

THE GURU - PART 8

GURMANTRA

While walking and sitting, sleeping and waking,
contemplate within your heart the Gurmantra.

Run to the Lord's lotus feet, and join the Saadh Sangat.

Cross over the terrifying world-ocean, and reach the other side.

O my mind, enshrine the Name of the Lord within your heart.

Love the Lord, and commit your mind and body to Him; forget everything else.

Soul, mind, body and breath of life belong to God; eliminate your self-conceit (sggs 1006).

The right conduct and the correct lifestyle to obey the Command of the Lord's Will;

this is your Bgagti. One who practices this Mantra, O Nanak,

swims across the terrifying world-ocean (sggs 377).



A handicap person with diseased or faulty legs needs the help of crutches until he is cured. Similarly, our mind is inflicted with a chronic disease of false ego. It needs help! The desire of worldly pleasures and the fear of pains have crippled it. Dwelling in desires and fear, it has become dense and ignorant. The Absolute Peace, which is the mind's true nature, is further aggravated by lust, wrath, greed, emotional attachment, false pride, enviousness, mental stubbornness, old age and related illnesses, psychological distress, efforts to acquire and abandon, hopes and longings, violent expressions, ever-growing foolishness, deception, cheating, hypocrisy, evil tendencies, crookedness, corruption, selfishness, perversities, and so on; all of which are based on spiritual ignorance and delusion.

It's needless to say that such conditioned and ignorant mind needs help; so that it can retrace the steps back to its real nature, the utter quiescence. The Spiritual Scientists looked into this diseased and ignorant condition of the human mind, and came up with very potent antidotes. And one of the antidotes is called *Gurmantra* or simply *Mantra*!

- *Chahu dis phool rahee bikhiyaa bikh Gurmantra mookhi garurhaare*: The poison of corruption is flowering forth in the four directions; I have taken the Gurmantra as my antidote (sggs 1209).

As revealed in the foregoing verse, the mind standing at the edge of material conditioning and spiritual ignorance is surrounded by the ocean full of poisonous lava of desires and fear; thus incapable of resting in its own Self-Bliss. How can this poison be restrained from all sides? In the Divine Light of the Gurbani (SGGS), the following in this context will be reflected upon:

- What is The *Mantra*
- Waaheguru: The *Gurmantra*
- The Purpose Of The *Mantra*
- How To Chant The *Mantra*
- Benefits Of Chanting The *Mantra*
- *Mantras* Are Neither Secret Nor For Sale
- Transcending The *Mantra*

What is The *Mantra*

Mantra is a *Sanskrit* word, simply meaning "incantation". Just as the fragrance is boxed in the flower,

and the light of the sun is hidden in the colors, similarly, the essence of the divine expression resulting from Super consciousness is summed up in the *Mantra*. In its subtle form, it's called '*Anhad Dhuni*', '*Anhad Naad*', '*Anhad Baanee*', '*Panch Shabad*', and so on, which is beyond the reach of our bodily senses and the three modes of material nature. The *Akhree* or the letter form of *Mantra* is the expression of this Primal Sound. Thus the *Mantra* is not an ordinary word; it's embedded with the transcendental vibratory sound that represents the Absolute Purity.

- *Panche Shabad vaje mati gurmati vadabhaagee anhad vajjiyaa. Aanand mool Raam sabh dekhiyaa gur shaddee Gobind gajjiyaa*: The Panch Shabad, the Five Primal Sounds, vibrate with the Gurmat, by great good fortune, the Unstruck Melody resonates and resounds. I see the Lord, the Source of Bliss, everywhere; through the Gur-Shabad, God is revealed (sggs 1315).

All *Mantras* are in the Name of the Lord. In other words, the *Mantras* are none other than the Lord's Name. Also called as *Naam*, one Word or *Shabad*, *Moolmantra*, *Beejmantra*, sacred syllables, *Gur Charan*, *Gur Moorati*, etc., the *Mantra* essentially represents the Formless Lord's Name. Baabaa Nanak says:

- *Mantar tantar ayukhadh pubahchaar. Hari Hari Naam jeeya praan adhaar*: Mantras, tantras, all-curing medicines and acts of atonement, are all in the Name of the Lord, Har, Har, the Support of the soul and the breath of life (sggs 184).

By chanting *Mantra* we try to invoke the Supreme Being who resides within. Thus, the *Mantra* is the name of the Inner Being whom we are calling or want to realize. Therefore, if chanted with concentration, intuitive understanding, determination, constancy, assiduousness and feeling, the *Mantra* will open a person to himself. It brings the person face to face with the Self within.

- *Gur shaddee Gobind gajjiyaa*: Through the Gur-Shabad, God is revealed (sggs 1315).
- *Saahib meraa sadaa hai dissai Shabad kamaayi*: My Master is eternal; He is realized by the practice of the Shabad (sggs 509).
- *Raam Naam Mant hirdai devai Nanak milan subhaaye*: The Mantra of the Raam Naam, the Lord's Name, is enshrined within the heart, O Nanak, and we merge with Him so easily (sggs 444).
- *Kahu Kabeer akhar dui bhaakhi hoyigaa khasam taa layegaa rakhi*: Says Kabeer, chant the two letters of the Lord's Name (Kabeer's mantra was Raam). If He is your Lord, He will protect you (sggs 329).
- *Nayunidhi amrit prabh kaa naam. dehee mahi is kaa bisraam*: The Name is the Ambrosial Nectar and real wealth, the nine treasures. It dwells in the human body (sggs 282).

