

'You have come from so far away. You left your homeland and dear ones, You have renounced family life, and day and night have rendered all types of service. You have true love and reverence. You were even ready to risk your life on the battlefield, but you were victorious and made my reputation shine. You considered the Prime Ministership to be nothing. You wanted to push it aside because you know that nothing is greater than service. Even though you have done so much, you keep on regarding yourself as incapable and unintelligent. Even though I recognized your determination, pure love, faith, devotion and spirit of renunciation from the start, I did not initiate you at once, because I first wanted to see from your actions whether you had real enthusiasm and power of concentration . Someone who works enthusiastically but without concentration cannot succeed in reaching the final goal.

'I came, called you several times, stood in the way of your light and cast a shadow on your books, but you were so absorbed in your work that could even see in the dark. As a result of your true service to me, light came from your heart and cast itself on the figures. I am proud to have such a disciple. the devotee is the crowning glory of the Master. The omnipresent god dwells in the hearts of all, but simply knowing this is not enough. A great devotee makes God manifest himself. There are many who give initiation and many who receive it, but he who spreads the True Knowledge everywhere is actually worthy of being called a disciple. My son, I believe you can do it."

When the Master is pleased, the joy of the devotee

knows no bounds. Eknath was transported with rapture, because he was reaping the harvest of his years of sacrifice. He had left his home for this. Now he was about to get his desired reward.

The Prime Minister said, "Son, I have one more thing to ask of you. Today you put so much labour into finding an error of one paise. I request that in the same way, on the path of devotion, you will overcome even the smallest error that crop up in life, and that you will keep your mind free of even the most trifling defects. Go, bathe and rest. Your tests are over. Now I will show you the path to the soul. Now you will make the Lord of the Universe your own."

Valuable jewels are extracted from deep within a mine, while pebbles, even though they are easily found on the road, can never have the same value. Gold is rare, so its value is also high. Iron is readily available, but it is not coveted like gold. Even though iron is extremely useful, people prefer to possess gold because it is more valuable.

A devotee of the Master and a beloved of God is extremely rare to find, and that is why such souls are glorified. Devotees of Maya don't count. Most people are greedy for worldly illusion, and are very happy when they get it. However, the Master is hungry only for loving devotion. Love, respect and faith are necessary to please him. He who has true attachment for his Master receives his love in return.

The Master was pleased with Eknath's service, and, by testing him, was convinced of his devotion, so he filled

Eknath's heart with the glorious Knowledge of God. Nachiketas had also wanted to realize this Knowledge, so he could not be tempted by Yama's boons of worldly wealth and grandeur.

People try all kinds of ways, unsuccessfully, to get this supreme Knowledge, but without the Grace of the Master, no one can realize it. If, after receiving Knowledge, the disciple practises it with full faith, and serves his Master with deep respect, then his soul will become fixed in God. After merging in God, confusion, fear and ignorance will no longer exist.

What can we say about Eknath's Great fortune on that day ! He easily achieved that fortune which is rare even for the angels. The Divine Light was kindled in his heart and his whole being thrilled. The eight Sattvic qualities were at his command, and he was drenched in rapture. In his intoxication he glorified his Master thus :

"O Master ! Until today I was bound by delusion, attachment, confusion and bothered by difficulties, but, by your mercy, I have been rescued by drowning in the river of desires and ambitions, and have been set on the bank. You have shown me the immortal Holy Name and, immersing myself in Truth, you have made me immortal. All I pray now is that my mind may always be directed towards you."

Everyone tries in various ways to get happiness, but no one ever finds it. A devotee who has true, loving devotion may get nothing material, but makes God pleased, which is truly the greatest wealth. Lord Rama was happy to eat the berries which Bhilni had already tasted. Lord Krishna ate

banana peels offered by Vidurani, and a handful of raw rice given by Sudama. Wealth, beauty and qualifications are necessary to please the world, but these things will not help you to please the Lord, he is hungry only of Love. The Master will not approach anyone who has no love.

'How can I praise the Grace, mercy and qualities of the Master? If all the mountains were reduced to charcoals, and made into ink by mixing with the oceans; if the entire earth was made into paper and the branches of every tree made into pens; and if the Goddess of Speech herself should advise me what to write, then day and night for years I would be writing his glories and still I could not adequately do it.'

On that day, Eknath was exalted by the Knowledge which uplifts the soul and gives true happiness. Even these days, people try in all kinds of ways to attain this same spiritual Knowledge, which is the connection to God, but they don't succeed. But when, by the Grace of the Master, someone receives that Knowledge, which is internally realized, and with full faith throws himself into meditation and service, his soul naturally will merge with God. He will be released from all worldly sufferings and achieve infinite, supreme peace. When his mind is filled with God, all doubts vanish. The person who reaches this state becomes one with the external manifestation of God, which is the spiritual Master.

How fortunate was Eknath ! Why not exalt his greatness ! Even the angels long for the chance to see and serve the Master as he did. When the Divine Light was revealed within his heart, his whole being felt at peace, and when he

meditated on the Holy Name all his years of self-denial bore fruit. He said, "O Lord of the Universe ! By your mercy you have shown me what you really are. I have no more vain hopes and desires! A fish flounders when taken out of the water, but I was drowning in an ocean of attachments and burning with desires. The Nectar of your Holy Name has completely cooled my heart. How can my feeble tongue describe your greatness? Therefore, I pray you give me the wisdom to always be your slave. I don't want anything other than this."

Worldly people think that there are many ways to attain liberation. However, just as light is the only way to dispel darkness, and heat is the only way to remove cold, it is a fact that the only way to liberation is devotion to the Master. A devotee never feels any difficulty, because that which experiences difficulty, i.e. the mind, is always attached to the Master's Feet. So how could such a devotee feel sorrow or difficulty? Pure love and faith for the Master will break all bondage, just as an elephant easily breaks lotus stalks. A disciple who serves cheerfully and meditates on the Holy Name can never feel difficulty.

While doing work the mind should be engaged in meditation on the Holy Name. Service and meditation should be thus balanced. As the disciple progresses in service and devotion, a disinterest in worldliness and the longing to see God grows in him. If one has an earnest desire to see God, he will naturally meditate on the Holy Name. Every second of his life is for meditation.

The Master's unlimited Grace is fully realized when one

has absolutely no desire for anything in this world or the next. This only comes through faith, reverence and service. A person who leaves the anchor of service and tries to free himself from sin by any other means is wasting his time. We try to restrain our senses but we cannot, we try to stop bad desires or impure thoughts but we cannot. Hermits hope to subdue the mind by a variety of austerities, but they cannot. Service to the Guru is also a type of sacrifice or austerity, and the disciple who serves will be able to stabilize his mind and restrain his senses. A devotee who surrenders all his hopes and desires to God becomes carefree and stabilized in Yoga.

The saint is described thus in the Ramayana : *He looks upon all beings with an equal eye, he has no desires, and is free from joy, grief and fear. Such a saint abides in My heart just as the desire for wealth lives in the heart of a greedy man. Saints are dear to Me, and for their sake alone I embody Myself. Those who worship My personal and qualified form, and are resolved to do good to others; who firmly tread the path of righteousness, are steadfast in their vows and are devoted to saints, are as dear to Me as life.*

God always dwells in the heart of a devotee who gets rid himself of all ego, and worships the Master who is the manifested form of God, placing his mind at his feet. All creeds and scriptures talk in some way or other about the need for the Master. All scriptures praise devotion. This testimony of devotion inspires us to become devotees and to serve. Until a disciple becomes a servant, he won't get the desired results.

Ekhnath had already dissolved himself in service. So

when he received Knowledge it blossomed in him. He continued to serve zealously and with heartfelt love. His love for the Lord increased day by day. He forgot all about the world, and cleansed his heart of the dirt of desire, thus making it a pure shrine in which he saw his Master's face 24 hours a day.

When he first met Eknath on the river bank, Janardan Swami had told him that enthusiasm is necessary and must be kept up to the end. Well, now that time had come.

Keep that first love up to the end, then you will be free, and will free thousands.

One day, Janardan Swami said to Eknath, "My boy, I have revealed to you that Nectar which rids one of worldly desires and by which you can reach the Divine Abode. It should be shared with others. Everyone is asleep in the awful sleep of infatuation and delusion, and therefore they are burning in the fire of desires. Go and reveal this Name to them and give them relief. Although your service so far has pleased me greatly, I will be most pleased if you spread this message of devotion and put people wander in search of this Nectar. Visit these places, show the people the knowledge and get rid them of their misconceptions. They imagine that merely going to a shrine, bathing, and worshipping idols is devotion. In exchange for trifles, they are wasting this priceless human body, which is rare even for the angels to get. Initiate them into Knowledge and explain the value of this life. A dip in the river of satsang can change a person's nature from being like a crow into being like a swan. Reveal the truth, Consciousness and Bliss to them so

that they can make their lives a success. Noble people work for the benefit of others. Most people are busy with selfish pursuits. A great soul is concerned with the welfare and blessedness of others, and nothing else. Therefore, my child, prepare yourself quickly for your pilgrimage !"

Allahabad (Pryag) is called the chief place of pilgrimage, but we have been shown that the company of saints and the presence of the Master is in fact the ultimate holy of holies.

Sahjo Bai said, *Greater than all the holy places is the Master's Feet, endlessly holy. There is no place to compare with this in the entire universe.*

Once you reach the Feet of the Master, there is no need for fasting, giving alms, or pilgrimages. Eknath had already dived into this most holy of all holy places, so there was no need for him to go on pilgrimage and take dips in holy rivers. He was not sent to these places because he had no desire to see them, but because the Master wanted others to bathe in his holy words, an obedient disciple who does such a pilgrimage for the benefit of others is indeed blessed.

So, according to his Master's orders, Eknath travelled to various holy places, such as Dwarika, Jagananathpuri, Rameshwar, Hardwar, Badrinath and Manasrovar, delivering the message of Truth. He gave Knowledge to those who had the proper love and faith, and started them on the path of devotion. Finally his wanderings led him to Pandharpur. A huge crowd of people had gathered there on the occasion of Guru Purnima, to bathe in the Chandrabhaga River. They bathed, worshipped, and sang devotional songs before

the idols, gave alms and thought themselves most fortunate. They considered that just doing this much gave some meaning to their lives.

The great devotee Namdev and some other devotees were present on this auspicious occasion. When Namdev heard that Eknath had come, he gathered all the devotees and brought them to see him. Knowing him to be a beloved devotee of the Lord, they prostrated to him. When he beheld Eknath, Namdev's eyes filled with tears, which Eknath wiped away with his own hands. Whenever devotees and lovers of God meet, they automatically start talking about God.

Eknath said, "Beloved devotees of the Lord ! Today we have come together from here and there to this gateway of God to receive spiritual upliftment. But many unlucky people come here and leave empty-handed. Actually, when a soul had transmigrated through the 8.4 million species, and comes into a human body, it becomes entitled to see God. The soul cannot be revealed in any other species. When a person takes the holy bath of satsang, his sins are washed away, Now you have both these auspicious opportunities. If you so desire, you can clean all the dross from your mind. My heart is filled with joy at your love. You can also have a chance to see the true Master.

By the Grace of the Master, my mind is free of doubts. He has shown me the one Reality behind the entire animate and inanimate Creation. This Reality is always before me. In word and deed I am aware of Spirit and nothing else. I have beheld this all pervading Reality. Now, I also want you to be

recipient of my Guru's Grace, and to make God manifest within yourselves. Your life will thus be successful.

The Master takes various births in all ages to share with the devotees, the Nectar of devotion, and to show them the True Path. He will keep on manifesting in the future also, for the sake of the devotees.

The Spiritual Master, Shri Janardan Swami, is truly a divine incarnation. An aspirant's every desire is fulfilled if he dives with faith, love and respect into the holy waters of his words and company. Such a disciple will be freed from the bondage of sin and will achieve liberation. When a person comes to the shelter of the Master, who is all compassion, forgiveness and peace, he gains the right to salvation and devotion. I have toured all the holy places, but find that there is no place like the Lotus Feet of the Master for purifying the mind.

If a person bathes there, he will cross the ocean of birth and death. Every holy place has a importance of its own, but all holiness is contained in the Master. So come to the Master and bathe in his Eternal Name. Dive into the stream of Nectar and you will experience eternal bliss. I sincerely hope that you will all take advantage of this opportunity. I have come to take you to the Supreme Light and show you God as he really is.

People avail themselves of the opportunity to go to sacred places of pilgrimage to bathe, meditate and give alms and charity. But even if you go to all the shrines and distribute alms you won't get the same result and benefit that you will get from meditating once on God within your-

self.

Only a real fool would cast away a touchstone and go looking everywhere for pebbles; or cut down a wish-fulfilling tree and plant a cactus; or turn a cow out of his house and wander in search of milk. What is the use of being like that? Could such a person let go of his obstinacy and accept initiation from an enlightened soul? Never.

There are two types of people in this world. The first type of person heeds the words of a saint, gives up his evil ways and takes to the path of devotion. The second type is the idiot whose consciousness will never wake up, even if he gets God Himself as his Guru. People are devoted to inert things such as idols, but they won't devote themselves to a living Master.

If a person has a magic talisman that can fulfill all his wishes, will he go begging for food? If he has the cool shade of a tree in his garden, would he trouble himself by sitting in the sun?

The fulfiller of all desires dwells within everyone. Even though the philosopher's stone of the Holy Name is closer than anything else to us, we grope in the darkness of Maya. People who are unlucky do not search for the Holy Name, but waste their efforts on useless things. In actual fact, the Holy Name of God is the philosopher's stone and the fulfiller of all desires. People think that chanting and singing is True Knowledge, and they even regard liberation as being no more than this. But if you really want to gain something, and take refuge in the Master, you will be given the jewel of the Holy Name, which will free you from the poverty of

attachment.

The philosopher's stone of Holy Name is present within us all, but it has been covered by the dust of ignorance. Fire reduces a heap of wood to ashes, and the Name burns up all desires and defects. But the fire of the Name is kindled only when the Master blows away the ashes of confusion with the breeze of satsang. A wise and discriminating person immediately receive the Name with faith, and then, in the shrine of his heart, the Divine Light is kindled. Fools don't appreciate the value of this jewel and throw it away. Turning away from the Light, they eat the vermin of desires and passions. Even though they have received the Name, they waste their life chasing after worldly desires and foolish pursuits.

What Eknath said was Knowledge in a nutshell, full of blessings and wisdom. People bowed their heads at Master's feet and prayed, "Revered Sir, if there is such a thing as this Holy Name, which is the simple way to get rid of the hassles of birth and death, please show it to us, and bestow on us the gift of devotion to the Master. Get us out of these worldly entanglements, and set us on the other shore of this ocean of suffering. We came to bathe in the Chandrabhaga River, but we are getting the chance to dive into the Manasrovar Lake. We would be idiots to waste this opportunity."

This liberated saint lived for the benefit of others. His purpose in life was to enrich the world through Knowledge. Eknath's intention in coming to Pandharpur was, according to his Master's instructions, to set people on the path of true devotion. He initiated the sincere aspirants, instructed them in service, satsang and meditation on the Holy Name,

and then went on his way. As he left, everyone's eyes were full of tears.

Prayer of Dharmadas

I bow before Your holy feet, for You have given me the Name,

My heart was dark, I could see nothing,

Until you kindled the lamp of Knowledge within me,

My mind had been slumbering for long ages,

Until Your Word awoke me,

Waves of poison arose in my heart,

But you stilled them with one drop of Your Nectar,

The river was deep,

It was beyond my capacity to deal with the currents,

But you have helped me to safety.

O Lord, your servant Dharmdas humbly request You,

Please keep him in your shelter.

I bow before Your holy feet, for you have given me the Name.

You won't get anything from a false Guru

Both Master and disciple must be sincere. If they are not they will sink like a rock in water. If the Master is blind, the disciple will be even more so. The blind then leads the blind, and both fall into the ditch.

If the disciple doesn't understand something, but still doesn't ask, or, even if he does ask and finds out the truth yet doesn't try to progress on the Path, then he is really blind. No one can show him the way.

How can one blind man show another which way to go? If the master is not perfect, the disciple cannot become

perfect. A greedy Master and a greedy disciple compound each other's misery.

If an aspirant doesn't meet the true Master, his knowledge will be incomplete. He may wear the garb and affect the mannerisms of a hermit, but actually he is just a beggar.

There are many types of teachers, with many kinds of knowledge, but the aspirant should follow the Master who reveals the Knowledge of the Holy Name. Don't try to recognize a Spiritual Master by his external appearance, but rather by the Knowledge that he gives, otherwise you'll have to dive again and again into the ocean of transmigration. A teacher who is not free of delusion himself cannot remove that of others. Both the teacher and his disciple will go to Hell, bound hand and foot.

A Master should reveal the Knowledge of the Holy Name, and the disciple should attach his mind to it constantly. How can one prisoner free another? Serve the one who is himself free and independent, then you will also be set free.

Don't hesitate for a moment to leave a false teacher, because if you don't, you'll get trapped and go straight to the gates of death. Someone who doesn't serve the living Master but instead worships an idol cannot cross to the other shore of the worldly ocean. You cannot remove stains by washing them with dirt. If the teacher is blind, how can he make the disciple see?

The True Master is the embodiment of spiritual Knowledge, and a true disciple is one who realizes the knowledge. Without the giving and receiving of Knowledge, there is

neither Master nor disciple. The Master must be perfect and the disciple should be like a fearless warrior, keeping the reins on his mind and turning it towards knowledge. The mind is controlled through meditation on the Holy Name. If he walks on this Path, the aspirant will reach the throne of the Master.

Living without the Master

There are people who pass their entire lives without receiving Knowledge from the Master. You should understand that they have passed their lives meaninglessly. Whatever they have done has been all in vain.

The great sage Narad is famous throughout India for the immense understanding which he had of subjects ranging from astrology to zoology. He was able to visit Lord Vishnu in his Heaven personally. Yet each time he left the court, one of Lord Vishnu's attendants would dig a hole in the ground where Narad had been standing and throw away the soil. He considered it defiled.

One day Narad happened to come back to Vishnu's Court and found the same attendant digging a hole in the ground and carting the soil away. He asked the reason for this and the servant replied, "Narad, you have no Spiritual Master, so you pollute the very ground you stand on."

Then Narad asked Lord Vishnu, "Lord, what need have I of a Guru, when I can visit you in person?"

Vishnu replied, "Actually, whether he sees me in person or not, the fact remains that without a Guru, a person's life is unholy and ignorant." Then Lord Vishnu directed Narad to a certain fisherman and told him to accept him as his

Master.

The great sage Sukhdev was already a Master of Yoga while still unborn. Even so, he could not experience perfect peace of mind. Finally he approached his father, the renowned sage Vyas, and asked him why his severe penances, fasting, chanting, pilgrimages and meditation were not bringing him satisfaction.

Vyas told him that it was because he did not have true knowledge of the Soul. Vyas could very well have revealed to his son this most holy secret, but he felt that familiarity would prevent Sukhdev from showing the respect due to a Guru. So he sent him to a great soul known as King Janak, to ask him humbly for the Knowledge. There are many stories of the tests which the King put Sukhdev through before bestowing on him the precious Knowledge.

All scriptures agree that charitable good works, counting rosaries, and all other such pious acts are of no value unless one is the disciple of the true Master.

Saint Kabir says that Sukhdev was refused admission to Heaven because he presumed to serve God without first following a Guru, even though he was a Master Yogi from birth. Not until he accepted King Janak as his Master could he enter Heaven.

Kabir declares that people who talk about realizing God but are not disciple of the true Master are like prostitutes who proclaim that they would gladly die for the Master, is no better than a bullock. He is good for getting things moved from one place to another, and that is all.

