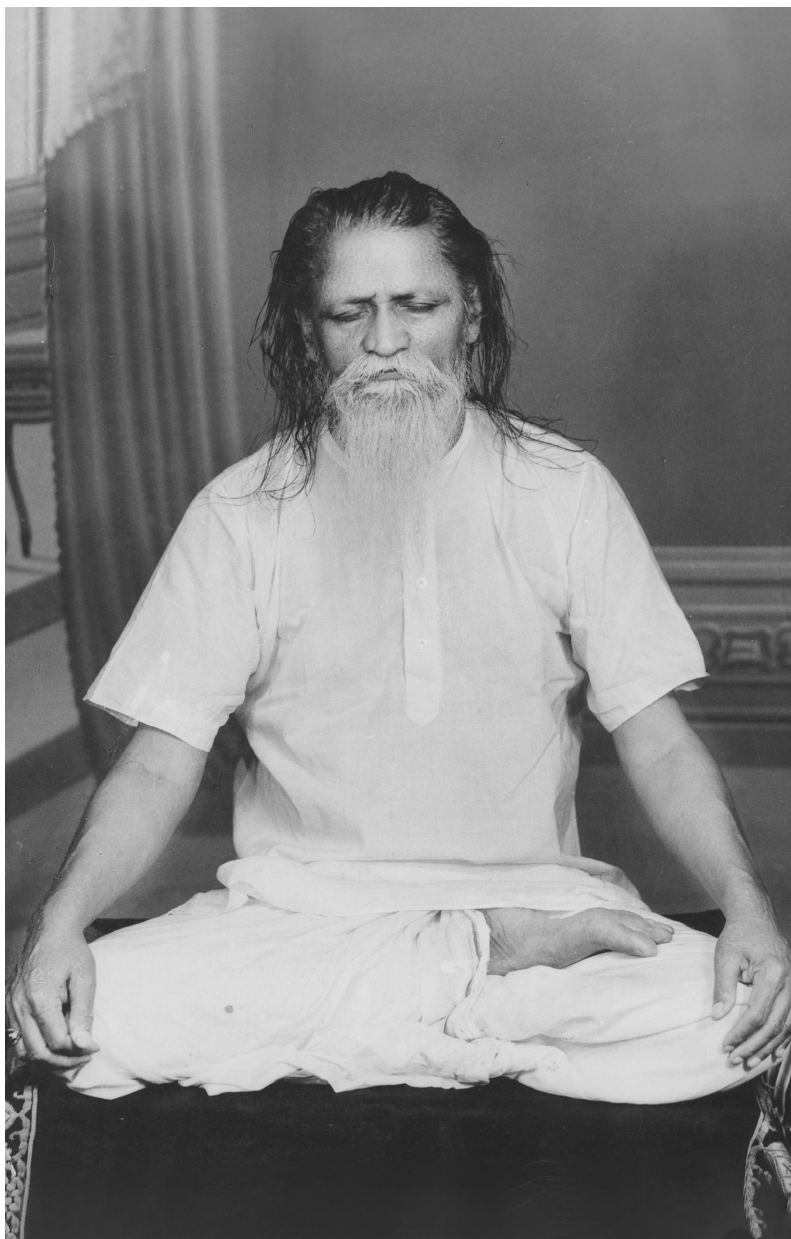
The Most Noble Destiny

**If your destiny awakens, you meet the True Guru;
Without noble karma, He cannot be found.
The one who meets the True Guru is transformed
into gold if it is the Lord's Will.¹**

This is the bani of Guru Amar Das, the third Guru of the Sikhs. He tells us that only through the highest good fortune can we obtain the human birth. It is a unique boon to get this precious body. In the times that we live, there are more human beings than ever, but only those people with the most noble destiny encounter a True Guru.

So, to meet the Guru is a rare privilege. All the other major events of our life are reactions of our past good karmas. But karma alone cannot bring about the meeting with the Perfect Guru. Only through the Grace of God do we come in contact with the Guru; that meeting is ordained from above. And what is the result of such a meeting? We are turned into pure gold, something very precious, and this transformation comes about through the pleasure of the Lord. It is by His will and through His grace that we meet with the Satguru.

¹ Guru Amar Das, *Karam hovai tā satigur pāīai viṇ karamai pāīā na jāi...*



Baba Somanath Ji

**O my mind, contemplate on the Name of the Lord.
The Lord is found through the True Guru;
And the soul remains merged with the True Lord.**

What instruction does the Guru give us? He says, “Friend, the Lord dwells within you, and this is the Path by which you can meet Him. Through this technique, you can come in contact with Him and have His darshan straight away.” The Guru reveals the secret of the True Shabd and the way to meditate on it. So, once we have received His instruction, we should tell the mind: “Oh mind, day and night, meditate on the Shabd through the technique revealed by the Satguru.”