The *Japa* is the prelude to enlightenment. No wonder Baabaa Nanak named his first *Bani* as "*Japu*", which also makes the beginning of the SGGS! The unbroken chanting or repetition of the *Mantra* makes an integral part of this spiritual practice of *Japa* (*Naam Simran* or *Naam Japnaa*). Since the *Gurmat* (Wisdom of the *Shabad*) is *Bhagti* or devotion heavy, there is an unequivocal emphasis on chanting of the Lord's Name throughout the *Gurbani*. In reality, the *Naam*, the *Gurmantra*, the *Shabad*, God's Will or *Hukam*, Truthful Living, the *Bhagti* or *Kirtan* are essentially one and the same.

- *Satigur Mantar deeyo Hari Naam. Ih aasar pooran bhaye kaam*: The True Guru has given me the Mantra of the Lord's Name. By this Support, my affairs have been resolved (sggs 196).
- *Ihee achaar ihee biyuhaaraa. Aagiyaa maani bhagti hoyi tumaaree. Jo ih mantar kamaavai Nanak so bhavjal paar utaaree*: The right conduct and the correct lifestyle to obey the Command of the Lord's Will; this is your *Bhagti*. One who practices this Mantra, O Nanak, swims across the terrifying world-ocean (sggs 377).

The *Mantra* for *Naam Simran* are usually short, containing only a few syllables. Relatively longer *Mantras* are impractical for chanting and meditation, thus lose their effectiveness. The shorter *Mantras* of fewer syllables are more effective, because they are more likely to flow better with the natural rhythm of the breathing process or *Praanas*, easy to remember, and more suitable for concentration and remembrance.

Waaheguru: The Gurmantra

As discussed in the second part of this article, the Guru's business is two fold: (1) to impart the Self-knowledge to the spiritual student to remove his veil of spiritual ignorance, and (2) to give the seeker *Gurmantra* or *Naam* whose unbroken chanting brings about mental control. Both of these essentials of spirituality have been provided to us by Baabaa Nanak — the Gurbani for Self-knowledge, and the "Waaheguru" (or Vaaheguru) as the *Gurmantra*.

The Lord's various names are scattered throughout the Gurbani such as *Waahu Waahu*, *Waahe Jee-o*, *Guru Guru*, *Gur Gur*, *Har Har*, *Gobind Gobind*, *Nirankaar*, *Saahib*, *Gopal*, *Ram Ram*, *Allah*, *Parmaatamaa*, etc. Therefore, the *Shabad* declares that, in essence, the entire *Bani* of the Lord is the greatest *Mantra* of all.

- *Bani mantar mahaa purkhan kee manahi utaaran maan kayu*: The Bani, the Word of the Supreme Lord, is the Mantra to rid the man of his mental ego (sggs 1208).
- *Man tan antari Hari Hari Mant. Nanak bhagtan kai ghar sadaa anand*: The Mantra of the Lord's Name, Har, Har, is deep within my mind and body. O Nanak, eternal bliss fills the home of the Lord's devotees (sggs 802).
- *Raam Naam Mant hirdai daivai Nanak milan subhaaye*: The Mantra of the Raam Naam, the Lord's Name, is enshrined within the heart, O Nanak, and we merge with the Lord so easily (sggs 444).
- *Guri mantraa Shabad sach deetaa Ram....*: The Guru has given the Mantra of the Shabad (Naam), the True Word of God. Meditating on this True Shabad, I sing the songs of joy, and my mind is rid of anxiety. I have found that God, who never leaves; forever and ever, He sits with me (sggs 576).

Although the entire *Bani* is the *Mantra*, but it's not possible or practical to chant and meditate on each and every word of the entire SGGS (1430 pages!) at a given moment while, for example, eating, walking, working, standing, sitting, talking, etc. Accordingly, it is said that the gurus gave us a very short and sweet, a four-syllable word "Waaheguru" as *Gurmantra* for the sole purpose of repeated *Japa* of the Lord's Name, day and night.

- *Saasi saasi simarahi Gobind. Mann antar kee utrai chind*: With each and every breath, meditate in remembrance on the Lord of the Universe, and the anxiety within your mind will depart (sggs 295).
- *Simrayu dini rain saas giraasaa*: Day and night, remember God with every breath and morsel (sggs 177).

Where does this one Word of the *Shabad* come from? Although scattered throughout the SGGS in various names as discussed above, the full form of this *Mantra*, Waaheguru, was revealed by the realized *Bhatts* in their *Bani* incorporated near the end of the SGGS. It was also mentioned in the writings of Bhai Gurdaas, the scribe of the SGGS.

