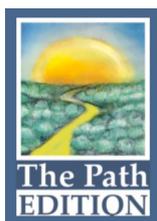


Prayer

Its Nature & Technique



KIRPAL SINGH



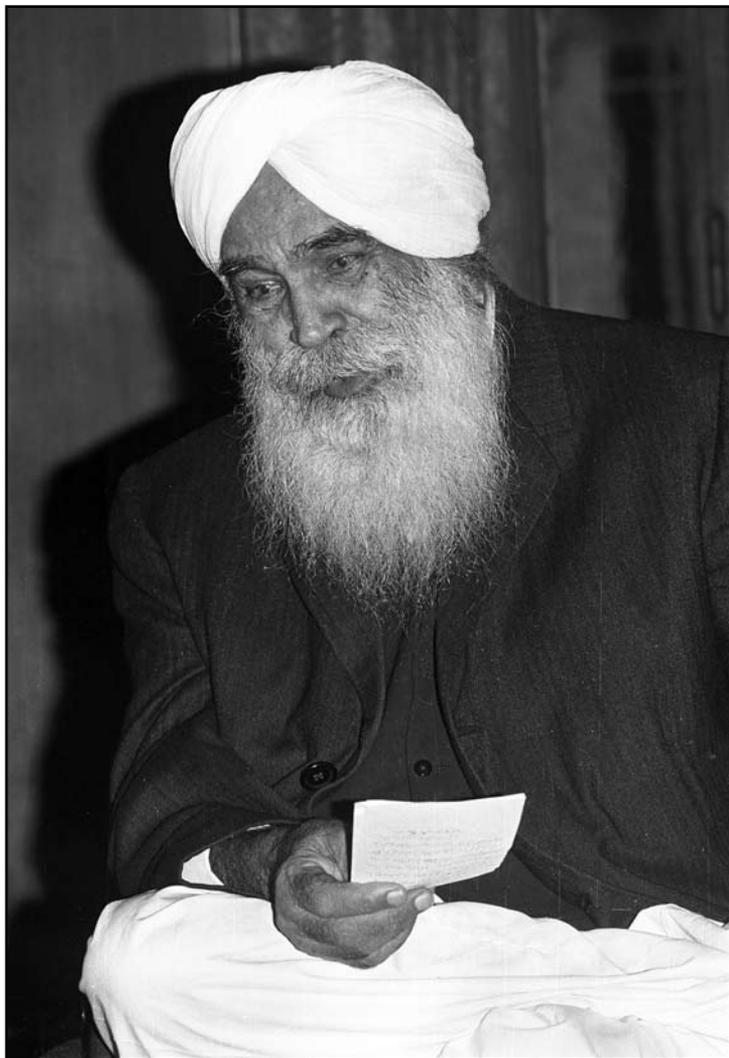
PRAYER

Kirpal Singh

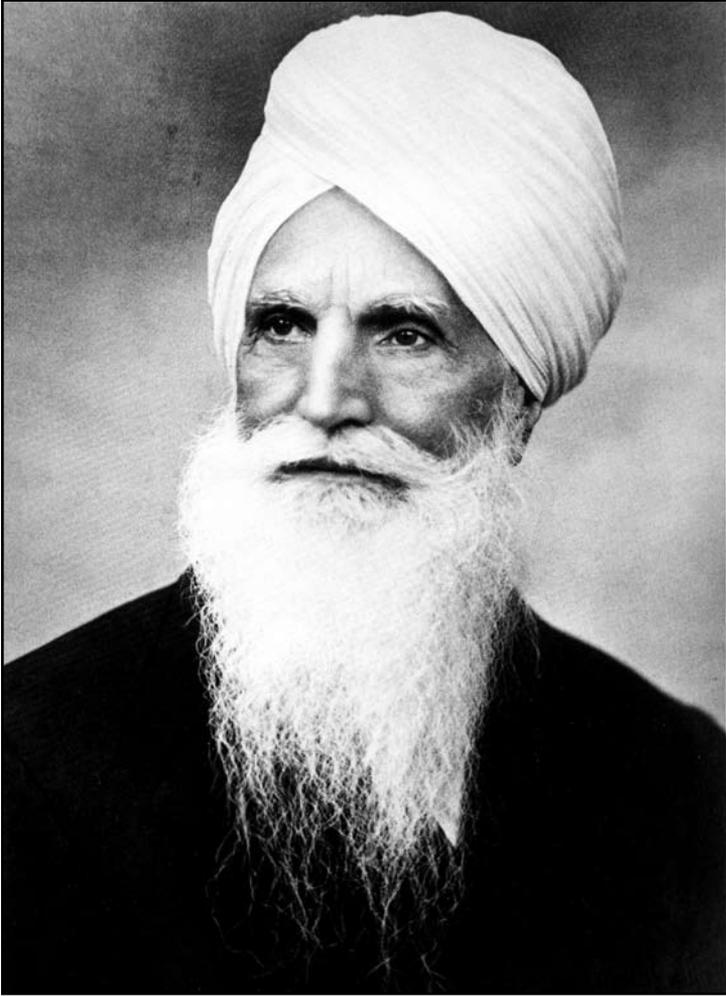
"Man's only duty is to be ever grateful to God for His innumerable gifts and blessings."

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Sant Kirpal Singh Ji
(1894-1974)



Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj

*Dedicated
to the Almighty God
working through all Masters who have come
and Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj
at whose lotus feet
the writer imbibed sweet elixir of
Holy Naam — the Word*

To The Reader

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

MATTHEW 4:4

PRAYER is the salt of life and we cannot do without it. It is ingrained in the nature of Man to pray for the fulfillment of his wishes whatever they be. But more often than not we do not know what we may really pray for, how to pray, and what we may do to make our prayer a great dynamic force as may stir up Heaven's mercy.

The secret of a successful prayer lies not so much in the words we use, nor in the time we devote to it, nor in the effort that we put into it, as it lies in the concentrated attention that we may give it at the seat of the soul so as to make it soulful. The most natural form for a fruitful prayer is the yearning of a soul without the agency of words, oral or mental, with the tongue of thought. A prayer like this generates and releases such a fund of spiritual energy that all the Cosmic Powers are attracted and combine together, shaping out things as best as possible.

PREFACE

A true prayer is one continuous process, independent of form, time and place, and leads ultimately to the stage of *Sehaj* — a halcyon calm, a perfect equipoise and a complete satiety, with no desire whatsoever. This then is the climax of a genuine prayer, and here prayer itself ceases to be a prayer and becomes a state of being, as one gradually rises first into Cosmic Consciousness, with the Divine Will fully revealed unto him. This is the be-all and the end-all of prayer; and how to achieve it is the object of this enquiry.

At the end of the book, by way of an appendix, are collected in classified form, specimen prayers from various Saints and Scriptures for the benefit of the interested reader.

— KIRPAL SINGH

July 1, 1959
Sawan Ashram, Delhi, India

My wishes count but little:
Let Thy Will prevail.

— NANAK

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Prayer

1. Prayer

*Prayer is the Master-Key that unlocks
the Kingdom of Heaven*

PRAYER can be defined as an anguished cry of the soul in distress or helplessness, to a Power fuller and greater than itself, for relief and comfort. It is, in the generic and commonly accepted sense, an invocation to God or a Godman (a living Master), competent enough to grant solace and peace to a mind tortured by the problems of life and life's surroundings.

*Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.*

VISCOUNT MONTGOMERY

A worldly-wise man in this scientific age regards human life just as any other mechanical contrivance which moves and acts blindly on the lone principle of "Cause and Effect" with no guiding hand behind it. Against this mechanistic concept of man and the universe, there is an organic concept as well. Without denying the principle of "Cause and Effect" that is visibly

PRAYER

in operation in human affairs, the exponents of the organic theory see behind it, the hand of God, or the Law of God, in and through which the principle of "Cause and Effect" is at work. The Law of God then is the motor power or seed force from which every conceivable principle — scientific or ethical — springs and works out the Divine Will according to His purpose. We unfortunately see only the surface currents and cannot penetrate into the depths beneath.

In common experience we see that a worldly-wise man, with all the material resources at his command, is actually in a state of dire helplessness. Ever dissatisfied with what he has, he cries for more and blindly works to that end, employing all means, fair or foul, to achieve his desires. But all his riches and possessions, pelf and power, name and fame, fail to give him any degree of satisfaction. He still continues, more helpless than ever before in the face of disease, decay and death. His mind is always haunted by untold fears and imaginary horrors. With no moorings, he drifts rudderless upon the ocean of life, a prey to chance winds and waters. In this sad plight, either he flounders on the rock of suicide, or, if he escapes that, he drags on a weary existence until death comes to his rescue. But even in death he finds no comfort. He yields to it simply because he cannot help it. This is the sad story of a common man of the workaday world.

PRAYER DEFINED

On the other hand, a really wise man also tries, like the former, to collect means of a comfortable existence; but unlike the other, these do not, in his case, form an obsession with him. Behind all his efforts, he sees the hand of God and is never bothered by success or failure in his endeavors. He leaves the result to the "Divine Will", for that alone knows what is good for him to possess. If things come to him as he desires, he does not feel elated but accepts them with sincere thanks and with a grateful heart. But, if things turn the other way, he does not feel dejected, but smilingly bows down his head before the Supreme Judge who decided otherwise; and at every step he prays to God, for he knows that without His active aid, he cannot do anything by himself.

"Prayer" is, in a strict sense, another name for collecting the outgoing and wandering faculties of the mind, at the root of the mind. Like the rays of the sun, these spread out into the world, and likewise these can be withdrawn and collected at their source. A person in infatuation with a thing which he cannot get, or in distress and distraction over some calamity from which he cannot escape, sets his face toward God for success in his endeavors or comfort in his woebegone condition as the case may be. This concentration, while begging for help, is called prayer.

Human mind is the throne of God and hence it is, at times, termed *Kaaba*.

PRAYER

*Of all the pilgrimages, the one to the human
mind is the most sacred,
Much better it is to win merit here, than
countless trips to Mecca.*

MAULANA RUMI

As soon as a person collects himself and focuses his attention at the seat of the mind, he stirs up the mercy of God, which, in turn, fills him with strength and fortitude never experienced before. These enable him to find a way out of the difficulty, whatever it be. A will, when concentrated, works wonders. "Where there is a will there is a way," is a common saying. Prayer is nothing but concentrated will falling back upon its source, the great reservoir of power, in which are lodged all sorts of possibilities — physical, mental and spiritual — and one can draw upon any of these, according to one's needs. Great indeed is man. He lives in a God-made temple along with God Himself. His very spirit is just a drop from the Ocean of Divine Life. Between God and spirit, there is no other obstacle but that of the veil of the mind. If this veil were to stop fluttering in the breeze of desires, as it does at present, the spirit could take in directly the Cosmic Energy from its very source.

"As you think, so you become," is a common adage. If a part thinks of the whole, it gradually begins to imbibe the characteristics of the latter.

PRAYER DEFINED

So is the case with the human spirit. It can gradually expand until it becomes all-embracing from the cribbed, cabined, cramped and cringing position that it occupies in its present state. When freed from its entanglements — physical, mental and causal — it triumphantly cries out: “I am soul,” or “I am as Thou art,” or “I and my Father are one” (as Christ put it).

There are two types of people in the world: first, those who can withdraw, introvert and take inspiration directly from the Great Power within. Secondly, those who depend on outer aids, like churches and temples, for worship and offering prayers at altars, or before idols and statues. Some try to seek inspiration from the great forces of Nature, like the sun, the moon, the snow-covered hilltops, waters of the sacred rivers, as different manifestations of the One Power behind the entire Universe. Everyone according to his faith and degree of concentration gets some benefit from his mode of worship, for nothing is lost in Nature and no effort goes in vain.

Some people do not believe in the existence of God and as such have no faith in prayer, for they do not realize that God has no objective appearance and cannot be seen by the eyes of flesh.

PRAYER

O Nanak! the eyes that behold the Lord are quite different from those with which we see the world.¹

GURU ARJAN

The truth, in fact, is that God is spirit, and can be worshiped in spirit only. We cannot worship Him with human hands, and much less in handmade temples and synagogues. He dwells in the inmost depths of the human soul. He is the soul of our very soul. He is immanent in every form and not apart from forms. All colors and all patterns alike take their hue and design from Him alone. Whether we believe in Him or not, we actually live in Him and have our very being in Him.

True prayer, then, is the means to concentrate the wandering wits at one center — the center of the soul — to gather up the spirit currents at the still-point in the body, between and behind the eyes. Herein lies all worship, all prayers, all renunciation and all knowledge of here and hereafter. The path to salvation lies in direct touch with the inner Power, rather than to get entangled in this or that thing. "Truth is one, though sages have described it variously," is a well known Upanishadic saying. Why not then search out the Eternal Truth, of which Nanak speaks:

PRAYER INSTINCTIVE IN MAN

*Truth was in the beginning of Creation,
Truth has been the beginning of each Age,
and Truth shall ever remain when all ages
and creations pass away.*

JAP JI

2. Prayer: Instinctive in Man

PRAYER is instinctive with man and no one can do without prayer at one stage or another, whatever form it may take. The faithful and the faithless, a *Momin* and a *Kafir*, a man of God and a man who has no belief in God, all pray, each one of course in his own particular way. The need for prayer generally arises when one finds himself in distress, in calamity, or in the grip of some devastating disease, or when he desires satisfaction of some unusual physical and spiritual need which he cannot otherwise fulfill, or when he wants to combat forces of adversity or darkness. In such circumstances, he feels that by his own unaided efforts he cannot secure satisfaction of his wants, and in utter helplessness he seeks strength in prayer. In everyday life we see a student seeking the aid of a teacher in the solution of some difficult problems, a patient in illness that of a physician, an employee that of his employer and so on. All these are prayers in varying degrees and forms. Again, for the satisfaction of his daily needs, a child looks up to his parents, a wife to her husband, etc.

PRAYER

In all trying circumstances, prayer is the last weapon in our armory. Where all human efforts fail, prayer succeeds.

*. . . More things are wrought by prayer than
this world dreams of . . .
. . . For what are men better than sheep or
goat,
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If knowing God, they lift not their hands in
prayer.
Both for themselves and those they call
friends.*

TENNYSON

When prayer is the salt of life, we cannot do without it. But whom do we pray to? The answer naturally is, "To the One Supreme God or the Godman in whom His power resides and through whom it works in the world." All religions are in agreement on the point that prayer at the seat of the soul draws out all the latent powers of Godhood within, and one can achieve spiritual beatitude through it. It is a connecting link between the Creator and His creation, between God and man. It is a supporting staff in the hands of a spiritual aspirant and a pilgrim soul cannot do without it, right from the beginning to the end of the journey, for it saves one from many a pitfall on the way, and transforms the mind through and through, until it shines forth and begins to reflect the light of the soul.

WHOM TO ADDRESS

*Through His Grace the osprey turns into a
royal swan,
O Nanak! He may make a cygnet of a crow.²*

GURU NANAK

3. Whom to Address

ONE must pray to the Lord God alone who is Omnipotent and competent to grant all wishes.

There is nothing which God cannot grant.

KABIR

*Rich indeed is one who has Nature at his beck
and call.³*

GURU ARJAN

The various gods and goddesses have a limited scope and sphere of action, and so work within limitations. They themselves draw their powers from Him and may not grant the petty boons that lie within their sphere, and certainly cannot grant salvation to the soul. A freed soul can grant freedom and no one else can. Guru Arjan tells us that God alone can remedy all types of maladies, no matter whether physical (like aches, ailments and various types of diseases), astral (like unforeseen and unpredictable disasters from accidents, thunder and lightning, floods and earthquakes, etc.), or causal (ingrained and inherent evil propensities like lust, anger, greed, attachment and egoism).

PRAYER

*God! Thou art the dispeller of all evils and
bestower of peace,
Whosoever prays unto Thee, can have no ill.⁴*

GURU ARJAN

*The dawn of Heaven's Light makes one a
worshiper of Truth alone,
The blossoming of loving devotion makes one
forget lifeless objects of adoration,
The knowledge of Him shows the futility of
all rites and rituals,
The manifestation of the holy light within,
distinguishes the pure from the impure.*

GURU GOBIND SINGH

Again, Guru Arjan says:

*I pray to Him who is the bestower of all
blessings and savior from all ills.
Shower Thy mercy, O Merciful! for then will
my efforts be well directed.⁵
Remember the One and sing thou His
praises,
Chant His holy name and keep Him
ensconced in thy heart.
Ceaselessly meditate on His endless
attributes, and
Serve Him with all thy heart and soul.
God is one, peerless and precious,
Complete in Himself, all-pervasive and
permeating,*

WHOM TO ADDRESS

*Creator of the vast creation is that One.
Worship then the One and none besides.
Be saturated, body and mind, in His love.
O Nanak! through the Grace of the Master,
is that One realized.⁶*

GURU ARJAN

*If ever thou hast a wish, ask the Lord for its
fulfillment.
It shall be granted unto thee, the Master is
witness thereto.
Boundless riches come from Him and so doth
the Elixir of Life.
Merciful is the dispeller of all fears and ever
abideth with His slave.⁷*

GURU RAM DAS

*I pray to Thee, O Lord, the Lord Thou art of
my body and soul.
Nanak attributes his greatness to Thee, for
none knew him ever before.⁸*

GURU ARJAN

*Thou art the woof and warp, O Lord, and I
pray unto Thee,
For Thou art my altar, whether in pleasure
or in pain I be.⁹*

GURU RAM DAS

PRAYER

*In vain we pray to the people of the world,
full of troubles as they are.
Pray alone to the Lord if wishest thou to
cross the ocean of life.*¹⁰

GURU ARJAN

In the holy Koran, it is clearly stated that God alone need be invoked, for an invocation to Him is the only true invocation in the correct sense of the word.

Similarly, Abraham, while denouncing his own followers, declared:

*I leave you and all the gods that you
worship,
I just call upon my God and I am confident
that I shall not remain empty-handed.*

Again he addressed them thus:

*O ye faithful, let us unite and come to a
common ground — the ground of
Divinity — and worship none else but
God and consider not anyone else on par
with Him, for none can equal Him.*¹¹

KORAN

The instinct of love cannot come into play unless one sees the beloved. As long as we do not see Godhead or the glory of God, we cannot have any faith in the existence of God; and without this, all prayers go in vain. But *Guru* or Godman is the

WHOM TO ADDRESS

abode of God's Light and is a radiating center of the same. We can pray with equal efficacy to the Master, who is at one with God. Connected as he is with the Powerhouse behind him, he is equally competent to grant our desires and fulfill our wishes. It is said that,

*God manifests Himself in the form of a Sadh
(a disciplined soul).¹²*

GURU ARJAN

Again, the Bible tells us:

*Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he
revealeth his secret unto his servants the
prophets.¹³*

In Gurbani we have:

God speaks through a Sadh.

GURU ARJAN

A Muslim divine tells us:

*His (the Master's) words are Allah's (God's)
words, though seemingly these may appear
to be coming from a human tongue.*

A prayer to the living Master is as good as a prayer to God. One must, therefore, wholly and solely depend on the Master, and turn to Him for the fulfillment of his desires.

PRAYER

So all prayers should be addressed to one who holds the mystery of life and death in his hands. We must have perfect faith in the living God, who lives and moves amongst us in a human form. With the attention fully focused on Him, we ought not to think of anyone else. This is the one way we can commune with Him. Kabir Sahib tells us that distance does not count in the relationship between the Master and the disciple. The two may be separated by vast oceans in between, but the very thought of the Master, in the disciple, is bound to attract the Master's attention and he can direct him (the disciple) wherever he may be. It is said of Vivekananda that when he rose to address the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago he felt diffident. He asked for a glass of water, closed his eyes for a moment, and thought of his Master (Paramhansa Ramakrishna, the sage of Dakshineswar) and in an instant the flood-gates of inspiration opened within him, and he delivered an unprecedented and impassioned discourse lasting for several hours. A Godman is a veritable king, and at his door all the mighty kings of the earth bow down their heads in humble supplication and seek the fulfillment of their cherished desires, and attainment of their otherwise unattainable ambitions.

Guru Arjan says in this context:

He has within his controlling power all the potentates,

WHOM TO ADDRESS

*Nay, the vast creation itself is under his
sway.
His will reigns supreme everywhere,
And nothing lies outside his Divine Will;
O offer thy prayer to thy Master alone.
For he shall fulfill all thy heart's desires.
His seat is in the highest heavens, and
Devotion unto him lies in communion with
His Word.
All-pervading, He is complete in Himself,
And His light shines in every heart,
His remembrance dispels all sorrows,
Even the angel of death does not come near
his devotee.
The dead come to life by the Power of His
Word, and
The lowliest and the lost are received and
honored,
O Nanak! thy prayer has been heard and
accepted, and
Through the Grace of the Master, His Light
has been made manifest within.¹⁵*

A Godman has within his grasp all that one may need — the gifts of *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kaama* and *Moksha* (the merits of righteousness, earthly riches and possessions, fulfillment of wishes and desires, and salvation itself).

*If one wants any of the four great boons,
He must take to the service of a Sadh,*

PRAYER

*If one wishes to have riddance from affliction
and sorrow,*

*One must commune with the Word, in the
depths of one's soul.*

If one is after name and fame,

*One must lose his ego in the company of a
saint.*

*If one be afraid of the pangs of birth and
death,*

*One must seek shelter at the lotus feet of a
saint.¹⁶*

GURU ARJAN

From the above it is abundantly clear that we must go in prayer unto God or a Godman, and after being able to commune with Him, we should depend on Him alone and not on any other power; for He alone is capable of drawing one out from the mighty swirls and eddying pools of mind and matter, and of applying a healing balm to the lacerated hearts torn by wild desires and temptations. He is the strength of the weak, the sheet-anchor in the storm and stress of life, and a haven of safety for the homeless. His glance of Grace soothes the broken hearts.

A perfect Master attends to the heart,

And from heart to heart, a life impulse darts.

BHAI NANDLAL

WHOM TO ADDRESS

It behooves a disciple to unhesitatingly unburden his mind to his Master and place his difficulties before him, wherever he may be, for the Master is above time and space and can attend to his disciple's tale of woe.

*Rip open thy mind before thy Master;
Cast aside all thy cunning and cleverness,
and
Take refuge, body and soul, at His feet.*¹⁷

GURU ARJAN

In the holy Koran, we have:

*Except Him, there is none who listens to
the woeful tale of the distressed and the
agonized cry of the helpless and renders
solace unto him.*

Christ's remarks in this behalf are significant enough:

*That whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in
my name, He may give it you.*¹⁸
*If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will
do it.*¹⁹

Since God or a Godman is the treasure-house of all blessings, we must offer our prayer to either of Them and to none else.

4. A Direct Appeal to God Within

IN WORLDLY matters, we do seek the help of persons who are more intelligent and capable than we are. We also offer prayers for aid to God — the greatest power conceivable — and that, no doubt, is a correct approach to the difficult and baffling problems which confront us every day in the course of our lives. But to regard that Omnipotent Power as something separate and apart from us, and to appeal to Him as to an outside benefactor, is assuredly a sorrowful mistake which is made by us; for He is the very soul of our soul, and is ever working within and without us, and we, in fact, live and have our very being in Him. The secret of success lies in direct prayer and appeal to the power within, as these bear sure fruit and in abundance. We do a great injustice both to Him and to ourselves when we think of God residing on snow-capped mountains, or under the depths of sacred rivers and water-springs, or in temples and mosques, or in churches and synagogues, or in this or that holy place. Limited as we are in time, space, and causation, we try to limit the Limitless within the narrow grooves that imagination can conceive of. Such belief on our part and consequent frustrations that result therefrom not infrequently tend to make us sceptical of Him.

When the reservoir of all power is in each one of us, we can, by a dip therein, become spiritually

great and powerful. As physical exercises make us robust and strong physically, so do spiritual exercises awaken in us latent spiritual powers. By means of these we can pull up the sluice-gates and thus flood our very being with Divine Currents. When a person becomes Divinized or Divinity Personified, the very Nature, which is the handmaid of God, begins to dance at his beck and call to fulfill all his needs and requirements.

A strong will does forge ahead and make a way for itself. We do, at times, by praying to some supposed powers without, succeed in our endeavors. Such success is in fact due to a little concentrated effort on our part rather than to any outside agency. In this way we not only deceive ourselves, but gradually perpetuate the self-deception to the extent that in course of time it becomes a part of us, and we cannot but look upon God as something extraneous to us, and the worst of it is that we do not at all come in contact with the untold treasures of Divinity that lie within us and constitute our own heritage. It is only after the inner contact with Him has been established that we can truly understand His pervasiveness in the Universe and see His glory everywhere. Without this direct perception and first-hand experience of Him within, our conception of God is just hearsay or bookish and hence erroneous, and our prayers to Him a meaningless jargon.

5. *Prayer and Effort*

PRAYER and effort go cheek by jowl. We pray to God for what? For the success of our endeavors. Should we wish for a thing, we must try for it, and alongside our efforts to achieve it, pray that God may grant it. Prayer is just the last weapon and a sure one that comes to our aid. Where all human efforts fail, prayer succeeds.

*. . . More things are wrought by prayer, than
this world dreams of.*

TENNYSON

As a bird cannot fly on one wing only, nor a chariot move on one wheel, so effort and prayer must go together if we want success in all our ventures. One of them by itself can achieve nothing. As long as a person is not fully Divinized, or in other words does not become a conscious co-worker with the Supreme Power by understanding His Will, he cannot do without endeavor, for God helps those who help themselves.

A mere prayer without endeavor seldom bears fruit. Just take the instance of a boy who is late for school. If he were to sit down on the roadside to pray, he would be running against time. If he wants to gain time, he must run, and it is possible that even if he be late, his teacher may forgive him because of the effort he has made to reach there in time. To have a ruling passion

THE ESSENTIALS OF PRAYER

for an objective and to work hard for achieving the same is the right type of prayer in the truest sense of the word. Effort should be combined with prayer, for mere lip service to reach the goal will not help much. In all sincerity one should pray, and indeed the very striving for a thing with heart and soul is the greatest prayer and is bound to fructify.

In all trials and tribulations, one must try to rid himself of his weariness and pray to God that He may help him in his endeavors. This is the only right attitude. In the Koran, it is said that when Moses and Aaron prayed for victory over the Pharaoh, God, accepting their prayers, commanded them to stand steadfast and not to follow the tracks of those who were ignorant of the Reality. Moses too, commanded his followers to be true and seek the help of God. In moments of storm and stress, never grow disheartened, especially as you stand on the bedrock of God and Godman. If, in spite of this, you fail in your endeavors, then take that failure as coming from God for your good.

6. The Essentials of Prayer

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him.²⁰

CHRIST

PRAYER

A PRAYER never goes in vain. A cry from the heart is always heard and attended to; but how, and in what manner, depends on the Will of God.