The Naam will take you on the straight road to the place from where it originated. You will not need to ask for directions from anyone along the way. Therefore, Guru Amar Das says: “Oh my mind, contemplate on the Name of the Lord.” Through Satguru’s grace, that True Power will manifest within you, and you will unite with God Almighty.”

**Spiritual wisdom springs from the True Guru;
And all doubts are dispelled.**

When the Satguru reveals the true spiritual wisdom, no place remains for even a trace of doubt.

In the outer world, we see that if we wish to gain competence in any endeavor, we must seek instruction from experts in that field and serve them. We can gain knowledge and wisdom from them. If someone has become an engineer, a doctor, or has acquired any other skill, we can derive benefit from their company.

But we cannot learn the expertise required for meeting the Lord from any of these outer experts. Therefore, Guru Amar Das tells us that to acquire inner knowledge, we have to go in

the company of the Guru. Only He can reveal the spiritual wisdom within us and banish all our doubts and illusions.

**Through the True Guru, the Lord is realized.
Then, you will not have to enter the womb and
take birth ever again.**

Meet the Lord through the Grace of the Guru and merge in Him—then you will not come back again into this world. For the one who has merged in the Lord, the seed impressions that bring the soul back into the world have been consumed by fire. If you plant seeds, you will have to harvest the crop. But if the seeds are destroyed, then how can a crop grow?

**Die while living, by the Guru's grace;
And become fit to merge into the Shabd.**

Establish the words of the Satguru in your heart and die while living. To “die while living” means that we lose all consciousness of “I and mine.” Then, we become fit to meditate on the Shabd and gain experience of the Inner Sound. As long as the sense of “I-ness” remains, the Shabd does not accept the soul. If the intellect and *antahkarana* (higher mind) remain active within, we can have no experience of the inner Sound Current. Therefore, He tells us to die while alive. Only then will the Sound Current reveal itself.

When the bhringi² catches another insect, she brings it to her home. There, she places it in a mud cell and renders it unconscious by giving it a sting. Then, the bhringi begins to hum a sound into the cell where the insect is lying. Three times, the

2 The bhringi is usually described as a type of wasp but is occasionally referred to as a black bee or beetle.

bhringi hums this sound, and if the insect can assimilate that sound, it is transformed from what it was before into a bhringi. Similarly, the Satguru instructs us to practice three methods—Simran, Dhyan, and Bhajan. If we perfect even one of these methods, then our inertia and ignorance are removed, and true consciousness starts to dawn within us. Then the Shabd attracts us, and merging into it, we become its very form.

But as long as we remain conscious of the body, the Shabd will not manifest. Our concentration will be broken, and our attention will be pulled outward if we feel the mosquitoes start to bite, or we move our legs, or we hear a child crying, or some stray thought intrudes. In this way, we remain separated from the Shabd. Only when we have become oblivious to everything outside will the Shabd manifest within us. That is called dying while living. We die to the outer world but awake to a new life within.

**Whoever eradicates self-conceit from their within
finds the Door of Salvation.**

Now, Guru Amar Das explains further. He says you can pass through the door of liberation only when you eradicate the sense of the individual self. This is the fruit of meditation and is achieved by good fortune. It cannot be had just for the asking. If you think that you can go on enjoying the worldly pleasures and still achieve union with God, how is that possible?

This is a very subtle matter. If even a trace of worldly thoughts and aspirations remains, the Shabd will not embrace you, and you will sink back down.

**By the Guru's Grace, the soul takes birth in the Home
of the Lord, becoming free from Maya's hold.**

When you meditate, the Guru showers His grace (prashad), and in that way, you attain liberation—this is the principle of Sant Mat. Following the Path of the Lord's Name, you merge into the form of bliss and become free of Maya.

Acquiring the wisdom to discriminate between the unchanging and the transitory, you meet with the Primal Lord.

You will develop the faculty to discriminate between that which is permanent and that which is temporary. There is one Power of Truth that is unchanging and everlasting and another power of falsehood that is wavering and evanescent. When you learn to distinguish between the two, you will meet with the Almighty Lord and become the form of Truth itself.

The intoxicating dream of this world deceives everyone, and the jivas depart at death, losing all their capital.

Now, He says that the Lord has placed the one Power of Truth within everyone, but the transitory drama of Maya has deluded the whole world. Thus, at our end time, babbling nonsense, we leave the body without honor. Even though the Spiritual Power resides within the human body, we depart from this world without ever having discovered it.

**The spiritual profit is earned in the Satsang;
Those with good fortune obtain this wealth.**

He says that Naam is the Path back to God, and that Path

is revealed in the Satsang, the company of Truth. But this knowledge can be gained only with good fortune.