What use is temple, unless the Master is worshipped

there? What use is this human frame, unless we realize Self-Knowledge? Even if a million moons were to rise together tonight, without the Grace of the Master you would still be in the dark. Divine Light flashes in the Inner Sky, but only those who have a Guru will be able to see it. They alone, who have the Grace of the Master, will reach the final destination.

You may try a thousand times, and try again, but without the Grace of the True Master, you will never understand the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. Without the help of the Master, Truth cannot be realized. Without a Master, it is most difficult to change one's bad traits.

The saints have divided devotees into two types. The first type approaches the Master because he understands that he needs spiritual guidance. He believes in his Master, obeys him, and gives his life in service of Truth.

The second type of devotee follows his mind. Although he has a Master, he continues to follow the dictates of his own mind, serves according to his own wish, and continues to do only those things which his mind tells him to do.

The devotees of his Master

A true disciple is focused completely on the wishes of his Spiritual Master, just as a Minister pays total attention to the wishes of the President. This disciple's glance never leaves his Master for a moment. He is always concentrated on him.

The Indian partridge is in love with the moon, and

stares at it all night long. That is how a disciple's eyes long for the sight of his Master.

A devotee is regarded as being truly devoted when he doesn't mind whether he gets praise or abuse.

There was a great devotee called Bulleh Shah who used to say, "My daily schedule is to fill every moment of my life with love."

How can I ever look anywhere else, when my eyes are already brimming over with the sight of my beloved? When all the rooms in an inn are taken, a traveller had to find somewhere else to stay.

The Follower of his Mind

People who claim to be devotees, but who are not stable in service, will remain bound to the wheel of birth and death, says Saint Kabir.

Those who are motivated by desire while doing service, and who do not try to remove that desire from their hearts, are not really devotees, although they expect four times the wages of a servant.

A disciple only ends up making mistakes if he tries to do anything while neglecting the Master's Word. He faces Death wherever he goes. What can his poor Master do about it?

Disciples say to the Master, "Whatever I have, is yours. I regard nothing in this world as my own. It will not cause me the slightest pain to hand over everything to you."

"Whatever you have, does not really belong to you," answers the Master. "Everything is mine, but when the time comes for you to give me back what is mine, you will find

yourself trembling."

A disciple who acts shrewd and proud in front of his Master will end up being confused. A disciple who criticizes his Master is a sorry sight. He who criticizes both God and Master is liable to croak like a frog for thousand of lifetimes.

A disciple who concentrates on making friends in the world instead of forging a strong relationship with his Master gets stuck half-way, and never reaches the Abode of Truth.

Some such disciples want to restrain the flights of their mind and go beyond the ocean of worldly misery, but, due to their disobedience to the Master, they get entangled in a hell of suffering.

A greedy Guru and his envious disciple compete with each other for a place in Hell. A blind Guru and his deaf disciple accomplish nothing, for one does not hear what the other does not see.

An aspirant who has no faith in his Master cannot be happy even in his dreams. He claims to be a servant of his Master, but still puts his trust in the world. He is neither here nor there.

What is a true devotee?

A devotee is someone who is always active in service. This alone entitles someone to be called a devotee.

He is always occupied in service. He doesn't wander off in the middle of a task. He retains his mental equanimity in both sorrow and happiness.

The intellect of a true servant and the intellect of the Master become one. They merge with each other. The Master is never pleased by showing off. He is only pleased by a

loving heart.

If a beggar stays near a rich man's door and puts up with being pushed around, one day the rich man might change his mind and bestow favours on him.

Kabir says that the Guru expects you to depend on nobody but himself, but no one is willing to belong to him alone. As long as you cling to yourself in vain expectations, you cannot become a real devotee.

The Master is capable of doing anything. He has all powers at his disposal and he is always with you. His feet rest upon your head. What more do you need? Wealth and fortune, and the genius to accomplish all things are ever ready to serve the devotee of the Lord. Salvation is within his reach.

If his devotee weeps, the Lord also weeps. He appears before the devotee with the twinkling of an eye, and grants him all his desires.

A slave never makes demands on his master, but serves him day and night. If a devotee is like that, then Death has no power over him.

The Master can provide everything. Each devotee receives according to his needs and circumstances. The devotee loves him with all his heart, and always clings to his feet.

The devotee is as faithful as a dog to his Master. His Master leads him on the leash of Love. He does whatever his Master asks of him. When the Master says 'Go', he goes, and when he says 'Come', he comes. He lives as his Master sees fit.

Some people say that they are truly devoted to their

Master, but in their heart of hearts they don't really feel this to be so.

How can my thirst be quenched if I refuse to drink water? How can I be truly devoted if I have no humility?

Master, I do not ask for the pleasures of this world, nor do I pray for salvation. I beg only for devotion. I don't want to be involved with others and make demands on them. It is up to you alone that I turn.

The devotee may wonder what will become of devotees when the earth and sky collapse. The Master answers: Let everything collapse, no matter. Let earth and sky vanish. My devotees will find refuge in me.

You can always trust the true saint who would rather die than betray his Lord.

This world is like an attic full of cobwebs. Happy are those servants of the Lord who can live in it without getting covered in dirt, because they are protected by the Holy Name.

Why should a person, in whose heart the Lord dwells, be sad? The point is, that those who are not in love rest easy, but he who has fallen in love knows no sleep at all. He is always restless and passes his nights and days like a fish out of water. Such a devotee should make more and more effort to see Him, and all will be Light.

St Kabir is of the opinion that only God is fully conscious. Even His servants are not fully awake, and worldling are far from it. The Lord is enthroned in every heart. None is without Him, but blessed is the heart in which he reveals His presence.

The Glory of the Holy Name

All religions, sects and scriptures speak of remembering the Holy Name. It is of the utmost importance to know that Name by which we can realize the Absolute Truth, and by which the Supreme Power manifests itself in us. If we could realize God, and thus fulfil the aim of our life, simply by remembering any name at all, then it would not be necessary to find the True master and follow him. However, without the Master, progress on the path of devotion is well-nigh impossible. People worship various deities, keep fast and go on pilgrimages, and think that this is all there is to devotion. However, in this day and age, there is no other spiritual practice worthy of the title apart from meditation on the Holy Name. In these times, we cannot fully carry out ritualistic worship and other complicated practices to achieve spiritual insight. So don't worry about all other things. Simply remember the Holy Name.

Says Tulsidas :

In Kali Yug (the Dark Age) the only support is the Holy Name, by meditating on which a person crosses the worldly ocean. In this Age neither devotion, nor spiritual discrimination, nor righteous action is possible, so the only recourse is in the Holy Name.

The Holy Name eradicates all the sins of this dark age. By remembering this Name, the dumb can speak and cripples can climb mountains.

St. Kabir said, One ounce of Name per ton of sin is enough. Just a small dose burns all sins to ashes.

There is a mythological story that once all the gods were arguing about who should be worshipped first. Finally, they decided that whoever was able to circumnavigate the earth and reach Lord Shiva first, would be entitled to be worshipped first. They all wanted that honour, so they mounted their various steeds and set off to encircle the earth. Now, the mount of Ganesh is said to be a mouse, so he was lagging behind the rest. He was worried about his slow progress. Suddenly St. Narad appeared and asked Ganesh why he was so depressed. Ganesh told him the whole story. Narad said, "Ganesh, stop worrying and meditate on the Holy Name. You will be sure to reach Lord Shiva first." Ganesh followed this advice and won the competition.

In the Ramayana, St Tulsidas says,

I bow to the Name of Ram (God) which is the source of fire, sun and moon. It is the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. It is the vital Breath of the Vedas. It is attributeless, peerless and the fountainhead of all virtues.

I bow to the Name which consumes sins like fire, causes the sun to shine and bestows supreme peace, like the soothing rays of the moon.

Academics have interpreted this through their own minds, and then try to explain it to others. They say that **R-A-M** is the Name of God, and that its letters are taken from 'krisanu' (fire), 'bhanu' (sun), and 'himakar' (moon). Can such a put-together name wipe out sins? You can be thinking of various desirable things while you are chanting 'Ram, Ram' (or any other such name). Your sins will not be burnt up, externally

or internally, nor will you get peace of mind.

The Holy Name contains the three active forces of Nature. It is actually the creative, preserving and destructive energy, and it is the essence of the scriptures. Saints have always sung its glory, and indeed it is the way of salvation. There is no use in reading the scriptures if you don't know what that Name is which is mentioned in all of them. The scriptures are just like a lifeless corpse, because they don't have that breath of life which is the Holy Name.

St Kabir said, *If you take the Name, you've taken everything, this is the secret of the Scriptures.*

The Name is said to be peerless, unique and beyond all attributes. Nothing at all can be compared with it. Some people chant the Gyatri Mantra, some chant 'Ram, Ram,' or 'Krishna, Krishna,' and think that this is devotion. Some think that chanting 'Om namah shivai' is real meditation. Still others remember names of their own choosing or which are imparted to them by their gurus. If they are all true, then they should all be peerless and incomparable, because that ultimate Name is said to defeat all others in competition.

Narad said to Lord Rama: *Devotion to you is like the night of the full moon. Your Holy Name shines like the myriad stars in the sky of the devotee's heart. Your Name surpasses all other names in exterminating sins, just as a fowler kills a whole flock of birds.*

So what is that Name, which exterminates the darkness of ignorance and sin?

This Name must be greater than all the others. This Name, which is omnipresent, and in which the Yogis merge

themselves cannot be equated by even thousands of other names. If you put all of them together, they could never equal that Name.

The Name is harmonious and attracts the devotee's mind. It resides always in the devotee's heart. The saints gave the same knowledge of Holy Name to everyone. If salvation came only as a result of chanting 'Ram, Ram' then Muslims and Christians would be left out, as chanting this name would not come easily to them. So how could 'Ram' be the Name whose pronunciation is easy for everyone? God dwells in every heart, so his Name must also be in every heart, but as soon as you try to represent it verbally, you will get variations.

The Holy Name embellishes Devotion, just as earrings enhance the beauty of a woman. The Name benefits the world, as do the sun and moon. The moon stimulates sap in plants and the sun matures it.

The Name is the satisfaction in taste, and is like the juice in fruit. It, like Atlas, supports the whole world. The Name is like a bee and the devotee's mind is like a lotus. They have a natural affinity. Devotees love the Name as Yashoda loved Krishna and his brother Balaram.

St Barahmanada says,

Ascending, descending, moving with the breath.

a worldly man doesn't realize this, and wastes his life.

People are wasting their lives because they have forgotten what the Name really is.

Tulsidas says,

The name and the object named are equally important, and have

a mutual relationship like that of servant and master.

Name and Form are the two aspects of God. Both are ineffable, eternal, and are understood only by the wise.

Form is dependent on Name, because without knowing the name of something you cannot acquire it and see its form. You cannot identify something without a name. If you remember the name of something, then even without having to see the form, it comes to mind.

This Name is a clever interpreter between the unmanifested God and the Manifested Form.

There is no difference between a name and its referent. They are like master and devotee. Externally they are two, but are united internally. Similarly, the Divine Name and Form are the two aspects of God. Actually, Name and the Bearer of the Name are One. Both are eternal, and only a wise sage understands their mystery.

The words people chant, or the forms upon which they meditate, are not eternal. Lord Rama lived in Treta Age, while Lord Krishna lived in Dwapar Age. If there was no such Form in Sat Yuga, on what did the people of that time meditate? On what did the devotees Dhruva and Prahlad meditate? Everyone should think about this and work it out. Only a saint fully realizes what is Name and Form, and what is the relationship and difference between them. Form depends on Name. Without knowing the Name, God's Form cannot be realized fully. When a statue is made, it is first given a shape and then a name. But if you think of any name, without having to see it, the form of the referent will automatically spring to mind. So don't be confused. Meditate on the Holy Name. The story of Name and form as a

matter of fact is untellable, as it cannot be put into words, but the Spiritual Master helps the aspirant to easily understand this delightful mystery.

Some people imagine a statue made of clay, stone or paper to be God's image, or qualified form. Others believe that he is Formless and beyond attributes. But the devotee who has realized the Name feels no confusion. Name is the intermediary, the translator, between God-with-Form and the Formless God. Just as a translator or interpreter can bring together people whose languages are different, so the Name is the bridge between these two aspects of God.

Install the shining gem of the Name on the threshold of your heart, if you want Light both inside and outside, advises Tulsidas, 'Keep the diamond of the Name in the shrine of your heart.' You will glow from within. A diamond shines day and night. The Name also is always emitting Light. By remembering the Name you kindle this Light, and when you stop, you will also be unable to see the Light.

St Kabir said, *You turn the rosary beads in your hand and your tongue in your mouth, but your mind goes in all directions. This is not meditation.*

You have wasted so much time doing this, but still you don't know where the mind goes.

Throw away this rosary and turn the Inner Rosary. A slave of mind twists external beads but gets nothing from it. However, after meeting the True Master, the mind can chant the Inner Rosary.

If the rosary beads and the mind are at odds with each other, what kind of meditation will you do? When you merge your mind in the Holy Name, all will be light within.

I neither count rosaries, nor chant 'Ram Ram'. Ram is remembering me, while I take rest.

If the beads are in your hand, but your mind is not in God, what kind of meditation are you doing?

A false saint wears all the external trappings, but his mind is only on money.

Tulsidas says in the Ramayana,

The Mahamantra is meditated upon by Lord Shiva, and to liberate the inhabitants of Kashi, He initiated them. Shiva understands well the power of the Name, by which He turned poison into nectar.

Any pronounceable name, by the mere fact that it is pronounced, has a beginning and an end. No such name is the 'Mahamantra' which has no beginning, middle or end, and which can turn poison into Nectar. The wondrous effects of meditation on Holy Name are described in all scriptures. How could the devotees of Sat Yug have meditated on 'Ram, Ram'? Ram lived in a later age.

Guru Nanak said, *It is the true Reality from the beginning, is the truth now, and will always be the Truth.*

Tulsidas said, *Narad realized the glory of the Name, which is why he is beloved of God.*

Because Prahlad remembered the Name, God showered His Grace upon him, and he is regarded as the epitome of devotion.

Dhruva remembered the Name and attained the highest state in the heavens. By remembering the Holy Name, Hanuman had Lord Rama in the palm of his hand.

The Name is praised as being even greater than God. Fire is present everywhere, but you can't use it in its unmanifested

form to cook your food or drive away the cold. Only when you collect wood and ignite it can you take advantage of the element fire. Similarly, we realize the unmanifest God through the Name, whose praises were sung even by Lord Rama Himself. If the Lord Himself couldn't adequately praise it, then could it be done by any ordinary name?

By remembrance of Holy Name, the worldly ocean dries up. The wise should think about this. How can I sing the glory of the Name? Even Lord Rama Himself couldn't adequately praise it.

Kabir said, *Everyone says, 'God God', but nobody knows what the Name of God really is.*

If you want to know the True Name, you have to approach the Master. There are thousands of utterable names for God in this world, but none of them will liberate you.

He is a rare saint who realizes the Primordial Name which is remembered deep within.

Tantras and mantras are not the real thing, so don't be misled. Without knowing the Holy Name which is the essence of all, nobody can cross the worldly ocean.

Ask yourself, when you chant a certain word or mantra, where does your mind wander? St Kabir goes on to say, *Without the Word you are in darkness, no matter where you go. If you don't find the door of the Holy Name, you'll have to go around and around in the wheel of birth and death. Remember the Name; don't say anything aloud. Close the external doors and open the internal. Close ears, eyes and mouth and meditate on the Pure Name. The internal doors gets opened when the external ones are closed. Remembering the Name brings great bliss, so keep your mind attached to it.*

So close your eyes, ears and mouth. Then what do you

do? That mystery will be revealed to you by the Master. St. Mansur Said,

If you want to meet God, you must remember His Name constantly.

Clean your heart with the broom of meditation.

Leave behind all feelings of duality and soar towards God.

It is not necessary to fast and die of hunger,

or to go to the mosque and say prayers,

So break the thread of the rosary and throw the books in the river.

Stop loving yourself and love God.

Love Him with all your heart and sing His praises.

Don't think that He is far away.

Forfeit your ego and search for the source within yourself.

You are not a Hindu or Muslim. You are a human beings.

So stop chasing duality.

You have to erase your pride, if you want to get anything from God.

There is only one Way, the True Way, to remember Him.

Guru Nanak said,

Meditate on that Name which pervades land and water. Why do you meditate on something else which is finite? God dwells in the shrine of your heart. Take a holy bath within yourself.

I know the One Word which dwells in my breath. I won't be reborn. Close the doors of the body and drink the Nectar of God's Name. Rest within yourself.

You can cross the worldly ocean by means of the Name, in the same way as a lotus lives in the water but does not get wet.

I am talking about the glorious Name of God.

He also said,

While standing, sitting, sleeping or awake, remember the Holy

Name, and you will be successful in all that you do.

You need the help of the Master to know and practise that Name, and if you don't know what the Name is, it's useless to simply chant any name that takes your fancy. You are only wasting your energy. If you could meditate on just any name, then it wouldn't be necessary to follow the Master, and the saints would have no value.

When we concentrate, we can hear that Word, but not with our external ears. It is not a matter of talking or writing, nor is its origin known. By virtue of being self-effulgent, it is eternal and said to be without origin. The scriptures call it God, the Primordial Seed, or First Cause. A person is a devotee when he listens to this Inner Word. Saints have called it Om, the True Name, Secret Name, Holy Name, Word of God, Satnam, Mahamantra, etc. Meditation means remembering it.

In the Kathopanishad, Vaivaswat asked Nachiketas,

What is that state which the Vedas, all saints, sages and ascetics have described, and to attain which Yogis practise continence and self-discipline? The only path, I tell you, is the Holy Name of God.

Definitely the Holy Name is God. It is called the Word of God, or the Energy of God. The devotee who knows it, gets his every wish fulfilled. It is the most reliable refuge and support. It is the foolproof way to realize God. Having understood this mystery, a meditator who faithfully, reverently, and lovingly depends only on the Name is glorified.

The Inner Breath (Prana) is not that breathing which discerns good and bad smells, says the Chandogya Upanishad. It is beyond sensory perception, and is therefore untainted

by sin. Because of this Inner Breath, we can eat, and drink. The secondary breath and senses are sustained by it. If, by the time of death you haven't realized this vital force, you will suffer all kinds of trouble. You will feel remorse. Someone who hasn't learned the 'Unchantable Chant' and who doesn't know how to worship the Name through the breath, will surely regret it.

By meditating on the Reverse Name, Valmiki became one with God. He knew well the glory of the Name, having been purified by it.

The constant awareness of 'I am That' is the dazzling flame of the lamp of Knowledge. When the rapture of self-realization sheds its brilliant light, the mistaken sense of duality, which is the root of birth and death, is destroyed. Then the enlightened intellect can untie the knots binding spirit and matter in the chamber of the heart. The darkness of ignorance is dispelled. Vanity, lust, anger, etc. dare not approach the devotee in whose heart the jewel of devotion shines.

The Holy Word and its sound dwell within each breath of all beings, therefore it is called 'unchanted'. Meditating on this sound very quickly concentrates and calms the mind. Samadhi is easily attained.

The Holy Word is also called 'Omkar Mantra'. 'Omkar' means 'omnipresent, omnipotent, sustainer and ruler of all'. The Name is present within all beings, and animates them. Therefore it is the foundation of all life. Because it is within us, we can live with each other. It is the inner controller of all. Meditating on it makes you aware of your soul. It is the origin of all life.