A prayer of a devotee never goes in vain.²¹

Whatever a devotee asks of Him, that cannot but happen.²²

*He doth grant whatever is asked of Him,
O Nanak! the words of a devotee prove true
here and hereafter.²³*

GURU ARJAN

In the Sikh scriptures it is mentioned that the Father God ordained that He would freely give whatsoever His children may ask of Him:

*The Ever-kind Father has pledged to fulfill
what His children may desire.²⁴*

GURU ARJAN

The Holy Koran likewise vouchsafes this very idea when it states:

*God has said, call upon Me, and I shall accept
thy call.*

And again:

*O Rasul! whenever any person enquires of
Me, tell him that I reside in him and I
listen to his prayers whatever the same
may be.*

THE ESSENTIALS OF PRAYER

In the Gospel of St. Matthew we have:

Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you:

*For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*²⁵

In actual experience, however, we find that most of our prayers do not bear any fruit. We have, therefore, to study the question critically as to what type of prayer is acceptable to God, and how that prayer is offered, and why all prayers are not accepted. For success in prayers there are certain essential prerequisites:

(i) *Faith in God* is the root cause of success. We may deceive ourselves and those around us, but we cannot deceive the inner power — God. In offering prayers, we run a great handicap race. We are not true in our thoughts, words and deeds. There is, in fact, no harmony among the three. We depend too much on our own cunning, maneuvering and scheming. We have no confidence in God and His powers. Our prayers do not arise from the depths of our soul. Far from being an anguished cry, we mechanically utter a few words of hurried prayer. It is just doing a lip service to God which is not even skin deep. No wonder then, that these perfunctory and ceremonial prayers for form's sake go in vain and

PRAYER

are not heard. We must realize that God is great, and that He knows our inmost thoughts and the very working of our mind, and have faith in His munificence, for:

*He knows what lies within the folds of our
mind,
And is fully aware of the afflictions of all:
the virtuous and the vile.*

GURU GOBIND SINGH

(ii) *Surrender to God*, With faith in God, the next step automatically is to surrender one's all at the feet of God. When the little self loses itself in the greater Self, the latter works and acts for and on behalf of the former. In such a case there hardly remains the need of actual prayer.

*O mind! be acceptable to thy Lord,
Be ye all humble and lowly unto Him.*²⁶

GURU ARJAN

(iii) *Love for God* is another prerequisite for successful prayers. We ought to be grateful to Him for what He has done for us without our asking, before we ask Him for further boons. We must love and respect His commandments and strictly follow them. We bow down a thousand times before Him but we do not, unfortunately, take His words seriously. Little do we realize that He is not apart from His words.

THE ESSENTIALS OF PRAYER

If ye love me, keep my commandments:²⁷

*If ye abide in me, and my words abide in
you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall
be done unto you.²⁸*

CHRIST

*Delight yourself also in the Lord; and He
shall give the desires of thine heart.²⁹*

THE PSALMS

(iv) *Right attitude* is another essential for expecting favors of God. Right attitude may be considered in relation both to God and to man. "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayers shall be abomination."

*And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him,
because we keep His commandments, and
do those things that are pleasing in His
sight.*

Again, if we want God to forgive our trespasses, we must be prepared to forgive freely the trespasses of others.

*And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our
debtors . . .*

*For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your
heavenly Father will also forgive you:
But if ye forgive not men their trespasses,
neither will your Father forgive your
trespasses.³⁰*

CHRIST

PRAYER

(v) *Fear of God.* We do not live in fear of the Lord. He is the very soul of our souls but we shamelessly do things in secret as if He knows them not. We feel ashamed to do a sinful act in the presence of a toddler of tender years, but have not even that much regard for the King of kings enthroned within us and looking not only to all our deeds but even reading our thoughts and knowing the drift of our instincts and propensities lying in the limbo of our subconscious mind. His fear alone can make us fearless of the world, but unfortunately we live in a state of perpetual fear of all and sundry and go about cringing petty favors here and there.

*Like as a father pitieth his children, so the
Lord pitieth them that fear him.*³¹

THE PSALMS

*Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.*³²

ST. MARK

(vi) *Purification.* Purity of body, mind and soul is the most important factor in winning the love of the Lord. It may be considered in three different stages — Repentance, Forgiveness and Abstention.

(a) REPENTANCE. Nothing under heaven is perfect and each one of us has his own weaknesses. Sin has come to man as a heritage from Adam. Mind in man is the agent of the

Negative Power, and it misses no opportunity to tempt man against God. In daily life we slip at every step. Our best resolves turn into airy nothings when temptations assail us. Unaided we cannot possibly escape from the cunning wiles, subtle snares and wild clutches of *Kal* or the Lord of Time, i.e., the mind. It is only the saving arm of the Master that can protect us and rid us of its terrible onslaughts. But every time that we fall prey to temptations we must realize our weakness and sincerely repent for what we have done.

(b) FORGIVENESS. Repentance, though good in itself, cannot alter the past. Each act of omission or commission leaves its indelible impress upon the mind and singles us out for its reaction or fruit. In this way, countless Karmic impressions go on accumulating day in and day out, making additions to our *Sanchit Karmas* (a vast storehouse of unfructified actions). Nobody can escape from this tremendous load which has a far-reaching effect, extending sometimes to hundreds of lives and over. Is there no remedy, then, to burn away the powder magazine before it blows us up? The saints tell us that there is a way and a sure one indeed. Prayer for forgiveness is a positive weapon in the hands of a sinner. There is hope for everybody including the sinners. Saints come into the world to save the sinners and the lost. An association with a

PRAYER

Master-soul goes a long way in liquidating the Karmic account. While He forgives in His Saving Grace our daily lapses, he at the same time enjoins abstention from repetition of the same. "So far and no further," is their admonition. "Go and sin no more," was the usual advice with Christ and Master Sawan Singh too, who used to advise his disciples to make a halt wherever they were and to sin no more. The past actions can be washed off, provided we refrain from sowing any more of the dragon's teeth.

(c) ABSTENTION. While repentance and forgiveness help us in escaping the effect of *Kriyaman* or day-to-day acts, we have yet to guard against future repetitions. No purificatory process can help us through unless we put a stop to the incessant round of the Karmic wheel, which gains momentum from our every act.

At times a magistrate may award a lesser penalty for a crime but that may not ennoble the criminal. In the dispensation of the Master, there is always the stern admonition which is so necessary an element in keeping a person on his guard. He has to wash a sinner clean so as to fit him for his journey Homeward. Like a Master-sculptor, he has to chisel hard to bring shape and form out of a formless piece of stone.

In brief, it is necessary that we must first of all mould our life according to the instructions of

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the Master, and feel a genuine delight in thinking of Him. Secondly, we must understand His Will and pray for those things that are to His liking; and thirdly, we must learn to accept smilingly His decrees whatever they be.

Last but not least, love is the soil on which life thrives the most. Lover gives and never takes favors. If one tries to live a Godly life, all God's favors automatically flow down to him. One who loves God need not ask for any favor. It is enough for us to dedicate our very life to Him and become His bound slaves. It is up to Him to treat us as He wishes. To live in His Holy Presence is its own reward and there can be no reward greater and richer than this.

*Downright heresy it is to pray,
To ask God to take the calamity away.*

MAULANA RUMI

*Thy frowns are fairer far
Than the smiles of many maidens are.*

COLERIDGE

*There is exhilarating sweetness
Even in thy frowns, O Master.³³*

GURU ARJAN

7. *Hurdles in the Way of Prayer*

SOME feel that when God knows even the Sinner-most secrets of our minds, wherein lies the need for prayer? Some others think that when God is to grant a gift for the asking, we may in ignorance ask for things that may ultimately be harmful or injurious to us and we may have to repent for our folly. Still others believe that God, who is more than our earthly father, knowing what is good for His children, would provide that without our asking and keep back that which may be detrimental to our interest. Despite all these arguments, the saints insist on offering prayers

Doubtless God knows our needs:

*Your Father knoweth what things ye have
need of, before ye ask Him.*³⁴

CHRIST

*His greatness lies in His Omniscience.*³⁵

GURU ARJAN

*He knows the secret of every heart,
And what lies hidden underneath,*

GURU GOBIND SINGH

*My Kirdgaar (Creator) knows my needs much
better than I do.*

A MUSLIM DIVINE

Still, the underlying object in offering prayer, is that *we* may know and understand our needs, be prepared for the fulfillment of the same when the time comes and be thankful to Him.

*We are thy children, O Master,
Grant thou the gift of right understanding.*³⁶

*To the ignorant children, Father giveth the
light.*³⁷

GURU RAM DAS

Sometimes it might seem that our prayers for riddance from calamities are not heeded, but in all certainty we do get from them fortitude enough to withstand the calamities, and strength to successfully combat them without feeling their sting and their pinching effect.

8. How to Overcome Inner Difficulties

HEART is the pulpit for offering prayer and must, therefore, be cleaned and purified before we engage in prayer.

(i) *Purity of heart* consists in respectful and humble attitude toward God, free from all cares and anxieties of the world.

*The All-knowing Himself sets everything
right.*

*To Him, O Nanak! offer ye thy prayer.*³⁸

GURU ANGAD

PRAYER

*With folded hands offer thy prayers.*³⁹

GURU ARJAN

(ii) *Humility* born of helplessness, coupled with confidence and faith in Him.

(iii) *Loving Devotion*. Next we have to still the mind, to make it free from the mental oscillations that continuously pull it this way and that. To achieve stillness of the mind we have to find within some center or pole to which it may be drawn time and again, so that gradually we succeed in stilling the mind at will. Until such ground is found, an aspirant is in a very delicate and slippery state. As he withdraws from the outer world and its associations, and waits for the dawn of the new world, he is haunted by countless seed impressions hitherto lying buried in the depth of unconsciousness.

One can free himself from these either by right contemplation or by seeking aid through prayer to the Power within. The surest and the easiest way to cross over these hurdles is to think of the form of the Master and to fix one's attention in that form. This "tapping inside" or "knocking," as it grows continuous and steady, gradually forces open the "Way in," bringing to view endless vistas of spiritual visions and rapturous strains of Divine Symphonies.

THE THREE TYPES OF PRAYER

Again there are myriads of obstacles in the inner path. Sometimes an aspirant gets no response to his prayers and begins to doubt their efficacy. At other times, far removed from God, he finds himself in a strange and vast stillness and feels his own vibrations. Others get entangled in the deep darkness behind the eyes and cannot penetrate into the Beyond. So bewildering and complicated are these regions of darkness and silence that one feels he has lost his way. In spite of his best efforts, he totters over and over again, tries to stand on his legs but slips over. This is indeed a very sad and delicate situation. By his unaided efforts he cannot safely come out of this labyrinth. It is in such weird and eerie surroundings that instructions from a Master-soul can be of avail to him.

These are just a few of the countless difficulties with which this path is strewn. The Negative Power has a regular network of pitfalls to thwart designs even of the wisest and wariest of souls, and by all kinds of wiles tries to ambush the weary traveler on the path. Its triumph lies in keeping the *Jivas* or embodied souls entirely in its clutches so that its sway over them remains undiminished and its glory undimmed. One can escape these dark forces only through the help of one who has himself conquered them, for such forces live in fear of him and do not molest a soul that is in league with him. The long arm of

the Master and his strong hand can lead a *Jiva* unscathed through all dangers with which the inner path is beset at every step.

9. *The Three Types of Prayer*

THERE are three ways of offering a prayer: (i) *Vocal or oral*: that is to say a prayer offered by means of tongue or words of mouth. It consists in repeating some set prayer as recorded in scriptures or as given by this or that *Mahatma* as a "model prayer." Some feel that such prayers are not of much consequence. A prayer, in fact, is not a mere repetition of particular words but an anguished cry of an individual soul arising from its deepest depths. Such oral prayers may be likened to borrowed clothes which never fit the borrower. As models these are very valuable and we should try to make such impassioned appeals directly from the innermost recesses of our mind, truly depicting our feelings and emotions.

(ii) *Mental*: A prayer may be repeated by the tongue of thought alone. This can be done only when one can prepare a suitable ground for it within himself. One must see the presence of God and be able to concentrate his thoughts before offering a thanksgiving to Him, making free and frank confessions of all his shortcomings and seeking His aid in all his endeavors. It is an art, and like any other art

THE THREE TYPES OF PRAYER

requires a great deal of patience and steadfastness, as is necessary in learning music or painting. To start with, the mind has to be trained and stilled by constant thought of the Master, which works like a goad (the steel rod used by *Mahouts* or elephant drivers for keeping the animal under control). After offering such a prayer, one must for some time wait for His grace or blessedness, which "descends like a gentle dove," says Christ. With it also comes peace that thrills one throughout from head to foot. Once a person tastes of this, he feels a perfect satiation within himself. The infatuation of the world with its wondrous charms falls off like a discarded and a long-forgotten thing in the limbo of the past. In the world, he is now no longer of the world. What a wondrous change indeed! Some people consider this as the be-all and end-all of spirituality. But this is not the case. This change in outlook is but a precursor or a harbinger of the advent of the luminous form of the Master and much more thereafter.

(iii) *Spiritual*: For true spirituality, a *Sadhak* has yet to wait and watch. As he continues his *Sadhna*, he occasionally transcends his physical body and meets the Master in his self-refulgent form. Thence onward countless vistas of spiritual scenes unfold themselves before his inner vision. These are beyond description. While yet a denizen of this world, he gets an access to

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higher regions, from whence come nothing but blessedness. Here he gets dyed through and through in the true color of pure spirituality. Now he is no more "worldly-wise" as he used to be, but is charged with spirituality. He is altogether transformed into a highly divinized person established in his Divinity or God-head. This may be termed *mystical prayer*. In this type of prayer an aspirant has nothing to do. It is all wrought by the Master. Once he takes charge of the soul, it becomes his responsibility to work out this transformation by gradually eliminating all traces of dross and converting the soul into pure gold. Even a most elementary experience of this stage sets at rest all doubts and misgivings. It is enough to awaken a soul into Cosmic Awareness, and from then onward it is established in its own and is no longer a prey to scepticism. In its naked pristine glory it cries out — "I am the soul" or "I am as Thou art" or "I am *Brahm*."

10. Loud Prayers

PRAYERS when uttered loudly do for the time being work like a lever in lifting the mind upward and bring about a sobriety, but as we do not understand their proper value and significance, these do not help in preparing the ground for raising the spiritual superstructure. On the contrary, we often feel entangled in public

LOUD PRAYERS

applause and approbation. The result, more often than not, is that we fall an easy prey to self-deception. As these do not come from the depth of the soul, they sound hollow without a single true ring in them. They may be used to capture the imagination of an audience for the moment, but do no ultimate good to those engaged in it, either as performers or as listeners. These, at times, create physical sensation and bring about a trance but do not lead to Conscious Awareness, which can only come with Self-knowledge. God cannot be cowed down by loud and strong words, nor does He need them. He is the very soul of our soul and can hear the faintest and feeblest tread of an ant. He knows our wants even more than we do, and long before we even feel them. The riches of spirituality do not at all come with loud professions or protestations. A prayer in the deep silence of the mind and uttered with the tongue of thought alone is capable of bearing any fruit. The rest is all in vain.

*Call upon thy God in all humility and in all
silence.*

You need not shout, for He knows everything.

KORAN

*He hears an ant's call before he does the
trumpet of an elephant.⁴⁰*

GURU GOBIND SINGH

11. *Individual and Public Prayers*

IN INDIVIDUAL prayer, there is of course no need to utter words loudly. One has just to change the course of one's thoughts from one channel to another. In it, mental Simran is quite enough.

What is there in the quest of God?

Transplant the mind and see Him in all.

SHAH INAYAT

In public prayers we generally lose sight of real personal emotions and in spite of ourselves drift into hyperbole. In a prayer like this, there is no harmony between the mind and the tongue. Divorced from personal feelings, we are thinking only of the public applause of the moment. All the time we try to play upon the feelings of the audience, so as to draw more offerings from their pockets or tears from their eyes, or words of praise for our accomplishment. These are more or less ceremonial prayers, mostly offered on the occasion of *Urs* or anniversary of the birth or death of various saints. Both *Qawwalis* among the Muslims and *Kirtans* among the Hindus fall into this category.

These set prayers are simply the outpourings of devotees in the past and not the spontaneous emotional outbursts of those who recite them, and as such, are not likely to be accepted, nor

do they bear any appreciable fruit or make any lasting impression on the participants on such occasions, whether the singers or the hearers. An arrow that does not take its flight right from the archer's bow-string, strung well down to the chest, hardly hits the target. Similarly, mere oral prayers, not coming out of the depths of the soul, fail to reach the Godman, who is also the very soul of our soul, and is already aware of our needs more than we ourselves are.

12. Congregational Prayers

THE same may be said of congregational prayers which too fall under the above head. These are offered in temples and mosques, churches and synagogues, gurdwaras and other sacred places. The man at the pulpit gives the sermon and the audience mechanically hears it, or he reads a prayer and the congregation just repeats it in a chorus. Except for some honorable exceptions, the rest just walk in for the weekly or monthly service, as the case may be, for form's sake. If such prayers do not create in us a longing for God, they avail nothing. This is the most elementary service that is expected from such prayers, and if that too is not achieved, nothing is gained therefrom.

Such services, if conducted on proper lines, can do a lot of good to the people. We may pray in all humility for the welfare of humanity in

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general, which is a universal cause and dear to God. It is a powerful instrument that has been responsible for building nations and welding together societies.

*O Nanak! great is His name.
May there be welfare of all under Thy Will,
O Lord.*

GURU NANAK

*O God! put us on the right path.
Make us steadfast in faith,
Grant us mercy, O Allah,
None is more merciful than Thee.*

*O God! forgive us our trespasses,
And ignore our high-handedness,
Make us true in Thy Path,
And grant us victory over the unbelievers
and the unfaithful.*

KORAN

The sole object of such prayers is either to ennoble ourselves, or to benefit the audience, or to tell God of universal sufferings or some needs of humanity in general or, in the last resort, to ingratiate and push ourselves into public favor by a show of religiosity. Prayers offered and services conducted with the last of these motives are, of course, not only quite useless but definitely harmful, and must therefore be avoided at all costs.

PLACE FOR PRAYER

In Sura Baqar of the Koran, it is stated:

- O God! if we err either in our endeavor or in practice, do not call Thou us on that account; but forgive us our shortcomings.*
- O God! never put us to hard trials and never impose on us restrictions and obligations as were ordained in times past.*
- O God! do not put a heavy load on us which we may not have the strength to bear.*
- O God! forgive us our transgressions and shower Thy blessings on us, for Thou art our Lord and Master; to whom may we turn except unto Thee. Grant us Thy victory and glory against the unbelievers and the unfaithful.*

13. Place for Prayer

FOR prayer, one needs no specific place. It grows best and thrives most on a leavened heart. All that is needed is a quiet place, free from the hubbub of the world or other distracting factors. It may be done within doors or without. Even one's sleeping room can serve the purpose, or just a part of it, if the whole be not available. In the absence of any place at home, one may walk down to a temple or a mosque, a church or a synagogue, for all such places are meant to satisfy this need of the public. If none of these are near at hand, one can by himself while walking, sitting, or lying down along a river bank or a

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mountain side, do *Simran*, as ordained by the Master, and commune with God and place before Him his inner feelings. Of course the entire world is God's creation and can be used as such.

*This world is the abode of God, and God truly lives in the world.*⁴¹

GURU ANGAD

Blessed becomes the place where one sits down to pray. The whole earth is sacred and one may offer his prayer wherever he likes.

*Mosque is the Earth and as holy it is,
Pray ye the faithful when the time comes,
Care not for the place wherever it be.*

ALAMSAEEN

God has created the whole world and He is the Lord of it all. He does not live in temples and mosques made by human hands. He, being spirit, can be worshipped in spirit only.

*God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of Heaven and Earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands.*⁴²

ST. PAUL

All is holy where devotion kneels.

O. W. HOLMES

PLACE FOR PRAYER

*God is the Master of East and West
Turn whichsoever side thou may,
God shall look thee in the face,
For He pervades in all the space.*⁴³

KORAN

Human body is the temple of God, and it befits man to worship God in the God-made temple in which He resides. We on the contrary run out to man-made temples and mosques outside, to offer our prayers.

*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and
that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?*⁴⁴

ST. PAUL

*This body is the temple of God (Hari
Mandir),
The true pearl of Jnana comes to shine in it.*⁴⁵

GURU AMAR DAS

*Thy mind is the mosque,
Let thou be the worshiper therein.*

A MUSLIM DIVINE

God can be best worshiped in the body. One need not wander from place to place like a shuttlecock. All glory and beauty lies within you. Outside the human body all structures are made of water and clay. The Vedas, the Puranas, the Koran and the Gospel all repeat the same tale.

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*The beloved is in the House,
I search for Him high and low without,
While the pitcher full of water stands beside.
Woe unto me for wandering athirst.*

A MUSLIM DIVINE

*But thou when thou prayest, enter into thy
closet, and when thou hast shut thy door
pray to thy Father which is in secret; and
thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall
reward thee openly.⁴⁶*

CHRIST

Here a question might arise as to why God, who is in the body, is not visible to us. It may be explained that our eyes of flesh can see material things only. They are too gross to behold the Divine Glory of the most subtle. Unless the power of vision comes into conformity with the density of the object, we cannot see the object. It is, therefore, only the Inner Eye that can, when opened, see Him.

*Different are the eyes, O Nanak,
That behold the vision of God.⁴⁷*

GURU ARJAN

*O remove the scales from my eyes,
And show me the face of the True One.*

KABIR

PREREQUISITES IN PRAYER

Again:

*Rise up to the level of God,
Then alone shalt thou see Him.*⁴⁸

*When thou closest the ten outlets of thy body,
The Light of God shall shine in thee.*⁴⁹

GURU ARJAN

*If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole
body, shall be full of light.*⁵⁰

CHRIST

True prayer consists in withdrawing the spirit within with a pure mind and fully devotional attitude. Such a prayer cannot but bear fruit in abundance and in no time.

14. Prerequisites in Prayer

NEEED OF GODMAN. As prayer is to be addressed to someone, it is but necessary that we must first have a firm belief in the existence of the Being whom we address. We have as yet no experience of God, and have therefore no conception of Him nor of His powers. Our knowledge of Him, however little it may be, is a secondary one, derived from the study of books, or heard from persons as ignorant of Him as we are. In such a state we can contemplate nothing. But there may be a person who may have a direct knowledge of God, and be inwardly in tune with

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the Infinite. There is a peculiar charm in his company. His weighty words of wisdom at once sink deep into the mind. His utterances, charged with His power, have a magnetic influence. One feels a kind of serenity and an inward calm in his holy presence. He does not reason of God. He simply talks of Him with authority, because he has a firsthand knowledge of Him and consciously lives in Him every moment of his life. Such a person may be termed a Prophet, a Messiah, or a Godman.

The Gospel tells us that God speaks through His Prophets or the chosen ones. It is but a natural thing. Man alone can be a teacher of man; and for God's science we must have some Godman to teach us that. *Sant Satguru* is the pole from where God's Light is reflected. From him alone we can know of the Path leading to God; and he can be a sure guide who can be depended upon, in weal or woe, both here and hereafter.

*He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father...
Believe me that I am in the Father, and the
Father in me.*⁵¹

CHRIST

From what has been said above, it naturally follows that Godman or *Sant Satguru* is the right person to be approached in the first instance, and to whom all our prayers should be addressed.

PREREQUISITES IN PRAYER

Faith is the keynote of success in all our endeavors. We must, then, have firm and full faith in the competency of the Master. With love and humility we must make an approach to him if we want to make a beginning in Spiritual Science. We must pray to him sincerely from the depth of our heart. We should think it fortunate indeed if in his grace he accepts us for imparting knowledge of *Para Vidya* — the Science of knowledge of Self and knowledge of God — which in fact is the seed-knowledge from which all knowledge springs.

(ii) *Complete Absorption*. The next essential in this connection is complete absorption. While offering prayer we must forget everything else, including our body and our bodily relations. Singleness of purpose is a *sine qua non* for hitting the target. It is common knowledge that one cannot serve two Masters at one time. We have to choose between God and Mammon and then forget the other. One by one we have to slip through the various sheaths enveloping the soul like funeral shrouds in their folds. The spirit is a living entity and cannot move ahead unless it discards the material appendages in which it is wrapped — physical, mental and causal. By complete absorption, these drop off one by one of their own accord, leaving the spirit free for flights in the spiritual regions. Mohammedans call this absorption *Fana-fil-*

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Sheikh which ultimately leads to *Fana-fil-Allah*, thus completing the journey from *Fana* to *Baqa* (from death to immortality).

(iii) *Truthfulness and Contentment*. Our prayers can be fruitful only when we are true to ourselves in all aspects of life. We must have right thoughts, right aspirations, right contemplation, right livelihood and right conduct. Purity in thought, word and deed must precede everything else. Righteousness, chastity and truthfulness are all closely associated with and actually spring from *Brahmcharya* (self control), which is a great motive force in life. It is on the bedrock of *Brahmcharya* that all these things grow and bear fruit.

Contentment is an active aid in controlling the wandering faculties of the mind. Unless mental oscillations stop and stillness is achieved we cannot offer a true and sincere prayer. A stilled mind alone can reflect God's Light when it may dawn.

*God is attracted swift and sure,
With prayer from mind contented and
pure.*⁵²

GURU NANAK

*To thine own self be true and then it must
follow, as night the day, thou canst not be
false to any man.*

SHAKESPEARE

PREREQUISITES IN PRAYER

(iv) *Sincere and stirring sensation.* Prayer must arise from the depths of the soul. It should not be a vain repetition of empty words with little meaning in them. What we pray for we must really wish for, not only intellectually, but from the very core of our being. It must churn the very soul to its depths, and the music of prayer should come out and tingle from the very nerves, tissues and fibres of the entire frame, making us unmindful and oblivious of everything else beside the sweet music of the soul.

*O Kabir! why to the minaret goest the Imam
for a call, for God is not deaf,
Why not address thy call to the mind so that
it goeth within.*

(v) *Spontaneity.* A prayer being the cry of the soul in agony is most beautiful and most natural when it gushes forth spontaneously, like a spring of cool water from the bowels of the Earth. It needs no embellishments of particular words and peculiar phrases. On the contrary, such adornments mar the true beauty of free expression, and very frequently the man of prayer is imperceptibly drawn in and imprisoned in the net of verbiage. All this makes a prayer artificial — a product of deliberate art divorced from feelings. Such prayers make us false to ourselves and are not at all beneficial. God is concerned with genuine emotions expressed in howsoever simple words and not

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with set speeches, vain repetitions, ostentatious phraseology and learned expostulations.

Maulana Rumi has given us a beautiful illustration of a loving prayer that a simple and unsophisticated shepherd boy was muttering in his own humble way as Prophet Moses passed by him. He was saying:

O God! where art Thou? I would like to serve Thee. I would knit for Thee woolen garments and comb Thy hair. I would like to serve Thee with milk, curd, cheese and clarified butter, tend Thee in Thine illness, kiss Thy hands and massage Thy feet. I would like to make a sacrifice of all my sheep and goats for Thy sake.