If by chance you come into the Satsang but do not remain attentive, what can be gained by attending? Your body is sitting there, but instead of listening to the discourse, your mind is dwelling on enjoying a plate of savory snacks³ when the Satsang is over. You are paying no attention to the Truth that is being explained. During Satsang, you remain absorbed in the thoughts and fantasies arising from your mind and intellect and then return home devoid of any spiritual wealth.

**Without the True Guru, no one finds it;
Examine your within and consider this matter
carefully in your heart.**

This is the Path of Liberation, and by following it, we can meet the Lord within. By walking on this Path, we become free from the sea of existence and the wheel of eighty-four lakh births and deaths. Until now, no one has achieved success on the spiritual Path without the Satguru, nor will they be able to do so in the future. Search through the four Vedas, the Shastras, the Puranas, and all the holy scriptures. You will find that they all proclaim that liberation is achieved only through the Guru.

**By great good fortune, we meet the Guru and cross
the ocean of existence.**

When the Guru manifests within us, we become the most fortunate ones. Why? Because when we meet with the Guru

3 Khichla—a popular papad (fried cracker) made of rice flour, often served with a spicy vegetable garnish

within, we become His very form; then, for us, this physical world and the whole of creation cease to exist.

**The Naam of the Lord is my anchor.
I rely only on the support of His Name.**

The Naam of God is the support of the devotee's heart. That Naam has existed from time immemorial. It is the foundation of the entire creation.

*Naam supports the divisions and
grand divisions of the creation.
Naam supports the heavens and nether worlds.*

But only when we meditate on that Naam can we understand its greatness. If we take the initiation but remain bound in worldly indulgences and do not meditate according to the Guru's instructions, then what was the point of initiation? You can realize the Naam only by hard work; simply taking initiation is not enough.

Suppose you purchase some agricultural land. Will you get a crop by merely owning that land? It is just uncultivated earth. Until you plant the seeds and tend the crops, you won't be able to bring home any harvest. What crop can the field produce without your labor? And if there is no harvest, what food can your wife prepare to feed the household?

**O Dear Lord, please be gracious and make me
meet the Guru, so that I may find the Door
of Salvation.**

The entire Granth Sahib is permeated with this nectar. Now Guru Amar Das says that it is through the grace of the Guru

that we obtained the Naam, and it is through the grace of the Lord that we met the Guru, who showed us the Path to liberation. The devotee prays: “Be merciful upon me and make me meet the Guru who can bring about my union with You.”

**The destiny written on our forehead by the
Almighty Lord cannot be erased.**

We cannot change the fate inscribed on our forehead, no matter how hard we may try to evade it.

**O Nanak, those who are pleased by the Lord's Will
achieve perfection.**

Those dear ones who accept the Will of God achieve perfection and are liberated from this world.

Until a river flows into the ocean, it keeps its identity as a river. But when it merges with the ocean, that river becomes the ocean itself. In the same way, when our individual thoughts merge into Truth, we become one with Truth and achieve liberation.

—Baba Somanath

When the River Flows into the Ocean

**O my mind, in this world you are always coming
and going in birth and death;
Only the True Name will emancipate you in the end.
When the True Lord Himself grants forgiveness,
you are freed from the wheel of eighty-four.¹**

This is the bani of Shri Guru Amar Das Ji, the third Guru of the Sikhs. He tells us that we can never achieve stillness as long as we continue coming and going on the wheel of transmigration. But what can free us from this cycle of birth and death? Only the Inner Power that is unchanging and true. Until we merge our thoughts in Truth, our coming and going will not cease.

It makes no difference if we worship the gods and goddesses. No matter what outer efforts we may make, it will accomplish nothing. And so, after death, the vast majority of the souls take rebirth, and this cycle carries on unbroken.

Let us look at this situation for what it is. If we continue to rush headlong into the illusion of this material world,

¹ Guru Amar Das, *E mana meriā āvā gauṇ samsār hai ant sach nibeṛā rām...*

deluded by our own false understanding and egotism, we will remain bound to the wheel of transmigration. But when the soul becomes motionless and concentrated within, we contact the Truth. Our coming and going ceases, and we gain self-knowledge. Once we understand the reality for ourselves, the thought of rebirth cannot arise.

At present, our attention is so much taken up with the world; our thoughts are constantly wavering. But when our soul meets with the unchangeable Naam, we see the cycle of birth and death clearly and understand its workings. Therefore, Guru Amar Das Ji says: “O my mind, trapped in the cycle of reincarnation, you continue to die and take rebirth. But when you become attached to the unchangeable permanence of Naam, then you will be freed from all coming and going.”
[break in tape]

Whether we call it Truth or Naam, we are referring to the same Power. That Power finishes off all coming and going in this world. When we unite with that power within, our revolving in the wheel of eighty-four lakh births and deaths is finished.