In Hindi, 'Hans' means both 'swan' and 'soul'. When someone dies, it is said that 'hans' has flown away. The great

work of Tulsidas is called 'Ramacharita-Manas'. 'Manas' means 'Manasarovar', the holy lake in which the soul-swan, lives. Our heart is like that Manas Lake, in which the soul-swan abides. The whole Ramacharitamanas is the sage of the soul. In it Parshurama says, *O Rama! How can I adequately praise You? You are the Divine Swan which lives in the Manasarovar Lake of Lord Shiva's heart. Hail to you always!*

Yogis exert great effort to realize that Pure Form of God which dwells within Shiva's heart. All the Scriptures sing the glory of Hans-Nam, or Holy Name of God.

St Kabir said, *While breathing, remember the Holy Name, the unchanted Chant. It is the Divine entity, operating automatically within you.*

St. Brahmananda said,
*Turn the pure rosary day and night.
 Ascending and descending with the breath.
 Most people don't understand this and waste their lives.
 The Holy Name is chanted without the use of lips or tongue.
 While asleep or awake, 24 hours a day
 Don't forget it for an instant.
 The Master fully explains this mystery,
 And the unsteady mind is tamed.
 Those Yogis who apply themselves to meditation always sit before dawn.
 Brahmananda has achieved liberation.
 He won't be reborn.*

In the Bhagavad Gita. Chapter 11 verse 54, Lord Krishna says, *By unparalleled devotion to me alone, I am seen and even entered into.*

शतं सतेस्रमनुत न्यर्बुदमसंख्येयं स्वमस्मिन्निविष्टम् ।
यदस्यद्दनन्त्यामपश्यत एष तस्मात्तेद्वेवो रोचते एष एतत् ॥

Who can adequately praise the Power of God? It is the supreme and Almighty power. God's Light shines everywhere. It illumines the Universe. He who realizes God also acquires amazing powers, says the Athuravveda.

पवित्रं ते विततं ब्रह्मणस्पते प्रभुर्गात्राणि पथ्येषि विश्वतः ।
अतप्ततनूर्न तदामो अनश्नुते श्रुतास इद्वहन्तस्तत्पमाशत ॥

The Blissful Lord pervades every particle of the universe. Coming into His presence and seeing Him face-to-face, is unparalleled rapture. The devotee who brings his body and senses under control is drowned in bliss.

अथाध्यात्मं यदेतद् गच्छतीव च मनोऽनेन ।
चेतदुपम्मग्न्यभीक्ष्णं संकल्पः ॥ (केन. ४-५)

Spirituality means stilling the restless mind in the Holy Name and singlemindedly meditating on it. Knowledge of God, following the spiritual path, remembering the Name and regular meditation are necessary, says the Kena Upanishad (verse 4-5).

उपनिषदं भो ब्रूहीत्युक्ता त उपनिषद् ।
ब्राह्मी वाव त उपनिषदम्ब्रूमेति ॥

It further says, 'Upanishad' means to contact or worship the Soul, to know the mysteries of Spiritual Knowledge and the relationship between God and Soul. The disciple asks, and the Master answers, and thus Divine Truth and the mysteries of Knowledge are revealed. You should worship only God, Who is Love. Remember His Name and practise meditation. This is Upanishad. (4-7)

यो वा एतामेवं वेद अपहत्य पाप्मानमनन्ते स्वर्गे लोके
ज्येयं प्रतिष्ठिति प्रतिष्ठिति ॥ (केन. ४-९)

The Master says that such a devotee overcomes sin and attains liberation. (4-9)

यस्त्वविज्ञानवान् भवत्यमनस्कः सदाऽशुचि ।

न स तत्पदमाप्नोति संसारं चाधिगच्छति ।।

The Kathopanishad says, in verse 3-17, *A person who is not wise, whose mind is not under his control, and who lives impurely, cannot reach the Ultimate State, but stays bound to the cycle of birth and death.*

यदुच्छ्वासनिःश्वासावेतावाहुति समं नयतीति स समानः
मनो ह वाव यजमानः इष्टफलमेवोदानः, स एनं यजमानमहरमर्ब्रह्म गमयति ।।

(प्रश्नो. ४-४)

According to the Prashnopanishad (verse 4-4) inhalation and exhalation of breath can be compared to a yagya, which is a ritual during which oblatory herbs are dedicated into a sacrificial fire. The circulation of breath sustains the body and digests food. Pranayama sacrifices the mind into breath. When the breath is stilled, this Yagya is successfully accomplished. The ultimate fruit of meditation and pranayama is Samadhi, in which the mind is taken to God. In samadhi, the mind reaches the highest state and then it itself is called 'soul.'

तिस्रो मात्र । मृत्युमत्यः प्रयुक्ता अन्योन्यसक्ता अनविप्रयुक्ताः ।

क्रियासु बाह्याभ्यन्तरमध्यमासु सम्यक् प्रयुक्तासु न कम्पते ज्ञः ।।

There are three ways of remembering, or 'chanting'—vocally, mentally, and with the Inner Self. Only the latter is true concentration. The state of meditation occurs only when the mind-waves are concentrated and stilled in the Holy Name. In this type of 'chanting' there is no distinction between meditator, object of meditation and the process of meditation. Soul becomes tranquil and through the Holy Name is

united with the Supreme Soul. (Prashn.5-6)

तत्रापरा ऋग्वेदो यजुर्वेदः सामवेदोऽथर्ववेदः शिक्षा कल्पो व्याकरणं
निरुक्तं छन्दो ज्योतिषमिति । अथ परा यया तदक्षरमधिगम्यते ।।

(मुण्ड १-१-५)

Scriptures, astrology, grammar and education, etc. are all worldly Knowledge. The transcendental Knowledge in that by which the eternal Soul is realized. (Mund. Up. 1-1-5)

नायमात्मा प्रवचननेन लभ्यो न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन ।
यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यस्तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनुं स्वाम् ।।

(मुण्ड ३-२-३)

You cannot see God through studying the scriptures, by power of intellect, or even by much listening and reading. The devotee whom God favours attains Him. To such a devotee who is worthy of His Grace, God reveals Himself His full splendour. (Mund. Up. 3-2-3)

The Upanishads mention three places where soul-energy is concentrated, viz. at the head, heart and throat. When, through devotion, the Sushumna Canal opens, then spiritual power awakens, rises from the Heart to the crown of the head and resides there.

एष आदेशः । एष उपदेशः । एषा वेदोपनिषत् ।
एतदनुशासनम् । एवमुपासितव्यम् । एवमु चैतदुपास्यम् ।।

Worship and devotion are a way to awaken spiritual power. By devotion, the ancient sages awakened their own spiritual power, and instructed their disciples in the art of devotion. Maharishi Mahachanasyamal said to his disciples, "The teachings which I have given to you, are my commands and my advice for your salvation. They are the substance and the secrets of the Vedas. You should follow them and behave accordingly."

ओमित्येदक्षरमुद्गीरथमुपासीतोमिति ह्युद्गायति, तस्योपव्याख्यानम् ।
स एष रसानां रसतमः परमः परार्थोऽष्टमो यदुद्गीथः ॥

Meditation and remembrance of Holy Name are extremely important for devotion. The saints of old glorified the Name. Human life is meant for praising God. Hymns are sung to this effect. The hymns of the Sama Veda sing the glory of the Name and its remembrance. The Holy Name is the seed and core of everything. Being the very best way to realize God, it is also the highest state, and gives the highest rapture. Of all forms of devotion, devotion to the Holy Name is the best, according to the Chandogya Upanishad (1-1-3).

Matter is perishable, but the Lord is impershable and immortal. He, the only God, rules over both matter and the soul. By meditating on Him, and becoming one with Him, there is, in the end, complete cessation of all worldly illusion. (Sveta. Up. 1-10)

क्षरं प्रधानममृताक्षरं हरः क्षरात्मानावीशते देव एकः ।
तस्याभिध्यानाद्योजनात्तत्त्वभावाद् भूयश्चान्ते विश्वमायानिवृत्तिः ॥

God has three aspects :

- 1) The Energy of Creation
- 2) The sustainer of souls
- 3) The destroyer of sins.

In the second aspect, as the ruler of Nature and souls, God is the Lord of Spirituality. The other two aspects derive from this one. By thinking of Him, by joining the mind with Him, and repeatedly remembering His Name, the aspirant finally becomes perfected in Knowledge. This is devotion.

स्वदेहमरणं कृत्वा प्रणवं चोत्तरारणिम्।

ध्याननिर्मथनाभ्यासाद्देवं पश्येन्निगूढवत्॥

A devotee who desires the maximum spiritual benefit for himself, should regard his body and the inner breath as two sticks of kindling wood, and, by practising the drill of meditation, he sees the hidden fire of God. So put your mind into remembrance of Name and see God. (Sweta. Up. 1-14)

We devotees, in order to realize God, must put everything of ours into meditation with concentrated mind, and single-mindedly devote ourselves to God, the Ultimate Doer.

हकारेण बर्हिर्याति सकारेण विशेत्पुनः।

हंस हंसेत्यमुं मन्त्रं जीवो जपति सर्वदा॥

षट् शतानि त्वहोरात्रे सहस्राण्येकविंशतिः।

एतत्संख्यान्वितं मन्त्रं जीवो जपति सर्वदा॥

Breathing is due to the power of the Holy Name. With inhalation, the Name rises from Swadhishtan Chakra and on exhalation enters the Muladhara Chakra. This is equivalent to one 'grand circulation' of the Taoist texts. The Holy Name, or Hans Mantra, is constantly and automatically going on with our every breath. In 24 hours, this Mantra is repeated 21,600 times. The soul does this by itself.

अजपा नाम गायत्री योगिनां मोक्षदायिनी।

अस्याः संकल्पमात्रेण सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते॥

The unchantable Name is the bestower of liberation, and is the real Gyatri Mantra. It releases us from sins. It makes the soul one with God. No other Mantra does this. A little labour on our part yields the greatest results. No other chant can equal it, because it is automatically going on, day and night, in all circumstances, while we are eating, drinking,

sleeping, walking, sitting, etc. Nobody has ever received, nor will ever receive, this unique experience from scriptures.

कुण्डलिन्यां समुद्भूता गायत्री प्राण धारिणी।
प्राणविद्या महा विद्या यस्तां वेत्ति स वेदवित्॥

Kundalini energy is produced by this Supreme Energy, and it is also the sustainer of the vital energies within us. It is the Knowledge of Soul itself, and therefore it is called the Supreme Science or Spiritual Science. Yogis who realize it, know the essence of Yoga practice.

अभ्यासानन्तरं कुर्याद्गच्छस्तिष्ठन्स्वप्नपि।
चिन्तनं हंसमन्त्रस्य योगसिद्धिकरं परम्॥

At all times, and under all circumstances, remember the Holy Name. You will soon become perfect in Yoga.

Human beings, birds, and animals all breathe, and this enables them to move. By constantly remembering the unchantable Name, the sins of countless births are erased. Just as fire reduces grass to ashes, so remembrance of Name consumes all sins. After much practice of the Name, the mind unites and merges in it, breathing slows down and the meditator loses outer consciousness. The mind retains the introverted state, the Yogi experiences supreme bliss, and at the time of death attains liberation.

Beings have come and gone since time immemorial. Only by the Holy Knowledge, and by knowing the secret of the breath, can you be purified.

प्रातरुत्थाय मेधावी संकल्पविधिपूर्वकम्।
गुरुपदेशतो योगी मंत्रयोगं समाचरेत्॥

The wise rises at dawn, and, with determination, practise meditation according to the Master's instructions. Remember

the Name, day and night. Don't neglect it.

Meditate on Ganesh, Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva the soul the Master and God (Truth-Consciousness-Bliss), in that order, in their respective chakras. Ganesh resides in the Muladhara chakra, and 600 breaths, or remembrance of the Holy Name, are for him.

Brahma is seated in the second chakra, the Swadhishtana, and 6000 remembrances of the Name are for him. Vishnu is seated in the third chakra, the Manipura, and 6000 breaths are dedicated to him. The fourth chakra is Anahat, where Shiva resides, and 6000 breaths are for him. The fifth chakra, named Vishuddha, is the abode of soul. 1000 remembrances of Name are done for it. The sixth chakra, Agya is where the Master resides. In the region of the inner or spiritual sky, beyond everything, dwells the Master, and within him is absolute Truth, Consciousness and Bliss. 1000 breaths are for the Master, and 1000 are for God. This means remembering the Holy Name 21,600 time daily. A devotee who can do this is liberated. When it becomes natural for the meditator to direct the Name through the Sushumna nerve at all times, he becomes free of karmic bondage and is liberated even while in the body. Such a free soul has no more desires and within himself, he sees God.

The first chakra is called Muladhara. It is located between the rectum and the origin of the reproductive organ, at the opening of the Sushumna nerve, i.e. at the junction of Sushumna and Kanda. It has four crimson petals and is shaped like an inverted triangle. It shines with a radiant golden light. It contains the vibrations represented by the

Sanskrit letters vam (वं), sham (शं), sam (सं), and sham (षं). Within the triangle of the chakra or lotus, is the rectangular 'Prithvi-Mandal' or earth-region. In the middle of this earth-region is its basic sound, lam (लं). The name of the presiding deity is Dakini (Energy) and she is represented as having four hands and red eyes. She is the illumination force in Knowledge and her brilliance equals many suns rising together.

The second chakra is Swadishthana, located at the base of the reproductive organ. The six letters bam (बं), bham (भं), mam (मं), yam (यं), ram (रं), and lam (लं) are like six petals on this lotus. Its colour is vermilion and it contains the power of levitation. The presiding deity is Rakini. He who meditates on this chakra gains instinctive knowledge of books which he has never seen.

The third chakra is called Manipura, located in the region of the navel. Dam (डं), Dham (ढं), nam (णं), tam (तं), tham (थं), dam (दं), dham (धं), nam (नं), pam (पं), and pham (फं) are the ten vibration-notes on its golden petals where Shiva resides dispensing all kinds of blessings and benedictions. The presiding deity is lakini.

The fourth chakra, Anahat, is located in the heart region. On its deep red petals are the vibrations kam (कं), kham (खं), gam (गं), nyam (ङं), gham (घं), cham (च), chham (छं), jam (जं), jham (झं), jnam (ञं), tam (टं), and tham (ठं). This is the bliss-centre of the heart. the presiding deity is Kakini. This chakra contains the source of all siddhis (yogic powers). The deities are always ready to serve the devotee

who meditates on the centre of this chakra.

The fifth chakra is called Vishuddha and is located at the base of the throat. Vibration-notes ang (अं), aang (आं), ing (इं) eenga (ईं), ung (उं), oong (ऊं), ring (ऋं), reeng (ॠं), lring (लृं), lrring (ल्रं), ayng (एं), eng (ऐं), ong (ओं), aung (औं), an (अं) ah (अः) adorn it.

This chakra is dusky-golden in colour and the presiding deity is Shakini. A person who always concentrates on this chakra becomes known as a wise philosopher and a master of Yoga.

The sixth chakra is located between the eyebrows and is known as Agya chakra. The vibration-notes on its two petals are ham (हं) and ksham (क्षं). It is pure white in colour. The power to control death is here, and the presiding deity is Hakini or Mahashakti. The superior meditator who can meditate here never falls victim to confusion or instability. The illumined sages described the greatness of Agya chakra in many ways. The meditator who puts his total concentration at this point severs the bonds of all desires and attains the supreme state. All the results gained from the other chakras can be attained from meditation on Agya chakra alone. Therefore this is the most important chakra.

Above the two petalled lotus is the Brahmarandha, the conjunction of Ida, Pingala and Sushumna, which is the 'holy of holies'. The Brahmarandha also contains the 'thousand-petalled lotus', which has also been termed Mt. Kailash, the Abode of Mahadev, the eternal Lord Shiva. Hans or the Prana resides here and this is where the devotee meditates

on the Lotus Feet of his spiritual preceptor. This Abode is also termed 'Satyalok'.

एकाक्षरं परंब्रह्म प्राणायामः परं तपः ।
सावित्र्यास्तु परं नास्ति मानात्सत्यं विशिष्यते ॥

This One Word is uttered by God. Control of the breath by the Name is the greatest sacrifice. No mantra is greater than the Holy Name. All scriptures and rituals are temporal, but the Single Name of the Lord of Creation (Who is known with difficulty) is indestructable and eternal.

विधियज्ञाज्जपयज्ञो विशिष्टो दशभिर्गुणैः ।
उपांशुःस्याच्छतगुणः सहस्रो मानसः स्मृतः ॥
ये पाकयज्ञाश्चत्वारो विधियज्ञसमन्विताः ।
सर्वे ते जपयज्ञस्य कलां नार्हन्ति षोडशीम् ॥

The Yagya of chanting yields ten times the results of any externally performed ritual. Chanting so that others don't hear yields 100 times the results, and inner chanting is 1000 times more beneficial. Thus the Yagya of remembrance is the best of all. (Mand. Up)

जप्येनैव तु संसिध्येद् ब्राह्मणो नात्र संशयः ।
कुर्यादन्यन्न वा कुर्यान्मैत्रो ब्राह्मण उच्यते ॥

The devotee who meditates on the Holy Name becomes worthy of liberation, and it is immaterial whether he does any other kind of rituals or not, because the Name is acceptable to all the deities, whom those other rituals are meant to propitiate. There is no doubt about it.

Adoration of the Holy Name

The Nameless Name is the essence of joy, and he who remembers it crosses the worldly ocean.

Worship the Name everyday, by concentrating your

mind on it. All sages and meditators have glorified it.

By meditating on the Name you easily hear the sound of the Divine Harmony which is continuously playing within you.

The most wonderful sound is that which is made by God. He Himself is that Name, the abode of total peace.

Only the Holy Name is the True Name. It is easily experienced, is the remover of doubts and the delight of the saints.

The worldly ocean is perplexing, unsteady, unfathomable and turbulent. Sit in the sturdy boat of the Name and cross to the other shore.

Even if you meditate only once on the Name, but with love, a multitude of sins is burnt like grass to ashes. The mind has accumulated many sins and defects, but one spark of the Name reduces them to ashes.

If someone remembers the Name at the time of his death, his life can be regarded as a success. It's a matter of inner experience, which has to be understood.

The body is a layer of skin filled with the breath of the Holy Name. This Name saves you from a torrent of sins, so don't waste your chance to remember it.

The dependability of the Name is that it and our ultimate destination are the same. The Name and its referent are one, whereas a speaker and his speech are separate.

Saints meditate on the Holy Name and reach the goal. Worship of the Name is the easy way to achieve Yoga, and no obstacles disturb you.

Disease cannot touch the person who practises the Yoga

of remembering the Holy Name. Dying is miserable, and understand this to be the result of actions.

Saints have explained this mystery. They believe the Name to be the goal. They called It imperceptible and God Himself.

Search within and catch hold of the Name. There is no need to open your mouth. The unchanted chant is going on automatically, cleaning the filth of the mind.

Take delight in the Name. Bring the mental fluctuations under control and be determined that they should not arise again.

Merciful Lord, you are the all-in-all of devotees. Please give them the wonderful gift of Your Holy Name.

Please accept those who are Yours, take them in Your embrace. You are the Name and the Lord of the Name as well.

The Primordial Name is the touchstone, and mind is the base iron. When the touchstone attracts, the bondage of attachment is broken.

The Eternal Name is the root of realization; all other chants are just branches. Without realizing the Name, you are drowned in the world.

There are thousands of names for God, but they won't liberate you. Only a rare saint knows the Primordial Name which is remembered deep within.

Everyone says, 'God God', but nobody knows what His True Name is. If you want to know, you have to find the True Master.

God definitely exists, so don't think that you are the

doer of actions. The Word of the Master is the True Name, so realize it in your heart. A jeweller recognizes the value of a ruby. A devotee recognizes the value of the Name.

We try all types of medicines, but nothing is equal to the Name. A little dose, and you are purified. A person who meditates on the Name erases the illusion of birth.

When you keep the Name in your mind, all sins are destroyed, just as a flame destroys dry grass.

Nobody has ever escaped death, and without meditating on the Name you are finished. However, Death is afraid of those who meditate on the Name.