- *Sat saach nivaas sri nivaas aad purakh satta tuhee waheguru waheguru waheguru wahi jee-o*:

You are forever True, the Home of Excellence, the Primal Supreme Being. Waaheguru, Waaheguru, Waaheguru, Waahe Jee-o (sggs 1402).

- *Waaheguru Gurmantar hai jap hayumai khoyee*: Waaheguru is the Gurmantar; by meditating on it, one loses his false ego (Bhai Gurdaas, Vaar 13, Payuree 2).
- *Keeyaa khel bad melu tamaasaa Waaheguru teree sabh rachnaa*: You have formed and created this World-Play, this great game. O Waaheguru, this is all You, forever (sggs 1403).

Knowing the meaning of the *Mantra* is very helpful when the spiritual student is concentrating on it. Then he will know when he reaches the goal which the *Mantra* is supposed to produce within him. The word Waaheguru simply means "the Wonderful Lord" — *Waahe* means wonderful and *Guru* means the Lord. As the meaning implies, the *Mantra* is essentially meant for praising the Lord through chanting, *Kirtan*, *Naam Simran*, *Bhagti* or meditation, etc.

- *Poorai Satgur Shabad sunaayaa. Trai gun mete chauthi chit laayaa*: The Perfect Satguru has revealed the Shabad; it eradicates the three qualified Maya, and attunes the consciousness to the fourth state, *Chautha Pad* (sggs 231).
- *Bhaj mann mere eko naam. Jeeya tere kai aavai kaam. Raini dinas gun gaayu ananta. Gur poore kaa nirmal mantaa*: Meditate, O my mind, on the One Name. It alone will be of use to your soul. Night and day, sing the Glorious Praises of the Infinite Lord, through the Pure Mantra of the Perfect Guru (sggs 193).

For a deeper understanding of the word Waaheguru, we can also look at its four syllables individually. These four syllables are "Waawaa", "Hahaa", "Gaggaa", and "Raaraa". As revealed on the page 435 of the SGGS, these four syllables represent the Names of the same Absolute Lord. For example, Waawaa represents Waasudev, Haahaa represents Hari, Gaggaa represents Gobind, and Raaraa represents Raam. Also, all these names of the same Timeless Reality have repeatedly been used throughout the Shabad. Which suggests that this *Mantra* is not only condensed into a short and sweet form, but also very potent!

- *Wawai waaree aae moorhe Waasudeyu tudh veesariaa. Ih welaa na lahasi moorhe phiri toon jamm kai was paiaa*: Wawaa: Your turn has come, you fool, but you have forgotten the Lord (Waasudev). This opportunity will not come again, you fool; you will fall under the power of death's messenger (sggs 435).
- *Haahai Hari kathaa boojh toon moorhe taa sadaa sukh hoee. Manmukhi parhe tetaa dukh laagai bin satigur muktee na hoee*: Hahaa: Understand the Sermon of the Lord (Hari), you fool; only then you will attain eternal peace. The more the Manmukhs (material beings) read, the more pain they suffer. Without the True Guru, liberation is not obtained (sggs 435).
- *Gaggai Gobind chiti kari moorhe gallee kinai na paayaa. Gur ke charan hirdai vasaee moorhe pishlai gunah sabh baksh laiaa*: Gaggaa: Keep the Lord of the Universe (Gobind) in your mind, you fool; by mere words, no one has ever attained Him. Enshrine the Guru's feet within your heart, you fool, and all your past sins will be forgiven (sggs 435).
- *Raarai Raam chit kari moorhe hirdai jin kai ravi rahiaa. Gir parsadee jinee Raam pashaataa Nirgun Raam tinee boojh laiaa*: Raaraa: Center your consciousness on the Lord (Raam), you fool; abide with those whose hearts are filled with Him. By Guru's Grace, those who recognize Him, understand the Absolute Lord (sggs 435).

The Purpose Of Mantra

One not knowing a treasure of precious diamonds and gold lies buried beneath his feet may walk over it

repeatedly yet never find it. Similarly, all beings live every moment in the city of the Self-God yet never find Him. Why? Because, due to the illusion created by the false ego and ignorance, our deluded mind has taken Him as the body. The Purpose of the *Mantra* is to help remove the veil of this illusion from our mind. In other words, the *Mantra* consists in shifting the emphasis from the changeful mind (ego) and its ephemeral world to the Immutable and Timeless Self.

The reason all religions, paths, and *Mantras* exist because there exists the phantom called mind. It is extremely fickle. Even if it is tamed it does not remain steady, but gets restless in a moment like the surface of the ocean. It jumps from one object to other like monkey jumps from one tree to other. This mind alone provides the senses with their intelligence; who, in turn, generate countless evil notions. Hence, this ghost called mind must be destroyed. This is the teaching of all world scriptures and masters.

- *Bin man mooye kaise hari paayi*: God is unattainable without annihilation (or conquering) of the mind (sggs 665).
- *Ayukhadh mantar mool mann ekai manni bisvaas prabh dhaariyaa*: The Mool (Root) Mantra is the only cure for the mind; I have installed faith in God in my mind (sggs 675).