**The cycle of reincarnation comes to an end;
And through the Truth, liberation is achieved;
The Gurumukh is blessed with the Lord’s greatness.**

Until a river flows into the ocean, it keeps its identity as a river. But when it merges with the ocean, that river becomes the ocean itself. In the same way, when our individual thoughts merge into Truth, we become one with Truth and achieve liberation.

So, Guru Amar Das Ji says that the one who attains this state is a Gurumukh. Gurumukhship does not mean just respecting the physical Guru outwardly. It is more than that. To

become a Gurumukh, we must merge into the Naam. Shabd is the Guru, and the soul is the disciple.

**Dyed in the color of the True Lord, the Gurumukh
remains intoxicated in Sehaj Samadhi.**

The Gurumukhs are filled with grace. Dyed in the true color, they remain absorbed in Sehaj Samadhi—the state of Natural Equipoise. Whether standing, sitting, walking, or moving about, their whole attention remains riveted within. Now, the question arises: How can we achieve this state? While doing all the worldly work, we should remain immersed in Sehaj Samadhi, but how can we accomplish this?

It is just like when a woman lives in a large family. She serves her husband's elder brother and his wife, all his sisters, and whoever else may be living in that household. In big families, there may be twenty or more people. While serving them, she is always thinking of her husband. Her thoughts remain absorbed in the love and service of her husband. Although she dutifully serves the family, all the time her thoughts are absorbed in her husband.

Similarly, when we fulfill our worldly duties, we should keep our thoughts turned towards the Beloved within. Where our desires are, there we dwell also. Whoever has the thirst within for True Love keeps their attention always turned in that direction. No matter how many worldly responsibilities we must fulfill, all our thoughts are still attracted to the object of our love.

**The True Lord is pleasing to the mind.
When you enshrine Him in your heart, you merge
into the Shabd and achieve emancipation.**

When the mind contacts the Truth within, it merges with that Truth and achieves liberation. Truth does not come; it does not go. It is not affected by time. It never changes. It takes no notice of morning, noon, or evening. Monsoon, winter, or summer pass by, but Truth does not mark the seasons. It is ever the same.

Once the mind comes in contact with and merges with Truth, it becomes fixed and stable. Then liberation becomes a reality. Before that, it was just a dream, a fantasy.

**O Nanak, those imbued with the Love of Naam are
not thrown back again into the ocean of existence;
They unite with the Truth, and their wanderings
cease.**

What is this Truth? It is the Naam. Whoever merges into the Naam achieves liberation and never again returns to this ocean of existence. We think that doing the inner devotion is for someone else, but this understanding is not correct. Kabir Sahib tells us:

*Everyone does the outer bhakti,
But they do not cast out illusion from their within.
Entangled in the net of deception,
they undergo terrible suffering and strife.*

Bhakti is not for someone else. We ourselves have to do the true bhakti to remove the veils from our within. It is through bhakti that we achieve permanent happiness. No one else can do this work for us.

Take the example of the banana tree. When you peel back the layers of its stalk, one after the other, in the end, there

are no layers left. In the same way, you must remove the inner veils one by one through meditation until all the veils are removed. You can throw out the simran of the world from your heart by doing the Simran of Naam. Then you merge into that Naam within and achieve liberation. This is the real meaning of bhakti.

**Attachment to Maya is total madness;
Through love of duality, you are destroyed.**

Now, Guru Amar Das describes the nature of Truth and paints an accurate picture of this creation. What is the nature of this world? Our attention is bound by attachment to the illusion of Maya within us. What is the nature of this attachment? How does it come about?

The trifles of this world are just like foam and bubbles. They appear to have substance, but in reality, they are empty—just an illusion. Similarly, when the sun's rays strike the air on a hot day, a shimmering mirage appears to the eye. The thirsty traveler chases that mirage, thinking it is water but finding no water there, dies of thirst and exhaustion.

In the same way, when our attention becomes attached to the things of Maya, we think they are the source of happiness and peace. We are forever chasing the waves of illusion. When one wave fades away, we go running after another. But Maya's creations are all ephemeral. They are unreal and bring us no lasting peace or happiness.

Indulging our desires for Maya is like throwing gasoline on a fire to put it out. Instead of being quenched, the flames flare up more than ever. And one day, we die burning in the fire of our unfulfilled longings. When we come near the mirage, it disappears, and we perish of thirst.

**Mother, father, and all our kin have selfish motives;
Everyone is entangled in duality.**

Someone takes up the role of mother; someone takes up the role of father. Someone becomes the child, spouse, brother, or friend. But these relationships are not real. No one is the brother, friend, mother, or father forever. When the potter fashions the pots from clay, he shapes them in so many different forms. But in fact, all the pots are made from the same clay.

In the same way, someone comes as the mother, someone as the father, the brother, the friend, the wife, the son. But this trap of the world ensnares us no matter what form it takes. Egotism and attachment keep us bound in this trap. Intoxicated with the illusory objects of Maya, we snatch at them, saying, "This is mine. That is mine." But there is no difference between these worldly things; they are all composed of the same clay. Why do we attach so much importance to them? Because we are deluded by duality.