I have the capital of the Holy Name, which thief and death cannot steal. It never fails to give me happiness.

Meditate on the Divine Light and awaken to the Inner Life. Meditation on Name takes the mind into Samadhi.

Realize the Name and throw away everything else. The benefits of fasting, pilgrimage, and chanting are all included in the adoration of the Guru.

Death recoils from a meditator, just as a cobra is rendered harmless by a snake charmer.

I will reveal the Name to whoever comes to me. The Name is Truth, so have firm faith in it.

Take delight in the Name, because the world gives only sadness. Have firm faith in the Master.

Your only hope lies in the Name; all other hopes will fail. If you build a house on water, people will call you an idiot.

An ounce of Name per ton of sins is enough. Half an ounce of meditation reduces the lot to ashes.

In the twinkling of an eye, a little meditation on the Name cuts through the accumulated karma of thousands of actions. Without the Name, you will keep on accumulating sins.

The True Name is the medicine which the Master prescribes. If you take it as directed, you will understand more and more.

Where in the three worlds will a man, who is so foolish as to neglect meditation on the Name and his Master for something lesser, ever hope to find a place? A leper who has Knowledge is better off than a healthy body if you don't use it to meditate?

If you take the Name, you've taken everything. This is the mystery which the Scriptures describe. Without the Name you can fall into hell, even while reading the Scriptures.

The Name is like a philosopher's stone, and the soul is like an iron filing. When the soul contacts the philosopher's stone, it becomes holy.

The happiness which makes me forget the Name is a curse, while the sorrow which makes me remember the Name is a blessing.

You should receive the Name and give food and charity. If you depend on God, you will succeed, but pride causes a fall.

Immerse the mind in the Name, in the same way as you have so far immersed it in illusion. When you forfeit the world, you gain Paradise.

Why leave the Nectar of the Name for something lesser? Take the bounty of the Holy Name, because who knows

when your last breath will leave you? When it's too late, you'll regret it.

He who meditates on the Name knows the value of the breath, and tries very hard to remember it with every breath.

What is the time guarantee on this body? It can be finished off in an instant. Meditate with every breath, and don't care about anything else.

Remembering the Name is blissful. Keep your mind attached to it.

The devotee turns the rosary beads of the breath. He cuts through the bonds of karma and wanders no longer in the 8.4 million species. Remember the Name with each breath. Don't waste even a single one. No one knows whether the next breath will come or not. Practice the meditation in which you can easily lose yourself. Merge your mind within.

The Holy Name is greater than anything. I cannot sing its glory adequately. An aspirant who receives the Knowledge of the Holy Name needs no mantra.

Only he who experiences the Name can describe its glorious secrets. On the other hand, the devotee who neglects the Name cannot be happy, even in a dream. So meditate on the Name day and night, and you will be successful in all that you do. It is Consciousness Itself, the giver of Supreme Bliss. The Holy Name is Truth-Consciousness-Bliss, and the source of joy. No other mantra can compare with it, and someone who remembers it achieves the four aims of life.

Within himself he hears the Primordial Sound and with the Divine Eye he sees God. Only a yogi understands what

meditation really is; others can only hope to understand.

Devotees remember the Primordial Name with no desire for liberation or devotion, but by putting the mind into the Name, you very soon become successful in everything. Constantly and singlemindedly remember the Holy Name. A person who does this is the very likeness of God.

Simply by remembering the Holy Name, you can be freed from worldly bondage. The aspirant's nature is purified if he meditates with love on the Name.

So receive the Holy Name from the Spiritual Master and remember it with faith. When you let go of anger, lust and greed you can enjoy true happiness.

The devotee crosses the worldly ocean in the boat of the Name. Its glory has been sung in all Ages. When you remember it, all your troubles fly away.

This Knowledge, this mysterious source of happiness, should not be revealed to atheists who, full of pride in themselves, deride the Scriptures.

You should sit quietly in an isolated place to meditate. That Word, which exists without having to be pronounced, should be realized as being the naturally-existing Word, which can be experienced but not described. Practise and merge in it. With practice you will come to know what it is, and the breath will be stabilized in it.

How can any creature live without breathing? Therefore, the unchanted Name is within all beings, but only the aspirant who follows the spiritual Master is entitled to experience it. An ignorant person cannot.

Never leave the simple and natural to run after the

artificial. God is natural and eternal; nothing else is. He can never be destroyed. When you see the omnipresent God within yourself, you will automatically go into unbroken meditation.

Everyone is held at the will of God. Results depend on the way the person meditates. Eventually everything is dedicated to God, whether you renounce it, or whether it is taken away from you by force. It is quite natural to worship and praise Him, meditate on Him and be devoted to Him. To understand such a natural thing, people do all kinds of unnatural practices which do not bring about immediate understanding.

You may have accumulated much wealth, but if you lose it, you become impoverished. Sometimes, it so happens that a poor man is living on top of a buried treasure, but how will that help him? He doesn't know that it is there. He lives in wretched misery, and his poverty may even increase. See the wonder of the Almighty ! So many people just waste their human life, which is a precious opportunity. Only if a person has discrimination, can he walk on either the path of renunciation or the path of action.

What do we lack if the Lord dwells within us? You should catch hold of Him, in Whose Hands is all prosperity, and keep Him firmly in your heart.

This Name is the sustainer of the breath; it is also the science of the Life Force, the 'Secret Science'. When a yogi grasps its secrets, he becomes all-knowing. The devotee should constantly meditate on the Name with devotion in

his heart. he should attune his mind to it. Then the mind and the breath fuse. By fixing the mind on the breath, the meditator can successfully practise the Name while sitting, walking and even sleeping. He is freed from the cycle of action-reaction, and becomes immortal.

If you hold fast to the Name, your sins are wiped out, just as a spark can consume any amount of grass. While you have life within you; don't forget the Lord. Hold tight to God's Name and remember it constantly, said St Tulsidas.

Guru Nanak said, *by Name alone fear is crushed and defects overcome. Nanak used to remember the Name daily and all his work was successful. Remember the Name while sitting, standing, sleeping and while you are awake. You will succeed in all that you do.*

Remembering the Holy Name erases evil desires and sins, just as fire consumes everything in its path. You can cross the worldly ocean. God is realized only by single-minded devotion.

Sahjo Bai said,

Practise that method of meditation,

In which you can be easily absorbed.

Sit straight, concentrate on the forehead.

Sit in lotus position.

Sink your mind into the Name

Follow it as it rises from navel to forehead.

Hearing the Word will entrance you.

The Master Charandas has revealed this Word to me.

It dwells in every heart. It is the Supreme Being.

If you want to find God,

You can, by meditating on the Name.

*Although there are so many kinds of beings,
god pervades them all.*

His Light is One,

Whether in a king, a beggar or an outcaste.

Remembrance of the Holy Name

He who relinquishes this mortal body, at the time of death, keeping his consciousness united in Me, (recollecting Me along) becomes one with Me. There is no doubt about it. (Gita 8:5)

This verse explains the need to remember God at the time of death, and the results thus attained. Many people think that it will be enough to remember the Holy Name only at the time of death, and not before, but the next verse says that we will remember only that thing at the time of death with which we have been preoccupied throughout our life. Therefore, we should not confine our remembrance of God at the time of death, but we should meditate on Him throughout life. If you practise the Holy Name throughout your life, you will automatically succeed in remembering it at the time of death. The Upanishads also say that in the next life you will get the requisite environment to fulfill whatever was your last desire at the time of your death. However, the Gita says that if you have not merged your mind in one-pointed devotion and divine Love, when the agonies of death begin you will not be able to steady your mind in meditation. So it is necessary to practise meditation throughout your life.

The soul after death enters into that being in which his inner consciousness remains united at the time of relinquishing his mortal body. The inner consciousness at that time becomes attached only to

the thing which was the object of his thinking and recollection throughout his life. This being the case, one should keep his consciousness attached only to the Lord's Name, throughout his life, so that his consciousness might remain united to Him alone at the time of death, so that he may become one with Him after death. (Gita. 8:9)

Therefore, at all times, recollect Me alone and fight. With mind and reason dedicated to Me, without doubt you shall attain Me. (Gita, 8:7)

When a person withdraws his outer consciousness completely from the objects of senses, and opens his inner consciousness to the Lord, just as a tortoise withdraws all its limbs and keeps them within, then alone he attains equanimity of mind and thought. (Gita, 2:58)

Therefore, a person should completely abandon all desires arising from imaginations and, having withdrawn all sense organs from their respective sense objects, keep them under complete control (and keep his mind united with the Lord.) (Gita, 6:24)

Of all kinds of devotees, the sage whose consciousness is constantly and unreservedly united in Me alone, and who knows no other, is the best of all. I am extremely dear to such a sage and he is extremely dear to Me. (Gita, 7:17)

And among all Yogis, he who adores Me with full faith and with the inner self abiding in Me, is considered by me to be the most completely harmonised. (Gita 7:17)

I personally make those devotees perfect in Yoga who are constantly and devoutly doing meditation on Me and are devoting themselves to Me.

St. Kabir : Happiness comes from remembrance of Holy Name and all troubles fly away. Everyone meditates on God when they are in trouble, but not while everything is going

well for them. However, a person who meditates during good times is never affected by troubles.

Be in the Name as water is in a container. When buffeted your mind will not falter.

Meditate on the Name with the same intensity as a cow remembers her calf. Even while eating, she doesn't forget it.

Meditate on the Name like a poor man constantly thinks about money. Don't forget it, and instantly you will be protected.

Let meditation change your mind like a Bhiringi wasp transforms its prey. Forget yourself and be dyed in the colour of love.

Merge yourself in meditation: don't speak a word. Close the external doors and open the internal.

Be firm in body, tranquil in mind, and calm in speech. Until you fix your mind in the Holy Name, you can't for a second imagine the experience.

I am beating a drum and proclaiming aloud: 'You are wasting your breath, which has the value of the three worlds! One precious breath is equal in value to the fourteen spheres of existence. So don't waste it.

Remember only the True Name and nothing else. All other thoughts will trap you in the net of death.

Meditate on the True Name, as it has redeemed many people. Don't abandon the support of the Name.

The path of meditation revealed by the Master is easy. Remember each breath and one day you will see God Himself.

Meditation is everything to me, all else is unnecessary

entanglement. Meditation is the essence of mind, speech, action, everything. It brings joy, and everything else brings misery.

Chanting, austerities, and self-discipline are all included in meditation on the Name. Devotees know that there is nothing to equal the remembrance of Name.

If you must desire something when you meditate, then desire to reach the Supreme State. But if you meditate desirelessly, you will merge with the Unchanging Name. The mind meditates on that which it loves, and mind, O Lord, is always thinking of You.

I always meditate on God. When my breath will depart from my body, my near and dear ones will come to take away their loot.

I meditate fearlessly on the Name, therefore, while the lamp of life is still lit, because when the oil is exhausted and the light is extinguished, I'll sleep forever.

Someone who applies himself to meditation realizes the value of the breath. He tries very hard to put each breath into the Name.

Life may be short, but it is noble if you meditate on the Name. What is the use of living thousands of years if you don't meditate?

Meditation is like ploughing, which makes the seed of Holy Name germinate. If you experience even a particle of Divine Bliss, then your life has not been in vain.

The purpose of the breath is to take us to God. God is One.

Guru Nanak : Brother, if you have no devotion, what is the

point of having come into the world? Without devotion, you cannot cross the worldly ocean. Without meditation of the True Name, you are no better than a dog, or a bird trapped by its greed.

There is only one True Name. It is the Doer, fearless and without opposition, indestructible, birthless and self-existent. You can meditate upon it by the Grace of the Master.

It has been the Truth from the beginning of time, it is the Truth now, and will be so in future.

Meditate with each breath on God's Name. Don't waste a single breath. Who knows whether the next breath will come or not?

A person who has no love and devotion for God is most unfortunate. He is a sinner devoid of merit.

Sadhana : I myself am nothing, and nothing is mine. Everything is Yours. Please protect me.

St. Jagjivan : Always keep your mind on God, the Almighty, while doing your worldly duties. This is the way to live the world, and the way to be always happy and at rest.

Paltu Sahib : A person whose actions and thoughts reflect his faith is truly a devotee. Leave all doubts behind, and meet the True Friend. A devotee who does this is happy in his thoughts and the world does not affect him.

Bullehshah : Now that you have come into this world, you should wake up and remember the Holy Name. One day you will have to leave your body, wealth and home. A true lover of God can see Him anytime. People call him an atheist, but he doesn't care.

Sahjo Bai: Don't waste a single second without meditation, let alone an hour or a day! While sitting, lying down, walking, talking, eating drinking and carrying on your business activities, constantly remember the Name.

I meditate on God and have no interest or affection left for the world. I feel that nothing belongs to me, not even my body.

Tulsidas : Once you have come into this world, you should do two things: feed others and receive the Holy Name. Anyone who gets involved in the world has to endure countless times the duality of joy and sorrow. This is minimised for the person who is one with God.

Instead of keeping bad company, keep holy company, and then nobody can stop you from entering Heaven.

The Nectar Technique

न च मूर्च्छा क्षुधा तृष्णा नैवालस्यं प्रजायते ।
न च रोगो जरामृत्युर्देवदेहः स जायते ॥

The Gherand Samhita says that a person who practises the Nectar technique is not bothered by hunger, thirst or dizzy spells. Illness, old age and death do not approach him. His body shines like that of a god.

नाग्निना दह्यते गात्रं न शोषयति मारुतः ।
न देहं क्लेदन्त्यापो दंशयेन्न भुजंगमः ॥
(घे. तृ. २९)

Fire cannot burn him, wind cannot dehydrate him, water cannot drench him and snakes cannot bite him.

कलां पराङ्मुखीं कृत्वा त्रिपथे परियोजयेत् ।
सा भवेत् खेचरी मुद्रा व्योमचक्रं तदुच्यते ॥
(गो. पं.)

Practising this technique totally introverts the mind. The yogi experiences the unparalleled rapture of the Spirit, and, at the time of death, achieves liberation.

रसनामूर्ध्वागां कृत्वा क्षणार्धमति तिष्ठति ।
विषैर्विमुच्यते योगी व्याधिमृत्युजरादिभिः ॥
(गो.प.)

When the meditator is able to practise this technique perfectly he is not affected by snake bites or scorpion stings. His skin stays smooth and unwrinkled and he conquers ill-

ness, old age and death.

ऊर्ध्वजिह्वः स्थिरो भूत्वा सोमपानं करोति यः
मासाद्धेन न सन्देहो मृत्युं जयति योगवित्॥
(गो. प.)

The yogi who drinks the Nectar from the inner well, which is associated with the moon, definitely overcomes death. Goraknath declares this unequivocally.

मूलं सिद्धीयां जननी ह्येषा मम प्राणधिकप्रिया।
निरन्तरं कृताभ्यासात्पीयूषं प्रत्यहं पिबेत्।
तेन विग्रहसिद्धिः स्यान्मृत्युमातङ्गकेसरी॥

This technique is known as the 'mother of all yogic powers', and is as beloved to me as my own breath.

It is written in the Shiva Samhita :

He who constantly practises this technique and daily drinks Nectar becomes perfect, in other words, he is invincible, and he vanquishes Death as a lion kills an elephant.

मूलं-गुरुपदेशतोमुद्रां यो वेत्ति खेचरीमिमाम्।
नानापापरतो धीमान् स याति परमां गतिम्॥

This Shiva Samhita goes on to say :

Even if he was previously steeped in sin, when he receives initiation from the true Guru and perfects the Nectar technique, the wise meditator reaches the ultimate state, i.e., liberation.

वलीपलितवेषज्जी मुद्रेयं खेचरी सदा।
न तस्य क्षरते बिदुर्मुद्रां यो वेत्तिखेचरीम्॥

Nectar practice banishes wrinkles and cures bodily tremors. He who knows how to practise this technique even conquers lust and death.

नित्यमंतर्मुखत्वेन
अनुभूय चिरं योगी कैवल्यपदमश्नुते ।।
परमानन्दमात्मना ।

There is a small aperture in the cremium, right in the path of the three major nerves (Ida, Pingala and Sushumna). It is associated with the Nectar technique, and is also called 'Vyom Chakra,' says Goraknath.

Saint Brahmanand composed a song about this technique :

Hear, brothers, about the Nectar technique.

It is the greatest technique,

And is the Mother of Yogis.

He who practises it constantly

Crosses the worldly ocean.

Penetrate the point between the eyebrows,

Then the body starts trembling,

You will see the Light Divine

The heavenly Nectar cascades endlessly.

The Yogi who practises this technique all the time

Becomes totally oblivious of himself.

Brahmanand has entered the Divine Abode of God himself,

And will not have to be reborn.

Celestial Music

शृणुयाद्दक्षिणे कर्णे नादमन्तर्गतं शुभम् ।
प्रथमं झिझिनादं च वशीनादं तपः परम् ॥
मेघझर्झरभ्रमरीघण्टाकांस्यां ततः परम् ।
तुरीभेरीमृदङ्गादिनि नादानकदुन्दुभिः ॥

In the Gherand Samhita it is written that the yogi should sit for meditation after midnight in solitude, where not a single sound may be heard. First he will hear cricket-like sounds, then thunder, then cymbals. Then buzzing sounds like bees are heard, then tinkling bells, and gong-like sounds. Next he will hear trumpets, kettledrums and tambourines. Daily practice of this technique enables the meditator to hear various kinds of melodic harmonies. He will also hear the marvellous sound emitted by the Holy Word, which is self-existing. He is enraptured by these sounds and merges in Divine Light. He reaches the Divine Abode. He achieves perfect Samadhi.

चिणिति प्रथमे नादं चिचिणीति द्वितीये ।
घंआनादस्तृतीये च शंखनादश्चतुर्थके ॥
तंत्री पञ्चमके नादं षष्ठे तालं प्रचक्षते ।
वंशीवाद्यस्तथा चान्यो मृदङ्गस्तदनन्तरम् ॥
भेरीनादस्तथा तत्रदशमेऽभ्रसमो भवेत् ।
नवमं च परित्यज्य दशमं यः समभ्यसेत् ॥
भित्वा सर्वाणि कर्माणि चिदानन्दायते ततः ॥

The 'Yoga Rahasya' ('Mysteries of Yoga'), states that at

first cricket-like sounds are heard, then buzzings, then bells, conches, lutes, clashing cymbals and tambourines, drums, and then the Divine Harmony Itself. Practising and listening daily to this Divine Harmony takes the yogi to the Supreme Abode.

Saint Ramanand, the Guru of Saint Kabir, wrote :

There is a Sound belonging to an endless, unbelievable place,

There is a staircase of ten steps known only to the wise.

From somewhere comes the sweet sound of a flute

From somewhere else, the lute.

Sometimes it is very faint, and sometimes deafening.

This secret mystery is revealed to very few,

And they clearly see God face-to-face.

Generally, the mind wanders about after pleasures like a drunken elephant in a forest. But the Divine Music is the goad which curbs this elephant. In other words, when the mind hears the Celestial Harmony, it is absorbed.

Saint Brahmanand said,

Wise saints listen to the eternal, endless Music.

Sit in solitude, and close your ears.

Put your attention into the subtle inner sounds.

Experience the Celestial Harmony.

Listen to the sweet sound of bells, conches, flutes and lyres, Cymbals, tambourines, and drums.

Thunder rolls as if from clouds.

If you listen to this Music day after day,

The mind is dissolved in it.

When you see the Divine Light, you forget yourself.