Death of the mind is the birth of the spiritual wisdom. How this phantom called mind be killed or conquered? Depending on the temperament of the spiritual student, several means are available to the seeker, the *Mantra* among them. Meditation on *Mantra* helps purge the mind of mundane thoughts, which in turn, helps gain realization of the omnipresent Self, the Infinite Consciousness. The *Mantra* has a great transcendental vibratory force. Its devotional repetition, aloud or mentally, fills the mind with divine vibrations that helps neutralize vibrations of material consciousness. When contemplated with sincere feeling, intuitive understanding, determination, constancy, assiduousness, and intense concentration, it helps elevate the consciousness Godward.

- *Kahu Nanak gurmanatr chitaar. Sukh paavahi saachai darbaar*: Says Nanak, remember the *Gurmantra*; you will find *peace* at the True Court (sggs 186).

The mind is nothing but thought-stuff. Destruction, purification or conquering of the mind simply means cessation of thoughts. The process for driving all mundane thoughts out of the mind is to make it focused on one thought, for example, one word of the *Mantra* (*Naam Simran*). Ultimately, once the mind is purified ("killed") of all thoughts, this one thought will also disappear, leading the devotee into the state of *Sunn Samaadhi*. Therefore, the idea here is to clear the mind of worldly concepts and precepts, followed by immersion in the *Naam-Consciousness*, spontaneously. The more we contemplate on the *Naam* in *Sahaj Subhaaye* (intuitive ease), the more it will sink in the heart, rendering the mind finer and finer, free of material anxieties, agonies, desires and fear.

- *Gurdev aadi jugaadi jugu jugu gurdev mantu Hari japi udhrra*: The Divine Guru existed at the primal beginning, throughout the ages, in each and every age; He is the Mantra of the Lord's Name; chanting it, one is saved (sggs 250).
- *Gobind gaavahi sahaji subhaaye*: Sing the Lord's Name with intuitive ease (sggs 121).
- *Ih maniyaa khin na tikai bahu rangee dahadaha disi chali chali haadhe. Gur pooraa paayaa badbhaagee haro mantar deeyaa mann thaadhe*: This mind does not hold still, even for an instant. Distracted by all sorts of distractions, it wanders around aimlessly in the ten directions. I have found the Perfect Guru, through great good fortune; He has given me the Mantra of the Lord's Name, and my mind has become quiet and tranquil (sggs 171).

Thus, the purpose of *Mantra* (*Naam Simran*) is to make the mind quiet and tranquil, free of anxiety, agony, desires and fear; which is its true nature. However, due to the rise of the false ego, it has forgotten

its true nature and has become restless. Thus, proper chanting of the *Mantra*, aloud or mentally, helps purge the mind of mundane thoughts. So long the mind is occupied with the worldly nonsense (inflated ego), mental purity needed to travel upward cannot be attained. We have only one mind; either we can use it for *Naam Simran* or for the world-*Simran*! The loving and unbroken repetition of the *Naam Simran* results in thinning of the ego-sense and ignorance, while the *Simran* on the world manifests opposite effects.

- *Andhkaar mahi Gurmantra ujaaraa*: The Gurmantra illumines the darkness of ignorance (sggs 865).
- *Saadh sangi jajiyo bhagvant. Keval naam deeyo guri mant. Taji abhimaan bhaye nirvair*: In Saadh Sangat I meditate on the Lord's Name. I am given the only Gurmantra, the Name of the Lord. Shedding my ego, I have become free of hate (sggs 183).
- *Dukh kales na bhayu biyaapai gurmantar hirdai hoyi*: Suffering, agony and fear do not cling to one whose heart is filled with the GurMantra (sggs 51).

Thus, the mind crippled by the desires and fear gains strength from the practice of the *Mantra*. This is dispassion and concentration, which helps meditation. Slowly but surely the mind gets identified with the *Mantra*, then one gets to know that the Formless, Infinite Spirit is only fit to be worshipped, everything else is a passing show. Also, one gets to know that the losing of the one's individuality is nothing but merging in the Self.

How To Chant The *Mantra*

The Self is not realized through instruction, much thinking, much speaking, keeping silence, fasting, intellectual powers, stubbornness, rituals, or much hearing. It can be reached only by the one whom the Self chooses; to him the "*Jot Saroop*" is revealed. And this fortunate one is he who has purified his mind of desires and fear. He who has not renounced evil ways, who is not at peace with himself, who cannot concentrate with intuitive ease, and whose mind is not composed cannot reach the Self, even by right knowledge.

- *Teraa keeyaa kiram jant. dehi ta jaapee aadi mant*: I am just a worm, created by You, O Lord. If you bless me, then I chant Your Primal Mantra (sggs 1176).
- *Giaan dhyaan Gurshabad hai meethaa*: Spiritual wisdom and meditation come to those unto whom the Guru's Shabad is sweet (sggs 162).

Before chanting the *Mantra*, first we must learn the philosophy. To put it otherwise, one must know what he is trying to remember. Once we know the philosophy, then through the *Mantra* and more advanced state of meditation we realize the goal. Otherwise, without knowing the philosophy before the *Naam Japa*, we may not know what is it that we have realized; thus creating more disturbance, frustration, conflict, and disconcerting feelings. Where can we find the true philosophy? It can be found in the true scriptures. For instance, for a Sikh the true philosophy is contained in the Gurbani (sggs).