**They are caught in this love because of their past
actions, which no one can erase.**

He says we have been ensnared in this trap since the dawn of creation. Caught in duality, we continue to act and make new karmas. Now, who can free us from this cycle? A farmer sows seeds one year and lives on that year's harvest. Then, the rainy season comes, and the farmer again sows the seeds. This cycle goes on and on. The sowing of seeds never comes to an end, and we go on harvesting the crop that we have sown. Thus, age after age, we have remained subject to the law of karma. We go on suffering and enjoying the karmas we ourselves have created.

**The Creator of the Universe cares for it;
No other is as great as He.**

The Almighty Lord who created the universe is the All-Doer. He is the greatest of all. Once you see the Lord face-to-face, all your doubts will be driven away. You will come to know who fashioned the creation, and you will understand its nature.

It is like watching a magician's performance. As long as your attention is absorbed in the magic tricks, you will remain mesmerized and astonished. But who is doing all that magic? It is the magician. Once you turn your attention to the magician performing all the tricks, the sleight of hand becomes obvious, and the reality comes into focus.

**The manmukh is blind, consumed in the fire of
this world.
Without the Shabd, there is no peace.**

Not understanding the reality, the manmukh is blind, and in that blindness is consumed in the fire of karma. [break in tape]

**O Nanak, without the Naam, everyone is deluded.
They are destroyed by their attachment to Maya.**

The force of attachment is strong, but the Power of Naam is much more potent. And when we come in contact with the Naam, we are enthralled by it. Someone may say, "Using the intellect, I will give up all my attachments, one after the other." But they will not be able to do it. Instead, those outer attachments will become even stronger. When the sun rises, the darkness of night is dispelled. If you are surrounded by a pitch-black night and someone starts relating stories of the sun, can such talk drive the night away?

Similarly, we are sitting in inner darkness, but we go on talking about spirituality and the Light of the inner sun. “What is the Lord like? He exists without any support. He is the Supreme Being. He is luminous, radiant, dazzling.” We go on talking like this, but we don’t see even a glimmer of light within.

Such empty talk cannot remove our illusion and attachment. But when the living Power dwelling within us is awakened, the Inner Reality will be revealed. And how does such awakening come about? Through the Naam.

**Seeing this world is on fire, I have run into the
refuge of the Lord.**

Now, what does Guru Sahib tell us? The whole world is burning. Seeing those flames, I have hurried into the Lord’s shelter.

**I offer my prayer to the Perfect Guru: Please save
me and bless me with Your greatness.**

He prays to the Perfect Guru within, “O Lord, please save me from this fire. Otherwise, I will be consumed. Please protect me.”

**Keep me in Your sanctuary and bless me with the
glory of Naam;
There is no giver as great as You.**

Further, He implores, “I have come into Your shelter abandoning all else. None is greater than You. You alone exist. You are the Creator of the three gunas, of Maya, of the entire universe. There is none greater than You.”

**Fortunate are those who are engaged in Your seva.
You are the One Lord throughout all the ages.**

And how can You be found? Whoever comes into Your shelter with undivided love, whoever accepts Your seva wholeheartedly, will meet You. Age upon age, this has been the Path to God.

Without seva, our egotism cannot be removed. Until we become freed from the ego, we cannot escape from Maya's grip. And as long as that *mamkār* (egotism) remains, Maya (illusion) holds sway. Maya and *mamkār* are intertwined.

**You may practice celibacy, truthfulness, and
self-restraint;
You may perform all the rites and rituals; But
without the Guru, you will not achieve
emancipation.**

He says that we practice celibacy and truthfulness. We perform all the austerities and arduous practices. But until we meet the Perfect Guru, we will gain nothing from all this strenuous effort. Everything is achieved through the Guru. Until we meet the Perfect Satguru, our doubts cannot be removed, and our egotism cannot be finished for good.

The authors of all the holy scriptures have written that the one God resides within us, and we should meet Him. But, my friend, the scriptures can only give us theoretical knowledge. Who is this Almighty Lord they speak of? What are the practical steps we can take to meet Him? How do the writers know about this one God?

**O Nanak, only the one who understands the
Shabd can enter the shelter of the Lord.**

What does the Perfect Satguru tell us? He says, “Brother, within you, the unbroken melody of Shabd is resounding. Merge into that Shabd through meditation and meet with the Lord.” He does not contradict the scriptures. He does not tell us that three or four gods are residing outside. He says the one God is living within you. The door leading within is bolted, and Shabd is the only key to unlock that door. So, following the Guru’s instructions, go within and meet the Almighty Lord, who is waiting for you there.