These words of the shepherd boy sounded as heresy to the Prophet, who in a rage began to reprimand the boy saying: "Shut up your mouth, O infidel. Why are you talking like a fool? Withdraw your insolent words or else God will curse us with hell-fires for your blasphemy. God is not a human being and He does not stand in need of any of the things that you offer Him. He is a spirit, without any hands and feet, and you have insulted Him with your idle talk." Stung to the quick, the simple-hearted boy tore his clothes, ran to the wilderness and wept bitterly for having incurred the displeasure of God. In the intensity of his agony he lost his consciousness,

PREREQUISITES IN PRAYER

and behold, he saw within him the Light of God and heard a sweet and kind voice assuring him that all his prayers, sincere as they were, were acceptable to God and He was greatly pleased with him for his offerings. On the other hand, when Moses went into his wonted meditation, he felt that God was sorely vexed with him for having driven a loving soul away from Him. God reprimanded him,

*You came into the world for uniting people
unto Me, and not for separating those
who were one with Me,*

and spake thus:

“Everyone remembers Me in his own words and according to his own inner feelings. I have accepted all that the shepherd boy offered Me spontaneously in his innocent and unpolished words as they may appear to you, but I am highly displeased with you for having driven him from his communing with Me. I am not affected by words alone, for whatever they be, they do not in any way sanctify Me but purify the heart of him who utters them. I see not to the glossy words but to the heart and the inner sincerity that lies therein behind the words, for it is from the abundance of heart that a man speaks, no matter in what broken and uncouth words he may give expression to his feelings. O Moses! there is a world of difference between the learned, entan-

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gled in the etiquette of polished speech, and the love-stricken hearts that give vent to what is within them, the withered souls in the wasteland of the heart, lost to all sense of decency and decorum as you would call it. Don't you know that even the government does not impose any land revenue on a land that is *banjar* or a waste. A martyr in God needs thy care and attention. The religion of love is quite different from the religion of set formalism and ritual, and for the lovers there is no religion higher than that of God Himself. A jewel remains a jewel even if it has no hallmark on it."

When Moses heard these words, he felt terrified and went to the jungle, found out the shepherd boy and said, "I have brought for you happy tidings. God has accepted all your prayer, and your seemingly heretic words are as good as those of a devout, and your devotion is the light of your body. Whatever comes to you from within, utter without any fear." The boy replied smilingly, "O Moses, I have now far transcended all the barriers of the flesh. Your rebuke was enough to bring in me a great change. Now I know the Great One, and my condition is that which no words can portray."

15. *Time for Prayer*

PRAYER needs no specific time nor any particular hour. In fact, one can pray without ceasing. It is an ebullition of spirit and like a volcano may burst at any moment. Prayer should, however, be offered regularly at any time during the day or night. Early morning hours and evening twilight hours are, of course, very congenial and most suitable.

*At the ambrosial hour of the early dawn,
Be ye in communion with the Divine Word,
And meditate on His glory.⁵³*

GURU NANAK

Most of us search for a time for prayer and unfortunately are so busy that in the end we find no time at all. A prayer does not need any philosophic dissertation or elaborate arrangement. One has just in loving faith to express his inner urge in the simplest words possible.

A true prayer needs no particular time and place. We have to sit quietly in the temple of the body, at the seat of the soul, and to gaze in between the eyebrows and mentally repeat whatever charged words have been given to us by the Master. That is more than enough of a prayer. But the trouble with us is that we do not know how to pray. We may in a case like this simply ask, "O Lord! teach us how to pray." In

this respect, we can be guided by the specimen prayers given by the various Masters.

16. Occasion for Prayer

WE GENERALLY pray when we are in distress and trouble, but when we escape therefrom we begin thinking that we wrought liberation by our own efforts and thereafter do not feel the need for prayer. We must guard against such serious pitfalls. Prayer in fact is needed at every step. When in difficulty we must pray to escape therefrom. In distress, when all else fails, the thought of the Omnipotent Father gives solace to the mind. When success be in sight, then pray that you may not get elated and puffed up, and ask for God's Grace and bounty; for without these we can never succeed. After the fulfillment of our desires or riddance from difficulties, we must render thanks to the Almighty for His favors. When God is the loving Father and we cannot do without Him at all, prayer must become a part of our very being.

17. Prayer and Sin

AMERE confession of sins and shortcomings in prayer does not avail anything. If we think that by mere confession our sins can be washed off, and we can once again indulge in them freely, we are wrong. Such an attitude, far

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from being a saving force, keeps us perpetually down in sins. Redemption is the gift that comes either from God or the Godman who specifically comes for the benefit of sinners. Our job is just to understand his commandments and to keep them scrupulously, leaving the rest to him.

*How may one know the Truth and break
through the cloud of falsehood?
There is a Way, O Nanak: To make His Will
our own,
His Will which is already wrought in our
existence.*⁵⁴

GURU NANAK

Every action has a reaction. Every act of omission or commission has an appropriate penalty. We cannot escape from sin as long as we consider ourselves as born of the flesh, for flesh is the root cause of all evils in the world. Until a spirit learns to leave the sensual plane at will, enjoyments and distractions do thrive like a bay tree.

*Too much indulgence means distress,
Enjoyments lead ultimately to disease.
Pleasures cannot chase away pain,
Without His acceptance one wanders in the
wilderness.*⁵⁵

GURU NANAK

PRAYER

God is all love. To think that it is because of our forgiveness that He forgives us for trespasses, or else He would not do so, is to misunderstand Him and make a misuse of prayers as a means for doing more wrongs.

The man of God, on the other hand, has a two-fold plan of Dispensation. While granting forgiveness for faults on the one hand he remonstrates severely against repetition. "Thus far and no further," is his admonition. "Go and sin no more," was a familiar phrase with Christ when he used to forgive the sinners. In this way he works out his purificatory process and the spirit is chiseled into a shape and form that may be acceptable to God.

Prayer *per se* cannot alter His Law of Dispensation nor help to reach Him. It is only the loving and intense longing for God and strict obedience to the commandments of the Godman that make a prayer a means leading Godward. Love, and not loud prayers, is the cornerstone of God's Law of Redemption.

If we lovingly depend upon the strong arm of the Godman, his Grace gushes out spontaneously from the fountain of love in him. "Reciprocity in love" is proverbial indeed, and there is no limit to his saving Grace. Even the penalty that he imposes is tinted with rays of love, with no trace of rancor in it.

18. *Prayers for Others*

SINCE all souls are of the same essence as of God and are correlated with each other, one may as well pray for the benefit of others. High souls always pray for the good of the entire humanity. They are not content with the greatest good for the greatest number as is commonly sought by the leaders of society. Their prayers generally end with the words — "O God, do good unto all."

The Muslims first pray for the *Momins* (their brethren in faith), and thereafter for all the rest. The Buddhists likewise pray for all. Christ even suggested prayer for one's enemies. Amongst the Hindus it is a common practice to close their prayers with a few charitable words for all living creatures great and small. Some people offer prayers for the ills of the entire humanity and still others make use of it in the case of individual ailments. Telepathy has now conclusively proved how heartstrings between individuals play in unison, irrespective of distance between the two. There is a tremendous power in thought vibrations and their range is unlimited. Is not the coming into being of the countless universes and their dissolution the result of some thought-force, if we may be permitted to use the phrase, as indicative of God's Will, no matter what we may call it — *Kalma*, *Word*, *Hukam*, or *Bhana*. Thus the

sympathetic chords between the Master and the disciples carry silent messages of love to and fro between them, with a force that is unimaginable. This wonderful relationship one can establish with God. By being in tune with the Infinite, one can by force of thought do a lot of good to others, as, at bottom, all are embedded in the same soil, the Divine ground.

19. Acceptance of Prayers

IT IS a common experience that most of our prayers get no response. The reason for this is not hard to find. We have not yet learned the Will of God and how that Will works entirely for our benefit. In our ignorance we very often pray for things that in the long run are likely to do more harm than good, and no wonder that the loving Father in His boundless compassion for us does not accept such prayers, and they bear no fruit, or else we would never be able to escape from sensual enjoyments.

*Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss
that ye may consume it upon your lusts.*

Again:

*We ignorant of ourselves,
Beg often our own harms, which the wise
powers*

ACCEPTANCE OF PRAYERS

*Deny us for our good; so find we profit
By losing of our prayers.*

SHAKESPEARE

George Meredith tells us to remember:

*That he who rises from prayer a better man,
his prayer alone is answered.*

Again, we generally pray to God for miracles and no wonder such prayers are not granted.

*Whatever a man prays for, he prays for a
miracle.*

*Every prayer reduces itself to this: "Great
God, grant that twice two be not four."*

TURGENIEV

All the time we are living a sensual life and have not yet known that there is another side of the picture as well — life beyond the senses. Most of our prayers are, therefore, of a temporal nature and if they were granted without any exception, we would naturally sink lower and lower in the scale of moral values, and our sins would increase more and more day by day, and there would hardly be a chance to get out of these prison-houses of the world and of the body and bodily enjoyments, with the result that we would forever remain an exile from the Kingdom of God — a Lost Province — with no hope for reunion.

PRAYER

When a disciple remembers the Master, he experiences within him a soothing influence and a sort of Divine intoxication. This is known as telepathy or sympathetic communication from heart to heart from a distance. In the same way we can, by tuning our attention with the Infinite, draw upon the great reservoir of God-Power and utilize that for the beneficent good of others. For this purpose one has to unite his self in the Divine ground wherein all are embedded, and from there pass on the heavenly influence to the individual or society desired to be benefited. In this attitude one has not to place the desires of others before the Creator, but has simply to invoke His loving pleasure and await His Grace to work out the desired result.

*If Radio's slim fingers can pluck a melody
From night, and toss it over a continent or
sea,
Why should mortals wonder if God hears
prayer.*

ETHIL ROMING FULLER

But man is just a part of the creation, and each individual but an infinitesimal speck therein. Gifted as we are with a limited vision, we do not know and understand that Grand Plan, that "Mighty Maze" as Alexander Pope, the Laureate of peace, puts it: it is indeed too much for "presumptuous man ... so weak, so little and

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so blind," a tiny part in the vast machinery of His creation. Again the great poet tells us:

*Heaven from all creatures hides the book of
fate.
All but the page prescribed, their present
state . . .
All Nature is but art, unknown to thee;
All chance, direction, which thou canst not
see;
All discord, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good.
And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
The Truth is clear, "Whatever is, is right". . .
Know then thyself, presume not God to scan.
The proper study of mankind is Man,
Chaos of Thought and Passion all confused...
Great Lord of all things, yet a prey to all,
Sole Judge of Truth, in endless Error
hurled.*

Each one, therefore, from his narrow angle of vision prays for a thing and knows not how it will fit in the Cosmic Order. In the hot and sultry months, for example, people living in towns pray for a refreshing shower, while in the rural areas peasants at the same time ask for more sunshine and heat for ripening their corn.

Man looks not beyond his nose. He does not even know what is good for him. Often he asks for things which, when granted, become a

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veritable source of nuisance to him, and with much regret he has to retrace his steps. The story of the "Golden Touch" is significant in this connection. King Midas after much longing and prayer got the boon of converting everything he touched into gold. After a few moments of happiness he realized his mistake. The food he put into his mouth turned into a lump of gold. The water as it touched his lips solidified into gold. His only daughter as she came running and embraced him became a statue of gold. As he went to the soft bed he found himself on hard metallic cushions.

God or Godman knows best. Our past and future are like an open book to Him. He would never grant such prayers as are ultimately baneful to us. How can the loving Father give to a child that which might prove a poison to him? A Persian poet says:

*My God is more anxious than myself to
fulfill my needs.*

*All my endeavors in this behalf are but
tortuous deeds.*

One should pray to God for such gifts as He may consider beneficial.

*O God, I know not what is good for me, for I
am immersed head and ears in the maze of
the world.⁵⁶*

RAVIDAS

Khwaja Nizami prayeth:

*O God! Thou alone art my well-wisher.
Show me the way whereby I may win Thy
Grace and attain salvation.*

In the holy Koran also it is stated that people ought to pray for that which may be useful both in this world and in the next.

20. Need for Prayer

WE CANNOT win God either by flattery or by vain repetitions, nor does He stand to gain or lose anything whether we offer prayers or not. Compassionate as He is, His Grace is always at work in each and all alike for we cannot live without It. We can, however, attract that Grace to our advantage by becoming a fit receptacle for It. Humility and faith purify the mind and make it a fit instrument for God's Grace. These two aids help in inverting the lotus of the mind which at present is attuned with the senses. Unless we are able to turn its direction upward, God's Grace cannot flow directly into it. Prayers, humble and sincere, help in establishing a harmony between man's mind and God's Grace. He needs no forensic arguments and legal acumen in defense of our deeds and needs. All that is required is a pure and loving heart attuned to His Grace, and the latter is automatically attracted to it.

PRAYER

God is all Love, and we cannot ask Him to be more loving. He is Omniscient, and we cannot by loud and strong prayers make Him any wiser. Perfection cannot be made more perfect by our protestations and prayers. We must learn to “stand and wait” as the classic poet Milton puts it; and His Grace shall of its own be attracted and flood our very being.

*. . . God doth not need
Either man's work or His own gifts; who
best
Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best; His
state
Is kingly, thousands at His bidding speed
And post o'er land and ocean without rest:
They also serve, who only stand and wait.*

JOHN MILTON

God is an unchangeable permanence and eternally the same:

*He was when there was nothing;
He was before all ages began;
He existeth now, O Nanak,
And shall exist forevermore.⁵⁷*

GURU NANAK

*Eternity is ever in love with the products of
time.*

W. B. YEATS

NEED FOR PRAYER

The way to God's Grace lies not in striving and crying. It is enough for man to wait silently as a receptacle for Divine breath which bloweth where it listeth. It is merely by waiting and trusting that one arrives at the Ultimate Truth, which cannot be apprehended at all except as it is focused upon the soul of man. Here lies the advantage of prayer which molds a correct attitude for approach to the Divine Will.

*Wheresoever I turn my face, Thou art there,
Why should I pray to anyone else, when I see
Thou art there to listen to my prayer,
O Lord.⁵⁸*

GURU ARJAN

Man's only duty is to be ever grateful to God for His innumerable gifts and blessings. On the contrary, we become so infatuated by them that we not only lose Him, but lose our own self also in the plenitude of His bounties and, more often than not, are carried off our feet by the whirlwind of desires.

*We get attached to the gifts, forgetting the
bountiful Lord.
For we have forgotten that we have to die
some day.⁵⁹*

GURU ARJAN

21. *The Advantages of Prayer*

PRAYER is the essence of spirituality. It affords a wonderful recreation to the body, mind and soul. It brings in complete satisfaction and satiation which nothing else can give. The peace which comes with prayer is of a unique nature, quite unimaginable. A kind of serenity descends upon the subliminal self within.

Prayer has in it a great dynamic force. It strengthens and befits a person to face and fight the battle of life fearlessly and successfully. It is in fact the only panacea for all types of ills: *Adhi Bhutak* (diseases and ailments), *Adhi Devak* (accidents over which man has no control), *Adhi Atmic* (evil propensities of the mind), and above all, brings in inner peace and satiety. It buckles a person with courage and fortitude and brings about a complete reorientation.

Prayer is the key that unlocks the Kingdom of Heaven. It pulls up the sluice gates and releases from within, immense power and resourcefulness.

Where all human efforts fail, there prayer succeeds.

Lord Tennyson tells us,

. . . More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of.

Even if prayer may seem to fail to avert calamity, yet it has the power to take the sting out of it. With an inner transformation there comes a change in the angle of vision, which greatly affects the outlook on life. Everything puts on a new mantle of color, superbly Divine.

Last but not least, prayer opens our eyes to Reality and enables us to see things in their true perspective. It gives new values to life, and gradually transports an individual into a New World and initiates him into a New Order. With a life of prayer a person eventually rises into cosmic awareness, and sees the hidden hand of God working out His will and His purpose, which otherwise remain a sealed book too subtle for the average man to pierce through and peep into. The more this inner contact is established, the more Godhead is imbibed by the spirit. Only when a complete identification comes about, does one become a conscious co-worker with Him.

22. *Gradations in Prayer*

IN THE course of time an aspirant begins to feel more and more the need for spiritual uplift than for mere physical comforts. In *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* we have this prayer:

*From the unreal lead me to the real, from
darkness lead me to light and from death
lead me to immortality.*

PRAYER

As soon as an aspirant begins to have inner experience, all worldly enjoyments lose their charm. Having had an experience, howsoever little, of the Unchangeable Permanence, he now finds no pleasure in the ever-changing objects of the world, subject as they are to gradual decay, disintegration and ultimate dissolution. He asks no more for physical comforts.

*What shall I pray for, when nothing is
permanent.*⁶⁰

KABIR

The whole world is slavishly mad, following the Epicurean principle "Eat, drink and be merry." None has time to think of God and the inner Self. But nothing in the world holds any attraction for a true aspirant. He makes best use of whatever comes in his way and works but to satisfy the bare needs of his body, and spends the rest of his time in *Sadhna* (spiritual discipline) so as to derive the greatest benefit for his soul.

*For times without number have I drunk life
to the lees.*

*Without Thy Saving Grace, O Lord! Nanak
hath no release.*⁶¹

GURU ARJAN

Hereafter the aspirant lives just for the manifestation of God-head within himself and to sing the glory of His name.

GRADATIONS IN PRAYER

*Let the lotus feet of the Master rest in the
heart,
Let the tongue repeat His Holy Word,
To live a life of constant remembrance nurture
ye this living temple of the Lord.*⁶²

GURU ARJAN

While on this Path the pilgrim traveler realizes his ignorance, and knowing his incapacity, extends to God his hands in prayer:

*O Lord! make me swim safely to the other
shore,
I know not swimming, extend to me Thy
hand of help.*⁶³

NAMDEV

As his angle of vision changes, so does the nature of his prayer. At first a person prays for the fulfillment of his physical needs; but when one starts on the spiritual Path, he prays for the removal of such obstacles as come in his way, e.g., sense-turmoil, mental chattering, ingrained karmic impressions.

This period is most critical in the life of a *sadhak*. Until actual self-realization he is in a state of perpetual restlessness, tossing back and forth. He belongs wholly neither to the world nor to God. While in the eyes of worldly people he is a man of piety, yet in the heart of his heart he knows he is full of iniquities.

PRAYER

*Farid the sinful is still robed in black,
Though the people address him as Darvesh.*

FARID SAHIB

In this state of uncertainty the *sadhak* at times tries to snap away and escape from the struggle; but after a time the inner urge once again comes upon him, and he takes courage and starts Godward.

*Should a traveler while traveling fall down,
There is nothing to wonder and cavil at.
O Kabir! one who sits and starts not on the
journey,
Has an immeasurable distance yet to
traverse.*

But until a person is able to subdue his senses and sensory organs and rid the mind of oscillations, the kindly Light of God does not dawn upon him.

*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall
see God.⁶⁴
If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be
full of light.⁶⁵*

CHRIST

*He who controls his ten organs,
Heaven's Light dawns within him.⁶⁶*

GURU ARJAN

WHAT TO ASK FROM GOD

The wiles of the mind are both very subtle and risky. It often lies in ambush and makes its inroads when least expected. The ingrained evil propensities, though invisible, are very strong, and time and again they come to the surface to deliver blows which often prove fatal. The coil strikes out like lightning, with such sharp and sudden twists and turns, that man by himself is helpless in its clutches. Here comes the need for the long and strong arm of the Master, which stretches forth with equal agility to his rescue:

*Subdue the mind with the Power of the
Master.*

SWAMI SHIV DAYAL SINGH

*Mind cannot come to rest unless it is over-
shadowed by the power of the Master.*

MAULANA RUMI

*The sleeping mind comes to its own
By constant thought of the Master.⁶⁷*

GURU RAM DAS

23. What to Ask from God

ALADY on marriage entrusts her all to her husband and gladly accepts the new mode of life whatever it be. Now, nothing else appeals to her but him. It is for the husband now to provide all her needs and to look after her comforts.

PRAYER

*Render unto Him all that belongs to Him,
And make His Will thine own.
In return He showers His blessings
 manifold,
O Nanak! He is ever so merciful.⁶⁸*

*He who has Him as his boon companion,
He stands in need of naught.⁶⁹*

GURU ARJAN

Once a certain king intended to go abroad. He inquired of his queens as to what gift each of them would like him to bring for them from the foreign lands. One of them asked for costly jewels, another for rich apparel, and still another for cosmetics. Some asked for fineries and others for delicacies, etc. The youngest of them, who loved the king most, requested his early return so that she would not have to languish long in his absence. The king on his return sent the various gifts to his other queens and himself went to the palace of the youngest, and was highly pleased that there was someone who loved him the most, much more than his riches and wealth. The queen too, thanked God for her good fortune that her husband was with her and that she needed nothing else. The rest of the queens, though each one of them had got what she wanted, had not the good fortune to claim their husband's attention. All their riches and gifts availed them not without their beloved.

WHAT TO ASK FROM GOD

In exactly the same way we, through short-sightedness, ask from God or Godman for trinkets of no consequence and not Him and His Saving Grace; and like the different queens in the parable, suffer most the pangs of separation. All the riches of the world fail to give the least satisfaction. On the contrary, these things distract us from the Truth and make us more miserable. If we could but win His Grace, we would then be in want no more. All His riches come to us automatically, without asking. Even if they are denied for one reason or another, it matters not, for without Him and His love they are dirty trash.

*All riches and fineries befit him who has
won Him,
And even without them, what care if he were
to live in poverty.⁷⁰*

GURU ARJAN

Our most elementary needs are of the body — to wit, food, clothing and shelter. For these things we strive hard, working madly and restlessly from morn till night. We sacrifice our very self to procure these comforts — if any comfort they provide. Do we not realize that when a child comes into the world his life plan is sketched out beforehand? Without this, nobody would be here at all. With destiny all shaped, the mould is cast and the spirit enters therein, ready to take his life's journey in the world.

PRAYER

*With a predestined plan one comes into the
world,
O Tulsi! with all this, the mind does not
accept it.*

Dame Nature now gets ready for the royal reception of the Prince of the Universe, providing milk in the mother's breast, shelter in the mother's lap, and an army of attendants to attend to his minutest needs. The Powers of Nature mobilize all their forces to claim the prince-child as their own. But as the child grows and develops into adolescence and begins to feel the life-impulse surging in him; the world, as a foster mother, claims him as her own, and he fondly clings to her and her gifts, forgetting his native and prenatal home in heaven.

*Heaven lies about us in our infancy,
Shades of the prison-house begin to close upon
the growing boy.
Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearning she hath in her own natural kind,
And even with something of a mother's
mind,
and no unworthy aim.
The homely nurse doth all she can,
To make her foster child, her inmate Man,
forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.*

WORDSWORTH

WHAT TO ASK FROM GOD

Again, all the gifts of the world are purely ephemeral. They are always in an unstable and changing state. Nothing is permanent. Everything is subject to decay and dissolution.

*Momentarily things appear and then recede
back into the Fullness,
In the twinkling of an eye the world itself
sinks into the great deep.⁷¹*

KABIR

Midst the ever-changing phenomena of the world, there is but one unchangeable permanence and that is God and God-in-action (the Holy Spirit, Kalma, Naam or Word), responsible for the creation, sustenance and dissolution of countless universes. Why then should we not long for, ask for and pray for that imperishable life principle, so that we too may have "Life Everlasting" and come to our eternal heritage, the everlasting Godhood which is our birthright.

*Listen ye to the call of the hollow man,
manifest Thyself, O Lord,
Nanak has humbly reached Thy door,
through the Grace of Thy devotee.⁷²*

GURU ARJAN

Our native home is in *Sach Khand*. Ages upon ages have gone by since we parted from the Father, and we are still in exile in this world.

PRAYER

*The soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And Cometh from afar.*

WORDSWORTH

We must then yearn for a reunion with the Beloved, separated as we are from Him for myriads of ages.

*For ages upon ages have we been separated,
Unite us unto Thee, O Lord, through sheer
compassion if Thou wilt.*

*We have wandered high and low in all the
points of the compass,
Now keep us O Thou under the shadow of
Thy holy wings.⁷³*

GURU ARJAN

*In countless births have I wandered away
and away from Thee,
This (human) birth I have dedicated to Thee
and staked on Thee,
Ravidas now lives in hope to meet Thee once
again.⁷⁴*

RAVIDAS

Guru Amar Das, therefore, prayeth:

*Through innumerable gyres have I gone
without rest,
In Thy mercy, O Merciful! grant me the
boon of Thy manifestation.⁷⁵*

WHAT TO ASK FROM GOD

Guru Arjan prayeth:

*Many a birth I had in various species,
Every time I had to undergo many
sufferings.*

*Through Thy Grace I have now a human
birth,*

*This then is the time to manifest Thyself
unto
me, O Lord.⁷⁶*

*Lift me O Lord! I have fallen at Thy door,
Accept me in compassion, tired as I am of
my wanderings.*

*Savior of Thy devotees, save the sinners as
well,*

*I know none besides Thee to offer my
prayers,*

*O ferry me safely across the ocean of living
matter.⁷⁷*

The soul pines in the separation of her Lord.
Even if she is not worthy of the Lord, she prays
for union with Him.

*All are blessed in the love of their Lord,
But I alone am the unfortunate one.
So filled with spots through and through,
My consort does not like even to see my
face.⁷⁸*

GURU AMAR DAS

PRAYER

*Meritless as I am, I intensely pray for my
turn, O Nanak,
All the spouses had Thee in abundance,
spare a night for me as well.⁷⁹*

*All the maidens have gone with their
spouses,
Where should I, the unfortunate, turn my
face?
With my parents I was the light of their
eyes,
But woe unto me that my Lord looks not at
me.⁸⁰*

GURU AMAR DAS

*Kill me if Thou wilt but turn not away,
Hug me to Thy bosom, listen ye to my
prayer,
Just look this way and earn my gratitude,
Why kill me by turning Thy face away.⁸¹*

KABIR

*Thirsty as I am for Thy sight,
My mind calls for Thee in agony,
I pray to Thee O Formless! and crave for
Thy mercy.⁸²*

*Life is worth living with Thee before me.
Be merciful, O sweet Beloved,
And drive away all doubts and delusions.⁸³*

WHAT TO ASK FROM GOD

*I earnestly beseech and pray for just one
thing,
I make a sacrifice of all my wealth and
possessions for a union with Thee.⁸⁴*

GURU ARJAN

*What may I ask for and repeat unto Thee
except
That I hunger and thirst for Thy sight;
It is through the Word of the Master that
one reaches Truth,
Nanak, therefore, prays for this alone.⁸⁵
I have just one submission and listen ye to
that,
Certainly Thou art great, compassionate,
and immaculate.⁸⁶*

GURU NANAK

*We never remember Thee and waste our life
in fruitless pursuits.
Nanak sayeth, O God, remember Thou the
pledge (of redemption), regardless of our
defaults.⁸⁷*

*Thou art the abode of all virtues and Lord of
us all with no virtue in us,
No bondsman can praise Thee enough, when
he holds even his body and life from Thee.
Thou saved me from the hell-fires, I have
taken shelter at Thy feet,*

PRAYER

*Thou art the only stake of my life and honor,
I depend on naught else.⁸⁸*

*Great is the Lord, boundless, infinite and
ineffable,*

*O Nanak! He is the Savior of all who take
refuge in Him.⁸⁹*

*I pray to Thee, O Lord! of body, mind and
soul,*

*O Nanak! it is His greatness else none knew
me before.⁹⁰*

GURU ARJAN

*Thou alone art the Doer of all things,
To whom then should we offer prayers.⁹¹*

GURU NANAK

*Helpless are we and Merciful art Thou,
What can we, the sinners, say unto Thee.
In spite of our broken words of no meaning,
Accept us and grant us the gift of
perfection.⁹²*

RAVIDAS

*Thou art the woof and warp of my very
existence,
I, therefore, pray unto Thee alone.
I have no other place to turn to for worship,
I place all my comforts and discomforts
before Thee.⁹³*

WHAT TO ASK FROM GOD

*I cannot do justice to Thy greatness,
For I am an ignorant fool.
O Lord! redeem poor Nanak,
For he has taken shelter at Thy feet.⁹⁴*

GURU RAM DAS

Again, we have in the Sikh Scriptures:

*We, the ignorant, insensate and devoid of all
virtues, have taken refuge with Thee, O
Primal Being,
Through Thy Boundless Grace, O Lord! save
us, in spite of all our shortcomings.⁹⁵*

*O God! have mercy and ferry us across,
Save us with the help of Thy Melodious
Song.
We are bogged in the mire of infatuation,
O extend to us Thy hand and pull us
out.⁹⁶*

GURU RAM DAS

*Look ye not on my merits and demerits,
But forgive me my faults, O Merciful.
How can the clay toy be washed clean?
That indeed is the fate of all human beings.⁹⁷*

*O Lord! be Thou compassionate on the
orphan at Thy door,
Sustain him in the blind well of the body,
For he is imbecile both in mind and
intellect.⁹⁸*

PRAYER

*We are the great defaulters and sinners with
a galaxy of thefts to boot,
Now Nanak is at Thy feet, O Lord! save him
as Thou wilt.*⁹⁹

GURU ARJAN

*O Savior and Sustainer Peerless, listen ye to
me,
O Nanak! the ignorant and the foolish never
think of Him,
Nor do they know the pitch dark night in
which they live.*¹⁰⁰

GURU NANAK

*I have no virtues of the body or of the mind,
and have come from afar,
I have neither riches nor beauty, save me the
homeless one.*¹⁰¹
*One who slips at every step cannot escape on
his own account,
O Nanak, He may forgive and pilot me
across in His Divine Mercy.*¹⁰²

GURU ARJAN

*We commit blunders without number, and
know not their consequences,
O Lord! forgive us in Thy Grace for we are
inveterate sinners.*¹⁰³

GURU AMAR DAS

WHAT TO ASK FROM GOD

*Like the great deep sea, we are full of faults,
With Thy Mercy and Saving Grace, Thou
canst save the millstones from sinking
down.*¹⁰⁴

GURU NANAK

The whole world is in the throes of death pangs.
God alone can save it, as He may with His
limitless love.