*all physical and mental troubles cease to exist.
Meditate constantly.
Brahmanand has thus crossed the worldly ocean,
He has attained Nirvana.*

The Unstruck Melody (The Divine Music)

*Listen to the Divine Music, O saints, to the Celestial Music !
Sit in lotus position and close your ears.
Concentrate on the subtle inner sounds,
Hear the strains of the celestial Harmony,
At first the sounds mingle together,
Then they are heard separately,
Bells, conch, lyre and flute,
Cymbals, tambourines and drums.
As the Inner Music wells up,
And reveals itself to you,
Your whole being thrills and trembles.
Your mouth is filled with heavenly drops of Nectar,
The Yogis' delight.
You forget your own existence.
Your heart is radiant with Light.
Brahmanand says, My mind has merged with that Music.
Realize what I am saying.*

Devotion to the Master

You will not get the privilege of a human body again and again. So don't waste your time on worldly pleasures, but rather love your spiritual Master.

A piece of gold does not lose its value if you drop it in a mudpuddle. In the same ways, nothing done in the way of devotion is ever lost.

Devotion is a very rare thing to attain. Knowledge of the Truth is necessary to reach it. The path of devotion is very narrow, and as sharp as a sword's edge.

You may have a keen desire to devote yourself, but how can one be a humble servant unless he first removes every other desire from his mind?

Devotion is the raft to salvation. One who climbs aboard is a saint, but lazy men keep on drowning one lifetime after another. So long as you have any ties to this world, you cannot have devotion. As soon as you cut all ties to this world, and apply yourself in remembrance of the Lord, you will be entitled to be called a devotee.

Without devotion you will never make it to safety, no matter how hard you try. Only he who has love for the Holy Name can reach the Kingdom of Haeven.

The Master can help you acquire devotion. He who has both love and devotion is the most fortunate of men.

There is no way you can fake devotion. Imitation devo-

tion will fail you when there is a crisis, just like the leaves fall from trees in winter.

It is useless to try and grab at devotion. Your grasp will soon falter. Few are those devotees, maddened by Love, who can truly hold fast to the Name.

Without the total and perfect knowledge, the heart will never know lasting peace. Fake devotion cannot keep up the appearances of Love for very long.

The devotee who knows the Truth dies daily, for he longs to give up his sense of his own importance. An ignorant man cannot understand this mystery.

An ignorant man cannot grasp the importance of opportunities when they come his way, because he spends his time trying to satisfy his worldly cravings.

When the sun rises, the night flees. In the same way, all bad intentions flee before the sun of Knowledge. Greed undermines one's understanding, and lust and pride diminishes devotion.

During the rainy season there are floods everywhere, but a river is something which continues to flow even during the dry summer months. Similarly, everyone who starts out on the path of devotion may look like a devotee, but he alone is worthy of the name, who continues even when hard times come upon him.

People who are full of desires, anger and greed can never be devotees. Maybe one in a million can transcend caste, creed, colour and family and be a true devotee. Life is worthless without devotion to the Master. It is like smoke, which dissolves in an instant.

Only someone who is truly impartial and who has no delusions can grow in knowledge. Only someone devoid of greed can dissolve himself at his Lord's Feet. Only someone who has no feeling of duality in his mind can attain salvation.

True devotion keeps the mind perfectly in balance at all times. The true devotee lives modestly. He does not have any feelings of 'thine' and 'mine'.

Fish loves water, greedy men love money, mothers love their children, and devotees love the Holy Name.

Devotion to my Master has rid me of all doubts. To go for a day without doing something in the direction of devotion would be complete torture.

So long as your devotion is mixed with personal desires, it cannot bear fruit. Why should the Lord, the Desireless One, come to a person who is full of desires?

The essence of devotion never changes with time. It is the same now and forever. A saint may be born in the family of a beggar or a king, but it makes no difference. A saint will always be a saint.

Forget caste, colour and creed, and devote yourself, body and soul. The Master will free you from the cycle of birth and death.

Devotion is like a toy. Anyone can play with it. But, in true devotion, there is no difference between a king and a beggar.

The Holy Name is as dear to the devotee as love-making is to the lustful man, who thinks of nothing else except fulfilling his desires. In the same way, the devotee

never ceases to remember the Holy Name.

No one can reach God without devotion to the Master. He alone can give the Knowledge of the Almighty. That is why all the Scriptures sing the glory of devotion.

He who has a much devotion for his Master as he has for God, is called a great soul, and his heart is illumined.

The Glory of the Saints

Saints are like clouds, which benefit the world with their rain. They cool the heat of passion in others, and change them with the Holy Name.

God is like the ocean, and saints are the rain clouds. God is the sandalwood tree, and saints are the breeze which disperses the fragrance.

Devotion blossoms when you do something devotional, but without contact with a saint you will not be able to be devoted to God in the first place.

If a person uses his discrimination and keeps the company of saints, devotion to God will come very easily to him.

God is like a mine. Saints extract the precious jewels within themselves, and through their discourses, give them to their disciples.

There is no misery like poverty and no joy like meeting a saint. It is their (saint's) nature to be benevolent in thought, word, and deed. They tolerate suffering for the sake of others. A person is really unfortunate if he sees other suffering and feels nothing.

Saints are like the tree whose bark is torn off for the welfare of others. They are as beneficial to the world as the sun and the moon.

You should always be contented, strictly adhering to the

laws of righteousness. Have faith in none except the Master, and don't be concerned about others. A saint cares for neither praise nor blame, and sees everyone with an equal eye. If anyone begs him for Knowledge, he will give it. Seek such a saint and cling to his feet. All the illusions accumulated throughout many lifetimes will be erased, and you will get complete felicity.

All trees are not sandalwood, and all men are not brave. All oceans are not sweet, and likewise saints are very rare. Lions don't travel in packs, swans don't fly in flocks, jewels don't come by the bagful, and saints don't come in large numbers.

Lions will not eat a rotten carcass. In the same way, a saint will not have anything to do with someone who has no devotion.

The sun is not affected by the clouds which cover the sky. The words of a saint can never change, even though the universe should perish.

How can a person be worthy of liberation if he is neither happy when a saint comes nor sad when he leaves?

Invite a saint to your home, feed him lovingly and listen to his discourses. You will achieve renown in this world, and after death you will reach the Supreme Abode.

A tree never eats its own fruit, a river never uses its own water. Likewise, saints come into the world only for the sake of others.

All saints are great in their respective place and time. A wise person who realizes the Holy Name is the flower of humanity.

Poppy buds are mostly white, and only a very rare one is red. Saddhus may all look the same, but only a rare saint can reveal the True Knowledge. The Absolute, Formless God within manifests externally as the saint. He is the mirror in which you can see the Invisible.

When I see a saint, I remember God. Such time is well-spent and the rest is wasted.

My mind was like a bird roaming around in empty skies looking for God. However, He is found with the help of a saint. God dwells with the saints, and nowhere else. If you want to offer Him anything, offer it through saints, with love. If you meet a saint, you meet God. There is no difference. Saints show their unity with God in thought, word and deed.

Don't ask a saint his caste, but ask him for Knowledge. Discard the sheath and appreciate the sword.

When a saint goes away, you weep, so you should go to see him often. Visit him as often as your circumstances will allow. Come into his holy presence many times a day. Saints are beneficial as the rain. You will grow in Holy Name.

If you can't visit a saint often, at least try to see him twice a year. I associate with saints, and death cannot bind me. Don't go after highborn priests who are not saints, but don't hesitate to follow an outcaste who is a saint.

Saints are hungry for love, not for wealth. He who runs after riches is not a saint.

If one is very lucky he meets the Master. Then all his bondage to family and society is torn as under, and with a fearless heart he takes his seat in the boat of the Holy Name.

The dog of a saint is lucky, because he always hears holy conversation. On the other hand, the mother of an atheist is unlucky, because her son only rebukes God.

Saints belong to the court of God; they have no peers. If you associate with them, you will soon realize the Holy Name.

The mother is most fortunate whose child becomes a saint, even though, as a result of remembering the Holy Name, he loses all attachment to the world and her.

You accumulate a certain amount of merit from bathing at a holy place, four times thereby meeting a saint, and many times thereby meeting the Master himself.

A saint is the oyster and God is the sea in which the pearl is produced. If you want to procure that pearl, you will have to dive into the sea, because it is not found in shallow waters.

Understand and realize that a saint is great due to God. If you want to find God, you'll find Him in the heart of a saint.

A saint is even greater than God. There is no separation between him and God, and all his actions are done desirelessly.

Visit a saint and prostrate before him. Who knows, you may be meeting God in the form of that saint. I meet with saints and consider myself very fortunate. Instead of being punished for your previous actions, all you get is a thorn. In other words, the company of saints lessens the effects of karma.

The saint is a tree, whose fruit is the Holy Name. His words are cool and soothing. If there were no saints in this

world, it would go up in flames.

The house where God is not worshipped and where saints are not served is like a graveyard. Only ghosts live there.

You may make thousands of pilgrimages, and give charity thousands of times, but if you don't serve saints you've done nothing.

The saint is greater than God; all the scriptures declare this. Lord Rama had to cross the sea to Lanka by bridge, but his devotee Hanuman had no need of a bridge.

Everyone wants to look like a Yogi, but no one wants to make his mind like that of a Yogi. A person who changes his mind through Yoga is a Yogi indeed.

He whose mind is merged in Yoga is in a unique situation. Internally he is a saint, irrespective of his external appearance.

Someone who has dedicated his life to God is given eternal life, while someone who has dedicated his life to God is given eternal life, while someone who holds on to his worldly life will lose it, as well as his eternal life. What an amazing scene-- dead men eating death!

Pride, greed, attachment and ambition should be discarded. Then you can realize the Holy Name.

Don't let obstacles get you down. A saint should turn himself into the dust on the highway. However, what does it avail you if you have turned to dust, which flies up and covers the body? Better to be like the tranquil water. But what's the point of being like water, which is sometimes hot and then grows cold?

A saint should have the same attributes as the Lord Himself. But what is the point of merely being possessed of Divine virtues? Such a saint should sing of the Lord's exploits and thus be cleansed of all impurities.

But what's the point of merely being clean ? You must transcend that state also and dwell in Unity consciousness. Be above purity and impurity. Such saints are indeed rare. Everyone has fallen into the pit of duality. A saint should never take any burden on his head.

Duality also needs a place to live, so an exceptional saint stays aloof from it. Beware of duality; give up debating and arguing. A devotee who has faith in his Master's words is infinitely wise.

From the Ramayana of St Tulsidas

The character of the holy person is like the cotton plant, whose fruit is tasteless, white and fibrous. Likewise, the actions of saints yield results which are stainless, pure, free from attachment and are full of goodness.

The cotton suffers hardships such as spinning and weaving, but after going through these processes it covers the faults of others, and has thus earned a glorious reputation.

The company of saints, which is full of joy and felicity, is like a mobile Prayag (the holiest of holy places, which is near Allahabad). Devotion is like the holy river Ganges, while holy discourse is like the Saraswati (an underground stream believed to meet the Ganges and Yamuna at Prayag). Discourses about Karma are like the river Yamuna, which washes away all the impurities of the Kali Age, while stories about the Lord represent the Triveni, the confluence of the

three streams, bringing joy and blessings to those who hear them. Noble actions represent the royal court of this king of holy places; the assembly of saints relieves the afflictions of those who take refuge in it with reverence. This king of all holy places, the company of saints, is beyond all description, and is not of this world. It gives immediate results and its glory is evident.

People who, having heard of the glory of association with the holy, appreciate it with love and affection, reap the rewards of human existence in this very lifetime.

The scriptures are like sacred mountains, and anecdotes about the Lord are the goldmines inside them. The saints are expert miners, using the pickaxe of penetrating intellect. Spiritual wisdom and non-attachment are the eyes with which they view these mines. Anyone who looks for the jewel of devotion with love and faith, will find it. It is a storehouse of all blessings.

Satsang : the company of Saints

The company of saints banishes sorrow and brings us joy. A candy wrapper fetches the same price as the candy, simply because of its association with it.

Associate with saints, whose minds are perfect, and who give away the riches the Holy Name without weighing its value. Associating with saints is rather like visiting a perfumer. Even if you don't buy anything, you still pick up the sweet fragrance which surrounds him.

I don't pray for riches or occult powers. All I pray for is the company of saints day and night.

Holy company is always worthwhile. You never fail to benefit from it.

Let the Holy Name dwell in your heart, and make good use of each breath. Any sacrifice is worthwhile, if it results in one moment in the presence of a saint.

The day is wasted if you don't manage to spend some time in satsang. Love is the only distinction between animals and human beings. You can never reach God except through devotion.

If you plant a neem tree (whose leaves have a very bitter taste) near a sandalwood tree, the neem tree will be drenched in the sandalwood fragrance.

If your mind is somewhere else, even though you are sitting in satsang, how can you benefit from the satsang?

How can a cloth be dyed unless it is dipped in the vat?

It is a terrible fate if one is still blind even after hearing the scriptures, and if he does not adopt the true path even after spending time with saints. A snake may spend a long time near a sandalwood tree, but still its sac is full of poison. You can't blame the tree because its scent doesn't take the poison out of the snakes that live near it. The snakes' sacs are so full of poison that there is no room left for the nectar. Likewise, how can saints influence someone who clings to his nature, and resists any change?

If you were to weigh the bliss of heaven or salvation against the joy of one moment spent in holy company, the later would surely win.

There is no mistaking the company of truth. One dip in it is enough to turn crows into swans. And it's nothing to be surprised about either. The glory of the saints is no secret.

Without associating with saints, you don't know what is true and false, spiritually speaking, and you can only enjoy satsang by the grace of the Lord. Satsang is the root of all blessings. Pious actions are like blossoms on a tree, but satsang is the actual fruit.

Even the wicked change their ways when they come into the company of a saint, just as lead can turn into gold when it contacts a touchstone.

Even such powers as Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva falter in their speech when they try to describe the glory of the saints. Poets and scholars are mute. To ask me to describe the wonders of satsang is of little use as asking a stallkeeper in a vegetable market to describe the virtues of a particularly

lovely diamond.

Rivers, trees, rain and saints all exist for the sake of serving others.

You become like the company you keep. The company of saints leads to salvation, while associating with the worldly affairs leads to worldliness. All scriptures, poets and saints agree that only if one is extremely fortunate, can he secure the company of a saint. By means of satsang, you can overcome suffering, and break through the cycle of birth and death, without any effort.

Bad Company

Good company is beneficial, but bad company is harmful. This is what the Scriptures say, Dust can be carried by the wind, but when it falls on the ground it becomes mud. Whether you are in the company of saints or the wicked, always remain cheerful by remembering God.

The conduct of saints and non-saints is comparable to the sandalwood tree and the axe. The axe cuts the tree and thus becomes scented. The sandal paste is used to adorn sacred images, whereas the blade of the axe is beaten by hammers and cast into the fire.

Do not listen to the wicked, even by mistake, as their company always bring distress. They burn with envy just by seeing others prosper. When they hear others being reviled, they feel as delighted as if they had found a treasure lying on the road. They are steeped in lust, anger, arrogance, and greed. They are cruel, deceitful, crooked and polluted. For no reason, they bear enmity towards everyone, even to those who are kind to them. They deal in lies and eat lies with relish. Such people speak sweetly, but have a heart of stone.

Malevolent by nature, they covet the life and wealth of others. Human life is wasted on such people. They wallow in greed, and are given to lust and gluttony, yet do not fear punishment after death.

They are the happiest when they see others in trouble. Devoted to their own selfish interests, they will oppose even their own families. They respect neither father mother, nor spiritual preceptor. Utterly degraded themselves, they lead others to ruin. Overcome by avarice, they covet the wealth of others. They have no love for saints, nor for the hearing about the Lord. They are oceans of vice, they are dull-witted and lascivious. They revile the Scriptures, and, in particular, harbour malice towards saints. They are deceitful hypocrites, although they put on a show of piety. Such wicked men were absent in Satyuga and Treata Yuga. There were a few in Dwapar, but in Kali Yuga there are great hordes of them.

Dominated by delusion, infatuation and selfishness, they do all kinds of wrongs and ruin their prospects in the afterlife. God comes in the form of Death and gives them the rewards of their actions.

Listen, dear brothers ! Virtues and vices are many, and all are the products of Maya. Don't pay heed to either, because if you do, you will lose your destination.

One Truth, diverse expressions

Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free.

The experience of God has been shared by the great Teachers of all times and countries. They never came to set up new religions, but rather to show people the eternal inner Truth of religion. Jesus said that his mission was not to destroy the scriptures, but to fulfill them.

However, after the Teacher leaves the world, a superstructure of scriptures, temples and legend is built up and the inner experience of spiritual Knowledge recedes, with the result that the followers of different religions cannot even relate to each other, or accept that the teachings of the other group are valid.

By taking a quick look at some experiences described by three religions--Islam, Christianity and Judaism, this chapter will attempt to show that the major religions, so often at odds with each other, are in fact talking about the same experience.

Knowledge

The foundation and core of religion is the direct perception and experience of God. This is called Atmagyan in Hinduism, Knowledge in Christianity, Knowledge, Covenant or Wisdom in Judaism, and Ruhani-ilm in Islam.

The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. (St James)

Compare this with the verse from Hinduism's Bhagvad-Gita which says:

This Knowledge is the purest and highest and is the supreme science. It is experienced directly, it is easy to perform, and is imperishable.

Here are some more quotes to illustrate :

Knowledge is the seal of the Kingdom of Solomon. The whole world is form, and Knowledge is the spirit. (Rumi, Islamic mystic)

The Lord giveth wisdom; out of His mouth cometh Knowledge and understanding. (Proverbs, 2:6)

That the soul be without Knowledge is not good. (Proverbs, 19:2)

And I will bring the blind by a Way they knew not; I will lead them in paths they have not known. I will make darkness light before them and crooked things straight. (Isaiah, 42:16)

The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant. (Psalm 25)

Such Knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. (Psalm 25)

From the Koran :

But it is clear revelation in the hearts of those who have been given knowledge. (Para 21, Aayat 49)

Behold that which I have given you of the scriptures and of Knowledge. (Para 3, Aayat 81)

Initiation

This is called upadesh in Hinduism. It is during initiation

that the Teacher, the enlightened soul, opens the Third Eye of the disciple and imparts to him the ability to meditate on the Holy Name and Inner Light of God. The seed of Knowledge is sown in the disciple's consciousness, and he begins his journey on the road to God-realization.

Christianity calls this the spiritual baptism, or second birth. The tradition of laying on of hands by the Bishop during the confirmation ceremony dates back to the Apostles' time, as this is the method of spiritual transmission or opening.

Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. (II Tim. 1:6)

(The Apostles) laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost. (Act 8:17)

In the old Testament, and sometimes in the New also, the same process is called anointing.

And Joshua was full of the spirit of wisdom for Moses had laid his hands upon him. (Deut. 34:9)

Samuel anointed him and the Spirit of Lord came upon David from that day forward. (I Samuel, 16:13)

But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth. (II John 2:27)

The Third Eye is called Teesra Netra or Shiv-Netra in Hinduism, single eye in Christianity, and inner gate in Judaism. In the ordinary state of awareness, this disciple begins to be aware of his own consciousness, and sees the Light Divine :

You cannot see my Cosmic Form with your ordinary eyes, therefore I will give you the eye of knowledge. (Bhagavad-Gita)

If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.
(Matt. 7:22)

The Spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven and brought me in the vision of God to Ferusalem to the inner gate toward the north. (Ezek. 8:3)

The Koran calls this Third Eye Dil-ka-Ankh or 'eye of the heart' and initiation is called Ruhani rasalat :

Allah cannot be seen by ordinary eyes, but by the eye of the heart. He is the subtle, the All-Aware. (Para 17, Aayat 104)

Light Divine

Called Bhargo Jyoti, and Param Prakash in Indian scriptures, it is termed Light or the Countenance of God in Christianity and Judaism, and Ilahi-Noor in Islam. The Scriptures abound with references to it.