**When the Guru puts you on the path to God, you
will flourish;
There is no other way to succeed.**

When the Guru puts you on the Path of Truth and reveals the secret of the True Naam, you should have firm faith in Him. When you devote yourself wholeheartedly to the meditation practice according to His instructions, all your doubts will be removed.

**Within and without, there is only You.
You Yourself have revealed this Knowledge.**

One Power is working both within and without. And when you experience that one Power directly, no place will remain in your heart for any uncertainty or confusion. Within and without, the same Power is at play. But when you try to grasp that Power through your intellect, the waves of inference arise in your heart. And as those waves expand ever outward, they drive the Truth farther and farther away.

Inside and outside, there is only unity. The one who understands, the faculty of understanding, and the One who

is understood are three manifestations of the same Power. When these three are united, no room remains for even an iota of doubt. When we see the unity in all things, the Lord unites us with Himself.

**You Yourself have revealed this Knowledge.
The Gurumukh loves no other and imbibes the
nectar of the Lord.**

**His court is True and endures forever;
There, the True Word is resounding.**

**Within the home (of the body), you discover the
Primal Home—the Satguru bestows this great gift.**

**O Nanak, those who repeat the Naam find the
Mansion of the Lord;
They follow the True Path and enter honorably.**

When humility, lowliness, and mercy manifest within you, know that you are practicing true bhakti. If the so-called devotee doesn't have these qualities, they are like a lovely flower that emits no fragrance. Outwardly, they look alright, but within, they haven't manifested even one speck of devotion.

—Baba Somanath

Like a Flower Without Fragrance

**Another devotee earned the merit, but it was
written in my account.
It belonged to some great soul but was bestowed
on a sinner.¹**

This is the bani of Satguru Paltu Sahib Ji. He says that until you develop humility within, you cannot become free of egotism. Humility is the one weapon that drives away vanity and pride. The ego ensnares us, and humility sets us free. But that humility must arise from the depths of the heart; it must be genuine. When we need to get some worldly work accomplished or to secure a favor from someone, we make a show of outer humility—we fold our hands in respect, prostrate ourselves, make ingratiating entreaties, and do so many things. But such humility is superficial—it remains only as long as it serves our purpose. Real humility is an inner experience; it is the form of Bliss. Explaining the quality of humility, Paltu Sahib says, “I was a sinner—wretched and base. But somehow, by accident, the Almighty Lord wrote the devotion of some great soul into the account of my karmas. The Lord made an error.”

¹ Paltu Sahib, *Karam rahe dui likhai patra ekai mañhai...*

**Someone else performed the devotion, but by
mistake, the Lord gave all the credit to me.
O Paltu, it was a grave error, but He didn't take
that devotion back again.**

He says, "Some great devotee did that bhakti, but when the time came to write down the karmas, the Almighty Lord inadvertently entered that devotion in my name. It was a big mistake. But the Lord is True—through and through—and once He had written that bhakti in my account, He didn't take it back again. This is all His greatness. For my part, I have searched my heart, and I can honestly say that I was not worthy of His gift."

**I am a baniya by caste;
I am lowly, a great sinner.
I am wicked through and through;
There is not a speck of truth in me.**

He says, "I am a baniya by caste." The banyas are traders, and traders never tell the truth. From the time they are born, they learn to speak nothing but lies. They start doing the trading right from their childhood because trading is the profession of their fathers. And they go on telling one lie after another. Therefore, He says: "I am very base and lowly. I come from the baniya caste. The knot of falsehood is tied within my heart all the hours of the day and night. I bring falsehood with me when I get up in the morning, I earn falsehood all day long, and then I carry falsehood with me when I go to sleep at night. How could a person like me earn the fruits of true bhakti? There is not a trace of truth in my heart. I am not worthy of doing the devotion."

There must be some other Paltu, but look what has happened to his devotion.

O Paltu! Bhagwan must have made a mistake because He gave me the fruits of that bhakti.

Paltu Sahib says, “There must be some great mahatma named Paltu. And since my name is also Paltu, maybe his devotion was written in my name.” He tells us: “There must be some other devotee named Paltu. But once the God Almighty has showered His grace and written the reward for that devotion in my account, even by mistake, He will not take it back again. He has given it to me once and for all. This is His grace and mercy.”

Humility, lowliness, and mercy—these form the root of devotion.

Now, what is bhakti? We all practice bhakti, so why don't we taste the nectar of devotion? The happily married woman is called *saubhāgyavatī*. Destiny smiles on the *saubhāgyavatī*; all good things come her way. “*Sau*” means “one hundred,” and “*bhāgyavatī*” means “the one with good fortune.” The *saubhāgyavatī* is blessed with good fortune, not just once, but a hundred times.