- *Boojhahu giyani Shabad beechaari*: O wise one, understand by reflecting on the Shabad (sggs 840).

Therefore, the Gurbani is not given to us for mere ritualistic and mechanical readings, nor for parrot-like memorization or show-off ceremonies. It is given to us for a very specific reason, that is, to understand the proper spiritual philosophy and then act upon it. If that does not happen, then, the Gurbani declares that there is no difference between a human being engaged in reading or listening to Gurbani and a beast engaged in filling his belly. Once the Gurbani is properly understood, we then come to possess all the

essentials such as right thought, right speech, and right action, which makes the proper behavior.

- *Ihee achaar ihee biyuhaaraa. Aagiya maani bhagti hoyi tumaaree. Jo ih mantar kamaavai Nanak so bhavjal paar utaaree*: The right conduct and the correct lifestyle to obey the Command of the Lord's Will; this is your Bgagti. One who practices this Mantra, O Nanak, swims across the terrifying world-ocean (sggs 377).
- *Gurmati sun kashu gian na upjiyo pasu jiyu udhar bharo*: Despite listening to the Gurmat (Shabad), no spiritual wisdom has welled up within me; like a beast, I fill my belly (sggs 685).

There is a wrong way of chanting the *Mantra*, and there is a right way of performing it. The proper *Japa* of the *Mantra* makes one spiritually fit for catching the Self. *Japa* simply means "remembrance". Like with all spiritual practices, the *Japa* is repetitive. Thus, *Naam Japa* means repeating the Lord's Name over and over again for mind control and personal enlightenment. And one of the means of remembering Waheguru's Name is through the positive repetition of the "Waaheguru" *Mantra*. But how are we to perform the *Mantra Japa*?

First of all, the ideal way to perform the *Naam Japa* is with *Sahaj*, naturally, without stubborn mindedness. Secondly, when pronounced, the *Mantra* must be pronounced properly, slowly, thoughtfully, with love, with feeling and concentration, spontaneously, mentally hearing its transcendental vibratory sound. At the same time, we should work to bring out the positive feelings, such as joy, happiness or contentment. Thus, it should be a very meaningful experience.

If the *Naam Japa* is not performed in the natural way, or if it is performed quickly like mechanical repetition or parrot-like chanting (machine-gun *Simran*) than it will be nothing more than a ritual, bringing little benefit to the student. Wearing "Waaheguru" around the neck, or hanging it on the walls, or sticking it on the refrigerator at home or automobile bumpers and windows will not do the trick. According to the *Shabad*, all rituals are fetters, as such, there is no place for them in the SGGS. Therefore, the *Mantra Japa* is not meant to be a meaningless ritual.

The *Mantra* is either chanted aloud or mentally, repeating "Waahe" while inhaling and "Guru" while exhaling, effortlessly. In the beginning it is performed aloud. So doing, the *Mantra* is heard back by the mind and therefore the mind does not wander. Thus, it is relatively easier to concentrate. In the early stage of the practice, the student may want to take advantage of relatively more peaceful hours such as before sunrise and at sunset.

Sahaje Sahaje, slowly slowly, after the *Naam Japa* is perfected aloud, it becomes mental. That is, it may be done silently, making the sound internally without the support of the tongue or any other external limbs of the body. This is what the *Shabad* calls "Ajappa Jaap". The ultimate accomplishment in the performance of *Naam Japa* is going to walk, stand, sit, eat, work, sleep, etc., while internally the *Japa* continues without a break, spontaneously. This is meditation. And to meditate, one must be free from anger, jealousy, contentions, fear and desires.

- *Jinaa saasi giraasi na visrai hari naamaa manni mant. Dhann si seyee Nanakaa pooran soyee sant*: Those who do not forget the Lord, with each breath and morsel of food, whose minds are filled with the Mantra of the Lord's Name — they alone are blessed; O Nanak, they are the perfect Saints (sggs 319).
- *Ajappa jaap na veesrai aadi jugaadi samaai*: Contemplate the unchanted chant, and the desires of the mind are dissolved (sggs 1291).

Naam Simran is performed only for one reason: to link with the Waaheguru. Therefore, with the help of

concentration and feeling, the mind should be only on the *Simran*. If the mind is allowed to wander into irrelevant thoughts, the benefits of the *Japa* will be nullified. Thus, complete commitment of the body and mind, regularity and discipline are the conveyance.

Self-imposed limitations of place and time to perform devotional service will also block spiritual progress of an aspirant. In *Sanskrit*, the word *Bhagti* comes from the root word of *Bhaj*, meaning "to serve". Therefore, the process of *Bhagti* must include three items or three B's: *Bhagta* or *Bhakta* (servitor), *Bhagti* (service), and *Bhagavaan* (the served). Accordingly, devotional service should be performed keeping in mind the omnipresence of the *Bhagavaan* (God). A sincere devotee, for that reason, will not limit his devotional service to a particular place or time. They see the all pervading Lord in everything, every where, and all the time. The limitation of time and place belongs only to the ignorant hypocrites (*Manmukhs*).