*The entire world is being consumed in the
invisible flames of hell fire,
Save us all with Thy loving Grace in
whatever way it may be possible.*¹⁰⁵

GURU AMAR DAS

*O Lord! Thou art peerlessly deep and
infinitely high and none reaches Thee,
We pray that we may not forget Thee, the
fountain of all comforts.*¹⁰⁶

GURU ARJAN

*O the Great Giver and perfect Master,
I ask of Thee but one gift, the gift of Hari.
Shower Thy blessings on Nanak,
O my oldest Friend, become manifest in
me.*¹⁰⁷

GURU RAM DAS

PRAYER

Good and evil intentions are both in your control, O Lord. We are but instruments and You are the motor-power behind us. We only act and do as You actuate us from behind.

*All our thoughts and good intentions are in
Thy control,
Thou alone art the motor-power behind all
our actions,
O Nanak! He is the overruling power that
works as He Wills.¹⁰⁸*

GURU RAM DAS

We, *per se*, are incapable of rendering any service to God, and cannot pride ourselves on our so-called service. It is in the refulgence of God's Light that we live and have our very being. When He withdraws the life current, we become helpless:

*None can serve Thee nor feel elated at
anything.
When the life currents are withdrawn, how
helpless we become.¹⁰⁹*

GURU AMAR DAS

We must ask for God from God, for all else means inviting headache. The greatest gift from Him is that of *Naam* or the Power of Godhead, which when granted brings with it contentment and satisfaction.

WHAT TO ASK FROM GOD

*Except Thee all else is the source of trouble
and misery,
Grant us the gift of Thy Word that brings in
peace and satiation.*¹¹⁰

GURU ARJAN

Maulana Rumi prayeth in this wise:

*Ask from God nothing but God.
Except Him, all else is perishable.
Never ask God for a thing that must decay,
Ask not of God anything beside Himself.
Darken not thy mind with thoughts and cares
that are chimerical.*

(i) *Ask for God:*

One may invoke help in crucial moments of his life, from God or from a Godman, for He alone can rescue him from such slippery moments.

*Full of the deadly sins and tormented by
lusts of the flesh I cry,
Rescue me by Thy Grace, as best Thou may.
O Great and Compassionate One! I am at
Thy mercy,
With austerities and penances one cannot
escape,
But with Thy glance of Grace, take Nanak
out of the blind well.*¹¹¹

PRAYER

*O Lord! save me,
I am incapable of doing anything,
In Thy mercy, grant me the gift of Naam.*¹¹²

GURU ARJAN

*I pray to the Guru, the beloved of God,
A filthy worm am I, O grant me the light of
Naam.*¹¹³

GURU RAM DAS

Mind can be controlled only by the *Dhun* of *Naam* or the celestial strains of music, and it is for this that one has to pray. No other type of yoga — *Jnana*, *Hatha*, *Karma*, etc. — can be of any avail in this connection; nor has anyone been able to escape from the clutches of the mind with all his wits about him. One may tame the wild mind only through the practice of *Sat-Shabd* or *Naam* (the True Word) and one can have initiation into this practice from some adept in the line. The moment it comes into contact with *Naam*, the mind gets docile and instead of being an arch-traitor as hitherto, it turns into a positive ally, and helps the spirit in its onward march on the Spiritual Path.

*O I have got the treasure of Hari Naam,
My mind now wanders not but is in eternal
rest.*¹¹⁴

GURU TEG BAHADUR

WHAT TO ASK FROM GOD

*Listening to the Dhun, the mind gets stilled,
None of the myriad of ways can work this
miracle.*

*The yogin practices yogic exercises,
The Jnani is immersed in Jnana.
The hermit tires himself out in lone solitude,
The anchorite does endless austerities.
Those who meditate on the mental patterns,
They too suffer from a great delusion.
Learning and knowledge are of not much
avail,*

*For the wise in the end have to rue their
wisdom.*

*The Pandit engages in the recitation of the
Vedas*

*But all his sacred lore fails to take him any
nearer to God.*

*No other means are of any consequence
whatever,*

The only beneficial way is that of Shabd.

*When a Master of the Sound Current
appears on the scene,*

*The disciple too begins to feel the yearning of
the new birth.*

*With the practice of the Surat Shabd Yoga,
The mind-stuff gradually sinks within itself
till nothing remains.¹¹⁵*

SWAMI SHIV DAYAL SINGH

PRAYER

When once this contact with Naam is established, the *Sadhak* always feels the presence of the Higher Power, and the Power remains forever with him wherever he may be — on the snowy mountain tops or in the burning desert sands. Reveling in the greatness of that Power he leaves all his cares to Him and becomes indifferent to everything around him. He cheerfully accepts whatever comes his way as coming from Him for his benefit alone. He consciously sees the Divine Will at work and smilingly surrenders himself to it with words of genuine gratitude on his lips. He has no longer any wishes and desires of his own except what may be of God. Now he works as a mere instrument moving like an automaton under the influence of that Power. He sees all creatures, high and low, just as tiny specks set in an orderly harmony in the immense Universe surrounding him. He now divines a procession which is orderly; an order which is harmonious, obeying a Will infinitely above him and yet infinitesimally careful of him. In this way is established a complete harmony between the soul of man and the soul of the Universe. At every step he cries forth, Let thy Will be done:

*All creatures, the highest to the lowest, are
at Thy mercy, and Thou carest for them
one and all.*

*Whatever pleaseth Thee, that is best; Nanak
has no other wish but this.*¹¹⁶

WHAT TO ASK FROM GOD

*Whatever pleaseth Thee is good.
Thou art forevermore,
O Formless one.*¹¹⁷

GURU NANAK

*O Nanak! Great is the Power of Naam,
Let there be peace unto all, through Thy
Will.*

The pontifical blessings generally end with the words: *Urbi et Orbi* (to the citizen and the world).

In the end there comes a stage when the Sadhak feels no necessity even for prayer.

*Sweet art Thy doings,
Nanak desireth only Hari Naam.*¹¹⁸

*In whatsoever state I am, that is a Heaven
unto me.*¹¹⁹

GURU ARJAN

When God is the Knower of the secrets of all, there hardly remains anything to be told Him. With the Lord seated in each one of us and permeating our very being, what need is there to pray, and to whom?

*Hari is the Indweller and knoweth all.
To whom then art we to tell of us?*¹²⁰

GURU ARJAN

PRAYER

*What should the lowly urge for
When God is seated within all?*¹²¹

GURU RAM DAS

Saints always live in this state. Being one with His Will and conscious co-workers with Him, prayer of itself becomes a heresy for them and savors of skepticism. Nature's forces simply wait on them. However slight a thought may arise, it must, like an immutable law, prevail. God is ever with His devotee and looks after him with more care and attention than any loving mother would give her child.

Guru Arjan tells us:

*He who asks from the Lord, whatever it be,
that is granted forthwith,
O Nanak! the words of the devotee do come
true wherever he may be.
For the sake of His devotee He runs far and
near,
And stands ever by his side,
Whatever the devotee asks of Him, that must
happen.*¹²²

Kabir, describing the condition of his mind, tells us that it has, like the water of Ganges, become so transparent that even God has become enamored of him:

WHAT TO ASK FROM GOD

*Kabir, thy mind is now as clear as the
Ganges water.
Even God Himself restlessly follows thee
shouting, "Kabir, Kabir."¹²³*

When all the desires of a devotee get automatically fulfilled, he naturally becomes desireless. The wish-yielding treasure of *Naam*, becoming manifest within, takes care of him at every step.

*With the Lord God as a loving Father, the
child has no hunger for aught, for
Thou art the treasure-house of Naam and he
gets whatever he wishes.¹²⁴
The prayers of the devotee cannot go in
vain.¹²⁵*

GURU ARJAN

When the Great Donor is with the devotee, the devotee has nothing to pray for; for he is one with Him and there is nothing besides whom he may address.

Guru Arjan draws a wonderful pen-picture of this state of perfect satiety:

*Deathless is He and I have nothing to fear,
He being Immortal, I have not to wail;
He is not poor and I have no want,
He being above sorrow and pain, I too have
none;*

PRAYER

*Besides Him there is no destroyer, He and I
live eternally,
When He is free, there is nothing to bind me,
Both of us are above the stage of bondage;
He being Immaculate, I too have no stain,
He being within me, what taint can I have?
He has nothing to think of and nothing is
left for me to think,
Neither of us has anything to gloss over;
Desireless is He and I too desire nothing,
He is spotlessly pure and so am I,
I have no existence apart from Him, for He
alone is:
O Nanak! through the Master has this
delusion disappeared:
Having dipped in Him, we are dyed in one
color.¹²⁶*

(ii) *Ask for Guru (A competent Living Master)*

The Lord is overflowing in the Guru. "Being immanent in the Guru, He distributes the Word." The Guru is God personified. Pray to the Lord:

*Oh Merciful Father, the Destroyer of our
ills, be kind and send us the Satguru. He
is the very support of our life. Through
Him alone we can attain to Thee.*

*Thou art Merciful and the Destroyer of all
our ills. Attend to our prayer. Please
make us search for the Satguru, through
whom we know Thee.¹²⁷*

WHAT TO ASK FROM GOD

*O Lord, the very Soul of the Universe, grant us faith in Naam (the Mystic Word), and the benevolent and purifying company of the true men.*¹²⁸

*O Lord, allow us that Satguru, remembering whom we shall be liberated. At his very Darshan (a sight of him) the mind feels exhilarated. We shall again and again lay our very life at his lotus feet.*¹²⁹

GURU RAM DAS

Beg from the Lord and the Guru their Divine Vision, complete self-surrender and the gift of Naam. Pray also to be saved from the evil tendencies of the mind and the senses. Being Omnipotent, He is capable of granting us all these boons. Besides this, the seekers may pray for the gift of happily resigning to His sweet Will. We have no good qualities in us. Being ignorant and of low mental caliber, we are not well versed in religious ceremonies, etc. Therefore, oh Beloved! have mercy on us. Bestow on us the capacity to sing Thy praises and to remain happy in whatever be Thy Will.

*Virtueless, blind, ignorant and unlettered as we are,
We know not what is good for us or for society,*

PRAYER

*Be merciful, O Lord! that Nanak may sing of
Thee,
And may ever rejoice in Thy Will and
Pleasure.*¹³⁰

GURU RAM DAS

In addition to this, pray for the grant of devotion
and of *Naam*.

*By repeatedly uttering Thy Naam, we are
freed from doubt and fear,
Those who are absorbed in Thy sweet
remembrance will be freed from the cycle
of birth and death.*¹³¹

GURU ARJAN

*We are humble mendicants at Thy door,
Be gracious enough to bless us with Thine
Amrit (Nectar) of the Word,
Satguru is my Master Friend, please grant
me his contact.*¹³²

GURU RAM DAS

*Forgive me for my lack of good qualities and
make me your own, my Master,
Thou art Infinite and Unknowable,
Graciously make known to me Thyself
through Shabd — the Mystic Word.*¹³³

GURU AMAR DAS

WHAT TO ASK OF GOD

*My Lord, the Creator, is the Ocean of all
goodness,
Who can adequately praise Him?
Saints pray for the gift of the highest bliss of
Naam.*¹³⁴

GURU ARJAN

*We are but humble mendicants and beggars,
Thou art the Protector of our honor,
Be kind and give us the alms of Thy Naam,
so that we may remain always intoxicated
in Thy love.*¹³⁵

GURU AMAR DAS

*O Lord! take us under the shadow of Thy
protecting wings,
We are unable to do anything on our own,
Graciously give us Thy Naam.*¹³⁶

*O my Divine Friend, grant that I may every
day make an effort to think only of Thee
all the time,
O give me a contact with Shabd — the Bread
of life.*¹³⁷

*The company of Saints dyes us with His
Naam and all our desires are fulfilled,
Nanak prays for Thy Mercy and Thy Grace
and that we may remain absorbed in the
sweet memory of Thy lotus feet.*¹³⁸

GURU ARJAN

PRAYER

*O Rama! make us the servant of Thy
Servants.*

*Grant us the boon to bask in the light of
Saints so long as the breath of our life
lasts.¹³⁹*

GURU RAM DAS

*O Merciful Lord! Graciously grant us the
radiant dust from the feet of Saints.¹⁴⁰*

GURU AMAR DAS

24. Guru Is the Greatest Gift of God

THE truest riches and the greatest gift of God is the Godman, the person who, having realized himself, is established in his Godhead. He is in a sense a polarized God or pole from which God manifests Himself amongst His people. Limitless and Infinite as God is, He is beyond comprehension by finite powers of perception. He can, however, be apprehended in the Master somewhat, as a vast sea can be apprehended at the beach with bathing *ghats*; where sea waters gently flow in so bathers can have a safe dip.

As like attracts like, man must of necessity have man as his teacher, for no one else can teach him. The way to God, therefore, lies through man. Some Godman alone can tell us of the "Way out" from the world, and a "Way in" into the Kingdom of God, now a Lost Province to mankind in general. The fall of man was brought

GURU IS THE GREATEST GIFT OF GOD

about by man, and the regeneration of man too is to be brought about by Man. But there is a world of difference between man and Man — the latter being God-in-man.

*Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He
revealeth His secrets unto His servants
the Prophets.*¹⁴¹

AMOS

*All scripture is given by inspiration of
God.*¹⁴²

ST. PAUL

*The Word became flesh and dwelt amongst
us.*¹⁴³

ST. JOHN

Guru is God personified, for God speaks through the Guru.

*Poor Nanak speaks whenever He desires him
to do so.*

GURU NANAK

*The words of the Master are the words of
Allah, though seemingly uttered by
Abdullah (the Servant of God).*

MAULANA RUMI

*I Speak not of myself; but the Father that
dwelleth in me, He doeth the works.*¹⁴⁴

CHRIST

PRAYER

The greatest prayer a person can therefore offer to God is that He may, in His unbounded mercy, establish his contact with His prophets who may lead him Godward. The Godman or the Prophet shows him the Way — the Grand Trunk Road that leads to God. It is nothing but the Sound Current or Sound Principle differently called by different sages: the Word or the Holy Spirit by the Christians, *Kalma*, *Bang-e-Asmani* or *Nida-e-Arshi* by the Mohammedans, *Udgit*, *Akash Bani*, *Naad* or *Sruti* by the Hindus, and *Shabd* or *Naam* by the Sikhs. Zoroaster calls it *Sraosha* and the Theosophists “the Voice of the Silence.” Christ speaks of it as “The Voice of the Son of God.” God overflows in the Guru and unites man with the Word to reach back to his True Home.

*When the dead shall hear the Voice of the Son
of God; and they that hear shall live.*¹⁴⁵

CHRIST

This Sound Current then is the means to salvation. It is the Master Key that unlocks the Kingdom of Heaven. It bestows life eternal on man, and restores him once again to the Garden of Eden from which he was driven away by disobedience to God. What greater boon can a man seek from God, but restoration to the Kingdom lost by him. It marks the end of his long exile through countless centuries as He hails back the lost sheep to His fold. The Master is the kind Shepherd who, out

GURU IS THE GREATEST GIFT OF GOD

of compassion, does all this for erring humanity. Such high souls hold a commission from the Most High.

*I am come in my Father's name.*¹⁴⁶

*No man can come to me, except the Father
which hath sent me draw him: and I will
raise him up at the last day.*¹⁴⁷

CHRIST

We have similar references in the Sikh Scriptures as well.

*Kabir knows the secrets of God and brings
His message to mankind.*

KABIR

*He who sent thee into the world, He calls
thee back again and wistfully awaits thy
homecoming.*

GURU ARJAN

Herein lies the greatness of Master-souls. They effect a reunion between man and God. The long-drawn period of separation comes to an end, and the lost child is restored once again to the Father. It marks the Grand Homecoming through endless trials and tribulations. The Saving Grace of God is stirred by the Godman and the purpose of life is fulfilled. Henceforth the Son and the Father are not only reconciled but become one.

PRAYER

*From the great deep to the great deep he
goes.*

TENNYSON

No longer is he an exile in the world but an inheritor of the Kingdom of God, established once more in his native Godhead.

This is the true fulfillment of the covenant between God and man, and the true resurrection or rising from the dead as vouchsafed by the Son of God to man. This is the fulfillment of God's Law and the purpose of human birth.

*This is the fundamental Law of God: that no
one can reach Him except through
Satguru (the Master-soul).¹⁴⁸*

GURU RAM DAS

Again:

*God clothed Himself in vile man's flesh, that so
He might be weak enough to suffer woe.*

JOHN DONNE

Therefore, always pray to God to bring us in contact with a Godman — the Master.

25. *What One Should Ask from the Godman*

THE Master is the mouthpiece of God. He is the Pole at which God manifests His Godhood. He is the bathing *ghat* or beach where a person can safely enter into the sea for a dip. He is like a switch, which has in it the concentrated energy of the powerhouse. The Son and the Father are one and administer the same Law. "I and my Father are one," says Christ. Clothed in Heavenly Light, He radiates Light into the world.

*I am the light of the world, and he that
followeth me, shall not walk in darkness
but shall have the light of life.¹⁴⁹*

CHRIST

God or a Godman is the Treasure House of Naam. Naam is God's Master-instrument with which He created the Universe and with which He is sustaining it. The moment He withdraws this power of His, the result is disintegration, dissolution and death. Saint John calls It "Word:"

*In the beginning was the Word, and the
Word was with God and the Word was
God. The same was in the beginning with
God. All things were made by Him; and
without Him was not anything made
that was made. In Him was life; and the*

PRAYER

*life was the light of man. And the light
shineth in darkness and the darkness
comprehendeth it not.*¹⁵⁰

A prophet, a saint, an apostle is truly the repository of God's Power. He is the veritable abode of God Himself:

*God comes into the world in the garb of a
Sadh (saint).*¹⁵¹

GURU ARJAN

Whoever then has a longing for God must hasten to a true Saint and seek God from Him. Nothing but the Saving Grace of the Master can work a true transformation in the worldly-wise man, fully identified as he is with the sensual plane.

*I think of Thee and lovingly long for Thee,
I pray to the saints to manifest Thee in me.*¹⁵²
*I pray to the sadhs for I hear God is of His
devotees,
Nanak has an intense longing for Him, O!
have mercy.*¹⁵³

GURU ARJAN

*Separate for ages, unite now O Lord,
This is the greatest desire of my heart.
Hear my prayers through the Master,
Nanak has no other wish but this.*¹⁵⁴

GURU RAM DAS

WHAT ONE SHOULD ASK FROM THE GODMAN

*I pray to the saints for union,
That is what Nanak asks for.*¹⁵⁵

GURU ARJAN

*The souls that have realized the Lord, I shall
inquire of them,
In all humility, I shall supplicate to know
the Way to Him.*¹⁵⁶

GURU NANAK

*Saints are the representatives of God, and to
them we pray,
We are but filthy worms, O Satguru, grant
us the light of Naam.*¹⁵⁷

GURU RAM DAS

Bhai Gurdas has given us a beautiful specimen
of prayer for the Sikhs:

*I am a depraved sinner and a heretic,
A thief, a gambler and a housebreaker,
A thug that lives on illicit gains,
A constant prey to all kinds of lusts,
A slave to the five passions, viz., lust, anger,
greed, attachment and egoism,
A betrayer, an ungrateful wretch, abhorred
by all.
O ye, with all these faults, and still more,
Remember the Satguru for He is
compassionate indeed.*¹⁵⁸

PRAYER

Once this relationship of Master and disciple is established, the latter becomes fully dependent upon him. The acceptance of the disciple by the Master means acceptance of the entire responsibility of his Karmic debt or burden, including *Prarabdhi* (fate or destiny), *Kriyaman* (actions or deeds performed from day to day), and *Sanchit* Karmas (the storehouse of unfructified karmic impressions). Like an official liquidator, it is now his job to liquidate the debts of the disciple, wind them up and free him from them so as to put him on his feet again for the second birth leading to the life of the spirit.

*We are now of the Master, a bond-slave unto
Him,
O Nanak! with the relationship of Master
and servant, save us now.*¹⁵⁹

GURU RAM DAS

*I long for an eternal friend,
Ever true, from end to end.*¹⁶⁰

GURU ARJAN

*I pray to the Satguru to lead me to the
Friend,
By meeting whom, peace descends and death
vanishes.*¹⁶¹

GURU NANAK

WHAT ONE SHOULD ASK FROM THE GODMAN

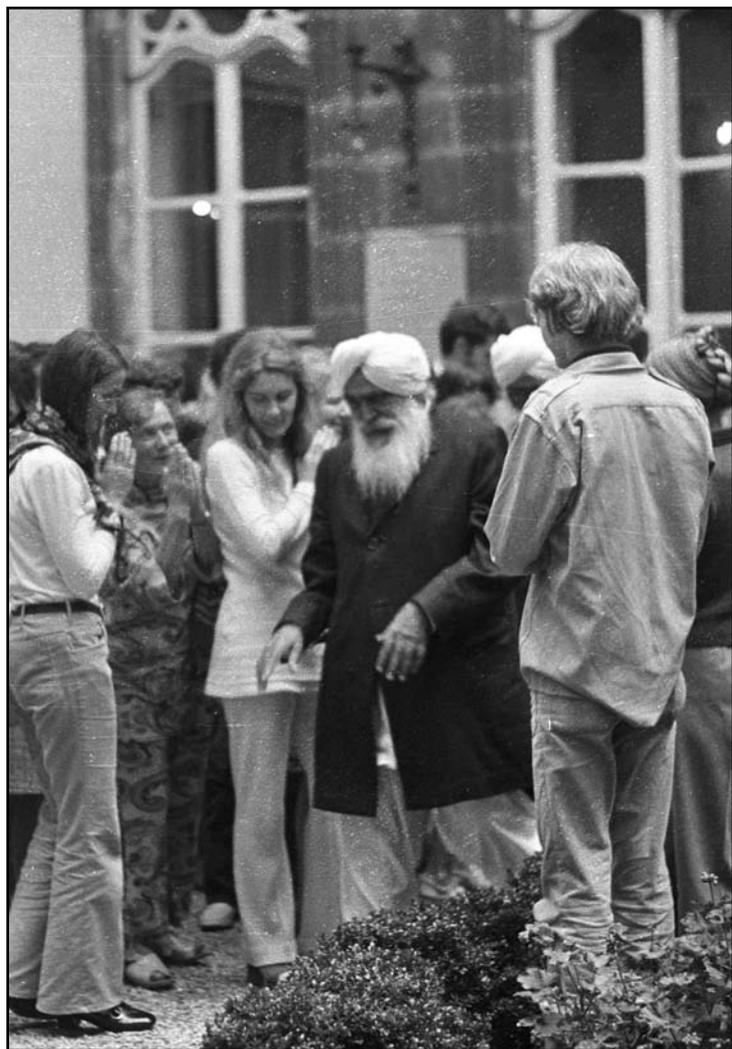
*O Master! may I live by beholding Thee,
And my life's aim be fulfilled.
O fulfill my prayers that I may live by Thy
Word,
May I ever abide under Thy protection,
Whose value only the blessed few may know,
And that too, only through the Master's
Grace.
Grant this boon, O my Beloved,
That Thou may ever dwell in my mind.
Nanak has but one wish alone,
That he may never forget the fountainhead of
all virtues.¹⁶²*

*Everything is in Thy Controlling Power,
O Destroyer of fear,
So saith Nanak, save the ignorant,
O Merciful One.¹⁶³*

GURU ARJAN

*Seeing that the whole world is being
consumed in invisible flames of fire, I
come to Thy feet,
I pray, O perfect Master, save us as Thou
wilt.¹⁶⁴*

GURU AMAR DAS



APPENDIX A

SPECIMEN PRAYERS

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Prayers

Miscellaneous and Brief Specimens

IT WILL *not be out of place to give below some specimen prayers for the benefit of the readers, with a few introductory remarks in this behalf.*

Man is an ensouled body, or in other words, soul plus body; and of the two, soul is the more precious because it is the active and live-principle that enlivens the body. In fact, body has no value apart from the soul.

The great souls or Mahatmas are of varied types. There are Mahatmas who ask of God such necessities of life as may keep their body and soul together, so that after satisfying their physical needs they may spend their time in meditation on God. Jesus in his prayer asked for "daily bread" to satisfy Nature's foremost need — "Give us this day our daily bread." Such souls regard everything as of God and ask Him for the fulfillment of their primary needs from day to day; and then engage in uninterrupted devotion for the rest of the time. The physical body is the vehicle of the soul and has, as such, to be fed for the higher purpose of life, to wit, the advancement of soul. Hunger, says Kabir, is a great handicap in the path of devotion.

PRAYER

O Kabir! the dog of hunger spoils meditation by snarls, Just throw a crumb to it and then sit at ease.

In the beginning the Satguru teaches a disciple to pray for his needs, as would appear from the following prayers of Kabir:

One cannot meditate with hunger gnawing
within,
Take thou the rosary away from me, O Lord.¹

Grant unto me flour, ghee and salt besides some
pulse,

That I may have a day's ration to live upon.
A cot, a pillow with a bed and a quilt,
That I may meditate on Thee undisturbed.
I have not been greedy in my demands,
For I love nothing better than Thy Word.²

Give unto me as much as I may live on in peace,
And none turns away hungry from my door.