Similarly, there are signs and indications of bhakti or devotion. First of all, the devotee is humble. You will have observed that wealthy bankers and merchants do not conduct themselves with humility. But we should not preen and strut about; instead, we should be humble and modest before everyone. Second, the devotee is lowly. Our words should always be sweet and gentle. And finally, the devotee shows mercy and kindness to all living beings. These three qualities—humility,

lowliness, and mercy—are the signs of true bhakti, and they shed glory on the practice of devotion.

But you have seen the swamis—each one tries to become more important than all the rest. When some swami goes out for a stroll, he is carried in a palanquin, and his entourage accompanies him in a procession. In his mind, he thinks: “I am a very important swami. I am the greatest of all.” Friend, what kind of swami is this? What meaning is there in all this outer show? When humility, lowliness, and mercy manifest within you, know that you are practicing true bhakti.

If you have not developed these qualities within yourself, you are like a flower without fragrance.

If the so-called devotee doesn’t have these qualities, they are like a lovely flower that emits no fragrance. Outwardly, they look alright, but within, they haven’t manifested even one aspect of devotion. For the true devotee, there is no question of defeat and victory. They always consider themselves the one who has lost; the thought of winning doesn’t arise.

**What is the use of becoming important?
It only burdens you down with pride.
O Paltu, you can drink the sweet water from the well;
But the ocean’s water is brackish.**

You may achieve greatness in the outer world, but what purpose will it serve? The water of a well resides in a very narrow space, but it tastes sweet and can quench many people’s thirst. On the other hand, the water of the ocean spreads across a vast, fathomless expanse, but it remains brackish and unfit to drink.

In the same way, however exalted you may be in the eyes of the world, still, at the end time, you will come crashing down, and you will be cast again into the wheel of eighty-four lakh births and deaths. On the other hand, the truly humble one always remains small and lowly—and even God Himself comes under their control. But the humility has to come from the heart. Those who only exhibit humility outwardly—the ones who bow and scrape, who fold their hands in false reverence and touch other people's feet—that's another matter altogether.



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 prēmaviddare 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 of 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 hegē? 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 mñḡe 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 nahiñ 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 tālāśh 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 chākarī 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 the 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 karūṅ gholūṅ samundar jāy; dhartī kā kāgad karūṅ 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 Ayo-dhya, 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 baṛhtā 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.

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Āyā mās Agahan ab chaṭhā / Now Agahan, the sixth month of the year, has arrived; Swami Ji Maharaj, Satsang 36: “The Month of Agahan Has Arrived” p. 321

E man meriā āvā gauṇu sansār hai anti sach nibeṛā rām / O my mind, the world comes and goes in birth and death; only the True Name will emancipate you in the end; Guru Amar Das, Satsang 39: “When the River Flows into the Ocean,” p. 365

Karama rahe dui likhai patra ekai mañhai / Another devotee earned the karma, but it was written in my account; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 40: “Like a Flower Without Fragrance,” p. 377

Karamu hovai tā satigur pāiai viṇ karamai pāiā na jāi / If your destiny awakes, then you meet the True Guru; Guru Amar Das, Satsang 38: “The Most Noble Destiny,” p. 355

Kisu hau sevī kiā jap karī satagur pūchau jāi / Who should I serve? What should I meditate on? I will go and enquire from the True Guru; Guru Amar Das, Satsang 30: “Guru’s Words are the Primal Mantra,” p. 241

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

Khudī khoya ko hovai soī hai durves / Whoever loses the little self becomes a dervish; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 32: “The Signs of True Darshan,” p. 269

Guru kahe pukār pukār / The Guru exhorts us again and again; Swami Ji Maharaj, Satsang 1: “Amass the Wealth of Devotion,” p. 1

Guru bachan kaheñ so sun re / Listen to the Guru’s words; Swami Ji Maharaj, Satsang 37: “Rotate the Rosary of the Mind,” p. 341

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

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

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

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

Pahile sansār se tori āvai, tab bāt piyā kī pūchiye jī / First, break away from worldly attachment, Then enquire about meeting the Beloved; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 24: “Drink the Bitter Cup of Love,” p. 189

Pāti āi more pītam kī, sāt turat bulāyo ho / A letter has come from my Beloved; my Lord says, “Your time is up. Don’t delay.” Paltu Sahib, Satsang 27: “No One Remains Here Forever,” p. 207

Pūrab meñ rām hai, pachim khudāy hai / It is said that Ram dwells in the East and Khuda in the West; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 2: “No Place Without Him,” p. 21

Fakīr ke bālke gusā nā kījiye / Shame on you, O foolish fakir! Don’t get so angry; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 8: “Please Give me Some Fire,” p. 63

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

Man khin khin bharam bharam bahu dhāvai til ghar nahī vāsā pāiai / Every moment, my mind goes on roaming and rambling. It runs from place to place and does not stay in its own home, even for an instant; Guru Ram Das, Satsang 28: “The Alchemy of Satsang,” p. 213