- *Hari simran kee saglee belaa*: Any time is a good time to meditate in remembrance (i.e., *Naam Simran*) on the Lord (sggs 1150).
- *Vin naavai naahee ko thaayu*: O Lord, without Your Name, there is no place at all (sggs 5).
- *Bhagti kare jan dekh hadoor*: Seeing the Lord just present, his slave performs His devotional service (sggs 1174).

For the practice of *Naam Simran*, company of the true and the wise ones (*Satsang*) is very important and helpful. In the association of such pious souls, who's hearts are penetrated with the *Naam*, it's relatively easy to concentrate. With concentration comes the inner transformation.

- *Mil saadh sangat bhaj keval Naam*: Join the Saadh Sangat; meditate on the Naam (sggs 12).
- *Saadh kai sang nahee kish ghaal*: In the Company of the Holy, there is no suffering (sggs 272).
- *Jiyon jiyon ih vadhaayeeai tiyun tiyun Hari siyu rang*: The more time we spend there (in Satsang), the more we come to love the Lord (sggs 71).

Benefits Of Chanting The *Mantra*

The holy *Mantra* helps awaken the mind so that the inflated ego may subside. This, in turn, opens up the inner doors to the higher consciousness. When chanted properly, it improves the protective aura of the individual, leading one into the Self-knowledge as to how to link back into the Self within. Thus, taking on the *Mantra* or *Naam* is for mind control, spiritual unfoldment, self-realization, or personal enlightenment.

- *Aap pachhaanai ghari vasai hayumai trishnaa jaayi. Nanak nirmal oojlai je raate hari naayi*: Through self-realization, people dwell within the home of their inner being; egotism and desire depart. O Nanak, those who are attuned to the Name of the Lord are immaculate and radiant (sggs 57).

In the early stage, the Truth may taste bitter and unpleasant to our inflated ego as our inner mind reveals to us our shocking crookedness, perversions, and weaknesses. Overwhelmed by these shocks, many seekers may shrink from *Naam Japa* very quickly, as the inner self plays back such impurities working within, becoming a little afraid of what might happen if they are to continue. However, diligent attempt, consistent self-effort, and continuous mental alertness is the key to the conquest. In all earnestness if the *Naam Japa* is given a chance, it will sink in and then taste sweet later! Baabaa Nanak Says:

- *Tam lag mahal na paayeeyai jabalag saach na cheeti*: As long as the Truth does not enter into the

consciousness, the Lord's Presence is not realized (sggs 58).

The *Mantra* is like a medicine. Scriptures are like label on this medicine. The purpose of label is to describe the medicine's name, nature, composition, dosage, etc. However, if one keeps reading the label day in and day out without taking the medicine, he cannot expect to be cured! Can he? In order to be cured, one has to take the medicine and stop mere reading of the label; for the healing of the medicine works, whether or not we consciously comprehend it. Similarly, until the mind is engaged in the sincere *Naam Simran* (medicine), the reading of scriptures (labels) will not have any effect on the healing process of the medicine. One may be able to gain all sorts of knowledge by reading the labels, however, the knowledge without *Bhagti* is empty as married life to an eunuch!

- *Ayukhadh mantar mool mann ekai jekar drirh chit keejai re*: O mind, there is only One medicine, Mantra and healing herb; center your consciousness firmly on One God (sggs 156).
- *Gurmantar ayukhadh naam deenaa jan Nanak sankat joni naa paayi*: One who is blessed with the medicine of the Gurmantra, the Name of the Lord, O servant Nanak, does not suffer the agonies of reincarnation (sggs 1002).

Naam Simran is a journey to a place within we have forgotten. It harmonizes the physical body with the mental body and spiritual forces through the life force (*Praanaas*). In turn, it harmonizes various states of the mind, altering the consciousness and taking the devotee to the realization of the transcendental vibratory sound (*Panch Shabad, Anhat Dhun*, etc.) emanating from the great depth of timeless, formless, and spacelessness.

The chanting of God's Name aids in depolarization and transmutation of the individual consciousness, the false ego. As we intone the transcendental vibratory sound of the *Naam*, we release the creative energy into the brain. In turn, the brain pours it out through the body, mind and intellect to create a new world for us. The unbroken repetition of the *Naam* bursts forth wisdom (*Giyan*) from within.

- *Beej mantar sarab ko giyan*: The Beej Mantra, the Seed Mantra, is spiritual wisdom for everyone (sggs 274).
- *Mati pooree paedhaan te gur poore mann mant. jih jaaniyo prabh apunaa Nanak te bhagvant*: Perfect is the intellect, and most distinguished is the reputation, of those whose minds are filled with the Mantra of the Perfect Guru. Those who come to know their God, O Nanak, are very fortunate (sggs 259).

The verbal chanting of the Lord's Name leads to mental uttering, which in turn leads to uttering without the physical or mental utterance (*Sunn Samaadhi* or total absorption). Here the devotee becomes one with the *Naam* within. This is the ultimate realization, the state of living liberated (*Jivan Mukata*).