Bhagat Dhanna likewise prayed:

O Lord! I pray unto Thee,
Thou dost supply the needs of thy devotees.
Furnish me with pulse, flour and butter,
That I may happily live in comfort.
Give me clothes and a pair of shoes to wear,
And a good supply of wheat and cereals,
And milch cattle for the supply of milk,

APPENDIX A — SPECIMEN PRAYERS

Besides a fine mare to ride on,
And a homely obedient mate in the house;
This is all Dhanna asks for.³

In the Lord's Prayer of Jesus Christ, we have a beautiful example of all that one need ask:

Our Father who art in Heaven, Holy is Thy
Name,
Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done, on Earth
as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day the Bread of Life, and forgive
us our offenses as we forgive those who
offend us.
By Thy Spirit lead us out of all temptation, and
deliver us from evil.
For Thine, Thou Everlasting Lord, is the
Kingdom, the Power, and the glory forever.⁴

Similarly we have a beautiful prayer from the Lord to the Earthly Mother:

Our Mother which art upon earth, hallowed be thy
name. Thy Kingdom come, and thy will be
done in us, as it is in thee. As thou sendest
every day thy angels, send them to us also.
Forgive us our sins, as we atone all our sins
against thee. And lead us not into sickness,
but deliver us from all evil, for thine is the
earth, the body, and the health.⁵

ESSENE GOSPEL OF JOHN

PRAYER

The disciples of Buddha, without considering the necessity for formal prayers, have always wished well for all humanity; and this in fact is the highest type of prayer, whether we call it prayer or not. Whenever after self-ablution, they sit in meditation in the morning and evening, they express these thoughts:

I wish to have universal love for all. I wish that all creation on all sides — above me and below, on my right and left — may live in peace. I wish well unto all, living either in this world or in heaven or in hell. Let there be peace everywhere.

In the Rig Veda (Hindu Scriptures) there are prayers invoking God for the fulfillment of physical and other worldly needs. In Sukat 53 of Mandal 6, we have:

O Lord of valor, we pray for all the gifts of God: for success in our endeavors and the gift of food, and all such things that are desirable. O God of Love, let there be nothing in one's way to gain food in abundance, and have our wishes fulfilled.

In their daily Sandhya, the Hindus recite:

Brahm, the eye of the three regions and the Devas, is in front of us. We wish to have him before us for a hundred years, and may we live a hundred years to see him, to hear him, to sing of him, and live for him happily and in prayer, for a hundred years and more.

APPENDIX A — SPECIMEN PRAYERS

The Vedantins also think of, dwell upon and meditate on the Mahavakyas (their traditional aphorisms) "Aham Brahm Asmi" (I am Brahm) and "Tat Twam Asi" (I am as Thou art).

The Gayatri — the most sacred Mantra — is a prayer to the Lord to lead us to Him, the Sun of all Light.

Khawaja Hafiz Shirazi, in a state of Divine intoxication, prayed to his Master thus:

Helpless I am and Thou art helpful,
Separated are we for myriads of ages.

In sheer compassion, take me to Thy abode,
Attracted by Thy wondrous beauty, I follow
Thee.

Else could I not budge an inch from my place,
Fortunate was Ayaz, the slave of Mahmud,
For having won the kingly favor.
It is a proud privilege to serve at Thy door,
With Thy glance of Grace, make me worthy of it.

Shamas Tabrez prayed to his preceptor as follows:

O Cup-bearer, serve Thou the wine of the other
world,
That may give a vision of the Invisible.
A draught whereof may give Divine
Intoxication,
And close the critical eyes of the flesh,
And open the mystic eye within.

PRAYER

O Master! ostrich lives on the Kaaf Mountain,
Thou art the true abode of the bird of my soul.
As candle is the altar for the moth,
My life is a thousand times sacrificed on Thee.
Throw down the sluice gates of the waters of
 life,
And make manifest the fabled spring of Kausar.
Grant me the intoxication of love,
And keep my wandering wits at anchor.
My only prayer is that Thou enter and occupy
 Thy seat in the mosque of my body:
And sanctify my poor abode with Thy holy
 presence.

The set prayer among the Muslims runs:

In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most
 Merciful.
Praise be to God, the Cherisher and Sustainer of
the Worlds;
Most Gracious, Most Merciful;
Master of the day of Judgment.
Thee do we worship, and Thine aid we seek.
Show us the straight way, the way of those on
 whom Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace,
Those whose portion is not wrath, and who go
 not astray. Amen!

PRAYERS FROM KABIR

With folded hands I pray: hear, O Ocean of
Mercy!

Grant me the gifts of compassion, humility,
knowledge and happiness, in the company of
the saints.

Kabir with thoughts fixed on Thy lotus feet
prays,

O Guru! tell me about the True Path of the
saints.

What should I ask of Thee? for I feel greatly
ashamed.

I commit sins of which Thou art a veritable wit-
ness: how then can I please Thee?

While I have all the faults in me, Thou art all
goodness.

If I may forget Thee, I pray that Thou mayest
not forget.

O Lord! May I never forget Thee even in the
midst of millions.

You can have many like me, but for me there is
none beside Thee.

If I were to forget Thee, where should I get
shelter?

I cannot give my heart to others — *Siva*,
Virancha or *Narda*.

With all my faults, do not get angry with me,
the Master doth forgive the lapses of his
servant;

PRAYER

Forgetful Kabir is all tainted vile,
But the Master has a loving heart.

I am steeped in sins, sins without number,
It is for Thee to forgive me or to kill me,
Forgive, forgive and again forgive, O Forgiver
Divine.

An ever erring child I am, but I depend on the
Father's Grace.

Thou art the abode of infinite virtues with no
vice whatever,
But when I search my own self, I find myself
full of all ills.

There is not a single virtue in me, listen O
Master Divine!

It is through the Power of Thy Word that I am
honored everywhere.

I am all false, while the Lord is Sterling Truth.
Full of sins as I am, O save me if Thou wilt.

Born with a thistle in my flesh, full of all evils
I am,

Thou art the great Donor and Savior, O save me
right.

O save me right for I am caught in a great
whirlpool,

And shall be carried away by the strong current
if Thou dost not take hold of me.

For other sinners Thou art a well of refreshing
waters, but I am an ocean of sins.

APPENDIX A — SPECIMEN PRAYERS

I only depend on the Word of the Master, hear
O Merciful One,
I know not what love is, nor have I any other
virtue.

I wonder, how will I have the love of my
Beloved?

If I meet the Master, I shall cry out my anguish,
With my head on His feet, I shall speak out my
mind.

Permeating all, Thou art immanent in every
form.

If I have to leave Thee off, who else will ferry
me across?

The ocean of life is too deep to be measured and
sketched,

With thy mercy, O merciful One, I may get a
footing.

Full of all evil, I have nothing to boast of and
am hard of heart,

But perfect as my Master is, He can land me
ashore.

O my perfect Master! take a firm hold of me,
And lead me to the goal with no break on the
way.

Grant me the gift of devotion, O my Munificent
One!

I wish for naught, save a ceaseless service unto
Thee.

Master! Thou art generous and merciful,

PRAYER

I am drowning in mid-stream, take me over to
the shore.

How can the love between Thee and me sever!
As the leaf of the lotus abides in the water, so
dost Thou in Thy servant;
As the night-bird *chakor* gazes at the moon all
the night o'er,
So do I my Lord, thy servant;
From the beginning of time until the ending of
time, there is love between Thee and me.
How can such love be extinguished?
Kabir therefore says: As the river plunges into
the ocean, so doth my heart in Thee.

ODE TO THE SATGURU

Long and dreary has been the struggle of the
mind but all in vain,
All potent art Thou and can do aught, then why
this delay?
Wandering up and down in the wheel of life, I
have never had a success.
O Munificent Lord, have mercy, free the spirit
and concentrate it all,
The arch enemy of the mind is but a waste, O
sow in it the seeds of love,
Enamored of false delights, it knows not true
happiness,
Hankering after the pleasures of the world, it
has never tasted the sweetness of the Word.

APPENDIX A — SPECIMEN PRAYERS

What should I do? How should I try to set it
right?
For it does not take to the Word of the Master,
This mind is a curious medley and has no
interest in the *Shabd*:
How can it save itself from the vicious cycle of
births and deaths,
When it does not practice the Word given by the
Master?
It shall keep tossing in the world and remain in
the clutches of *Yama* (the God of Death).
Forgetful of the Word of the Master, it shall
suffer terribly.
O Master! immanent in every heart, why dost
Thou not lead me out?
When there is none else whom I can call mine
own, O take me to the Heaven above.
Have mercy on me now, and take me to Thy
Heavenly House as Thou may.

Entangled in evil thoughts, I am an utter
stranger in a strange land.
Reform me this time and I shall lovingly think
of Thee all the time.
I feel repentant and sad as I know not how to
contact my Beloved;
He lives in the High Heavens while I am a
creature of the earth and miserable without
Him.
O Satguru! attend to my tale of woe and take
me out of the domain of Death;

PRAYER

In sheer helplessness I cry unto Thee, O hear,
Thou, the Gracious and the Merciful to all but
this unfortunate wretch.
How may I tell Thee of my pain? for I am lying
on a bed of thorns.
Thou, O beloved! hast encouraged me to fly to
the heavens with the wings of love.
Thy Grace has enabled me to meet my Beloved,
and to escape from all toils and miseries.

O Master! just listen to my prayer, I bow unto
Thee again and again:
Drive the evil out of me and grant me proximity
to Thy lotus feet;
Ferry me safely ashore for my barque is in the
midst of an eddying whirl.
None save Thee is my own, save me as Thine
own, O Master!
With all my ills I am yet Thine, and Thou art
Donor beyond all limitations.
I am in great pain, sorrow and affliction; rescue
me at Thy pleasure.
I worship Thee with all my heart and soul, and
make a sacrifice of all unto Thee.
Now I have a powerful sheet anchor though I
know not Thy worth.
Thou hast explained the mystery of the inner
Sound Current but the devil of the mind
listens to It not.
Wandering in the ups and downs of life, it runs
after name and fame;

APPENDIX A — SPECIMEN PRAYERS

How may I turn its direction without Thy
loving Grace, O Master?
O Lord of my spirit: listen to my prayer, pull
the mind out from its rut.

I ask of the Master but one gift: make me
recognize the mystic Word.
All my life have I wandered with the mind, O
free me from the bondage of Karmas;
Let my Consciousness recede within and hear
the ceaseless Sound, and the mind grow still.
Thus can I escape from all ills and reach the
eternal place of Sat Shabd (the true mystic
Word).

Grant unto me the intoxication of the Word so
that I may remain absorbed in It;
Then harm and dishonor shall not affect me, for
I shall always be lost in Thy sweet memory.
Let me not be swept off by the time stream, but
grant the sheet anchor of the Word.
My mind has now grown humble, O Master! let
it lose itself in Thy lotus feet.

O Master! take me to Thy abode:
I am a useless fellow, always entangled in
doubts and delusions;
O Thou the Merciful! take me to Thy Abode.
I have no count of the sins I have committed,
and my mind does not catch the Word.
What should I do? My strength fails me and my
mind finds no rest.

PRAYER

O Satguru! take pity on me, for I remain
miserable all the time.

Neither the consciousness recedes within nor
the mind gets stilled, and I cannot appreciate
the greatness of the Word.

I have taken to the Path of the Masters, a High
Road to Spirituality;

Why then O Master dost Thou take no hold of
me?

This noble Path of the Masters shall suffer
a great setback if I succeed not in my
endeavors.

I cry from my egoistic reason, and do not resign
myself to Thy Will.

I beg of Thee again and again, O give me the
gift of Thy Word.

O Master, Word personified as Thou art, I come
to Thee for relief.

How can I liberate myself from the wiles of the
mind? This is the problem of my soul.

It has cast a deadly spell of worldly pleasures,
and I am thus separated from my Real Home.

Enmeshed in the ten senses, I find myself in a
vicious circle,

Having been expelled from the tenth portal, I
am wandering through the nine gates.

Caught in the web of worldly pleasure, I find
no Way out of the bondage.

Besides the Master, I see nobody capable
enough to lead me out of the wilderness.

APPENDIX A — SPECIMEN PRAYERS

I am all afraid of *Yama* (the Lord of Death), who
else can free me of this fear?

I have degraded myself to the life of beasts as I
have never loved the Master,
As a branch fallen off the tree, I am cast away
from the Real Home.

I beg the Master to get my mind to love His
lotus feet.

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

And then will it drink *Amrit* (nectar) from the
fount of immortality,

And 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
(Lord),

O Lord! make me thine own: I have come, for I
seek shelter at Thy feet.⁶

SWAMI SHIV DAYAL SINGH

HYMNS OF MIRA

Herein have I suffered much,
Drive away my sorrow and scepticism,
Now I am in search of Thee, O Lord!
Take me beyond the bounds of affliction.
The whole world is flooding down
The current of births and deaths,
O Lord of Mira — *Gidhar Nagar!*
Rescue her from the giant wheel of births.

PRAYER

I know no peace without seeing Thee, for I
know the deep anguish in my heart,
Over and over again I go to the housetop to
see if Thou art coming; and my eyes have
swollen red with weeping.
The whole world is false and transitory, and so
all the friends and relations;
With folded hands I pray that Thou mayest hear
me.
This mind of mine, a great scoundrel, is ever
out like an elephant run amuck.
The Master, having explained the secret, has
taken me in his fold, and I am at rest.
O Girdhar Nagar — the Lord of Mira! I am now
fully absorbed in contemplation of Thee.
Every moment I see Thine immanence
everywhere and seeing, I feel blessed.
My friends have turned enemies and hate me,
one and all, but Thou alone art my well-
wisher.
My boat is marooned on the high sea, and I feel
restless all the day and get no sleep at night.
By constant waiting and watching have I grown
lean like a thorn,
The arrows of love have pierced my heart and
I cannot for even a moment forget the love
pangs.
Thou regained the accursed *Ahilya* from a stone
in the wilderness,
O what complaint is there against Mira
— O speak to me of that.

APPENDIX A — SPECIMEN PRAYERS

The perfect Guru, Ravi Das, came from the
Supreme Abode to my rescue,
And He opened up the Way for me, and I
became one with the Lord.

I am being swept down in a fearful current,
save me O Lord, if Thou wilt.

O! none is my own in this world, but Thou
alone art mine.

All friends and relations: one and all,
All are attached to me through selfish ends.
Let the Lord of Mira listen to her supplications.
Grant her the boon of Thy feet, if Thou wilt.

FROM DHANI DHARAM DAS

Grant unto me, O Master, the gift of devotion,
for Thou art a great Donor.

I wish I may not forget Thee all my life and
serve Thee always.

Pilgrimages, fasts and vigils attract me not, nor
the worship of gods;

I have no desire for anything save Thee;
Thou art everything to me, O Possessor of all
riches!

I need nothing when I have a Perfect Master by
my side;

I would not like even in dream to think of wife,
wealth and children, but of Thee and Thy
Greatness.

PRAYER

Listen ye to the prayer of Dharam Das, O the
Munificent Lord!
Take me out of the gyres and make me Thine
own.

THE PRAYER OF SURDAS

O Lord! have mercy on me,
Thou Knower of all hearts, I have no virtue in
me.
I cannot get rid of my evil, not even
momentarily,
I have on my head a heavy load of cunning and
deceit.
Entangled amongst wife, son and riches, I have
lost my very self,
O, come to the rescue of Sur, as his barque is
about to sink.

FROM SIKH SCRIPTURES

There are many beautiful prayers in the Adi Granth Sahib, the scriptures of the Sikhs. Some examples follow:

We are severed from Thee through our own
deeds: show mercy and take us unto Thee
again.
Having wandered in all directions, tired and
worn out we have come to Thy feet.
Just as a dry cow is of no consequence and
vegetables without moisture go stale and
become valueless;

APPENDIX A — SPECIMEN PRAYERS

So we, the worthless, have no peace without
our Beloved.

If the Beloved reveals Himself not in the house
(body), the house, nay the very town where
one lives is like a desert,

And all the make-up and ornamentation of the
body become useless.

In the absence of the Beloved, all friends
and relations appear like angels of death
(*Yamaduts*).

Nanak prayeth: kindly grant me the gift of Thy
Holy Word,
And unite me with the Lord, who abides
forever.⁷

My mind yearns for the sight of the Lord, as
doth a thirsty man for water.

My heart is pierced with the love's dart from
my Lord and He alone knows my miserable
state.

Whosoever narrates to me the tales of my
Beloved, he alone is a brother unto me.

Come together ye brothers, accept the Master's
Word and sing songs of my Beloved.

O Lord! fulfill Nanak's desire: Grant him Thy
holy vision, the harbinger of peace.

O mother! how can I find my Beloved, the Lord
of my soul?

I am not beautiful, nor wise, nor strong;

I am a stranger come from afar,

PRAYER

I have no riches, nor am I youthful;
Grant this helpless creature Thy shelter
(*Sharan*).

I have become love-stricken from endless
seeking.

I am wandering about, thirsty for a vision of the
Lord,

Now, O Nanak! the most merciful Lord has
quenched my thirst through contact with the
saints.⁸

O Ocean of Mercy! always reside in my heart,
Grant me such wisdom that may make me love
the Lord.

I ask for the dust of Thy servant's feet, that
I may rub it over and over again on my
forehead;

Fallen as I am to the lowest depths, I am sure
that I will be purified by singing Thy praises.

Let Thy Will be sweet unto me, and whatever
Thou doest be pleasant for me;

Whatever Thou givest I should accept with
good grace and not wish for aught else;

Knowing Thee to be always near me, I wish to
be the dust to Thy servants;

If we get the company of saints, then alone can
we attain the Lord.

We are always Thy boy-servants, and Thou art
our Master.

Nanak saith: I am a child and Thou art my
father and mother,

APPENDIX A — SPECIMEN PRAYERS

And Thy Naam in my mouth is just like
exhilarating nectar.⁹

It is through Thee that I live, forsake me not
even for a moment.

O grant me but one gift: remove my doubts and
protect me, my Beloved, Thou the Knower of
all secrets;

The wealth of the Word is more than millions of
earthly kingdoms,

The nectar of Thy Glance is the highest honor
for me:

O Omnipotent Beloved! grant me the power to
sing Thy praises all the time.

O Benefactor of all souls, I take shelter with
Thee;

Nanak lovingly sacrifices himself at Thy feet.¹⁰

Lord, make me the dust of Thy feet, most
merciful Beloved, the Captivator of my heart,
Be Gracious enough to satisfy this craving of
mine.

Thy praises are being chanted in all the ten
directions,

Thine all-knowing wisdom is present
everywhere;

Those who sing Thy praises, my Creator, shall
have no regrets when quitting the world.

The contact of the saints relieves us from all
bonds and pains,

PRAYER

Nanak knows that all pleasures, riches and
delights are of no consequence, without the
love of the Lord.¹¹

There is none beside Thee, Thou the Creator,
and all happens as Thou desireth,
All my strength is from Thee and so the support
of my mind;
Nanak always meditates on Thee alone.

O Par Brahm, Thou art the highest Benefactor,
and sustaineth all,
Thou art and Thou shalt ever be: Unreachable,
Unknowable, the Highest and the Endless.
Those who serve Thee are freed from fear and
pain.
Through Guru's Grace, Nanak sings Thy
praises.

Whatever we see is evolved from Thee, Thou
the Ocean of Goodness, beautiful Lord.
O seeker, remember Him constantly: but
the remembrance, O Nanak, cometh only
through His Grace.
I am a humble servant of one who meditates on
Thee;
Company of such a one liberates all the world.
Nanak saith: O Lord! I pray for the luminous
dust of the saints: fulfill this craving of
mine.¹²

Thou art a most loving Lord with many
disciples like me,

APPENDIX A — SPECIMEN PRAYERS

Thou art an Ocean of Jewels, with depths
immeasurable,
Thou, O Supreme Wisdom! be merciful unto
me, and give me understanding to meditate
on Thee all the time.

O my self, do not be vain and proud, but
humble like dust for that is the way to
liberation.

The Lord of Nanak is the highest of all, and
many like Nanak serve His Will.¹³

Be gracious, my Lord, that my eyes may behold
Thy Gracious Form;

Give me millions of tongues, my Beloved,
That I may sing Thy *Naam*.

Singing of Thee will save me from the path of
Yama and drive away all pain and sorrow:

The Lord permeates the water, earth, ether
and everything besides and I see Him
everywhere.

All doubts and delusions having vanished, I see
the Lord as the nearest of the near,

O Lord! be merciful to Nanak, that he may have
Thy blessed vision.

My Beloved Lord, grant me millions of ears that
I may hear Thy praises forever,

Hearing it is that purifies the mind and snaps
the bondage of time.

All bondage ends by constantly meditating on
the Ever-present;

PRAYER

And then comes in rejoicing and True
Knowledge.

By constantly repeating His Name (*Naam*) we
become concentrated into an effortless state
of Bliss.

Remembrance of the Lord burns away all sins,
and evil thoughts fly as by an enchanter
driven.

Nanak prayeth: Lord, be kind, that men may
hear the Voice of the Ever-present Word.

Millions of hands serve Thee, and millions of
feet walk in Thy Path,

Thy Word is the boat to ferry us across the
ocean of life and death,

Whoever sits in that boat crosses the *Bhavsagar*
(the fearful sea of life and death), and is
blessed forever, with no desire unfulfilled,

All the deadly sins vanish giving place to Bliss,
and the Mystic Sound becomes audible,

Whatever the mind desires that comes to pass,
The Unstruck Sound of the Word is a priceless
gem.

Nanak saith: Be kind and grant us the boon of
treading Thy Path all the time.

This is the boon, this the honor, this the treasure
of *Naam*, and fortunate is he who comes by
it;

This is the greatest delight and the highest
enjoyment, for one who meditates at His feet:

APPENDIX A — SPECIMEN PRAYERS

Now the mind is absorbed in the contemplation
of His feet and has taken shelter in Him, the
Creator of all.

Everything is Thine, O Lord! and Thou art
mine, O Merciful One;

I am a worthless fellow and Thou an Ocean
of Bliss: this realization comes through the
company of the saints.

Nanak saith: The Lord hath been kind; my mind
is now absorbed in the sweet contemplation
of His lotus feet.

Thou art my Father and Thou art my Mother,
Thou art my relative and Thou art my brother,
Thou art my Protector everywhere,
What fear can I have?

I found Thee out through Thy Merciful Grace:
Thou art my shelter and also my honor,
There is none besides Thee,
Whatever happens is of Thy doing and nothing
is of us.¹⁴

Thou art our Lord and to Thee we pray:
The soul and the body are Thy gifts.
Thou art mother and father to us, and we are
Thy children:
Through Thy kindness we get immense
happiness,
Nobody knows Thy greatness,
Thou art the Highest Lord of all,
Thou art the Sustainer of all creation,

PRAYER

Which is created by Thee and obeys Thy Will.
Thou alone knowest Thy vastness,
Nanak is always pouring himself out in Thy
love.¹⁵

O Benefactor of this unworthy soul! my life,
body and mind are all Thine,
How can one gauge Thy greatness?
What cleverness can a purchased slave show?
All my body and soul are Thine: O most
beautiful and attractive Beloved!
I shall give all that I have for a glimpse of Thee,
Thou my Benefactor, O Lord!
I am a poor beggar at thy door, and Thou art
ever Gracious.
There is nothing that I can do.
O Master! Thou alone art Unreachable and
Limitless!
What service can I render?

What words can I utter to please Thee?
How can I have Thy *Darshan* (a look at Thee)?
We cannot know Thy Greatness, nor Thine
Existence Infinite :
My mind is yearning just for a glimpse of Thee.
I persist in begging of Thee without feeling any
sense of shame,
The gift that I may have the luminous dust from
the feet of Thy saints to smear on my face.
The Master showed His mercy, O Nanak!
And the Lord liberated me through His Grace.¹⁶

APPENDIX A — SPECIMEN PRAYERS

Who is ours besides Thee?
O my Beloved, the Sustainer of my life breath,
You only know the inner state of my mind.
And you alone are the Good Friend:
I have derived all happiness from Thee,
O my Master! Unspeakable, Unweighable,
I cannot describe Thy various plays.
O Thou, the Ocean of all Goodness and the
source of real happiness,
Thou art Unreachable, Ever-Present Lord, but
becomest known through the Master's Grace.
Thou hast eliminated all my fears, and have
liberated me after finishing off my egoism.
The fear of life and death is also gone in the
company of the saints;
I touch the feet of the Guru and serve Him.
I sacrifice my whole being a million times for
Him through whose Grace I have crossed the
sea of fear;
Nanak saith: I have now found the Beloved.¹⁷

Thou art my Protector here and hereafter,
Thou nourished me in my mother's womb;
The fire of *Maya* cannot affect those who are
intoxicated with Thy love,
And are absorbed in Thy holy contemplation.
What qualities of Thine can I describe?
I realize Thy presence within my mind and
body;
Thou art my Friend and Master,
I know not anyone else besides Thee.

PRAYER

Whomsoever Thou takest under Thy Protection,
not a breath of the scorching air can touch
Him.

Thou art the Lord and in Thy *sharan* (shelter)
one gets immense happiness.

Thou makest Thyself known through
meditation in the company of the saints:
Thou the Highest, the Limitless and the
Priceless.

Thou art my True Master and I, Thy humble
slave:

Thou art Lord, Thy greatness true,
Nanak sacrifices his all for Thee.¹⁸

Thou art my boon companion and my Friend,
Thou art my Beloved and my love goes only to
Thee,

Thou art my spouse, honor and adornment,
And I cannot live without Thee, even for a
while.

Thou art my jewel and my very life,
Thou my Master and my Ruler too;
I shall ever abide by Thy Will
And shall do what Thou wilt.

Wherever I look, I see Thee there in fullness.

I will recite with my tongue,

Thy Word that made me fearless;

Thou art my great Treasure and *Bhandar*
(merchandise).

Thou art sweetly sweet and the support of my
mind,

APPENDIX A — SPECIMEN PRAYERS

Thou art my honor and I am absorbed in Thy
love.

Thou art my shelter and Thou my support;
I worship Thee in my mind and body after
having got this secret from the Guru.

The Guru made me firmly established in the
One,

O Nanak! the servant of Hari is ever sustained
by Hari.¹⁹

CHERISHING SALVATION

Pray forget not Thy servant; if for nothing
else consider my previous love of Thee and
possess my heart.

Thou art Gracious and Uplifter of the fallen and
so look not to our faults.

Thou art my soul, my very life breath, and all
my riches and happiness,

Kindly burn down the veil of egoism that
separates me from Thee;

How can a fish live without water?

And how an infant without milk?

Nanak is thirsty for the light of Thy lotus feet:

A glimpse of Thee brings in all the happiness
that one needs.²⁰

Blessed is the love which pours itself out on the
lotus feet of the Beloved;

When most fortunately I found the Perfect One,
I obtained the fruit of millions of austerities and
meditations.

PRAYER

I am a poor slave of Thine and depend upon
Thee alone with nothing else to depend
upon.

The repetition of the Lord's Name has banished
all my fears, and with the collyrium of Thy
Word (All Wisdom), I have been roused
from a long drawn sleep of ignorance.

Thou art fathomless and extremely great, O
Lord! The veritable Ocean of kindness, full of
jewels.

Nanak seeks and begs for the Divine *Naam*: he
bows at the feet of the Lord.²¹

Lord be Gracious, and keep me in Thy *sharan*
(shelter), for I know not how to serve Thee,
low and ignorant as I am.

I have the proud privilege to have Thee as my
Beloved:

We are all sinners and always commit mistakes,
while Thou art the Benefactor of the
worthless.

We run after *Maya* with our back to the Lord for
such are our deeds.

Thou givest us everything in Thy Compassion,
while we are callously ungrateful to Thee,
Entangled in Thy gifts, we forget the Donor
Divine.