Islam :

Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. His Light shines as a candle in a niche though no flame has touched it. Light upon Light.
(Koran, Para 18 Aayat 36)

*Deep in our hearts the Light of Heaven is shining
Upon a soundless sea without a shore.*

(Rumi)

*The Light of Truth I saw in my citadel,
When I had renounced all, I was bathed in it.
If thou, too, aspirest for it, give up thy lower self.
Then ye shall find thyself bathed in Truth's sunshine.*

(Sarmad)

Old Testament :

Thou coverest Thyself with light as with a garment. (Psalm 104)

In Thy Light shall we see Light. (Psalm 36:9)

Out of Zion, the perfection of Beauty, God hath shined. (Psalm 50:2)

God is the Lord, which hath showed us Light. (Psalm 118)

Make Thy Face to shine upon Thy servant. (Psalm 31:16)

New Testament :

I could not see for the glory of that light. (Acts 22:11)

That was the True Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. (James 1:17)

(The Supreme Abode) had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it. (Rev. 21:23)

How similar is this to this verse from the Gita:

Where sun, moon and fire do not shine, there shines the Supreme Light which is My highest Abode.

And this verse from Isaiah :

The sun shall no more be thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee, but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting Light. (6:19)

Nectar

This is called Amrit, the Nectar of immortality, by Indian scriptures. Islam calls it Aabehiyat. Jesus called it Living Water and the sages of the Old Testament called it various names, the most frequently used being Fountain of Life.

Whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into eternal life. (John 4:14)

And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal,

proceeding out of the throne of God. (Rev. 22:1)

Come ye to the waters, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.....eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself. (Isaiah 55:1)

With Thee is the fountain of life. (Psalm 36)

Far away the living fountains ply.....

What is this fountain, wouldst thou rightly know?

The Soul whence issues all created things,

Doubtless the rivers shall not cease to flow

Till silenced are the everlasting springs.

Farewell to sorrow, and with quiet mind,

Drink long and deep.

(Rumi)

From the Koran :

In a high Garden is a gushing spring (Para 30, Aayat 12)

.....a Garden where of the breadth is as the breadth of heaven and the earth. (Para 27, Aayat 21)

A Spring whence those brought near to Allah drink. (Para 30:28)

Holy Word

The Word, or Holy Name, is the active creative energy of God. Experiencing it, is the basis of God-realization. All the great Teachers knew this Word, and enabled their disciples to experience it too. All of them said that it is the Source-Energy, pure and perfect and beyond alphabets. However, when the inner experience of the Word is lost, people resort to external name and call them the True Name of God, hence the disparity found among religions on this point.

Hindu scriptures talk about Shabd-Brahm, Ram Nam, or Akshar Brahm. The Old and New Testaments call it the Word or Name. The Koran calls it pak Nam. However, these adjectival names all refer to the same fundamental Divine Energy, which is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent.

Those who meditate on the eternal, unmanifest and omnipresent Word, which is beyond mind and intellect, attain the Supreme Abode. (Gita, 12:3)

If ye seek the Lord, remember the Name constantly, and be sure union will be thy lot, for there is not the least difference between the Lord and His Name (Sufi saint)

You worship using names which ye have named, ye and your fathers. Allah hath revealed no sanction for them. The decision rests with Allah only, who hath commanded you that ye worship only His real Name. This is right religion but most men know not. (Koran, Para 12, Aayat 40)

The Word of the Lord endureth forever, and this is the Word by which the Gospel is preached unto you. (I Peter, 1:25)

Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)

He had a name written which no man knew, but he himself. And his name is called the Word of God. (Rev. 19:13)

Thy Name is from everlasting (Isaiah 63:16)

I will give them.....a name better than those of sons and daughters. I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. (Isaiah, 56:15)

We verily created a man and we know what his soul whispereth to

him, and we are nearer to him than his jugular vein. (Koran, Para 26:16)

In what language does the soul whisper?

Inner Music

Vibrations produce sound. The Holy Name, the Purest Vibration, produces the purest sounds. In all scriptures, divine visions were accompanied by heavenly sounds and music. Hindus call this Anahad Nad, the Koran talks about Gebi-Awaz, and the Bible describes sound like rushing waters, trumpets, choirs of angels, etc. Here are some examples:

Behold, the glory of the Lord came from the way of the east, and His voice was like a sound of many waters. (Ezekial, 11:43)

The voice of the Lord is upon the waters.....the God of glory thundereth. (Psalms 29:3)

I heard the voice of many angels. (Rev. 5:11)

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet. (Rev. 1:10)

His voice was as the sound of many waters. (Rev. 1:15)

eighty million horns and 30 million shofars and 40 million bugles heard the Jewish mystic Rabbi Nehuniah.

If ye close thine ears, eyes and lips, I promise the Diving Voice shall reveal the Supreme Secret which ye cannot hear so long as thy ears hear the worldly sounds. (Rumi)

These secrets can be realized after initiation by the Master followed by long and sustained meditation, combined with satsang and service. The process of meditation, called dhyān in Hinduism, hitbodehut in Judaism and ibadat in Islam, is absolutely necessary. The mind must be with-

drawn from external stimuli (a process called 'Pratyahara' in Hinduism) and fixed on the object of meditation. Single-pointed concentration is known as *ikswait* in Islam, and *kavanna* in Judaism. The ultimate achievement of the meditator is the state of *samadhi*, which corresponds to *Yechidah* in Jewish mysticism and *fanafillah* in Islam. This is the state described by Christ when He said, I and my father are One. 'Fanafillah' refers to the state when the Light of individual consciousness merges with the Universal Light.

Moses, the greatest Jewish Master, had attained *Yechidah*, the highest stage of 'Devekuth', or cleaving to God. Psalms says, *Who dwelleth in the secret place shall abide under the shadow of the almighty.*

The great Jewish mystic, Rabbi Nachman, said, 'One who does not meditate cannot have wisdom..... His power of concentration remains weak and cannot be maintained. One who does not meditate also does not realize the foolishness of the world.'

Rumi, the Islamic sage, advised, *Fix thy gaze upon the Light, and thou art delivered from the dualism inherent in the body. O Thou who art the kernel of Existence, the disagreement between Moslem, Zoroastrian and Jew depends on the standpoint.*

St Nazir expressed the same thing in these words:

From duality I passed into Unity.

And all illusions vanished like phantom shows.

Since then, whatever I see I see Him alone.

The Muslim and the Hindu and the Jew

Have all become the same to me.

All differences have vanished

In that experience of Unity-consciousness.

Once a person has realized God in the state of unity consciousness, he breaks through all the chains that bind him to the world and attains liberation. This is the Supreme State, called salvation in the Bible, Mukti by the Hindus and Nizat by Muslims.

The Master

The holy saint through whom the experience of Knowledge is transmitted, and who guides the disciple on the road to salvation, is called the Sat-Guru in Hinduism, Pir or Murshid in Islam, and Master, Teacher or Prophet in the Bible. He is the Tzaddik, the enlightened sage, without whom, all scriptures agree, liberation is impossible.

This path can be trodden only through the help of an intermediary, the Teacher. But he alone is a Teacher, who is dead to self and established in Unity. He is the one who is above the Shariyat (institutionalized religion). He can help in the path of Tariquat (practical spiritual experience). Seek such a one, that ye may gain union with the Lord. (Rumi)

In every epoch after Mohammed a Saint arises to act as his viceregent. The saint, then is the living Imam, who appears in every age. He is the God-guided one (Mahdi) and the Guide (Hadi)...He is as the Light of the Prophet (Noor-i-Muhammadi) and Universal Wisdom is his Gabriel: the saint lesser than he receives illumination from him, like a lamp. (Rumi)

So believe in Allah and His messenger and the Light which we have revealed: And Allah is aware of all that ye do. (Para 3:85)

By his Knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many. (Isaiah 53:11)

The Teacher is one who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. (Hebrews 7:6)

All things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father, neither knoweth any man the father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the son will reveal Him. (Matt 11:27)

Guru Vashishta's advice to Lord Rama

The soul is not realized by giving alms, charity, fasting, pilgrimages or whatever else you may do. You can only get Spiritual Knowledge through the company of saints. Satsang is like a tree, whose flower is Knowledge. Anyone who wants this flower, has to taste the fruit of spiritual experience.

Even if a person has no idea about spiritual ecstasy, he will be filled with it once he associates with saints. A man who lives all his life in ignorance meets his death, but someone who keeps the company of saints achieves immortality. People suffer all kinds of adversities, but find spiritual fulfilment in the company of a saint. Satsang eradicates misery in the same way as dew kills a lotus. Spiritual knowledge gets rid of sorrow and the devotee attains immortality and supreme Bliss.

In the company of saints the flame of Knowledge burns brightly, dispelling the darkness of ignorance. Great treasures are gained from satsang, leaving no desires at all remaining.

Saints are like a wishing well. They will grant your every wish. Contact with saints will ferry you across the worldly ocean, in the same way as a boatman ferries passengers to the other bank of a river. After receiving Knowledge from a saint, the devotee can take his place in God's Supreme Abode.

The breeze of satsang scatters the cloud of infatuation. Someone who has no particular affection for his body, who rests contentedly in the Spirit and whose intellect is not thrown off balance by the vicissitudes of life, always maintains tranquillity and mental equilibrium. Such a saint uproots the creepers of adversity, lifts us high above the worldly ocean as easily as the breeze picks up a flower, and sets us on the other shore.

The company of saints is like light. They can give you the highest things. A person who lacks divine vision cannot experience True Knowledge. Anyone who abandons the saints will burn in hell just as wood burns in a fire. However, if someone associates with saints, the fires of his personal hell are extinguished. He who bathes in the river of satsang does not have to do any other practices, such as fasting, austerities or chanting. He reaches the Ultimate State. So you should give up all these other practices and seek out satsang. A sincere aspirant searches for satsang in the same ways as a poor man is always on the lookout for a valuable jewel.

Satsang soothes the burning passions of body, mind and spirit. It cools the heat of emotions, just as rain cools the heat of the earth. The axe of satsang chops down the tree of ignorance and deluded infatuation. Only through satsang is immortality achieved, and nothing more than this is desired. Satsang is greater than anything. Even if you want nothing more than your own well-being, this is enough to qualify you for satsang.

Mental equipoise, contentment, right thinking (spiritual

wisdom) and satsang are the four gatekeepers of the door to liberation. Anyone who cultivates them soon progresses spiritually, while someone who doesn't cultivate them has no hope of liberation. Even if you practise only one of the above, the other three will come to you automatically.

If there is an ocean, automatically rivers will flow into it. If a person has mental equilibrium, then contentment, spiritual discrimination and holy company will follow. Contentment, equanimity and spiritual wisdom always accompany satsang.

The wishing tree has everything, and, in the same way, where there is contentment, then satsang, spiritual wisdom and mental equilibrium will also come. All phases and attributes of the moon are seen in a full moon. Similarly, where there is contentment, the other three will also come.

When spiritual insight dawns on a person, all good traits become his, just as all good fortune comes to a noble man. Someone who possesses the above four graces should be regarded as the flower of humanity.

If you don't possess all four, then take refuge in any one of them, because the other three will surely follow. These four graces are the way to liberation. There is no other way.

Contentment is the highest profit, satsang is the greatest wealth, wisdom is the greatest knowledge and a tranquil, even mind is the highest joy. These four graces are the greatest benefactors a person can have. Someone endowed with them is praised even by the gods.

Hold on to them and use them to bring your mind under control. The mind is like an elephant which is kept

under control by the goad of spiritual wisdom.

Desires flow in the mind like a deep river, whose two banks are virtue and vice. Human beings have the capacity to take their minds from vice to virtue. When you become introspective, and the current of mind starts to flow back towards the soul, you will realize soul. The devotee must labour hard to remove the wrong ideas which are damming up his mind, because only when this silt of ignorance is removed, will the current of Knowledge flow smoothly.

The outflowing of the mental current towards the world is the cause of bondage of the soul. Introversion of the mind leads to liberation. When the heart is pure, spiritual wisdom develops. And then, through philosophical deliberation, the intellect becomes keen. Ignorance is like a forest in which flourish the creepers of adversity. When someone uses the sword of reason and spiritual insight to cut them down, his mind becomes peaceful.

Attachment and infatuation are like elephants which trample the lotus of the heart into the ground. Affection for desirable things and aversion for the undesirable disturb the mind. When the lion of wisdom kills this attachment, the spirit becomes peaceful.

Success in anything comes only after proper deliberation and hard work. A king who takes action only after much careful forethought wins his battles.

From spiritual wisdom are derived strength, sagacity, a shining countenance and the four objectives of human life (i.e.) righteousness, proper action, liberation and worldly prosperity). The possessor of these has a lustrous appearance,

is master of his senses, and spiritually blooming. Someone who takes refuge in spiritual wisdom and holds fast to it gets whatever he wants. So, spiritual wisdom, or the capacity to reason for our spiritual benefit, is our best friend. A man of sound spiritual intellect is never thrown off balance when adversity strikes. He does not succumb to misfortune, just as a gourd does not sink in water. He who resorts to spiritual wisdom before taking action will succeed in whatever he does.

Righteous conduct (Dharma), philosophy, proper action and liberation are like trees. If you cultivate them, you will reap the fruits of success. So think about what is the absolute Truth and scale the heights of spirituality. In the light we can see clearly and likewise, a person who exercises his power of reason and spiritual insight, knows what is true and what is false. He discards the false and aims for the truth. Such a man can be said to have spiritual wisdom.

The world is like an ocean. Waves of adversity arise, but a wise man is not disturbed by the ups and downs of life. Happiness is the result of practising even a little spiritual discrimination. Thoughtless action yields only suffering. Thoughtlessness, or lack of reason, is like bracken which produces the thorns of misery. The specters of desire and ambition haunt the dark night of thoughtlessness, but when the sun of spiritual wisdom rises, these specters vanish along with the night. May the darkness of ignorance never find a place in you, because wisdom gets rid of ignorance and all forms of misery. Due to ignorance, a child mistakes his own shadow for a ghost and is frightened. Due to our

ignorance we are made miserable by the world, but worldly fears can be controlled by taking the help of the scriptures to reason correctly.

Where there is spiritual wisdom there is no misery, and where there is no wisdom, there is misery. Similarly, where there is spiritual insight there are no worldly fears, and where there is lack of insights, fears proliferate.

The good habits which produce happiness thrive in spiritual wisdom. Just as lotuses grow in the lake, so good traits grow with spiritual wisdom. Without it you are subject to all kinds of suffering.

Action performed without proper forethought lead to suffering. When a mouse digs a hole, it throws out dirt, on which weeds will start to grow. Similarly, through lack of consideration and insight, a person piles up the dirt of sinful actions which are a breeding ground for the weeds of adversity.

Thoughtlessness is like a woodworm which eats away at a tree. How can we get the fruits of happiness in such a situation? Lack of spiritual wisdom is not conducive to good action. Discrimination is like a king and spiritual wisdom is his minister. Wisdom follows Discrimination wherever he goes, and vice-versa.

Everyone respects the person endowed with spiritual wisdom. Spiritual wisdom is your best friend. A pure intellect and spiritual wisdom have led many to salvation.

The Himalayas are always cold both inside and out, and in the same way, a man of spiritual wisdom stays cool. By exercising his wisdom, a person can reach a state which is

eternal, endless, unchanging, pure and supreme ecstasy itself. Once he reaches this state, he does not desire anything, nor does he have to renounce anything. He is not affected by likes and dislikes.

Even though waves rise and fall in it, the ocean remains the same. Similarly, a discriminating person has no worldly confusions, and he reaches that peerless state which is independent of everything.

The universe is a product of the mind and through our own lack of insight we think that it gives us misery. The apparition of the world is like the ghost which the child imagines he sees in the dark. However, the person who has spiritual wisdom is not confused by the world. With the advent of wisdom comes mental equanimity. A wise man experiences bliss wherever he goes. He never feels sorrow. When the sun shines we don't see darkness, and a wise person never feels sorrow. Spiritual wisdom brings happiness and its absence causes suffering. If there is no darkness, we don't fear ghosts, and in the same way, a wise man does not fear the world.

Birth and rebirth is a long illness, whose only cure is spiritual insight. Spiritual wisdom results in reaching the Supreme State and the Ultimate Destination. Lack of wisdom results in degradation of the spirit. A man who becomes intoxicated with the wine of thoughtlessness cannot reason at all for his own benefit. He cannot perform the activities enjoined by the Scriptures. Wrong ideas can never result in spiritual wisdom.

The illness of desire is cured by the medicine of spir-

itual insight. A person who uses his discrimination and depends on spiritual wisdom gets perfect peace, and his mind does not descend again into the world. He sees the world objectively; he is detached and unchanging in the midst of life's ups and downs, pleasures and unpleasantness.

The ocean is full of water, and likewise, a man of knowledge is full of spirituality. If a blind man falls into a well, he can climb out using the strength of his hands. Similarly, if a person falls into the dark well of the world, he can be extricated by the strength of spiritual wisdom.

A wise person considers a problem from all sides, and then takes appropriate action to solve it. Any problem can be solved with proper deliberation. So you should depend on spiritual wisdom and then you will succeed in life. In order to gain this wisdom, you have to study the scriptural precepts, think about them carefully, and, with a firm intellect, reach the heights of spirituality.

Light reveals an object as it really is, and, in the same way, we can realize the Soul through the scriptures and the words of the Spiritual Master. A blind man cannot see anything, even in the light, and an unworthy aspirant will not be able to realize the Soul, even if the scriptures and the Master are available to him. The aspirant who has the eyes of spiritual insight will realize the Soul as it really is, but someone bereft of such vision is actually blind. He who acquires the insight of spiritual wisdom can know everything. Through it he grows in spirituality. He becomes perfect, and his mind does not wander any more in the world of merit and demerit.

This body will continue to function until the action determined by the reserve of prenatal impressions and tendencies have run their course. However, a sage stays in the body through his own will. After he leaves the physical body, he lives on as pure Soul. So take refuge in Divine Wisdom and cross the worldly ocean. Not even a sick man laments as much as a thoughtless man does, and even as person in dire straits will not weep as much as the man who is bereft of spiritual wisdom. Just as all rivers naturally flow into the sea, so all adversities take up residence in a man who has no spiritual wisdom.

Germs live in dirty water, thorns are found by the wayside and snakes attach themselves to trees—all these are natural and right, but a man who doesn't think and who runs after sensual pleasures is no better than a dog. He can't look after himself for a moment. The aspirant should become fixed in wisdom, live fearlessly, and ponder the questions 'Who am I?' and 'What is the real nature of this world?' Reflecting thus, he can realize the Soul, which is Truth Itself, and he has nothing more to do with the world of the senses.

A man of spiritual wisdom and discrimination doesn't fall prey to sensual pleasures. He is stable in Truth. If he lives like this he will realize the spiritual knowledge and rest in the soul. The fluctuations of his mind cease and all his troubles are over. Pure Love only awakens in a tranquil mind, and Love is God, God is Love.

Loving God

Loving God is not an easy matter.

Only someone who severs his head and tramples it underfoot is worthy.

Love does not grow on trees, nor is it sold in the marketplace.

Whoever wants it, be he king or subject, must be ready to give his life.

I have drunk from the overflowing cup of Love.

The Knowledge bestowed by the Master has illumined me.

I have sounded the trumpet of the Word.

I have entered like a warrior into the field of devotion.

Where does love come from and where does it go?

No one knows.

Sometimes laughing, sometimes crying—

Such emotionalism is not Love.

The true beloved of God gives his mind with heartfelt love.

The heart in which love does not dwell

Is as desolate as a cremation-ground.

Such a person is like a blacksmith's bellows,

Which draws in air, although it is not alive.