- *Pareeyai guneeyai Naam sabh suneeyai anabhayyu bhaayyu na darsai*: People read, hear and reflect upon all the Names of God; but without the intuitional realization, they can not see the Lord, the embodiment of love (sggs 973).

Holy Mantras Are Neither Secret Nor For Sale

Many so called *Deh Dhaaree* Gurus or Yogis foster this nonsense idea that there should be a special *Mantra* for each person and that each *Mantra* should be secret. All kinds of such *Mantras* are given by those Gurus or Yogis who are amassing wealth from unsuspecting or ignorant devotees all over the world. They sell these *Mantras* in a format like packaged merchandise, and keep them secret! This is a mundane business, which has nothing to do with spirituality.

The reason they do not give *Mantras* openly and freely is that they have no genuine interest in giving people a helping hand. Instead, all they are interested in is how to plunder money out of them. This is because people want to be cheated. In fact many devotees pay dearly to receive the *Mantra*, only to forget it a few days later! But in this age of Kal Yuga, the people are so deluded that if you charge fee and bluff and cheat them, they will follow you. We must know that, from ancient time, all traditional *Mantras* were neither sold nor acclaimed secret in India! Because the Lord's Name is ever free.

- *Kabeeraa lootnaa hai to looti lai Raam Naam hai loot. Phiri pachhai pachhatahuge praan jaahinge chhooti*: Kabeer, if you must rob and plunder, then plunder the plunder of the Lord's Name. Otherwise, in the world hereafter, you will regret and repent, when the breath of life leaves the body (sggs 1366).

Along the same holy tradition, "Waaheguru" *Mantra* is freely accessible to all. Anybody and everybody can take advantage of chanting it. Why it's free? Only the egoistic man is bound, because every moment he is born and every moment he dies. But the Lord (Waaheguru) is ever free and available, and so is His Name. There is no need to join any club or group; for there is no need to have it blown into your year or spit it into your mouth. It's very simple, as simple as crushing the flower in your palm or winking of your eye. It's simply remembering the Wonderful Lord with infinite love and concentration. That's all.

- *Khatree braahaman sood vais ko japi Hari Mantar japaainee*: Anyone, from any class — Shatriya, Brahman, Soodra or Vaishya — can chant, and meditate on the *Mantra* of the Lord's Name (sggs 800).

The *Bani* is descended from the All-pervading Waaheguru. Thus, the *Shabad* makes it very clear that the Lord's Word or *Bani* is not a property of any person or a group; for it belongs to the entire mankind. In order to understand the Essence of the Divinity, everybody can take advantage of it. The consciousness devoid of the sincere *Naam Simran* is compared with the animals and insects as follows:

- *Gur mantar heenas jo praanee dhrigant janam bhrastanah: Kookarah sookarah garadhbhah kaakah sarpanah tuli khalah*: That mortal who lacks the Gurumantra — cursed and contaminated is his life. That blockhead is just a dog, a pig, a jackass, a crow, a snake (sggs 1357).
- *Jo na sunai jas parmaanandaa. Pasu pankhee tagad joni te mandaa. Kahu Nanak gurmantar drirhaayaa. Keval naam rid maahe samaayaa*: Those who do not listen to the Praises of the Lord of supreme bliss, are worse off than beasts, birds or creeping creatures. Says Nanak, the Gurmantra has been implanted within me; the Name alone is contained within my heart (sggs 188).

Transcending The *Mantra*

The object of *Mantra Japa* is to realize that the same *Japa* is already going on within even without any effort! To put it otherwise, in the final analysis, *Shabad*, *Naam* or *Mantra* is the person's true nature, which is also the ultimate state of spiritual realization. With proper repetition, the *Japu* finally reveals itself as being Eternal; which is the man's real nature, the Self. This is also called the state of Self-realization.

- *Man tan antari Hari Hari Mant. Nanak bhagtan kai ghar sadaa anand*: The *Mantra* of the Lord's Name, Har, Har, is deep within my mind and body. O Nanak, eternal bliss fills the home of the Lord's devotees (sggs 802).
- *Kahu Nanak Gurmantra driraayaa. Keval Naam rid mahi samaayaa*: O Nanak, the Gurmantra has been implanted within me; the Name alone is contained within my heart (sggs 188).

Once the needed concentration or quietness of the mind is attained, the *Mantra* comes to its end. In other

words, it burns itself out and blends into one's very existence; like when you stir the fire with a wooden stick, you burn the stick. The concept or thought disappears, the essence remains! It's just like crutches; a person with broken legs needs the aid of crutches until he is cured. The *Shabad* reveals that the Lord is "*Sunn Samaadhi*", which is the state of notionless or Absolute Silence. Therefor, clinging to any type of thought or notion will turn into an obstacle for attaining the ultimate state of realization, which is beyond any conceptualization.

- *Ye akhar khiri jaahigi uyi akhar inamahi naahi....*: These Akhar or letters will perish; they cannot describe the Imperishable Lord. Wherever there is speech, there are letters. Where there is no speech, that is the state of no-mind (sggs 340).
- *Sunn samaadhi guphaa tah aasan. Keval brahm pooran tah baasan. Bhagat sang prabh gost karat*: One sits there, in the cave of Sunn Samaadhi; the unique, perfect God dwells there. God holds conversations with His devotees (sggs 894).
- *Sunn samaadhi Naam ras maate*: In the Sunn Samaadhi, they are intoxicated with the essence of the Naam (sggs 265).