There is nothing beyond Thee, O my Liberator,
Nanak saith: O I have come to seek Thy shelter;
liberate this muddle-headed one also.²²

APPENDIX A — SPECIMEN PRAYERS

O Hari! save me from disgrace, as I am greatly
afraid of *Yama* (Death).

I have come to Thy *sharan*, O Ocean of mercy:
I am foolish and greedy and I have run myself
out in sinning and sinning;
The fear of death haunts me in and out all the
time.

I am being consumed in the invisible fires
within.

I have tried many remedies to obtain salvation,
And have searched in all the ten directions,
But the secrets of the Lord residing within, I
could not find.

Devoid of all virtues, I have done no meditation
nor undergone any austerities,
What should I do now?

O Nanak! exhausted and defeated as thou art,
Seek thou His anchorage and pray for the boon
of fearlessness.²³

Do hear my prayer, O my Lord!

I am Thy disciple even if filled with millions of
sins,

Thou art the Destroyer of all ills; ever kind and
bewitching, the Dispeller of sorrows and
woes.

Grant me shelter at Thy feet, and protect me, O
Thou the All-Pervading Absolute.

Seated in the hearts of all, Thou art both seeing
and hearing us through, for Thou art nearer
than the nearest.

PRAYER

O Lord! do hear Nanak's prayer: save me, for I
am Thy disciple.
Thou art ever All-Powerful, while we are poor
beggars entangled in worldly attractions.
O, do take us out of the mire and free us from
the bondage of mind and matter,
For we are every moment paying the penalty
for our faults:
O my Creator, Thou art unattached and free
from all limitations.
Tired as I am from wanderings into many
incarnations,
O have mercy upon me,
Nanak prayeth: I am the slave of Hari:
The Lord is the support of my life breath.

Thou art All-Powerful, while I have inferior
intelligence, my Lord;
Thou, however, providest even for the
ungrateful,
Perfect as Thou art in Thy Merciful Vision:
O Creator, Thou art Beyond all understanding
and Limitless, while I am lowly and know
naught:
With my back upon the pearls, I collect shells,
Brute, low and ignorant as I am,
The hard earned *maya* (wealth), collected
through means fair and foul, is transitory
and disappears in the twinkling of an eye.
Nanak seeks the shelter of the Omnipotent One,
Do save me from ultimate disgrace.²⁴

APPENDIX A — SPECIMEN PRAYERS

We are dirty, Thou Pure: we are so unworthy of
Thee, O Benefactor,

We are fools, while thou art All Wisdom and
Possessor of all powers (arts).

O Madho, what a world of difference between
the two;

We the failing ones and Thou so perfect:

We the sinners, and Thou the Destroyer of all
sins, O beautiful Beloved:

Thou hast created everything and hast provided
for everyone with life, body and soul;

This worthless one is without qualities, and yet
Thou givest him all out of Thy kindness.

Thou doest good which we do not appreciate
and yet Thou art always kind;

O Lord! protect Thy children, Thou the treasure
of everything and an ever-abiding King.

The creation begs of Thee:

Nanak saith: Low as we are, save us for the sake
of Thy saints.²⁵

Make me Thine own, O Merciful One, for I have
taken shelter at Thy door,

Save me, O Benefactor of the poor, I have tired
myself out in quest of Thee.

It is in Thy very nature to love Thy devotees
and to lift up the fallen:

There is no one else save Thee to hearken to my
prayer,

PRAYER

I pray, take me up, O Merciful One, and get me out of the ocean of *Sansara* by holding my hand.²⁶

O my Beloved, hear how I wander alone in the wilderness!

How can I have patience without the Beloved? the Carefree as He is.

A wife cannot live without her spouse during the long and tortuous nights;

I do not get a wink of sleep, I only yearn for my love, O listen to me.

In the absence of the Beloved, none has any sympathy for me, and I cry all alone.

Nanak saith: the wife doth get her Beloved if she really feels unhappy and is extremely miserable without him.

The Beloved of my life has left me, who is there to unite me with Him?

There is happiness when love unites, for then the Word (Mystic Sound) becomes pleasant.

When the Word doth become blissful, we get the right place, with the inner (mystic) lamp illumining the body.

Hear, my friend, we become really beautiful by singing the praises of the Supreme Truth.

When Satguru united me with the Beloved, I got the pleasure of His company,

And the Divine Word full of nectar made me buoyant with happiness.

APPENDIX A — SPECIMEN PRAYERS

Nanak says: a wife can have true happiness,
when the Beloved is also fond of her;
Though forgetful of Thee, we are still Thine
own, O Lord!

Even if I commit mistakes, still I have the proud
privilege to belong to Thee.

He whose mind has gone elsewhere, will surely
die from the very regret of having done so.
How can I leave the side of my Beloved, when I
see that He is the Sustainer of my soul?

Thou art my friend and relation, and I am
highly proud of Thee.

When Thou art in, I am happy and feel that my
poor self is honored.

Now that Thou hast been so kind to me,
Pray let me not look anywhere else, and
Let me keep the gift of Thy remembrance ever
locked in my heart.

I will walk down leagues to have Thy *Darshan*
(a love glance),

I will love to hear Thy stories should it please
Thee and the Satguru.

Millions of suns and moons cannot equal the
glory of Thy one hair;

Thou art the greatest of the Great: the
Indescribable and the Ineffable.

I cannot praise Thee sufficiently: Thy friends
run into millions and all superior to me.

Just bestow one Gracious Look on me, and I
will be the happiest creature.

PRAYER

By seeing Him, the mind gets Supreme Peace,
and all mental ills leave off.

How can I forget Him Who saturates me with
His Divine Presence?

With great humility I threw myself at His feet,
and He made me His own for the asking.

Nanak got Him through the help of a Saint, for
it was so preordained.²⁸

Thou art my Father, Thou art my Mother,
Thou art my soul and life, O Bestower of
Happiness:

Thou art my Master, and I am Thy slave,
And apart from Thee nothing is mine.

Grant that I may be singing Thy praises day and
night:

We are Thine instruments and Thou playest on
them.

We are beggars at Thy door; give us the Gift,
O our Benefactor!

Through Thy Grace I may enjoy inner Bliss,
For Thou art permeating every heart.

Through Thy Grace alone one can repeat Thy
sweet *Naam*,

And sing Thy praises in the company of Thy
beloved saints.

Through Thy Mercy, our pains are eliminated,
And through Thy Grace, the lotus of the heart
opens out.

I lovingly pour myself out at the feet of the
Gurdev (the Radiant Form of the Master),

APPENDIX A — SPECIMEN PRAYERS

Whose *Darshan* (sight) is fruitful and whose
service so purifying.
Be kind, O my Lord! that Nanak may sing Thy
praises constantly.²⁹

My Lord, what a poor helpless fellow am I!
Thou hast raised me into a man from a very low
birth,
And therein lies Thy greatness.
Thou art the Lord of all, the Giver of soul and
the life-breath,
And none can describe Thy numerous
attributes.
Beloved of all, Thou providest nourishment to
all, Thou the Sustainer of all life.
None knows Thy mystery permeating as Thou
art unto the vastness and the Beyond, for all
this is Thy manifestation.
Nanak prayeth: Grant me the ship of the saints'
company to cross the ocean of life and
death.³⁰

Keep us as it pleaseth Thee, we have come unto
Thy shelter.
We commit mistakes day and night, and the
Lord forgives us and protects our honor,
We are Thy ever-erring children, and Thou art
our Guru and Father.
O give us good advice:
Nanak is Thy servant, save him from disgrace.³¹

PRAYER

IMPLORING THE UNEQUALED BOON OF NAAM

Satguru, I have come to Thy feet:
Give me the bliss of *Naam* for Divine honor and
free me from all anxieties.

I cannot think of any other place of rest, and as
a last resort, I am at Thy door,
Whether I deserve it or not, O save me as Thou
wilt, for merit I have none.

Thou art ever forgiving, ever kind and
sustaineth all,

Nanak hath taken his refuge with the Saints:
kindly protect him this time.³²

I get real life from a vision of Thy Divine Face,
and feel myself fortunate indeed,

Hear this prayer of mine, my Lord:

Make me Thy disciple and give me the gift of
Naam,

And keep me under Thy protection, my
Benevolent Lord:

It is only the rare few who appreciate the
Guru's Grace,

Hear my appeal, my Lord and Friend:

Let Thy lotus feet abide in my heart.

Nanak makes but one request:

Do not slip away from my remembrance,

O Thou, the Ocean of All-Goodness.³³

O Lord! be kind and grant that we may sing
Thy praises.

APPENDIX A — SPECIMEN PRAYERS

I wistfully wait for the time when the Lord will
hug me to His bosom.
We are children without wisdom and are
steeped in stark ignorance,
Thou our Father, make us understand.
Sons commit mistakes again and again, while
the Father of us all still loves them.
Whatever, O Lord! whatever Thou givest us, we
gladly accept it, for we have no other shelter
whereto we may turn.
The Lord shall be dear to such devotees, who
are dear to the Lord,
Through Thy Grace, we shall merge ourselves
into Thee.
Through Thy Grace alone can we constantly
remember Thee.
Nanak has come to Hari's door,
He will save me from disgrace.³⁴

FOR GRANTING SOLEMN CHANCE TO SERVE SAINTS
AND FOR SELF-SURRENDER TO THE LORD

O Merciful One, I ask of Thee to make me a
slave of Thy servants:
When Thou speakest to me, I feel alive, and get
all wealth and kingdoms.
The treasure of *Naam* nectar is plentiful in the
house of the Lord's devotees,
I feel elated in their company for there I hear
His praises,

PRAYER

My body gets purified in their service.
I bring water for them, fan them, grind their
 corn and get happy by washing their feet;
I cannot do anything of myself.
Show me Thy Grace, O Lord!
Give me a place to live with the Divine Saints.³⁵

O show me Thy Gracious Face, that I may sing
 Thy praises at dusk and dawn and dust the
 feet of Thy servants with the long hair of my
 head,
That is my inner desire, O Master! for there is
 none besides Thee that I may think of.
I meditate on Thy lotus feet, and look toward
 Thee:
Merciful Lord! the Master of all.
With folded hands I pray, that Nanak,
Thy servant, may repeat Thy Divine *Naam*,
And get into the Beyond in the twinkling of an
 eye.³⁶

O Lord! I have just one desire:
O Treasure of mercy and benevolence, make me
 a disciple of Thy saints;
I may make obeisance unto them at early
 morning hours,
And reverently look at their beaming faces day
 and night,
And dedicate myself, body and mind to their
 service;

APPENDIX A — SPECIMEN PRAYERS

I may ever sing praises of the Lord with my
tongue, and
With each breath of my life, let me remember
the Lord, and let me live with the saints from
day to day.
My only food and wealth is Thy Divine *Naam*,
Thus Nanak enjoys real bliss.³⁷

Do me one favor: let my forehead be at the feet
of the saints,
My eyes have His Darshan (look),
My body lie in the luminous dust of His Feet,
The Word of the Guru surge in my heart,
And the Name of the Lord abide in me.
Liberate me from the five deadly sins (lust,
anger, greed, attachment and egoism),
And burn all my doubts and delusions, O
Master,
Whatever you do we may take it to be for our
good without any regrets whatsoever.
You are the Benefactor of Nanak, O Lord!
Liberate me through the company of Thy
saints.³⁸

FOR SHELTER FROM FIVE PASSIONS

My Father save me: I am without any virtue,
While Thou art All Virtuous; I am all alone and
have to contend with five enemies.
Protect me, O my Savior! the foes play hell with
me and make me terribly miserable.
I have come therefore to Thy *sharan* (shelter).

PRAYER

I have tried all *sadhnas* to avoid them, but they
do not leave me.

Having heard of the protective power of the
Saints, I have come to them for relief,
They were kind enough to come to my rescue
and I found great relief through them.

The Saints gave me a lesson in fearlessness and
I practiced their Word:

Thus I did conquer the fearful foes through the
blissful *Bani* (the Mystic Sound).

Nanak says: Having seen the Light I have
attained the Deep Stillness.³⁹

Thou makest me free from passions, falsehood,
greed and speaking ill of others;
Weed all the evil propensities out of me and call
me near to Thee;

And make me the knower of Thy Will.

Hari's servants sing songs of happiness;

O teach me the way whereby I may never forget
Thee even for a moment.

Most fortunately, Nanak met the Perfect Guru,
And since then his mind has ceased to wander
anywhere.⁴⁰

I know none other than Thee:

Thou art with me, Thou my friend and
companion, O Lord!

What fear can I have with Thee as my sheet
anchor and my hope?

Let me not forget Thee for a moment, even
while I sit or stand and am in bed or out of it:

APPENDIX A — SPECIMEN PRAYERS

Keep me always in Thy *sharan* (protection), for
This world is a dreadful ocean of fire.
O Nanak's Satguru! Thou art the giver of real
happiness;
And we are Thy children, O Lord!⁴¹

GENERAL: PRAYERS FOR ALL

All the sins of the saint's devotees who serve the
Lord are eliminated and done away with,
Be kind to us, O Lord! and keep us in the company
of those dear to Thee.

My Lord! I cannot describe Thy Greatness,
With the dead weight of sins like millstones
around us, we were sinking in midstream,
when Thou so graciously lifted us out.

For many incarnations we were entangled in
the obnoxious lures of the world, but when
we came into contact with the saints, we were
saved.

As gold is purified by heating in the fire, so does
our dirty mind get etherealized.

Recite His *Naam* day and night, and make your
heart saturated with the love of Hari.

His *Naam* is a perfect remedy in this world:

Our egoism too was finished up by the Power
of His holy Word;

Hari is unique and beyond our understanding
and still beyond the beyond.

O the Infinitely Conscious Personality,

Be Thou kind to Thy servant;

Nanak has come to Thy shelter.⁴²

PRAYER

We are blind and blindly entangled in the
stupefying enjoyments of the senses;
How can we follow the Path of the Guru?
Only through the Grace of the True Teacher can
we join His fold.⁴³

There is none so poor as I am and none more
merciful than Thou art;

What then is needed?

I have but an unsteady mind:

O lead me to a Perfect Saint.

When I pour out all my love for the Lord,

Why art Thou so silent, O Madho?

We have been separated from *Sach Khand* for
many an incarnation;

But this life I dedicate to Thee.

Ravidas says: I live in the hope of having

Thy sacred Darshan (a meeting),

Which I have not had for such a long time.⁴⁴

What qualities of Thine can we describe?

O Master! Thou art Limitless and beyond all
description.

We sing praises of Thy Naam day and night and
that is our only hope.

We are ignorant and do not know how to cross
over to Thee.

The lowly Nanak is His bondsman and a
drawer of water,

Make us live as Thou pleaseth, for now we live
under Thy shelter,

We commit mistakes at every step,

APPENDIX A — SPECIMEN PRAYERS

But Thou art the Forgiver and Keeper of our
honor,
We are Thy ignorant children, and Thou art our
Father and Master:
O Teach us the Way.
He took Nanak out of serfdom
And has accepted him as His own.⁴⁵

O Master, have mercy upon us,
And take us to Thyself.
We are but worthless cargo,
And Thou canst pilot us to our End.⁴⁶

O Master, come and unite me,
Who has been long separated from my Lord;
My body and mind have been emptied of
attachment,
O fill me with the Light of God.⁴⁷

Having renounced all things,
I have come to Thee, my Master;
O take me under Thy wings,
And make of me what Thou wilt.⁴⁸

The Master is the true devotee of the Lord,
And so to Him I pray;
We are but worthless creatures and seek Thy
protection,
O grant us the gift of Thy Word.⁴⁹

Seeing the world in flames,
We turned to the Lord for refuge;

PRAYER

O Master, save us and deliver us,
For therein lies God's Glory.⁵⁰

I am purifying my heart,
To make it fit for Thy Altar.
O True Friend! I have come to seek Thy refuge;
Teach me the Way to God.⁵¹

Thou alone knowest Thy mysteries,
For Thou art all complete;
O give refuge to a worthless orphan,
And lead him to his destined goal.⁵²

I pray to my Master to unite me to my Lord,
Meeting whom I may find peace and freedom
from death.⁵³

When I prayed for the company of the saints,
Hearing me the Lord's true devotee came unto
me;
It was my good fortune that they made me their
own.⁵⁴

Nanak prays to the Master that he may be
united with God.⁵⁵

O my Beloved, grant me the holy Word of God.
Those that have full faith in the Master, their
worries are over.⁵⁶

O Master, we have come to Thy fold,
To have the peace of the Divine Word,
And the Grace of God,
And a riddance from all our cares.⁵⁷

APPENDIX A — SPECIMEN PRAYERS

May I live beholding Thee, O my Master,
And may my deeds bear fruit;
This is our prayer to Thee, O Lord,
Grant us the boon of Thy Word and make us
Thine own.⁵⁸

This is my only prayer to Thee,
That I, lost in Thy meditation, be dyed in Thy
color.⁵⁹

Thou Giver of all gifts, grant me this boon,
That I may be freed from vanity and ego, from
lust, greed and wrath.⁶⁰

PRAYER

FROM BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

The following prayers have been selected from the Book of Common Prayer as used by the clergy and laity of the Church of England. These will serve as inspired examples of spiritual devotion, reverence, humility, supplication and praise to the Supreme Creator. Such sublime incentives are inherent in all religions, establishing the universality of a common origin and destiny for all mankind.

O God, the strength of them all that put their trust in Thee, mercifully accept our prayers; and because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without Thee, grant us the help of thy Grace, that in keeping of Thy commandments we may please Thee, both in will and deed; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O Lord, Who never failest to help and govern them whom Thou dost bring up in Thy steadfast fear and love; Keep us, we beseech Thee, under the protection of Thy good providence, and make us to have a perpetual fear and love of Thy holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O Lord, we beseech Thee mercifully to hear us; and grant that we, to whom Thou has given a hearty desire to pray, may by Thy mighty aid be defended and comforted in all dangers and adversities; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

APPENDIX A — SPECIMEN PRAYERS

O God, the Protector of all who trust in Thee, without Whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy; increase and multiply upon us Thy mercy; that Thou being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal. Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake our Lord. Amen.

Grant, O Lord, we beseech Thee, that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by Thy governance, that Thy Church may joyfully serve Thee in all godly quietness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O God Who hast prepared for them that love Thee such things as pass man's understanding; Pour into our hearts such love towards Thee, that we, loving Thee above all things, may obtain Thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord of all power and might, Who art the Author and Giver of all good things; Graft in our hearts the love of Thy Name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of Thy great mercy keep us in the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O God, who declarest Thine Almighty Power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity; Mercifully grant unto us such a measure of Thy Grace, that we, running the way of Thy commandments, may obtain Thy gracious promises, and be made

PRAYER

partakers of Thy heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty and Everlasting God, Who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and are wont to give more than either we desire or deserve; Pour down upon us the abundance of Thy mercy; forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask, but through the merits and meditation of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

Almighty and Merciful God, of whose only gift it cometh that Thy faithful people do unto Thee true and laudable service; Grant, we beseech Thee, that we may so faithfully serve Thee in this life, that we fail not finally to attain Thy heavenly promises; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty and Everlasting God, give unto us the increase of faith, hope and charity and that we may obtain that which Thou dost promise, make us to love that which Thou dost command; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Keep, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy Church with Thy perpetual mercy; and because of the frailty of man without Thee cannot but fail, keep us ever by Thy help, from all things hurtful, and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation;

APPENDIX A — SPECIMEN PRAYERS

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O Lord, we beseech Thee, let Thy continual pity cleanse and defend Thy Church; and because it cannot continue in safety without Thy succor, preserve it evermore by Thy help and goodness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord, we beseech thee, grant Thy people Grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh and the Devil, and with our pure hearts and minds to follow Thee the only God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O God, for as much as without Thee we are not able to please Thee; mercifully grant, that Thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O Almighty and Most Merciful God, of Thy bountiful goodness keep us; that we, being ready both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things that Thou wouldst have done; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Grant, we beseech Thee, Merciful Lord, to Thy faithful people pardon and peace, that they may be cleaned from all sins, and serve Thee with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord, we beseech Thee to keep Thy household the Church in continual godliness, that through

PRAYER

Thy protection it may be free from all adversities, and devoutly given to serve Thee in good works, to the glory of Thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O God, our refuge and strength, Who art the author of all goodness; be ready, we beseech thee, to hear the devout prayers of Thy Church; and grant that those things which we ask faithfully we may obtain effectually; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O Lord, we beseech Thee, absolve thy people from their offenses; that through Thy bountiful goodness we may all be delivered from the hands of those sins which by our frailty we have committed: grant this, O Heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our blessed Lord and Savior. Amen.

PRAYER FOR SELFLESSNESS

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love; for it is in giving that we receive; it is in

APPENDIX A — SPECIMEN PRAYERS

pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

BEDTIME PRAYER

O Heavenly Father, protect and bless all things that have breath; guard them from all evil and let them sleep in peace.

ALBERT SCHWEITZER

SPRINGTIME PRAYER

Now winter is gone, and spring is here: now tiny leaves, and blossoms sweet, lambs in the fields, and baby calves, and budding flowers about my feet. O teach me gentleness, please God, to care for all things weak and small, that I may grow strong and brave and helpful in my love for all.

ANONYMOUS

We may conclude this section with the following few prayers:

Almighty God, unto Whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from Whom no secrets are hid; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify

PRAYER

Thy Holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

O Lord Christ, we, Thy faithful soldiers, dedicate this newborn day to Thee, praying that it may shine in Thy service as a pure pearl in the chaplet of our life, O Thou Great King of Love, to whom be praise and adoration forevermore.
Amen.

Teach us, O Lord, to see Thy life in all men and in all the peoples of Thine earth, and so guide the nations into the understanding of Thy laws that peace and good will may reign upon earth; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

To the most Holy and adorable Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Three Persons in One God; to Christ our Lord, The Only Wise Counselor, the Prince of Peace; to the Seven Mighty Spirits before the Throne; and to the glorious Assembly of just men made perfect, the Watchers, the Saints, the Holy Ones, be praise unceasing from every living creature; and honor, might and glory, henceforth and forevermore. Amen.

The Peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son, Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you, and remain with you always. Amen.

APPENDIX A — SPECIMEN PRAYERS

Midst Thy circling power I stand,
On every side I find Thy hand,
Awake, asleep, at home, abroad,
I am surrounded still with God.

Let these thoughts possess my breast
Wherever I roam, wherever I rest,
Let not my weaker passions dare
Consent to sin, for God is there.

PRAYERS FROM VARIOUS RELIGIONS

FROM HINDU SCRIPTURES

Om: The Thousand-headed *Purusha*, thousand-eyed, thousand-footed, even He, encompassing the Universe on all sides, remained over ten fingers in extent. *Purusha* alone is all this, that which has been and that which is to be. Moreover, He is the Director of immortality; and hence manifests Himself as the Universe evolving by means of food. Of this magnitude is His greatness, even greater than this is *Purusha*. One fourth of Him forms all created things, the Immortal three fourths are in the regions above.

One God sits hidden in every creature, pervading all, the Inmost Self of all beings, the Watcher over all acts, abiding in all created things, the Witness, the Heart, the Absolute, Free of all attributes.

PRAYER

The One Dweller, Self-controlled, who divided the One Seed into the Many, who is their *Atma*, those steadfast ones see Him enthroned with their *Atma*; for them alone is Bliss Eternal, not for others.

That blessing do we choose, in order that we may sing for the purposes of the sacrifice, and for the Lord of the sacrifice. Divine blessing be ours. May blessing be on the children of men. May that which is of good effect go always singing upward. May blessing be on us, the two-footed, blessing on the four-footed. Om! Peace, Peace, Peace!

FROM ZOROASTRIAN SCRIPTURES

1. We pray for the gracious joy of God the Omniscient Lord of Existence. Beneficent Holiness is the best of blessings. It alone is the source of true happiness. Happiness to him who is sincerely righteous.

2. O Lord! Through the most beneficent and excellent Path of Purity may we see Thee, face to face. May we then observe Thy many aspects. And may we be finally merged into Thy Benign Presence.

3. Cleanse Thou my soul, O Omniscient and most Bountiful Spirit! Grant me strength through Perfect Wisdom, goodness through devotion, courage through righteousness, and leadership

through Benevolent Mind. In order that I may acquire spiritual knowledge to instruct others, grant me that power, which is indeed the resulting blessing from the Lord of Benevolence. Reveal unto me the laws of religion through upright mind and pure conduct. Then does Zoroaster give away, in charity, even his own life besides his perfect benevolent Wisdom, to the Omniscient Lord. He dedicates his power of speech and action, to serve *Asha* (Holy Divine Spirit) and *Sraosha* (the angel of inspiration).

4. As is *Ahu* (the High Ruler) absolute in His Will, so is the Spiritual Teacher *Ratu* wielding authority through the law of righteousness. The reward of good deeds, done as offering unto the Lord, is the gift of Benevolent Mind. Whoever gives protecting help to the needy, is entitled to receive power from the Creator.

5. O Omniscient God: when malicious people seek to harm me, who else shall grant me protection, except the Divine Fire and Wisdom that are within me? Indicate to me, O God! the good deeds that may propagate righteousness in this world. In order that I may expound to others the teachings of the good Faith, tell me, O Lord! how the evil forces may be foiled. Surely Thy protecting words that are eternal will prevail. Reveal unto me a teacher, who may be full of Wisdom, and proficient in the lore of both the worlds, so innocent that the Angel of Inspiration

PRAYER

may approach him through his loving thoughts.
A true teacher is Thy beloved agent.

6. O Immortal: Archangel: I offer unto you my sacrifice and devotion through thought, word and deed, and with all my heart I dedicate the very life of my existence. I adore the Path of Purity.

7. Whoever amongst the living beings is foremost in loving sacrifice, is always within the knowledge of the Lord, because of his righteous conduct. We pay our homage unto all such men and women who have sought to serve.

FROM JAIN SCRIPTURES

Reverence to the Arhats,
Reverence to the Perfect Ones,
Reverence to the Heads of the Sangha,
Reverence to the Preceptors,
Reverence to all holy Monks in the World.

All these five are worthy of Reverence.
They are all protectors against sin. Among all auspicious things, this is the most auspicious.

FROM HEBREW SCRIPTURES

Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One. May it be Thy will, O Lord our God, and of

APPENDIX A — SPECIMEN PRAYERS

our fathers, to cause us to walk in Thy Law and cleave to Thy commandments; and lead us not into sin, transgression, temptation and contempt. Remove from us every evil inclination and cause us to adhere to the good.

O, grant us grace, favor and mercy in Thy sight, and in the sight of all that behold us; and bestow gracious favors on us. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who bestowest gracious favors on Thy people Israel. Amen.

(The word "Israel" is composed of ISR (Righteous), EL (Omnipotent); hence it means: those who righteously walk in the Law of God.)

FROM BUDDHIST SCRIPTURES

Praise be to the Lord, the Holy One, Perfect in Wisdom.

Praise be to the Lord, the Holy One, Perfect in Wisdom.

Praise be to the Lord, the Holy One, Perfect in Wisdom.

I go to the Buddha for refuge,
I go to the Law for refuge,
I go to the Brotherhood for refuge.

For the second time, I go to the Buddha for
refuge,
For the second time, I go to the Law for refuge,

PRAYER

For the second time, I go to the Brotherhood for
refuge,

For the third time, I go to the Buddha for
refuge,

For the third time, I go to the Law for refuge,

For the third time, I go to the Brotherhood for
refuge.

I promise to abstain from taking the life of any
living creature.