There is no peace without Love,

And without the pain of separation

There is no renunciation.
Without the Master, the blemishes of soul and mind
Cannot be eradicated.
Have the same intense love that the chakora bird has for
the moon,
Even when its severed head is on the ground,
Its gaze is on the moon.
Great is the love of the fish of water.
There is nothing like it.
As soon as it is separated from the water,
It gives up its life.
Where there is Love, there is no reason, rules or
commonsense.
When the heart is full of the ecstasy of Love,
Who counts days and dates?
When Love manifests in your heart, it can't be hidden.
You can't express it in words
But your eyes are full of tears.
Love should be unchanging, whatever your ways of life.
Then it doesn't matter
Whether you live in a house or a forest.
I searched everywhere for a lover of God but found
none.
When two such lovers meet,
Their devotion is strengthened.
I have drunk the Nectar given by my Master,
What other potion do I need?
When a potter completes a pot,

He doesn't have to put it on the wheel again.
I have tried many medicines,
But nothing compares with Love.
Just a small dose purifies the whole being.

Sahjo Bai :

There is no room for mind
In a person who is in love with God.
He is totally contented,
And sees Him everywhere he goes.
The words of a lover of God are sweet.
Sometimes he feels like laughing,
And sometimes like crying.
It just happens, for no reason.
I care naught for caste or appearance.
Even though everyone may scorn me and call me crazy.
Love is fathomless, peerless and eternal.
To express it is impossible.
Without Divine Love in your heart.
Your beauty, wealth and even your life have no meaning.
Without purity of desire,
Your love is worthless.
Everywhere you'll find plenty of people
Who want riches and happiness,
But hardly one who wants Divine Love.
Only someone who is ready
To cut off his head and stamp on it
May enter into the City of Love.

Non-Attachment

(Vairagya)

भोगा न भुक्ता वयमेव भुक्ताः तपो न तप्तं वयमेव तप्ताः ।

कालो न यातो वयमेव याताः तृष्णा न जीर्णा वयमेव जीर्णाः ॥

We do not enjoy pleasures, but rather they enjoy us. We do not satisfy passions, but they satisfy themselves through us. We do not conquer desire, but rather it conquers us and reduces us to senility.

वलिभिर्मुखमाक्रान्तं पलितैरङ्कितं शिरः ।

गात्राणि शिथिलायन्ते तृष्णैका तरुणायते ॥

The skin on the face wrinkles, our hair turns white, all our limbs become feeble, but desires remain ever-young.

निवृत्ता भोगेच्छा पुरुषबहुमानोविगलितः

समानाः स्वर्याताः सपदि मुहृदो जीवितसमा ।

शनैर्यष्ट्योत्थानं घनतिमिररुद्धे च नयने

अहो मूढः कासस्तदपि मरणापायचकितः ॥

You lose your taste for worldly pleasures, your prestige declines, your friends die and those that are left are due to die soon. You walk with a cane and can't see in front of you. Even in this situation you are so silly that the thought of dissolution of your body through death startles you! In a place where there were once many people, now there is only one. Where there previously was only one, now there are many, not one of whom will stay there.

इत्थं चेमौ रजनिदिवसौ दोलयन् द्वाविवाक्षौ ।
 कालः काल्या सह बहुकलः क्रीडति प्राणशारैः ॥
 आदित्यस्य गतागतैरहरहः संक्षीयते जीवनम् ।
 व्यापारैर्वहुकार्यभारतगुरुभिः कालोऽपि न ज्ञायते ॥
 दृष्ट्वाजन्मजराविपत्तिमरणं त्रासश्च नोत्पद्यते ।
 पीत्वा मोहमयीं प्रमादमदिरामुन्मत्तभूतं जगत् ॥

It can be seen from this, that the world is like a checkerboard, on which Time plays with all beings, throwing the dice of day and night. With each day rising and setting of the sun, our lives are getting shorter. We are burdened with so many cares and responsibilities that we don't notice the passage of time. Even though we see old age, calamities, birth and death all around us, we are not struck with terror. Certainly we drink the wine of delusion and become intoxicated!

त्वं राजा वयमप्युपासितगुरुप्रजाभिमानोन्नताः
 ख्यातस्तवं विभवैर्यशांसि कवयोदिक्षु प्रतन्वन्ति नः ।
 इत्थं मानद नातिदूरमुभयोरप्यावयोरन्तरं
 यद्यस्मासु पराङ्मुखोऽसिवयमप्येकान्ततोनिस्पृहाः ॥

You may be a king, but I have been elevated by the wisdom which I have gained through serving my Master. I have reached the highest state. You may be renowned for your riches and worldly achievements, but my Knowledge is glorified all over the world. If you are cool towards me, I will also be indifferent to you.

आशा नाम नदी मनोरथजला तृष्णातरंगाकुला
 रागग्राहवती वितर्कविहग धैर्यद्रुमुध्वंसिनी ।
 मोहावर्तसुदुरस्तराऽतिगहना प्रोक्तुङ्गचिन्तातटी
 तस्याः पारगता विशुद्धमनसो नन्दन्तियोगीश्वराः ॥

Hope is like a flowing river, whose waters are ceaseless desires. Ambitions rise like waves. Doubts and arguments are like crocodiles, attachment to worldly things is like a stinging bee, scheming and greed are the aquatic birds that abound on the river, which destroys in its course the mighty trees of patience and fortitude. This river is rendered impassable by the whirlpools of ignorance. Anxiety and worries are its banks, and they are precipitous indeed. Only a rare Yogi of pure mind can cross this impassable river of birth and death.

विवेकव्याकोशे विदधति शर्म शाम्यति तृषा
परिष्वांगे तुंगे प्रसरति तरां सा परिणतिः ।
जराजीर्णैश्वर्यग्रसन गहनाक्षेपकृपण
स्तृषापात्रं यस्यां भवति मरुतामप्यधिपतिः ॥

When peace arises through the light of discrimination, desires are stilled, but through contact with worldly pleasures, these desires become so mighty that even though you are withered with age, the mind is incapable in giving up its excessive fondness for attachment, wealth and status.

प्राप्ताः श्रियः सकलकामदुष्मान्तः किं
न्यस्तं पदं शिरसि विद्विषतां ततः किम् ।
सम्मानिताः प्रणयिनो विभवंस्ततः किं
कल्पस्थितंतनुभूतां तनुभिस्ततः किम् ॥

So what if you attain the riches necessary to satisfy the myriad desires of this mortal body? So what if you vanquish your enemies? So what if you have the respect of your friend? So what if your body lasts for ages? If you have not practised meditation, in preparation for the hereafter, you have done nothing.

भक्तिर्भवे मरणजन्मभयं हृदिस्थं
 स्नेहो न बन्धुषु न मन्मथा विकाराः ।
 संसर्गदोषरहिता विजना वनान्ता
 वैराग्यमस्ति किमतः परमर्थनीयम् ॥

If you have no fear of death, if you have no attachment to relatives and are not moved by passion, if you have settled in a secluded forest, unsullied by the company of worldly men, and along with all this, also feel unattached to everything, what more do you need to ask of God?

तस्मादनन्तमजरं परमं विकसि
 तद्ब्रह्म चित्तय किमेभिरसद्विकल्पैः ।
 यस्यानुपंगिण इमं भुवनाधिपत्य
 भोगादयः कृपणलोकमता भवन्ति ॥

A person who experiences even one particle of Divine Bliss counts the world of the senses as nothing. So meditate on the almighty, incorruptible and sorrowless God. What will you get from the illusory uncertainties of this world? So let go of ego and pride in yourself, and meditate on God.

त्रैलोक्याधिपतित्वमेव विरसं यस्मिन्महाशासने
 तल्लब्धासनवस्त्रमानघटने भोगे रतिं मा वृथाः ।
 भोगः कोऽपि स एक एव परमो नित्योदितो जृम्भते
 यत्स्वाद्विरसा भवन्ति विषयास्त्रैलोक्यराज्यादयः ॥

Compared to the Knowledge of God, the pleasures of the three worlds seem insipid. After receiving Knowledge, don't hold any affection for food, clothes and worldly pleasures that are simply the creations of your mind. After tasting the ultimate bliss of Knowledge, the petty pleasures of the three world totally lose their charm.

आयुः कल्लोललोलं कतिपयदिवसस्थायिनी यौवनश्री
 रथाः संकल्पकल्पा घनसमयतडद्विभ्रमा भोगपूगाः ।
 कण्ठा श्लेषोपगूढंतदपि च न चिरं यत्प्रियाभिः प्रणीतं
 ब्रह्मण्यासक्तचित्ता भाव भवभयाम्भोधिपारं तरीतुम् ।।

We should realize that human life is as ephemeral as a wave. The beauty of youth does not last long, and earthly possessions are as transient as thought. The whole series of pleasures that we go through are as fleeting as lightning in a raincloud. Your beloved ones who embrace you now will not keep your company forever. Cross the ocean of worldly fears by merging your mind in God alone.

अवश्यं यातारश्चिरतरमुषित्वपि विषया
 वियोगे को भेदस्त्यजति न मनो यत्स्वयममून् ।
 ब्रजन्तः स्वातन्त्र्यादतुलपरितापाय मनसः
 स्वयं त्यक्ता ह्यंते शमसुखमनन्तं विदधति ।।

In the end you have to leave behind these objects of enjoyment which you have been hoarding for so long. Is there any doubt about this? So why don't people just give them up? If enjoyments are torn from us by force, the mind is greatly afflicted, but if you renounce them of your own accord, you will find endless joy.

भिक्षाशनं तदपि नीरसमेकवारं शय्या च भूः परिजनो निजदेहमात्रम् ।
 वस्त्रं च जीर्णशतग्रन्थमयी च कन्था हा हा तथापि विषया न परित्यजन्ति ।।

A renunciate may beg and eat unsavoury food, sleep on the ground, have no relatives other than his own body, and wear tattered rags. The surprising thing is, that even in this austere condition, he is not free from desires.

विद्या नाधिगता कलंकरहिता वित्तं च नोपाजित ।
 शश्रुषाऽपि समाहितेन मनसा पित्रोर्न सम्पादिता ।।

कालोऽयं परपिण्डलोलुपतया काकैरिव प्रेर्यते ।।

We do not do proper meditation on the Lord in order to destroy our bondage to the wheel of birth and death. We have no merit from pious actions to our credit. We do not attempt to concentrate our minds. We do not serve our parents as we should. Instead, like crows, we waste our time being greedy for food, and placing expectations on others.

स्नात्वा गाङ्गैः पयोभिः शुचिकुसुमफलैरर्चयित्वा विभो त्वां
ध्येये-ध्यानं नियोज्य क्षितिधरकुहरग्रहवपर्यंकमूले ।
आत्मारामोः फलाशी गुरुवचनरतस्त्वप्रसादात्मरारे
दुःखान्मोक्ष्ये कदाहं तव चरणरतो ध्यानमार्गेकनिष्ठः ।।

O Lord! After worshipping You with flowers and fruits, I want to sit in a mountain cave absorbed in meditation upon your gracious Form, which is the giver of all blessings. Full of faith in my Master's instructions, I will love You and renounce the ambition for rewards. When, by Your Grace, will I be released from the suffering of birth and death?

धन्यानां गिरिकन्दरे निवसतां ज्योतिः परं ध्यायता
मानन्दाश्रुजलं पिबन्ति शकुना निःशंकमङ्केशयाः ।।
अस्माकं तु मनोरथोपरचितप्रासादवापीतटे
क्रीडाकाननकेलिकौतुकजुषामायुः परं क्षीयते ।।

Someone who can live in a mountain cave meditating on the Divine Light is indeed fortunate. Birds sit fearlessly in his lap and drink his tears of joy. He really is blessed. Meanwhile, we romp around in the garden of imagination and destroy ourselves, as our life ebbs away.

व्याघ्रीव तिष्ठति जरा परितर्जयन्ती रोगाश्च शत्रव इव प्रहरन्ति देहम् ।
आयुः परिस्रवति भिन्नघटादिवाम्भो लोकस्तथाप्यहितमाचरतीति चित्रम् ।।

The obstacle of old age is before us, frightening us like

a tiger. Diseases are enemies which afflict the body. Our life is slipping away from us day by day, just as water leaks out of a cracked vessel. It is truly amazing that, even in such a condition, people do actions which are detrimental to themselves.

भोगा भंगुरवृत्तयो बहुविधास्तैरेव चायं भव
स्तत्कस्यैव कृते परिभ्रमर रे लोकाः कृतं चेष्टितैः।
आशापाशमोपशान्तिविशदं चेतः समाधीयतां
कामोच्छेत्तुहरेः स्वधामनि यदि श्रद्धेयमस्मद्वचः॥

All pleasures are ephemeral, and are accompanied by fear and dread. Knowing this, why do you wander around in the vicious circle of pleasures? If you believe what I say, tear as under the net of hopes and expectations and constantly meditate with love on the pure consciousness Which is God, the Light Divine.

गंगातीरे हिमगिरिशिला बद्धपद्यासनस्य
ब्रह्मध्यानाऽभ्यसनविधिना योगनिन्द्रां गतस्य।
किं तेर्भाव्यं मम मुदिवर्गैर्यत्र ते निर्विशंकाः
संप्राप्यन्ते जरठहरिणा शृङ्गकट्ट्विनोदम्।

On that auspicious day when I can sit by a river or on the mountain crags, close my eyes and lose myself in Yoga, I will be so detached from body and senses that animals may rub themselves against me and I will not be aware of it.

Vairagya Satakam of Saint Bhartrihari.

Benevolence

To work hard to remove the misfortunes of others, is the mark of eminence, and benevolence is the sign of noble men and saints. The more serious a crisis is, the more we appreciate any help offered. If we help remove someone's agony for even one second, we have done a worthy act. To remove a thorn from someone's body, to offer water to the thirsty, and to feed the hungry, are all good works, but if we help somebody for a year, then proportionately this help is more valuable. So how much more valuable is relieving someone's troubles for a lifetime?

Spiritual Knowledge alone has the power to relieve the pangs of death. That is why, spreading knowledge is the highest form of philanthropy. It is the stairway to God-realization.

There is no form of learning whose effects remain intact forever. Spiritual Knowledge alone has the power to install the aspirant in the kingdom of heavenly bliss. It totally gets rid of desire and its offspring, dissatisfaction, which always reside within us. Under such circumstances, which action can be more meritorious than spreading knowledge? Lord Krishna describes its importance to us :

Whoever propagates this supreme and secret Knowledge among My devotees will attain Me and is dearest to Me. (Gita, 18:68)

The realized soul who shows the ways to perfection is

the true benefactor of humanity. Unsurpassed power lies in such a great soul. We do whatever we do on the strength of our reasoning power. Without this power, the body is no more than a lump of clay. Therefore, a person who experiences this power in its proper perspective, as do these great souls, will be able to perform any type of action, worldly or otherwise, correctly. A person who does not experience spiritual power within himself will be unable to pursue even his own selfish interests properly, let alone any action which leads him to salvation.

Next in importance to spiritual knowledge is intellectual knowledge. The imparting of intellectual knowledge is much superior to the giving of clothes and food, because the main objective of man, which is to fulfill his creative urges, cannot be accomplished without such knowledge. For someone who has never experienced any creativity, living or dying would be the same. What use is a life spent in ignorance and its resultant suffering?

Physical assistance is the next most valuable aid that we can offer to anyone. To help others through one's own strength is truly a kind of charity. But we should not think that physical service is the only way to lessen the suffering of others. As a matter of fact, physical service is a lesser form of service, because it brings only short-term relief. Physical aid usually effects no permanent change in the situation. Feeding a hungry man will certainly remove his immediate pain, but he will soon become hungry again, and feel miserable along with it. Suffering is the constant companion of need. If we want to be really happy, there should be no

feeling of want in our lives. The day our sense of need is completely removed, we will be instantly and truly happy. In that blessed condition, even hunger will pose no problem. No worldly events will be able to diminish our joy.

The help we need to reach such a state is the most important aid anyone can give us. Next in order of importance comes intellectual help and then comes physical help. The unhappiness that we see in this world cannot be eradicated by physical aid alone. Until people change their ideas and behaviour, they will continue to feel bound by a variety of needs. If these needs are not fulfilled, unhappiness is sure to result. Thus physical help alone is insufficient to remove unhappiness from the face of the earth. The most potent medicine for all sufferings is purification of the mind through True knowledge. One saint has said that if a man's mind is pure, even snakes and tigers look upon him with love.

All sins and sufferings spring from ignorance. Mankind will be truly happy only when individuals have been introduced to their own power of consciousness, and when full confidence in it develops as a result of spiritual realization. We should not even hope for a state of universal happiness before this. Even if each household were to distribute alms daily to the poor, the present predicament of humanity can never be erased. Unless the nature of modern man undergoes a complete transformation, the world will continue in its present distressing state.

Lord Krishna tells us in various places in the Gita, that a person should constantly be engaged in work. It is His considered opinion that work is the father of success. Yet

each action that we do leads to a mixture of joy and sorrow. As a result of any action, someone will be pleased and someone else will suffer. There is no action that does not result in joy or sorrow. Action by its very nature keeps on yielding a mixture of pleasure and pain. It is a complete misunderstanding to think that because actions result in joy and sorrow, we can avoid this by avoiding action.

Action produces joy and sorrow in proportion to their goodness or badness. Even so, joy binds a soul as much as sorrow does. We can experience it to be a fact that joy comes from virtuous action, but that is not the whole story. Actually, joy is already within us, but we can only realize it through meritorious actions. As long as we retain the misconception that joy is produced by virtuous action, our soul cannot escape the double-edged sword of joy and sorrow. So Lord Krishna tells us to completely abandon the idea of doing such-and-such actions in order to enjoy such-and-such types of happiness. When we have a duty to perform, we must do it, but we must give up the idea that it will bring us joy.

Man has the right to work, but there should not be any attachment to its results. Now we have to understand what non attachment is. One of the central ideas of the Gita is that every action should be performed in a spirit of detachment. Everyone must work, but he should do so without desiring the fruits of his labour.

From birth everyone has some memories and latent impressions. We can compare the mind to a lake, just as small waves arise in the water, so waves are also produced in

the mind. Even though the mental waves cannot be perceived, they cannot be completely destroyed either, but remain dormant in the subconscious, and resurface when a suitable opportunity arises. These subtle modifications are known as 'samskaras' in the terminology of the Indian scriptures. Some such inherent impressions are found in every living creature.

Whatever action we take and whatever thoughts we nurture leave impression on the mind, which remains hidden, but, even so, exercises influence on our actions. Whatever behaviour we are exhibiting at present, is the result of impressions that we have gathered in the past. In daily life we refer to the sum total of these impressions as our 'nature'.

Each person's nature is called his character. If his previous impressions were good, he becomes a man of good character, while if his previous impressions were bad, he becomes a person of bad character. If a man continues to listen to evil suggestions, invite bad thoughts and perform evil deeds, then the impressions in his mind are bound to become evil, and the character that is built on these impressions will also be evil. If somehow the habits which these impressions create get a stranglehold on the mind, then he will be unable to see the disadvantages of doing evil, and it will become part of his nature to do evil unthinkingly. In the course of time these impressions will gather so much momentum that he will become inclined to perform evil deeds deliberately. Even if he has also received some good impressions, they will not have a chance of withstanding the

influence of the negative impression.

In the same way, someone whose thoughts are good, and who performs good deeds, will be induced by resulting good impressions to perform even greater deeds in the future. Such a person's character becomes so solid, that even if he think of doing something wrong crosses his mind, his body will absolutely refuse to carry it out. This is the sign of a stable character.

Consider the tortoise. If someone starts to torment it, it will withdraw its head and limbs into its shell. No matter how much you may stick on its back, it will keep its limbs tucked inside.