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 mächhalā sansār samude / O mind! You are like a fish swimming in the ocean of this world; Ravidas, Satsang 20: “The Bitter Fruit,” p. 153

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

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 māl tiāgau / O Sadhu, forsake your pride of mind; Guru Tegh Bahadur, Satsang 12: “Playing the Difficult Game,” p. 89

Santan kiya 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

Saba kā sākhī merā sāññ / My Lord is the witness of all and everything; Kabir Sahib, Satsang 31: “The Witness of All,” p. 253

Samujhāye se kyā bhayā, jab gyān āp se hoyā / What can you achieve through explanations? True Knowledge comes of itself; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 26: “True Knowledge Comes of Itself,” p. 201

Sādh soī jo kāyā sādhai, taji ālasa aur bād bibādai / The Sadhu is one who controls the body through sadhanas; Sahajo Bai, Satsang 35: “The Qualities of the Sadhu,” p. 305

So panchī mohi koī na batāvai, jo bolo ghaṭ māñhī re / No one can tell me about the bird that sings within; Kabir Sahib, Satsang 33: “The Bird that Sings Within,” p. 273

So sikhū sakhā bandhapu hai bhāī ji gura ke bhāṇe vich āvai / Only the one who lives in the Guru’s Will can be called a disciple, a friend, a true relative; Guru Amar Das, Satsang 29: “According to the Love in Your Heart,” p. 227

Ham bhajanīk meñ nāhīñ avadhū / O seeker, I no longer practice meditation; Paltu Sahib, Satsang 25: "The Unbroken Stream of Devotion," p. 195

Henahāra ke bahuta batāven, pai tā ko kachu marama na pāvaiñ / Many people try to foretell the future, But none have unlocked its secret; Charandas Ji, Satsang 34: "A Matter of Doing, Not Talking," p. 281

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

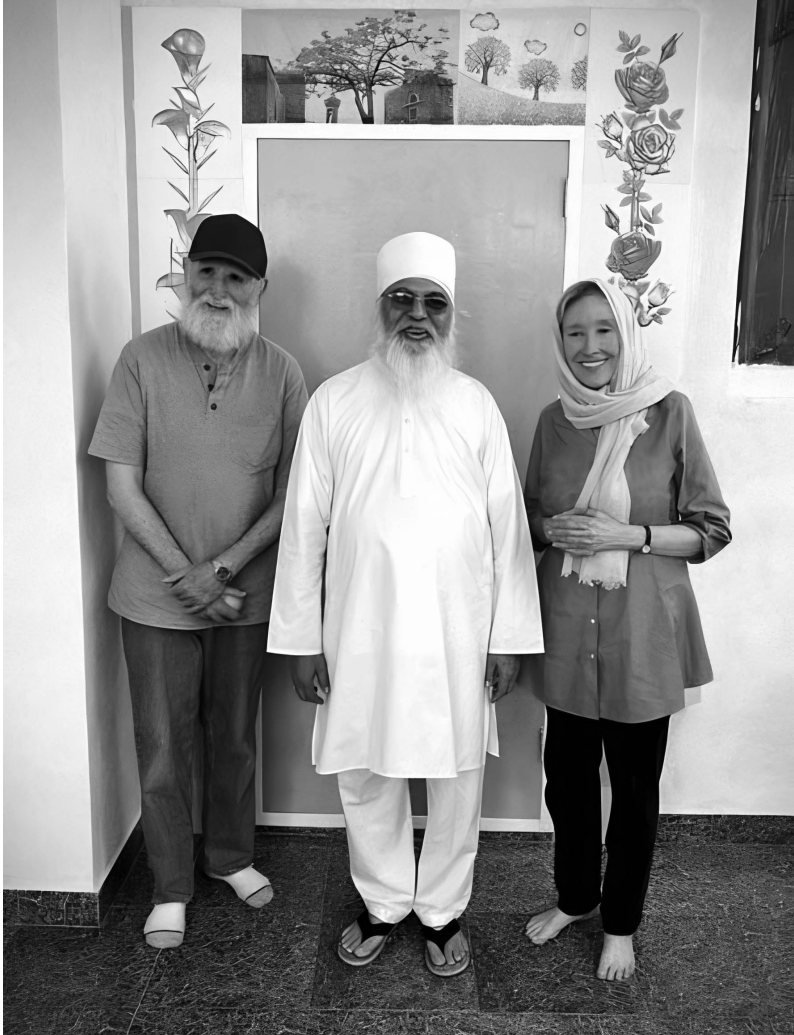
Christopher McMahon studied in Bangalore at Friends World College, where he received a B.A. in Indian Philosophy. While studying there, he had the good fortune to come to the feet of Baba Somanath Ji and was initiated by Him in 1971. From 1971-1976 he spent six months each year living with Baba Somanath 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.