I promise to abstain from taking anything with
thievish intent.

I promise to abstain from the evil indulgence of
bodily passions.

I promise to abstain from falsehood.

I promise to abstain from any intoxicating
liquor or drug.

FROM THEOSOPHY

Invocation by all

O Hidden Life! vibrant in every atom;

O Hidden Light! shining in every creature;

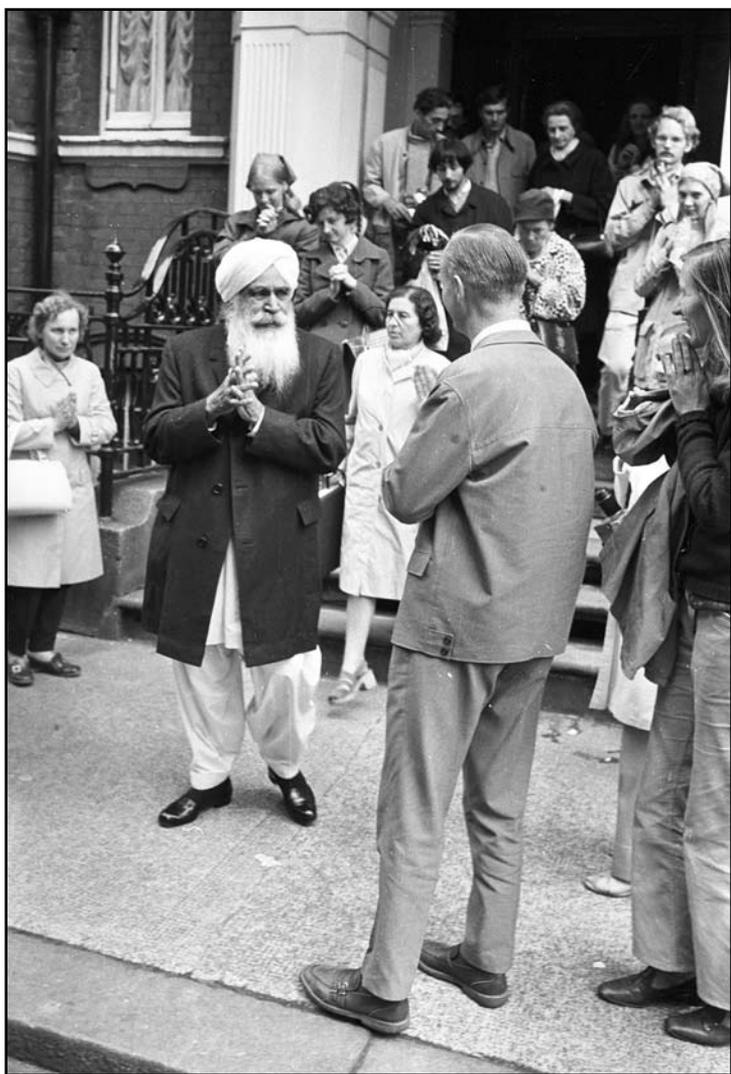
O Hidden Love! embracing all in Oneness;

May each who feels himself as one with

Thee,

Know he is also one with every other.

ANNIE BESANT





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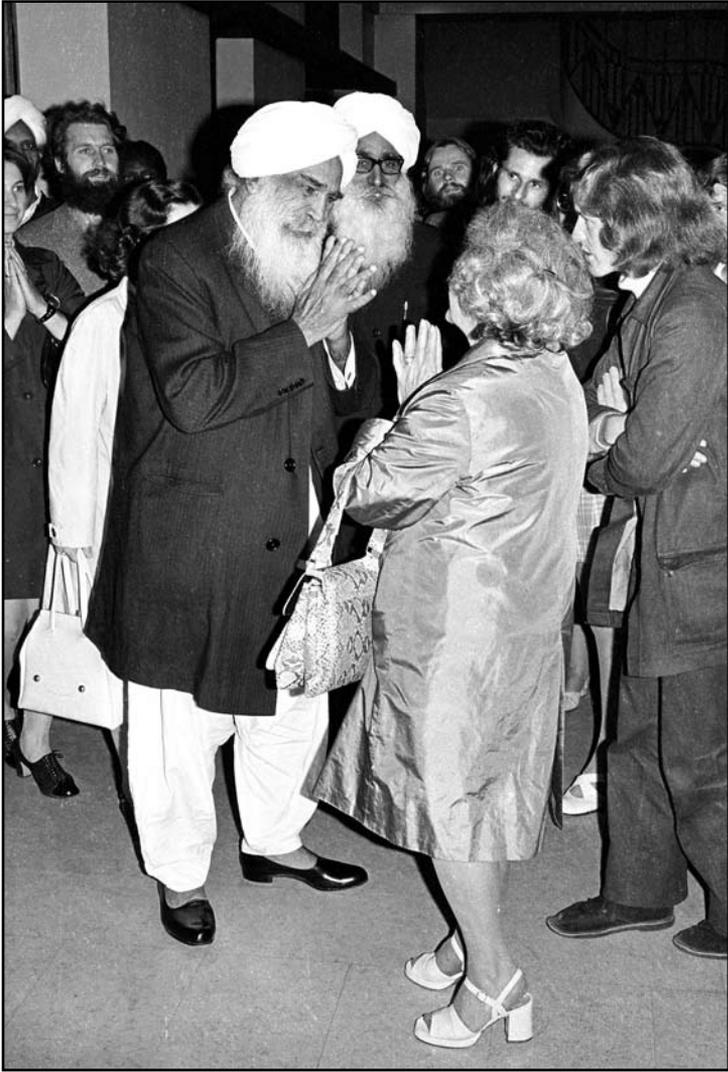
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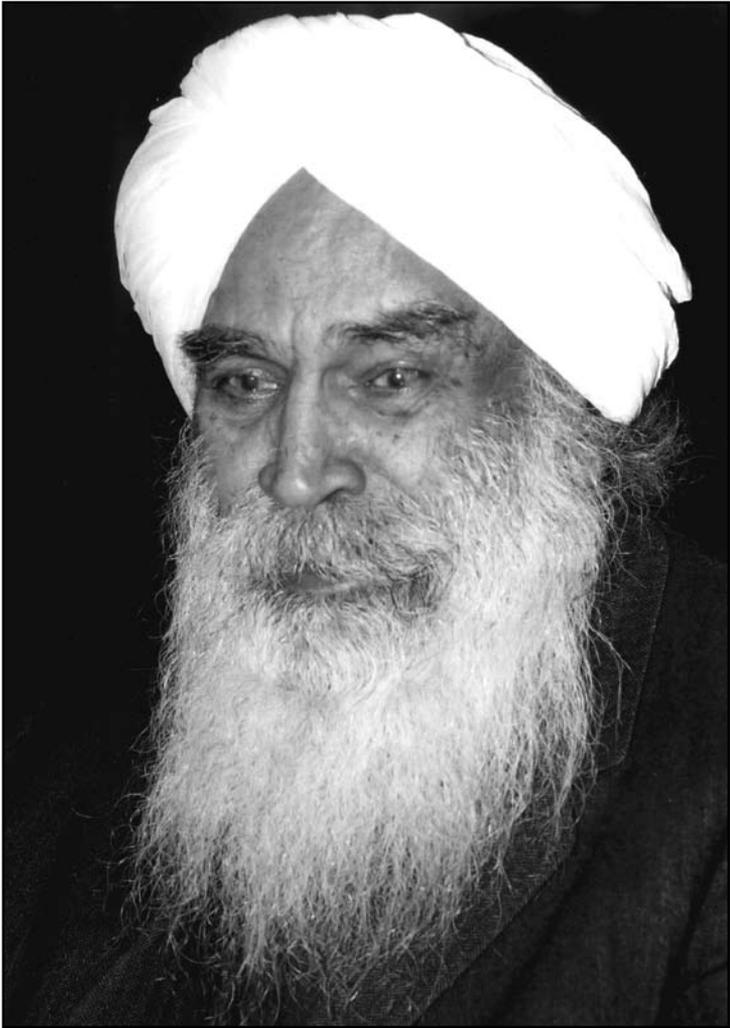


SIMRAN

The Sweet Remembrance
of God

Kirpal Singh

*“Man’s only duty is to be ever grateful to God
for His innumerable gifts and blessings.”*



Sant Kirpal Singh Ji
(1894-1974)

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INTRODUCTION

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Mr. Khanna has asked me to give some message on my birthday anniversary. The day of my physical birth fell on the 6th of February, 1894. The true date of my birth is the day when I sat physically at the holy feet of my Master SAWAN SINGH, in February 1924. Still the truer date is when I was reborn anew into the beyond and met my Master in all His glory in 1917, i.e., seven years before my meeting with Him physically. I respect all holy scriptures of all the Saints who came in the past as all those were given by inspiration of God. I had the good fortune to sit at the feet of my Master. That which I have received of my Master, the same I deliver unto you. I find the same parallel with what all the past Saints have said. The difference is in the language or the way of expression, but the subject matter is the same. They all talk as to how to liberate our souls from mind and matter and know ourselves and know God. At the time of Initiation, Satguru resides

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with the devotee. He is with you always even unto the end of the world and will be extending all feasible help. He will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. Whosoever's mind is stayed on Him with full faith, He will keep him in perfect peace. There is hope for everybody. Master Power comes into the world to save sinners and to put them on the way back to God. It is for you to remain devoted to Him and keep His commandments. The rest is for Him to do. God is Love. You are also love. Love is the potent factor to meet God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God. Therefore, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. I wish you to be the doers of the Word and not hearers only, for an ounce of practice is worth more than tons of theories. Reformers are badly needed, not of others, but of themselves. You shall have Godhead as salary. I wish you all Godspeed in your efforts to tread the way back to God, which lies within you. My love and best wishes are always with you and will remain with you. The mystery of life is solved in the company of those who have solved that for themselves. How to find such a man? One who solved this mystery can help you in finding the same truth.

Someone questioned Guru Nanak as to how one could find a true and real Guru, and by what signs He could be recognized. Guru

Nanak replied: "The human body is a temple of God, and it is by turning within that we meet God. There is a way from this house of the body to another house within (the Nij Ghar or Sach Khand) which is the Real House and here the soul finds everlasting peace. The human body is just like a rented house, given to us temporarily (i.e., allotted span of life) until, in the meanwhile, the soul is wise enough to gain access to her permanent abode of everlasting bliss. Now, the Real and True Master is one who can show us the way out to the Kingdom of God within this body and can lead the soul from stage to stage until the kingdom is gained and the soul comes into her own."

The human body, like any other physical thing, is subject to decay and disintegration. Even this world suffers dissolution. But Sach Khand or the Kingdom of God alone is indestructible and eternal. The process of Dissolution works up to the realm of the Triloki or three worlds (physical, astral and causal planes) and that of Grand Dissolution up to the subtlest of the causal planes; but it cannot reach Sach Khand, or Sat Lok, or Mukam-i-Haq as the Mohammedans call it (New Jerusalem of the Christians), for it is the veritable Kingdom of God, as spoken of by Christ. The Saints have, therefore, set Sach Khand as their goal, which is beyond the ken of Dissolution and Grand Dissolution.

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Next, the Satguru or the True Master points out the way to the Kingdom of God. He tells us that the Divine Music comprised of five strains or melodies is always going on in the body. This continuous symphony is the connecting link between the Creation and the Creator. It is the ladder which the soul has to climb step by step in its onward journey to the Kingdom of God. This Music is most melodious, the like of which cannot be found on Earth. It has immense attraction and an irresistible appeal in it. The different melodies begin from Sahas dal Kanwal (the region of the thousand petaled lotus) and reach as far as Sach Khand. The Master Soul gives a contact to the human soul at the lowest end of the Musical notes, besides some experience of the withdrawal of the sensory current from the body, **both of which have to be developed by daily practice.**

The Satguru comes into the world with the treasure of Naam. The Muslims call it the Nada-i-Asmani (heavenly music) and Christians describe it as "Word." The treasure of Naam is not the heritage of this or that particular nation or community, nor of any particular country, nor of any religion, caste, or creed. Again, this treasure is freely distributed by a Master Soul to all, irrespective of any of the above considerations. An aspirant may be a Brahmin or Kshatriya, a Hindu or a Muslim, or anything

else, for that is not of any consequence. Each one of us can learn The Art of Life and The Science of Spirituality so as to find a way out to the Kingdom of God which is the common heritage of all and the summum bonum of life.

Again, a Master Soul may come into the world in any garb He may choose. It is of no consequence to the aspirants for spirituality. Any such considerations will surely be a hindrance and a positive disadvantage. Our only connection with the Master Soul is purely of a spiritual nature and not a temporal one. Saint Kabir, though a Muslim weaver, had among His followers Rajput chieftains like Bir Singh and Bhaghail Singh. Similarly Saint Ravi Das, a cobbler by profession, had Mira Bai, a Rajput princess, and Raja Pipa in His sacred fold. All that we have to ascertain is that the Master is Shabda Sanehi. He who loves the Word is Word personified and can give us first hand experience of the Shabd or the Sound Principle to start with. If He satisfies these conditions, we should have no scruples on any ground whatsoever in accepting Him and learning from Him the Science of Spirituality.

The macrocosm is in the microcosm. The human body is the prototype of the universe and much more than that. In it there are millions of solar systems with their suns, moons, and earths revolving in and out. The sweetest of the

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sweet music is also going on in it, emanating from the true throne of the True King — God.

A Muslim divine also says in this respect: “When I heard the bewitching strains of that celestial song, Kaaba (the holiest of the holy places of Muslim worship) and the temple (of the idol worshippers) both appeared to be bad caricatures before the divine intoxication it gave.”

Maulana Rumi says: “The Saints are the True Devotees of God, always listening to the Divine Music within. That infuses life into the lovers of God.” Shamas Tabriz, another Muslim Saint, also speaks of it: “Every moment a strange type of call is coming from the Heaven. I hear that voice and none else. Blessed indeed are they who hear this call.”

This song is quite unique in character. No language can describe it — neither Turkish, nor Arabic, nor Persian, nor any other. It is, in fact, an Unspoken Language and an Unwritten Law unto itself.

The Prophet Mohammed once declared that He listened to the Voice of God just as He listened to any other voice. But when questioned as to why it could not be heard by others, He said, “You cannot hear this Voice as your ears have been sealed up. Hie to some Master Soul

with a prayer for breaking of the seal and then listen attentively in the silence of your heart.”

Mrs. Annie Besant, the great Theosophist, calls it the Voice of the Silence and says that the Silence becomes vocal when the mind is at perfect rest.

“The Kingdom of God is within you,” says Christ. The trouble is that we search for it without and find it not. Man in his search for God has not spared any efforts. He has looked for Him in the sacred rivers (like Ganges, etc.), in the snow-capped mountains of Badrinath, Kailash, Amarnath, etc., in the deep recesses of the forests, and in the sacred places of all antiquity, but with no success. As the “way out” to God lies within, you will have to find a Master who knows the Way and would be a guide unto you until the goal is reached. This work only a True Master can do and no one else can do it.

Now the question comes: Where can this Divine Music be contacted? To this the Master replies, “This Divine Music is going on in Sukhmana (a central cord between Ida and Pingala, the two cords on either side, which running through the spine and passing through the center of and between the two eyebrows, reaches directly as far as Sach Khand or Shah Rag as named by the Muslims). It can be experienced

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by the soul in her deepest depths, when layer by layer the various sheaths or coverings (physical or gross, mental or subtle, and causal) are shaken off from the soul in her onward journey to the various Lokas or regions: the sun, the moon, the stars, of spirits (Pithrian), of Deities (Devian), etc. 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 Ajapa Jap 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 Nam) is freed from its clutches and now moves on unhampered."

It is, of course, impossible to describe the sublime symphonies in so many words, as they are past description for want of adequate expression.

At present every soul has, on account of constant association with mind, acquired a tendency to flow downward and outward through the outgoing faculties. It is because of this that she cannot catch the Sound Current (the

Elixir of Life) within. A cup turned upside down may for ages remain in the rain, but not a drop will fall into it. But if it is turned aright, it will get filled up in one or two showers. Exactly is it the case with the soul. As soon as the Master Soul gives her a contact with the life-giving Sound Current, by turning it aright through the withdrawal of the sensory current, the lotus-like cup of the spirit gets more and more water of Immortality until she gets drenched through and through and is saved forever.

Mind, you know, is ever after pleasures of one kind or another. But the pleasures of this world are all transitory and have always some sting at the bottom. "Our sincerest laughter with some pain is fraught," says an English poet.

This renegade of the mind can only be subdued if some internal pleasure of rapturous strains of the Divine Music — the Word — is given to it in lieu of the external one. When mind tastes the sweet Elixir, it is diverted from the worldly enjoyments and is subdued. The soul becomes free. This is the only remedy by which the sages controlled the mind. It held good in all ages — the Golden, the Silver and the Copper, and holds good even today in Kali Yuga or the Iron Age. The Sat is eternal. It was in the beginning. It was in the middle, and it shall ever remain until Eternity.

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The Divine Music of Sat is then the sovereign remedy for stilling the mind. In due course of time, by regular practice, the soul becomes fully absorbed into the Elixir of Naam, and the mind is rendered absolutely ineffectual.

As said above, the Sound Current begins from Turya Pad when, the sensory current having withdrawn from the body, the soul enters into the Beyond. The five strains in seriatim follow one another from one spiritual plane to another until Sach Khand is reached. One has to take hold of each of these strains or melodies for traversing from stage to stage until the final stage is attained. It is only here that salvation of the soul is assured and the cycle of births and deaths ends. This is the grand purpose of life, which one fulfills through the grace of the Master Soul.

The Master Saint Shamas Tabriz says: "The Great God has turned us out and closed strongly the door behind the eyes. He Himself comes to us in the garb of a man to take us back into His fold."

The method by which He lets us in once again is explained further:

First one has to withdraw into the silence of the soul, before he begins to hear the five strains of Music. The sensory current is to be withdrawn at the seat of the soul behind

the eyebrows. The journey onward begins from this stage, the seventh in the order from below. When the soul rises above the six chakras or ganglions in the Pind or physical body and starts toward Sahans dal Kanwal (thousand petaled lotus), the seventh stage, she catches the first of the five strains of the Divine Music and proceeds further. There is no Naam in the lower six chakras. These, in fact, are the grave, from which we have to rise above and come to the point from where the Grand Trunk Road of Spirituality begins.

Another Saint says, "At the seventh stage you begin to hear the five strains of the Divine Music when you remove the tent of the soul from the graveyard of the body comprising the six lower Chakras. From here heavenly Music takes charge of the soul and pulls it up from stage to stage until the final consummation with Sat Purush or Sat Naam takes place."

Almost all the Saints have given the same qualifications of a True Master. Guru Arjan says, "Accept that man as a Guru who can give you an experience of the Truth, the Naam. That is indescribable, no doubt, but we must have some contact thereof." In short, whoever can tune us into the Shabd — the Divine Music. Kabir also speaks in the same terms: "We have so many sadhus, the great ones. I have respect for all of them. But the one who is One with the Word, and

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can give us a contact with that, He overtops all; and I have the greatest regard for Him." Swami Shiv Dayal Singh Ji also speaks in the same way: "Guru is He who has love of Shabd and practices no other methods except that. Whoever practices Shabd is the perfect Guru. You sit at His feet, who will give you a contact with it." He who is Word Personified, who was Word made flesh and dwelt amongst us, and can give us a contact with that, is held in high esteem by all Saints. The Holy Scriptures all speak in volumes of their greatness.

It is through the grace of God alone that a jiva (soul) comes across such a Master Soul or Guide who is well versed in the science of Surat Shabd Yoga. The Master in extreme compassion takes him into his fold and links him up with the Sound Current and thereby puts him on the path of final liberation. Guru Nanak says that he is an admirer of the man who reaches his true home in this way.

The course of Surat Shabd Yoga, as described by Guru Nanak, is the most natural one. It can be practiced by man or woman, young or old, alike. Even a child can practice it with ease. It is designed by God Himself and not by any human agency, and therefore it admits of no addition, alteration or modification.

It is God's Law that nobody can reach Him except through a Master Soul. This is what is given out by almost all the Saints who came so far.

The Master teaches us how to withdraw from the body and contact the Sound Current — the Word within. There are so many ways to withdraw from the body but the one devised by the Saints is most natural and quickest and **that is achieved through SIMRAN or repetition of the names of God.** So I would like to just give in detail something about this subject which is very important and is the first step toward going up. As far as the Word or Naam is concerned I have already given a talk separately. I will now speak on Simran.

SIMRAN

Everyone in the world is doing Simran of one kind or another. In fact none can do without it. A housewife, for instance, is thinking all the while of the kitchen requirements like flour, pulses, spices and pepper, lest any of these things run short. She is thinking of recipes for new dishes and delicacies. Similarly, a farmer is always thinking of ploughing the land, furrowing the fields, sowing the seeds and harvesting and the like, besides his cattle and fodder. A shopkeeper is preoccupied with his stock-in-

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trade and keenly alive to rise and fall in the prices of commodities he deals in, and how he can make huge profits in his business. A schoolmaster, likewise, dreams of his school, classes, pupils and lessons, on all of which his attention is closely riveted. Again a contractor is engrossed in problems of labor, material, and various building processes.

Thus, everyone of us is constantly dwelling on one thing or another. This close association leaves an imprint in the human mind which, in course of time, becomes indelible enough and leads to complete identification of the subject with the object — and hence it is said, “As you think so you become,” or “Where the mind is there you are also,” no matter where the physical self is. This being the case, Saints take hold of a person from the line of least resistance.

As no one can do without Simran, the Saints try to set one type of Simran for another type. They substitute for Simran of the world and worldly relations and objects, a Simran of God’s Name, or “Word.” As the former leads to distraction of the mind, the latter pulls heavenward, leading to peace of mind and liberation of the soul. Three to four hours in a day has been enjoined as the minimum for Simran, and it may be gradually increased. The Mahatmas are never without Simran even for

a single moment. As it is altogether a mental process (for it is to be done by the tongue of thought), no amount of physical and manual labor can interfere with it. In course of time, like the tick of a clock, it becomes automatic and ceaseless for all the twenty-four hours. While the hands are engaged in work, the mind rests in the Lord.

I now give you some details of recipes prescribed for doing Simran or repetition of the Name of God.

All persons are engaged in the doing of Simran in one form or another. Some do Simran by means of a beaded string called a rosary. In this type of Simran one cannot maintain undivided attention, for while doing it one has to roll off the beads with his fingers and reverse the head-knot on completion of each round of the rosary. In this way one cannot have single-minded devotion, without which there can be no gain. By constant practice the fingers automatically roll over the beads while the unbridled mind keeps wandering astray. This is why Master Souls always lay emphasis on mental Simran or one that is done with the tongue of thought. For Simran done with concentrated attention alone is beneficial.

Again, there are persons who do Simran with their tongue. This type of Simran, too, is

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no better than that done with the help of the rosary. In this type also the tongue wags on in the mouth, while the mind runs riot all the time.

Some do Simran at the seat of the thyroid gland. This as well does not count for much unless it is done with attention fully riveted to it.

Still others do Simran at the seat of the heart in unison with the constant heart beat, but here again sine qua non is whole-hearted attention before one can expect any benefit from it. Another type of Simran is one that is done with the breath vibration of the vital air as it goes in and comes out; it gives just temporary stillness and is of little value.

Each of the above Sadhans (practices) has more efficacy in ascending order than the one preceding, but none of them per se is efficacious enough unless it is done with undivided attention. A person may experience a little calm for a while, but it cannot help the spirit in withdrawal and concentration at the seat of the soul just behind the center of the two eyebrows.

The Master Souls in all times and in all climes have, therefore, gone to the very root of the thing — the discovery of the self called Atma-Siddhi, the experience of the Changeless One, beyond time, space and causation — something

subtler, higher, nobler, purer and more powerful in the entire creation, and have enjoined Simran of the Highest Order: one done mentally on the Divine Ground, before the threshold of God's own door, about which Christ says, "Knock and it shall be opened unto thee." Again the gospel says with regard to single-minded attention, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be filled with light." This eye is called in Sanskrit as Shiv-Netra or Dev-drishti. The Muslims describe it as Nukta-i-Sweda. William Wordsworth, a great romantic poet, refers to it as an "Inward Eye."

Muslim Saints classify Simran or Zikr into five categories:

1. Zikr-i-Lassani or Zikr done with the tongue. It is also called Kalma-e-Shariet or Nasut.
2. Zikr-i-Qalbi, done with Qalb or at the seat of the heart by the process of Habas-i-dam (Pranayam or control of the breath). It is technically called Kalma-i-Tariqat or Malqut.
3. Zikr-i-Ruhi, done with full attention and known as Kalma-i-Marefat or Jabrut.
4. Zikr-i-Siri, that leads to the inn or secret of reality. It is named Kalma-i-Haqiqat or Lahut.

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5. Lastly Zikr-i-Khaffi, or one that unlocks the secret door. It is called Hahut.

Maulana Rumi, a Muslim Saint, while speaking of Zikr or Simran, therefore considers such Zikr alone of the highest type as helps in manifesting the Reality within, viz., Zikr-i-Ruhi as opposed to Zikr-i-Lassani.

Similarly Rishi Sandilya in His Upanishad tells us that Bekhri Simran (done with the tongue) is quite good, but Upasu (done with the breath slowly) is better still, while Manski (done mentally with the tongue of thought) is the best and tops all the rest.

The Seat of Simran:

Now we have to see where the repetition of Naam is to be done.

The Divine Ground on which Simran should be done is the center between the two eyebrows called variously as Third Eye, Tisra Til, Shiv-Netra or Mukta-i-Sweda. It is the gateway leading to the subtle planes. In the state of wakefulness it is the seat of the spirit or psyche, and it is located above the six physical ganglions. We have to transcend both the astral and causal planes above the physical plane. The Yogis, step by step, cross over the six physical centers until they finally and completely traverse and go over the physical plane. Instead of descending down

into the lower ganglions and then going up by piercing them through in the upward journey, it would be easier and better by far if one were to commence the journey right ahead from the seat of the soul in the wakeful state which is at the back of the two eyes. The easiest way to withdraw the spirit from the body to its own seat is by means of some mental Simran, as may be enjoined by the Master Soul.

The Basic Names of God:

Let us now see what Simran is and what the relation is between the Name and named.

For Simran there are two kinds of Names, original and derivative. Generally people engage in Simran of one or another of the derivative or attributive Names of God, as may have an appeal to the individual concerned. This may be good and useful to a certain extent, but it cannot work as an “Open Sesame” to the higher spiritual planes within.

Master Souls always do and recommend Simran of the highest type, to wit, of the Original or **Basic Names of God** for these open up charmed casements and bring to view vistas leading to spiritual realms within the body. Such Names are charged with and electrified by the thought transference that usually accompanies them when communicated to

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an aspirant by a Master Soul. As these are magnetized, they have the power to attract and pull the spirit up to the planes to which they relate. The engrafted “Words” charged with the Divine Spirit of the Master very soon bear fruit. Christ in this connection says, “I am the vine, ye are the branches, and as branches cannot do without the vine, ye cannot do without me ... Let you abide in me and my words abide in you.”

Again, these charmed words of the Master — Basic Names of God — have the power to dispel the forces of darkness that may meet and assail a Spirit on its onward journey. Simran of these names helps the soul both in the physical plane and supra-physical plane, one after the other. Hence it is imperative that Simran be done of such Names as the Master-Soul enjoins, for they are charged with a tremendous spiritual power which negative powers can hardly put up with, and from which they flee as from an enchanter driven. Immortal and everlasting as these words of the Master are, they bestow life everlasting to the soul in which they sink and take root. Death cannot come near such a soul. This is why it is said, “Take not God’s name in vain.”