As revealed in the *Shabad*, "*Sunn Samaadhi*" or the state of "no-mind" is the state of becoming one with the *Naam* within, the state where there is no time (or birth and death), no creator, no creation, no destruction, no worlds, no universe, no existence, no names, no forms, no "I" and "me", no "mine" and "your", no "this", no "that", no truth, no false, no likes and dislikes, no humans, no demons, no elements, no bodies or senses, no mind, no thought, no meditation, no chanting, no remembrance, no forgetfulness, no sorrow, no enjoyment, no duality, no non-duality, no beginning, no middle, no end: all is at all times, beyond the comprehension of the body-mind-intellect. Only the Infinite Awareness exists there.

- *Ayukhadh mantar tantar sabhe chhaar. Karnaihaar ridhai mahi dhaar. Taji sabh bharam bhajiyo paarbrahm*: All medicines and remedies, Mantras and tantras are nothing more than ashes. Enshrine the Creator Lord within your heart. Renounce all your doubts, and meditate upon the Supreme Lord God. Says Nanak, this path of Dharma is eternal and unchanging (sggs 196).

Therefor, in the final stage of the *Naam Simran*, the *Mantra* must turn into one's actions, the *Mantra* must turn into one's love and compassion, the *Mantra* must turn into one's life, and it then bursts forth into intuitive wisdom. In other words, from that point on, one does not only know the Truth, but he also lives by It; for, as the Gurbani says, this in itself is a *Manatra*. The *Naam* then reflects in his words, deeds, and speech, rendering him *Jivanmukata* (living liberated).

- *Ihee achaar ihee biyuhaaraa. Aagiya maani bhagti hoyi tumaaree. Jo ih mantar kamaavai Nanak so bhavjal paar utaaree*: The right conduct and the correct lifestyle to obey the Command of the Lord's Will; this is your Bgagti. One who practices this Mantra, O Nanak, swims across the terrifying world-ocean (sggs 377).
- *Kavan su akharr kavan gun kavan su maneeyaa mant. Kavan su veso hayu karee jit vas aavai kant. Niwan su akhar khavan gun jihba maneeaa mant. Ye trai bhaine ves kar taa vas aavee kant*: What is that word, what is that virtue, and what is that magic mantra? What are those clothes, which I can wear to captivate my Husband Lord? Humility is the word, forgiveness is the virtue, and sweet speech is the magic mantra. Wear these three robes, O sister, and you will captivate your Husband Lord (sggs 1384).
- *Hari maarag saadhoo dassiyaa japeeyai gurmant*: The holy one has shown me the Way to the Lord; I chant the Gurmantra (sggs 321).

The chanting of *Mantra* or *Naam* is thus a mean of tuning in with the subtle divine forces. The scriptures

warn the sincere seeker to be careful here to avoid the entrapment of any *Sidhis* (occult powers) that may come along the way as the by-product of the *Bhagti*. Too often what happens is that the seeker falls pray to their temptations and loses union with God. Since the psychic powers are limited to the restless or egoistic mind, the spiritual teachers and scriptures teach sincere aspirants to avoid their temptations; for they are hindrance to spiritual wisdom. Therefore, all inferior powers should not interest the man of Self-knowledge so long he is perfectly content in himself. As spiritual wisdom is the greatest gain, the man of such wisdom is free from the least desire for anything.

- *Ridhi sidhi sabh moh hai Naam na basai mann aaye*: Riches and the supernatural spiritual powers of the Siddhas are all emotional attachments; through them, the Naam, the Name of the Lord, does not come to dwell in the mind (sggs 593).

Here is a little story about Baalmeeek, whose name is mentioned several times in the Gurbani. There was a highwayman by the name of Ratnaakar. He made his living by robing and killing people. One day a holy man fell into his hands.....To cut the long story short, the holy man told Ratnaakar that he could help him become a good man if he agreed to chant the Lord's Name. "How?", inquired Ratnaakar. The holy man gave him the *Mantra "Raama"*, and asked him to chant it with sincere feeling, determination, and intense concentration. As Ratnaakar's consciousness had become so filthy by putting people to death, he could not utter the word "*Raama*" with his tongue. The bandit asked him if he could utter "*Maraa*" (which means "dead"!) instead of "*Raama*". The holy man said, "if you feel comfortable with uttering '*Maraa*', so be it". He then began chanting the Word "*Maraa, Maraa, Maraa....*" with utter love and faith. With concentrated practice, first the sound "*Maraa, Maraa...*" spontaneously turned into "*Raama, Raama...*". Then, in due course, he became absorbed in it. Later, that bandit came to be known as Rishi Baalmeeek who wrote the famous Ramaayana!

- *Re chit chet chet achet. Kaahe na Baalmeeekahi dekh*: Be conscious, be conscious, be conscious, O my unconscious mind. Why do you not look at Baalmeeek? (sggs 1124).

--T. Singh

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