Every name has its own significance, influence, energy, and power. If one thinks of ice, he is reminded of the bleak cold and the shivers it brings; the thought of fire puts into mind

its attributes of heat and warmth. The word “lawyer” is suggestive of courts and cases, and “doctor” at once conjures up pictures of hospitals, patients and medicinal chests, etc. It is a common saying, “As you think so you become.” Thought is said to be the keynote to success. There is always a strong link between a name and the named, and much greater and stronger is this link between God and His Names. It may be said that God Himself resides and dwells in His own Names (basic and original and not derivative or attributive).

Simran of the Basic Names of God has an inevitable influence on the mind. It leads to dhyān, making the spirit forgetful of the world and worldly objects. In meditation nothing but concentrated Simran remains; and from the great and deep silence of the heart (Hriday Kamal of the Saints, i.e., the Divine Ground behind the eyebrows), there issues forth a ceaseless Sound Current, which helps in pulling the spirit up, leading to the withdrawal from the body (without, of course, breaking the silver chord) and guides the spirit in its onward journey into various spirit realms. The luminous form of the Master always remains with the spirit, helping and guiding it at every step. **This Sound Principle is the link between God and man**, and in this way an indissoluble bond and relationship is established between the

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Creator and His creation. This Sound Current is variously described by various sages. The Vedas speak of it as Sruti (that which is heard) the Upanishads describe it as Nad or Udgīt (song of the other world). The Muslims call it as Bang-i-Asmani or Kalma. In Gurbani we have references to Shabd and in the Gospel it is mentioned as the Word. The Zoroastrians call it Sarosha and the French have given it the name of Elan-vital or life current.

Once the consciousness takes root in this Sound Principle or Voice of the Silence, life everlasting is assured to the spirit. There is no other way to God than this, and it can be reached only by means of Simran of God's Names. "Knock and it shall be opened unto thee" is what the Gospel preached. Emerson calls it "tapping inside." This knocking and tapping is possible only when through Simran the mind is stilled and the spirit is withdrawn and concentrated before the very door of God. This then is the way as ordained by God Himself; but no one can find it without the grace of the Master Soul, an adept in the Science of Spirituality, not only in theory like Yog Valik, but in practice as well like Ashtavakra, one who has transcended all the planes (physical, subtle, causal and beyond) and holds commission from God to lead other souls to Him.

How to Do Simran:

For Simran one has to adopt some convenient posture and then to fix his attention on the Divine Ground between the eyebrows. Simran is entirely a mental process and is to be done mentally with the tongue of thought, while the gazing faculty is to be fixed at the spot behind the two eyebrows as said above. The Words, as given by the Master, may slowly be repeated mentally or with the tongue of thought. It should be done without causing any strain or pressure on the forehead. The practice may be started with a half hour or so as may be convenient, but in course of time it should be developed to two or three hours a day or even longer. Simran of the Divine Names introverts the mind and weans it from worldly thoughts and mundane matters, until it gets stilled and is equipoised.

Some do Simran with closed eyes and others with open eyes. The first, in some cases, sinks into drowsiness leading to what may be called Yog Nidra; and the second, in some cases, keeps the mind engaged on environments. One has, therefore, to guard against both pitfalls. Simran with closed eyes is preferable provided one retains full consciousness. It must be done regularly every day at a fixed time. Hafiz, a Sufi poet of Persia, says, "The only job is to pray, unmindful of whether the same is accepted or

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not." This means you have to remember the Lord internally without any clutching nature or receiving one thing or the other. We have to leave everything to Lord or Master working overhead. Just as we need food for the body, so do we need food for the soul. We are very careful in giving food to the horse of the body, but starve the rider — the spirit — the life-giving fountainhead that enlivens the body and without which it has no value. We must provide food to spirit more regularly and timely than we do for the body, no matter where we are, whether at home or abroad, and no matter what the circumstances may be, this should be our first and foremost concern.

The Simran of Naam or Word is an elixir of life and, in fact, a panacea (healing) for all ills, physical, mental, accidental or ordained. It is a food for the spirit; and when the spirit is strong and healthy, it will charge the body with vital currents of life and light (elan vital) dispelling all darkness from head to foot. It is the Bread of Life spoken of by Christ when He declared you cannot live on bread alone. **But you can live on the Name of God alone.**

Simran and Dhyan (meditation) flood the spirit with the waters of life. Spirit comes to its own, rises in its latent Godhood and, like a tumultuous mountain stream, rushes head-

long toward the ocean of life which is its perennial source and merges therein losing its separate identity.

There are no limitations as to time and place for Simran. It may be done at any time and at any place, sitting or standing, walking, or in bed; but it must be done in a state of conscious wakefulness. Early morning hours (Amrit Vela) is the best time for Simran. A light and frugal night meal consisting of milk and fruits and morning ablutions are aids in the right direction. Purity of thoughts, words, and deeds go a long way to make a success of the Sadhan (spiritual discipline), for ethical life precedes spiritual life and is, in fact, the very ground on which the spiritual structure has to be raised. For a householder, it is very necessary to observe strict discipline in life in matters of diet, drink, and speech. Again Simran must be done slowly and the Words are to be repeated or thought out with clarity. The whole process is to be carried out with love, devotion, and single-minded attention to ensure quick results. When properly done for some time, a state of divine intoxication comes upon the spirit and blessed calmness is experienced. All worldly thoughts vanish like thin air and the spirit feels freed from the bodily tenements and is irresistibly drawn upward by the Unseen Power of the Master. When it thus withdraws from the sensual

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planes, it gets concentrated at its own seat; the inner light dawns, and one by one spiritual experiences like starry welkin, the moon and the sun unfold themselves. One comes across frequent references to these things in all the scriptures, both ancient and modern, like the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Holy Koran, the Gurbani, the Gospel, etc. The Prophets Mohammed and Moses speak of the various inner lights. In the Gospel there are repeated references to the thunder and lightning in connection with the Voice of God as it spoke to the prophets.

As the spirit crosses over these initial stages and lands in the subtle plane, the luminous form of the Master appears, takes charge of the soul, and leads it on the onward spiritual journey from plane to plane. With the advent of the Master, the work of Simran is completed, and the aspirant soul lies wholly in the hands of the Master Soul.

Guru Arjan, the fifth Guru of the Sikhs, has given a glowing account of the results which a man can have by doing the sweet remembrance of the Word. He impresses on the man to remember Him all the time in so many words as used by the Saints in the past. There are so many names of the One Reality, and our aim and goal is common. **We have to start from the name and contact with the Named.** Unless

you contact the Named you cannot derive the full benefit of the words repeated by you. For instance, you say “water” in English, “aqua” in Latin, “pani” and “ash” in Urdu and Persian, “jal” and “nir” in Hindi; but by repetition of these names alone, your thirst cannot be satisfied. It is only by drinking the particular fluid which is called by so many names that your thirst is appeased. By doing Simran of the world and its environments, they have so much taken possession of us that we have become the world and its environments. We have to use the same methods, so as to eliminate all the worldly thoughts from within, by remembering sweetly of the Lord in so many words devised by the Saints so far. So there are two uses of Simran: one use is to withdraw from the body by Simran of the electrified words given by a competent Master, and the second is to drive out the world and its thoughts from within us by the constant remembrance of the Lord in so many ways as prescribed, the description of which has been given above in detail.

Kabir on Simran:

I have given a digest of the whole subject matter in connection with Simran. It will not be out of place to put before you the sayings of the different Saints on this subject. I now put before you the statements made by Saint Kabir on the subject. He says: “Comforting is

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God's Name. All ills it dries (cures). Remembrance of God's Name leads to Him besides." Further, Kabir says: "Amongst high love, 'mongst rich and poor, Great is he who prays and greater still he that motiveless does so."

The pelf and power hardly make a man. Poverty and riches are both transitory. A man of Simran stands far above all mankind. He is much more blessed than the rest. Most people crave for worldly things. Some are desirous of having children, others hanker after wealth, and still others after name and fame. The kind Father, of course, grants prayers of all. But a man of Simran, on the other hand, asks for nothing. He seeks God for God's sake and hence is the crowning glory to Him.

Once Akbar, the great Moghul Emperor, while riding lost his way and felt thirsty. He asked a farmer standing near a well for water. The peasant tied the Emperor's horse to a nearby tree and gave water and food to him, little knowing who he was. The King was pleased with his hospitality and told him who he was and bade the farmer to see him, should he ever stand in need of anything. After some time the farmer had an opportunity to visit the metropolis. He went to see the King as he was bidden to do so. On going to the royal palace, he found that the King was busy praying, and at the end he requested God for the peace

and prosperity of his kingdom. Seeing this, the farmer felt humiliated for having come to beg from a beggar; for he, too, could directly appeal to the Great God, who listens alike to the prayers of both rich and poor.

Guru Nanak has said, "Why should we ask for worldly things from God?" All those who love the body and bodily relations go the way of hell, but one who does Simran motiveless is truly great. We generally pray for the fulfilment of our wishes and desires. So long as a man or a woman is full of these, the human body, far from being a temple of God, is an abode of Satan. So Kabir says that God loves those who love God alone: for no other purpose but for the love of God. The same is in the Sikh Scriptures: "What should I ask for? There is nothing lasting in all the world over. I see the whole world passing away."

Kabir says, "In pain we pray to God; in pleasure we forget; Could we in pleasure pray, then pain would not come up."

We remember God only when we are hard pressed from every side. It is affliction and not affluence that turns us God-ward. If one were not to forget God in prosperity, adversity will never come near him. Hard times only come as a result of sins committed when forgetful of the Lord. Simran (or constant

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remembrance of God) is a tonic for the soul. It makes the will grow stronger from day to day. Troubles and trials however severe cannot cow him down. With a smiling face he pulls through the storms of fate or destiny unscathed. Simran is a panacea for all the ills of the world. It is a potent remedy and works wonders to remove worry where all human efforts fail. A man of Simran never has any worry or anxiety.

Simran, to be very effective, must be constant and ceaseless. Once Moses, the Prophet of the Hebrews, felt that he was the most devoted of God's creatures. In an egotistic frame of mind, he questioned God if there was in the world a devotee greater than himself. The Great God told Moses that among His devotees were included many birds, and animals besides human beings. Pointing to a solitary bird in the jungle, God directed Moses to meet the said bird, if he wanted to know the great depths of devotion. As Moses did not know the language of the birds, God endowed him with an understanding so that he may have a talk with the bird. Moses approached the bird and inquired as to how he was. The bird replied that engaged as he was in constant remembrance (Simran), he could ill afford any time for a useless conversation, except for the Beloved's sake who had sent Moses to him. Next, the prophet asked the bird

if he had any trouble in which he could be of any help to him. The bird replied that he had no trouble whatsoever; but if the prophet wished to do him a favor, he asked him to bring nearer to him the spring of water that lay at a distance, as a flight to it to quench his thirst interfered in his Simran. This incident humbled the pride of Moses.

Guru Nanak also speaks in this wise: "If I forget You, O God, even for a fraction of a minute, this amounts to me more than fifty years." Again He says, "He who is in constant remembrance of God, only he is alive, O Nanak; all others are as it were dead."

Simran must be done at all costs. Constant remembrance of God is life-giving to the devotee. Guru Nanak says, "If I remember Thee I live. When I forget thee that means death to me." There are many devices to develop concentration. Some stand for hours and hours. Others keep their arms uplifted. Some engage in breathing exercises like Pranayam, and some sleep on nails or sit under the burning sun with four fires lit around them (i.e., Panch Agni Tap or the austerity of the five fires). But all these methods are artificial. Simran or the remembrance of God is the only natural method and the easiest to follow and develop. It can be practiced with equal ease by both the young

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and the old — in one's hearth and home, and in the midst of kith and kin, as well as in his business.

Kabir further says: "Forgetful of prayer in pleasure, we pray only in pain, so says Kabir, such prayers go all in vain."

Since we remember the Lord only when in trouble and never care for Him when in affluent circumstances, Saint Kabir says that God also does not listen to such selfish prayers which are muttered in vain in distress over one's ailments, or when one is involved in a lawsuit, etc.

Prayer should be ceaseless, overflowing as a lover's passions are, forgetting not his love even for the twinkling of an eye. When a man falls in love with a woman, he carries her image in his mind at all times whether sleeping or awake, sitting or standing. **If one could carry with him the love of God like this, it would be grand indeed.**

Kabir goes on to explain how the sweet remembrance of God should be done. He gives another example of the same type. He says, "Attend to the prayer as do the village maids, who move talking with attention always fixed on pitchers overhead."

The daily routine of life, says Kabir, does not interfere with the Simran. The village maids, as they go to fetch water, carry pitchers of water one above the other on their heads; and in spite of an unseen path, they keep jesting and talking among themselves while the pitchers remain steady on their heads, as their attention is pertinently fixed on them. Similarly one need not forget Simran even in the midst of the hustle and bustle of life and worldly obligations.

Kabir again says, “Attend to prayer as kine do the calves, Who grazing on the lea never forget their young.”

When a grazier takes the cows for grazing, they do not forget the young ones they leave behind at home. All the while they are busy grazing in the field their attention remains fixed on their calves. In this way while engaged in worldly pursuits, we should not forget our aim and objective in life, i.e., God Realization.

Kabir gives another example to explain and bring home the fact that we should do the remembrance of the Lord. “Attend to the prayers as misers do the wealth, With mind forever fixed on the hoarded pelf.”

A pauper collects his money by begging coppers and keeps counting the same day and night. Whether sleeping or waking, he is

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dreaming all the time of his little hoarding. We, too, should like a pauper always keep an account of the Simran that we do and try to accumulate bit by bit the wealth of Naam — not forgetting it for a moment.

Kabir has given so many examples so that we may understand the true value of real Simran which brings forth fruit.

*“Love the prayer as the deer loves the trumpet
sound
Who life and freedom risketh for sweet music’s
sake.”*

A fleet-footed deer, which cannot otherwise be caught, is entrapped by the hunters just by means of playing upon the trumpet. He is so enamoured of the sound that he is irresistibly drawn toward it and helplessly places his head on the musical instrument. In just the same way, when once the ever restless mind hears the Nad (or the Sound Current within) it is charmed, stilled, and becomes motionless. Soul, when freed from the tentacles or talons of the mind, is able to soar easily to higher regions.

Another example He gives: “Love the prayer as the moth loves the light; In its flame doth burn itself, never turns aside.”

Light is the very life of the moth. He loves it so passionately that he does not hesitate to singe himself to death rather than to avoid it. Kabir Sahib therefore says that we must love Simran as the very breath of our life whether rich or poor, healthy or sick, awake or asleep and like a moth be ever ready to sacrifice our very self in our devotion to our ideal.

Again He says: "Lose yourself in the sweet remembrance as the insect doth bhirangi, who for sooth loses itself to rise bhirangi like."

Bhirangi (an insect) after almost killing a keet (another insect) revivifies the latter to life by bestowing its powerful attention to it. The keet when charmed back to life is no longer a keet, but becomes a bhirangi-being saturated with the life impulse of the latter. In just the same way Kabir says that one who does Simran and gets firmly engrafted therein will have new birth and a new life quite distinct from the old sensual life he has been living hitherto.

This is the "second birth" of which all the Saints speak. Christ says, "Unless you lose this life you cannot have life everlasting." "Except a man be born of water (first birth) and of the Spirit (second birth) he cannot enter the Kingdom of God." "The first birth was of corruptible seed, and the second shall be of seed incorruptible." This may be called *"birth*

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in Christ"; and when it actually takes place, one would like St. Paul say, "It is not I but Christ speaks in me. The principle of engrafted life works alike in plants as well as in man and is in accord with the laws of Nature.

Hazrat Baziad Bustanvi, a man of extreme piety and devotion, once looked within himself and found nothing but God. In a state of divine intoxication he exclaimed, "I am God!" His disciples, unused to hearing such apparently sacrilegious words, wondered what had happened to the Pir (Master). After some time, when the Master had come down from the super-conscious state, they inquired of him why he had exclaimed that he was God which was quite contrary to his usual instructions to them (that God could not come into a human body). The Master told them that the expression "I am God" was not uttered by him, but by someone else (he could according to the Koranic Law be condemned as a heretic for uttering such blasphemous words). After some time, this Hazrat was once again seized by a fit of God intoxication and began to exclaim, "I am God." This time some of his disciples came down upon their Master with staves, spears, and swords. In the *Maulana Masnavi*, by Maulana Rumi (the original poetical narrative in this behalf), it is stated that whoever aimed a blow at the Master's head, hands, or legs got his own

chopped off, while the Master beside himself kept chanting, "I am God." The disciples were amazed and inquired of the Pir the significance of the incident. The Pir with a smile on his face informed them, that one who merged his little entity (soul) into the greater entity (Oversoul) becomes One with God and no one could hit or harm him.

Similarly it is mentioned in Ghat Ramayan (a sacred book of the Hindus) that Tulsi Sahib of Hathras (a man of great devotion) when staying with Baji Rao Hulkar, a Maharatta chieftain of Stara, once said: "While the people see my physical raiment (the body), I actually live out of it."

Our own Master Hazur Baba Sawan Singh Ji was once on tour to Gujranwala city in the Punjab when some opponents came up with the idea of fighting. Master was inside. He rose up. He was in a state of God intoxication and said, "Look at me, who am I?" And it was all quiet.

This is the general experience of those who sometimes become God intoxicated. Such statements bring out the true meaning of Simran.

Saint Kabir gives so many examples. He says: "Love the prayer as fish love the water, who rather die than be separated from their element."

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Water is the vital element of fish, without which they cannot live. A fish would prefer to die than live without it even for a single moment. Similarly, Simran (the Sound Current) is the vital element in which we live and move and have our being. Unless we by actual practice realize this fundamental truth, we cannot have peace.

Now He further explains: "Pray we with all our heart in the silence of the soul; Shut off the world without to unveil the Truth within."

Simran is to be done with the tongue of thought and not by word of mouth. It is entirely an inner mental process, to be practiced only after the outlets of the outgoing faculties are closed up.

The treasure of Simran is to be kept hidden from the people of the world. It is the most precious wealth, the value of which worldly people can hardly realize. **The reality dawns only when you tap the veil behind the eyes.** Christ, too, says in this behalf, "Seek and ye shall find. Knock and it shall be opened unto you."

Referring to the outer process which we generally do by way of Simran, Kabir says, "By telling beads we please ourselves and yet we never gain; But if we were to make a bead of the mind, an inward light would dawn again."

The telling of beads on the rosary gives just a mental satisfaction but leads nowhere. If you were to turn the beads of the mind, you would witness God's light within.

Kabir Sahib says that there is hardly any need of beaded rosaries, for while the hands are engaged in telling the beads, the mind is fixed on the beads without and cannot possibly withdraw within; and without this there is no gain whatsoever. Conversely, when the mind is once absorbed in Simran (mental concentration), the iron curtain will fling open (at the "Open Sesame" or enchanted words).

He says, "Aeons have passed in telling beads, yet our minds changed not; So cast off the wooden beads and take to the mental ones."

Kabir Sahib therefore says that we waste our entire life in performance of outer works of merits, but the soul finds no inlet. The veil within does not give way and soul remains without. We should, therefore, turn the bead of the mind; and it will act like a push-button giving an ingress of the soul to spiritual realms within."

Kabir further explains, "Continuous flow the symphonic strains sublime: Divine in birth, they subdue the mind."

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By concentration, a feeling of numbness gradually creeps up on the hands and feet and spreads on to the rest of the body until the sensory current gets focused on the center of the soul behind the two eyebrows (from whence during wakefulness it proceeds). The concentrated energy then falls back upon the veil behind the eyes which is rent asunder, opening a brilliant vista ahead. The sun and the moon, in turn, appear with a melodious Sound Current emerging from beyond. These unbroken strains of music continue of their own accord. When this stage is reached an aspirant has nothing more to do except to be absorbed in them.

Kabir goes on further saying that: "True rosary lies in the mind, the rest is all sham and a worldly show; Lo, the rosary on the Persian wheel draws water alone."

Simran, to be effective, should be characterized by love, affection, and devotion. If the rosary alone were to lead to God, then the big rosary on the Persian wheel could, as well, do the same thing. But our daily experience shows that they fail to achieve any such thing (rosaries on the Persian wheel are the ropes to which the water pots are attached, and they fetch water only and nothing else).

Similarly, the Chinese have invented what is called the “Wheel of Prayer.” If it is once put in motion it makes about a thousand rounds. They transcribe a mantra or a holy hymn on a piece of paper and put it on the wheel and set it into motion and feel satisfied that they have repeated the holy name a thousand times — but to no avail. Simran done parrot-like by repeating a mantra thousands of times in this way cannot bear any fruit.

Among orthodox Hindus there is a practice of writing the word “Ram, Ram” or the Word of God on paper in thousands every day. After some time they scissor down each word “Ram” and put it in a pill of flour and consign the said pills to the waters of some running stream, and believe that they have gained religious merit. It gives only a little remembrance of Ram. If one were to tell them that real Ram is within them, they would not believe it. So they neither find Ram nor do they get any substantial thing.

Similarly, Purbias (an orthodox sect who attach great importance to outer rituals and try to perform the same with religious faith) generally take a bath early in the morning in the waters of a running stream, as an act of religious merit. Once a few Purbias went to Kabul in Afghanistan (a hilly country to the northeast of India) where the weather is generally very cold. Here one of them went for a bath in the

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Kabul River, but finding the water icy cold, he hesitated to enter the stream. He thought of a good device to escape the ordeal and yet satisfy his scruples. He took up a pebble and threw it into the stream, saying, "O pebble, thy bath shall also be mine." After saying this he turned back and in the way met another Purbia going to the river for his morning ablutions. The latter asked him if he had taken the bath in the chilly bleak weather. The former informed him of the vicarious pebble-bath that he had had, and thereupon the other fellow embraced him saying, "Your bath is my bath as well." In this, blind leads the blind and both fall into the ditch by performing deeds blindly.

Kabir Sahib further refers to the rosary, saying: "Over the wooden rosary you have wasted much time; Now to the mental rosary take, that hath no knot on the end."

"O Kabir, the telling of the wooden-beaded rosary is a great laborious task, but continuous mental rosary, as of the breath beads (incoming and outgoing) is a natural phenomenon. It goes on endlessly without any effort."

In the rosary there is the head knot. When one round is completed, it is to be reversed so as not to neutralize the effect, for beads are to be told in one direction only. So Kabir advises that we should take to the natural rosary of the

breath which, being endless continuation, has no knots and needs no reversal at all.

Further He says, “On continuous fruitless revolution, rosary cried out quarreling, ‘Why do you turn me round and round?’ Turn mental rosary should you want a Master guide. Telling beads and counting the turns on fingers, Hollow are such deeds of merit, performed with wandering mind. How can God be found with an insensate mind?”

Kabir says, “When doing all ablutions or purificatory exercises like telling the beads, etc., your mind is not still, what is the good of doing them after all? While you are telling the beads and counting the number of rosary revolutions performed on your fingers, the mind like an unbridled colt is wandering about. All such deeds are, therefore, of no avail. You can meet God through a living Master only when, according to His instructions, you learn to bridle the mind and turn it the other way” (i.e., inward and upward from its usual way of looking at things outward and downward). The practice of concentration and focusing of the mind can be achieved only through Simran as enjoined by a Master Soul and by nothing else.

Kabir Sahib further presses the point. “In vain is the rosary that loosens not the mind knot. A heaven veritable lies in the Master’s

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feet alone. No outer shows are needed, all must be done within. Why lose time with the outside world? I am now engaged in my Lord within."

Simran, as said above, is all a mental or inner process and, as such, a rosary or any other aid cannot be of any use in this behalf. By concentration at the blessed feet of the Master, by implicit faith in His instructions, and by putting them into actual practice, we can attain a stage of perfect bliss. There is no short cut but that of Simran as enjoined by the Master.

The Bible, too, says, "Be ye the doers of the Word and not the hearers only," and then you will enter New Jerusalem.

CONCLUSION

The Naam or Word is within you. This is to be contacted within. The observance of the outer rituals and performance of so-called meritorious deeds cannot be of any help in this matter. While the untold treasure of divinity lies hidden within, we search for it without and so all our efforts go in vain.

Emerson in this connection says, "The human body is a temple of God and, as such, God can only be made manifest from within." The contact between an individual spirit or human soul and the Oversoul is, of course, established

by a Master Soul by means of the Sound Current or Word.

Another Saint, Bhika, says: “O Bhika, there is no man starving in this world. Everybody has a diamond of precious value within. They do not know how to withdraw from the body and concentrate the sensory current and transcend the lower chakras in the body (or just analyze oneself from the body). That is why they feel hungry. They have the thing within them, but they know not how to come out of the body to contact it.”

The Sound Current or Word is contacted through the medium of Simran, which withdraws the spirit current from the body. When the current comes up to the seat of the soul in the waking state, only then it contacts the Conscious Power working within throughout the whole creation. It will, therefore, appear that Simran or the process of the sweet remembrance of the Word is the stepping stone to contacting the Word within. The first step is, therefore, to do the Simran or repetition of the charged words given by a competent Master, and the second step is, when the soul is withdrawn to its seat in the body at back of the two eyes, it contacts the Word which is called Naam, Shabd, Nad, Akash Bani, Kalma, Sarosha, etc. This Word has two phases: one is of Light and the other of Sound, which the

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soul experiences when it comes in contact with that Power. He sees the Light of God and hears sweet symphonies of the rapturous strains of the Sound Current going on within which gives its sweetness very sublime and ineffable, so sweet that no words can convey.

Farid, a Muslim Saint, says: "O Lord, there are so many sweet things in the world such as honey, buffalo milk, sugar; but the sweetness that Your Name conveys, O Lord, is far sweeter than all these." It is a subject to be done practically and tasted by the individual self. It is not a matter of routine only, nor of mere talking. It is a matter to be experienced by contact within. Those who have tasted the sweet elixir of it have talked about it in glowing terms.

Once Guru Nanak met Babar, the great King of India, who was taking an intoxicant. He offered it to Guru Nanak who told him, "Babar, this drug that you are taking loses its intoxication, but the intoxication I have by contacting the Word of God is everlasting and cannot be diminished." So it is an interesting subject. Those who have once tasted a bit of it can never forget it. All the world's enjoyments and other things lose their weight and value in their own eyes.

Constant remembrance of the Lord further gives a wakefulness to the man who is engaged

in it. Tennyson in his Memoirs gives an instance of his experience of a waking trance he had, which could be interesting to know. He says:

A kind of waking trance I have frequently had quite up from boyhood, when I have been all alone. This has generally come upon me through repeating my own name two or three times to myself silently till all at once, as it were out of the intensity of consciousness of individuality, the individuality seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being and this not a confused state but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, the wisest of the wisest, utterly beyond words, where death was a laughable impossibility, the loss of personality (if so it were) seemingly but the only true life. I am ashamed of my feeble description, have I not said the state is utterly beyond words.

This wakefulness Tennyson had by remembering his own name two or three times, quite calmly; this was, as it were, dipping into his own self, the soul. If we but dip in our source — God — by constant remembrance, losing our own selves into the whole, how much greater consciousness and wakefulness full of intoxication we would have. We can well consider all this. Thank you for your patient hearing.

KIRPAL SINGH