Similarly, a person who gains control over his senses won't allow them to become the agents for any evil action. Lord Krishna said : *He who has maintained a flow of good thoughts does not find it difficult to restrain the senses. His character, which is composed of the good impressions he has received as a result of positive actions, helps him.* The word 'senses' does not only refer to the visual and other physical actions, a character can easily be spoiled simply by concentration on bad thoughts. A man who gains mastery over his senses can be called a man of steady intellect.

Therefore, a person can transcend duality and arrive at a perfectly sheltered place. One who has achieved this state, is absolutely incapable of performing any evil deed. Even if he is surrounded by the most wicked and degenerate types, he does not deviate at all from his noble character. This state is called being 'established in divinity'.

As soon as a person reaches this state, he immediately

attains liberation without being ensnared by any kind of delusion. This is the aim of every Yogi; this is the condition he strives to attain. On the surface, it may seem as if the paths taken by the various saints were different, but they all lead to this same place. That same state of consciousness which Buddha reached by following the path of meditation and discrimination, and at which Christ reached by the path of devotion, can also be reached by the path of Karma-Yoga. Buddha was Karma Yogi, also, and Christ was a devotee, but both of them reached the same place.

Now we must understand something of what the liberated condition actually is. One who becomes free of the polarities of joy and sorrow, and of good and bad actions, becomes liberated, but good actions and joyfulness are also. Maybe one type of action binds with a chain of lead and the other with a chain of gold, but it is still a chain. A person who enjoys the pleasure that he experiences upon performing charitable actions, is in fact is tied up in his actions, from the point of view of liberation, as the man who experiences remorse or pain is the result of his bad actions.

When you get a splinter in your foot, you may use another splinter to extract it, but then you throw both away. In the same way, we have to perform good deeds to get rid the mind of evil habits, but once the mind turns away from evil tendencies, we have no further use for the good deeds, either. At this point, we have to check the mind from dwelling on our good deeds, just as earlier we had to check it from concentrating on our bad deeds. We have to cultivate indifference, which means not feeling obliged to perform

any particular actions. We have to work but not let work disturb our mental quietude. Just as waves arise on the surface of a pool, and slowly fade away, without disturbing the peacefulness of the pool, in the same way, says Lord Krishna, *even while you are performing your duties, do not let the mind be disturbed.*

All the same it is our everyday's experience that the mind invariably receives a measure of pleasure or pain from whatever we do. So how can we achieve the seemingly impossible? How, in this day and age, are we to keep our minds detached while doing our work? Lord Krishna tells us to do all actions with a detached mind. He says that these actions should not leave impressions on the mind. We should continue to use the faculties at our disposal, to perform our duties, but we should not allow our efforts to have any impact on the mind. We must regard every object in this world in the same way as we look at the furniture of a house in which we are a guest. We should be a neutral witness. We should always be industrious, but never attached. There is nothing wrong with hard work, but to be attached to worldly attainments is detrimental on the path to salvation.

One day I visited a house where a number of people had gathered. I saw them all, but I particularly noticed one person, who was my disciple. My eye fell on everybody's face equally, yet only one person really caught my eye. This was because I had never seen the others before, and therefore had no previous impressions in my mind regarding them, whereas I felt affection for my disciple.

I had seen him several times before, and so I already had

some impressions about him in my mind. I had heard many other people talking about him on other occasions, too, and I had often thought about him myself. So on that particular day, as soon as his image reached my mind, it came in contact with latent old impressions that were already there, and these impressions refreshed my memory of him. Up to that point, the impressions had been lying dormant in my mind, but as soon as his face appeared in my mind, the memories returned.

We can understand from this that anything which is brought repeatedly to the attention of the mind, establishes a firm hold there, and can then be reactivated by the slightest reference at any time.

During the course of my work, I come into contact with many, many people, but suppose there is one of them that I love more than all the rest. Before I go to sleep at night, I try to remember everyone whom I have seen in the course of the day, yet, of all those people, the only face I can recall at will is the one for whom I feel affection. His face has been imprinted on my heart; his image has been imprinted so clearly on my mind that it cannot easily be forgotten.

The reason that my mind is not attached to the other faces is that they are not imprinted in my heart. For this reason, I am his whom I love, and he is mine who loves me. This attachment is a hindrance in loving God.

St Tulsidas said, *Whatever love you had for the world, now concentrate it all on God.*

We have not come into the world to stay forever. This world is like a roadside inn. We have stopped awhile in

many such places before, and we have no idea how many more places we shall pass through on our journey. There is no telling how long this cycle of coming, staying and leaving has been going on.

Indeed, the whole universe has been created for the benefit of the individual soul, but we should bear it in mind, that the spirit is not created by the creation. This entire creation has manifested itself in order to help teach the individual souls. There is no reason for its existence apart from this. The purpose of creation is to permit the individual consciousness to receive and realize the Truth. When the soul receives Knowledge of the Truth, it can attain salvation.

The universe is inert, unreal and unstable, like a dream, while God is Truth, consciousness, and Bliss. The world can be viewed as a scripture. The soul needs to receive Knowledge and realize the Truth, and then set the world, like a book, aside. We don't do this however, but do exactly the opposite. We don't realize our freedom, but are content to think that we are just like everything else in the universe, i.e. only a vessel. We think that the soul has arranged everything only for the sake of the body, and that the job of the soul is to satisfy and maintain the body. Nowadays, people think that the highest thing one can do is to satisfy physical needs.

There is a saying, 'Man does not eat to live, but he lives to eat.' we can see for ourselves that we are no better than that gluttonous person. The surprising thing is that we laugh at this habit, thinking that we are better! We firmly believe that we are part of the material universe only, and we get

involved in physical relationships, but if we get thus involved only once, that's it! The soul becomes completely bound and begins to act like a slave. The Gita says that we should always work, but we don't work like a master. On the contrary, we work and live like a slave. We don't have mastery over the situation. The objective of Karma Yoga is liberation, but we keep on deceiving ourselves and day by day recede further and further from our goal.

The central principle of Karma Yoga is to become free, then do work. Never forget that the final result of your actions should be liberation. All around us we see that people are working, but what kind of work are they doing? It is obvious that they are slaves to their desires. Because of this servitude, everywhere people weep. So dissolve yourself in working for your liberation. Put this tendency to fulfill physical desires aside, fill yourself with Divine Love, and then act. This is called Desireless Yoga.

The word 'love' has been very much misused. It is impossible to feel true love if you are not free. You can buy a person, make him your slave, bind him hand and foot and force him to work. He will certainly work for you, but will he love you? The spirit has become the slave of the senses. You cannot fill your heart with true love if you keep on working only for the senses. For the sake of his own sensual satisfaction, a person is prepared to cut another's throat!

A person may be very industrious, but this doesn't mean he is doing work properly. Labouring for self or family cannot be regarded as proper action. You are behaving like a slave, if your actions are motivated by a desire for per-

sonal happiness. Only actions done in a spirit of true love result in total joy. Such acts will always give us peace of mind and its off spring, joy.

Eternal Consciousness, Knowledge and spiritual love always co-exist. They come from the same source and if we possess one of them, automatically the other two will become ours also. They are three branches of the same tree, three waves on the same pond.

The Name of the Primordial form of God is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss. Truth appears to us dressed up in the garb of the manifest universe. Consciousness manifests as knowledge of the various aspects of creation. The phenomenon of love, which expresses itself in the hearts of all living beings, originates from bliss. Thus, misery can never be the result of true love. A true lover is never made miserable by his beloved.

Now, we have to answer the question : If love is always full of bliss, then why do people in love always appear to be grieving? Let us take an example, one that crops up all over the world. A man loves a woman so much that he sees and thinks of nothing else. His dreams and thoughts are full of her. Oh, what a divine love! But let us examine this love according to scriptural guidelines, and then we can understand what it really is. The man in question always want his lady to remain by his side, to eat and drink with him. The idea is that she should virtually be his slave, as if she had nothing else to do with her time, as if she had no independent existence. Every word he utters bears out this fact. However, having made her his slave, he also becomes her

slave. Can the love of two slaves last forever? If she leaves him for a minute, his mind is thrown into a turmoil and he is miserable. Real love is never like this. This is nothing more than infatuation. These people are caught up in their desires, which spring from physical attraction.

This man has become obsessed, and thus mistakes these feelings for love. He gets caught up in it and dances like a puppet, all the while imagining his ephemeral and unreal love to be divine love. Indeed, he manages to involve other people in his craziness, too! However, if the lady refuses to obey his orders, it doesn't take long for his mind to become very disturbed. Misery is never a part of true and pure love. If there is misery, the love is not pure. People become involved in this other thing, mistakenly believing it to be a love, but it is not true love. The day you experience pure love for anyone, be it your wife, your child, or anyone else, you will know the secret of universal love, and on that day it will be absolutely clear to you just what is love without attachment.

Says Krishna : *I perform actions not because I look for anything in return, but because I love this world, and I am concerned for its welfare. If I don't perform action, others will also stop doing work, and as a result this world will be defiled and destroyed.*

These words of the Lord give us a good insight into the nature of detachment and true love. The Lord has no selfish motive. He does everything out of love. If the slightest desire for pleasure arises, detachment and true love vanish at once. The love of the man who enjoys sensual pleasure does not go beyond the physical. We may say that

so-and-so has fallen in love with so-and-so, but in fact he has fallen in love with her body. His mind dwells on her physical attributes, which are just inert matter, forms, and the attraction he feels is what we call 'love'. This type of love is nothing more than the attraction of iron filings to a magnet. In fact, this type of love can be broken off very easily, resulting in grief. Real love is quite different. It is never attached to physical objects, but only to the consciousness within them. This consciousness is beyond physical objects. It dwells in every soul uniformly. People who are truly in love experience no ups and downs. They may live thousands of miles apart, but their love doesn't change; it is constant and imperishable. It can never cause grief.

It is not easy to achieve this type of detachment. We must practise it every moment throughout our lives. It is seldom that this love grows by sheer coincidence. When we attain this state, true love and salvation is also ours. At this point, the bondage of this world begins to crumble, and Nature gives up trying to fetter and chain us. By walking on this path, we avoid having to suffer the consequences of our actions, whether they be good or bad, and there remains no need to figure out whether the fruits of our work will be sweet or sour.

Let us be frank, now. Is the love we feel for those we call our own, true love or not? We have to admit that the 'love' we feel for our familiar and friends is not worthy to be called true. It does not deserve the name, for it is partly born of selfishness. If we analyze our natures carefully, we can see that we seldom go beyond this selfishness. Although

we may say that we are doing something only for the sake of others, for the sake of our family, or our country, when we get down to it, we find that deep in our heart we are craving for fame and honour. We have seen that wherever there is the slightest desire to see some results of our work, true love cannot exist. If our love is not true, how can we be detached?

It follows, then that we should do whatever we do as a duty, and no more. It is harmful for us to harbour any hope of reward for our labour. The more steadfastly we work in this way, the more true detachment will grow in us.

It has already been said that we are slaves to our senses, If we perform the work of a slave, we will find that the fruit of our actions become obstacles in our path, but if we keep our senses under control and work like a master, that is, without desire, we attain salvation. Lord Krishna expressed it thus : *He who has control of his senses is established in wisdom.*

We always hear people talking about rights and justice. In my opinion, talking too much about these things is a total waste of breath. There are two virtues that we can easily recognize in the day-to-day dealing of human beings. The first is compassion and the second is ability. Normally, any given person will manifest one of these traits more than the other. When someone ignores compassion and starts to show off his ability, his selfishness increases. This state of affair has now become so common, that it is very hard to find compassion in anyone. The heart in which compassion dwells is an expression of heaven itself. He who has a compassionate heart is the most fortunate of men. It is al-

most impossible to find someone with a true sense of justice. The composing of laws and judgements should be left to men of compassion.

If there is anything that comes in the way of spiritual wisdom, that thing is the desire to reap the rewards of one's own actions. Such desire will not help us to develop wisdom and a sound intellect. Rather, it may precipitate many other crises. Performing our actions without any kind of desire is the best way to worship God. When we have given something to God, we should not ask for it back. In the same way, we should surrender to Him all our good and bad actions. If we always bear this in mind while we are doing work then this habit will gradually grow on us. If we consecrate each and every action to God, then we will not expect or desire rewards from anyone.

Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever sacrifices you offer, whatever gifts you give, do it as an offering to Me.

The Incarnate Lord, who has always worked in this way, and who has never had any desire for the fruits of His actions, remains eternally free. And so it is with anyone who lives in this way. It doesn't matter if he lives in a great city where vice and corruption are rife. Sin cannot touch him, just as a lotus lives on the surface of a pond but does not get wet. Such a person can remain untainted even if he is cast into a den of inequity.

He who performs his duties with intellect surrender to God, having given up attachment, and the desire to get the fruits of his actions, lives in this world but is not of this world. He is never entangled by the effects of his actions.

He remains pure and underfiled, like a lotus leaf in the water.

At the end of the great war which is described in the Indian epic, 'Mahabharata', the victorious pandava brothers held a great ceremony to celebrate their triumph. They spared no expense, and spent money like water, giving alms to all the poor and destitute of their kingdom. People were amazed at their generosity. It was generally agreed that there had never been such a sacrifice.

As the festival was drawing to a close, a mongoose appeared, half of whose body was gold. He came to the place where the great sacrificial ceremony had been held, and rolled over and over in the dust. After doing so he exclaimed, "How stupid can people be! Everyone here is talking about a great sacrifice, but I see no signs of anyone having sacrificed anything."

People told the mongoose that he was crazy, because the greatest sacrifice the world had ever seen had just taken place. They pointed out that everyone in the kingdom had received rich gifts and there was not one poor person left in the land, so did this not add up to a great sacrifice? But the wise mongoose replied, "This sacrifice which you are all praising so highly is not equal to one grain of barley given by someone who is genuinely poor. Please listen to me carefully, and I'll explain what I mean.

'I come from a small village. An extremely poor Brahmin family used to live there. There were four members of that family. The Brahmin himself, his wife, a son and a daughter-in-law. The Brahmin used to support the family on

the small amount which he earned by teaching scriptures. It so happened that there was a great famine in that district, as a result of a drought which had lasted for three years. That poor Brahmin's family often went without food for days on end. They suffered greatly. Then one day the Brahmin managed to acquire a small quantity of barley. He divided it up into four portions, and prepared a meal. Just as they were about to eat, a guest arrived at their door.

'Now, the scriptures tell us that a guest should be regarded as a manifestation of God. He must be welcomed and fed first. Therefore, the Brahmin told his guest, "Come in, the meal is ready," and offered him his own plate. The guest ate this portion in one mouthful, and said, "Sir, I haven't eaten for ten days. This is just whetting my appetite." Hearing this, the Brahmin's wife offered her share of the food. The Brahmin knew that his wife was weak due to starvation, and he tried to persuade her to eat it herself, but she replied that it was her duty to make sure that their guest was satisfied.

Even after eating her share also, the guest was still not satisfied. Then the Brahmin's son came forward with his plate, and said, "Sir, please do me a honour by taking my share of the meal, for it is a son's duty and honour to assist his father in doing good." So the guest ate the son's share, too, but still he was hungry. Then the daughter-in-law placed her share before the guest. After eating her portion, the guest blessed the family and went on his way. That same night, the whole family died of starvation.

'Now, it so happened that I came to that house the next

day, and I found some crumbs that had fallen from the table where that guest had eaten his meal. The sacrifice of that family had been so great and noble, and the crumbs from their table so sacred, that when I rolled over among the crumbs, half my body turned gold, as you can see. Since that day I have made it my business to roam the world, trying to find another place where a comparable sacrifice has been made. So far, I haven't found any place, so my body has stayed like this.

'I came here when I heard people praise the selfless sacrifice that was held here. But although I have rubbed myself in the dust of this festival, the other half of my body has not turned golden. So I understand that not such a great sacrifice has taken place here.'

Once there was a boy whose mother lived in a small village. She was a widow and her son went out to work to provide for her. He worked in the city, in the factory of a wealthy man, and he would always send her some of his salary, even if it caused him considerable hardship.

One summer's day, he was operating the fan outside his employer's office, and, while reading a letter from his mother, he fell asleep. When the fan stopped moving, the boss came into the room and found him sound asleep, with the letter lying on his chest. He picked the letter up and began to read it. It said, "Dear son, may God make you immortal. May you always be happy, and successful in your work. I am managing to make ends meet as a result of the savings you send me from your honest hard work."

The rich man's eyes filled with tears as he read this.

Later, when the boy woke up, he called him into his office, and said "I am very pleased at your sense of devotion to your mother. I am doubling your salary, so that you may continue to support her adequately."

I tell you truly, that children nowadays find it hard to comprehend such stories of children who do without themselves to serve their parents. They talk about 'every man for himself'. People now are indeed callous and self-centered. When I first heard this story, its importance was not very clear to me, but now it is obvious. There are still plenty of people on this earth who would carry on eating till they burst, even though their parents may be starving or their wife and child are out in the streets begging. What kind of humanity is that? No one has the right to lives so selfishly. A person should use whatever is at his disposal to help others, too.

The highest work is to step forward to serve all men, even at the cost of your own life, without fuss, and according to the spirit of religious propriety. Even if you have been tricked a thousand times, it is still your duty and privilege to give something to anyone who comes to your door and asks. You should never talk about your charitable deeds. You should not even expect gratitude. 'Do good and cast it in the river'. Do not examine yourself for virtues, but rather be aware of your faults.

Someone asked Sheik Sa'adi, "How did you learn to do good?" and he replied, "I learned from my own mistakes and those of others. I went on giving up any bad traits in myself that I saw in others, because I realized that what I

don't like in others, other won't like it in me."

It must be obvious to you by now, how hard it is to live a householder's life and practise devotion. It is much harder than the life of a renunciate. It is difficult enough to renounce the world and not take any part in it, but to live in the world and practise spirituality is even harder. Yet both paths lead to the same destination. Both renunciation and unattached action are extramely beneficial. But of the two, the Yoga of desireless action is superior, because it is harder to accomplish.

The Gita says, *He who knows neither hate nor desire, know him to be a perpetual renunciate. Free from the pairs of opposites, he is happy and easily set free from bondage. Only fools and children, not the wise one speak of Knowledge and Karma Yoga as if both are sepatate. He who is firmly rooted in one of them gets the results of both, because after receiving Knowledge, true work begins.*

Renunciation (i.e. giving up the idea of personal doership) is hard to do without the Yoga of action. He who has achieved balance by performing his action in steady recollection of My Name, goes quickly to the Supreme Abode. He who devotes himself to the path of action, whose mind is pure, who has conquered the self, who has subdued his senses, who realizes his self to be the self in all beings, even though he lives and works in this world is not tainted by it.

The Subtle Nervous system

The Nadis, the subtle nerves or channels that carry vital energy (Prana) originate from an egg-shaped ganglion lying between the base of the genitals and the navel.

There are 72,000 such nerves, and of these 72 are major nerves, and of them, ten are the principle carriers of the Pranic current. These ten nerves are the Ida, Pingala, Sushumna, Gandhari, Hastajihva, Pusha, Yashwini, Alambusha, Kuhu and Sankhini. The practitioner of Yoga should know about these nadis and their related chakras.

The Ida travels up the left side of the nose, and the Pingala up the right side, and between them is Sushumna. These three join at the Muladhara Chakra, forming a triangle. The Ida emerges from the left side, the Pingala from the right, and they flow through the nostrils on their respective sides. In the middle, the Sushumna extends from Muladhara to the Aperature of Brahma ('Brahmarandhra') at the crown of the head. The other Nadis originate from the above-mentioned chakras and proceed to each bodily aperature. The Gandhari nerve is located in the left eye, and the Hastajihva in the right. The Pusha is in the right ear, and the Yashwini travels to the left ear. Alambusha travels to the mouth. Kuhu is located in the genital region and the Sankhini at the base of the spine. Kuhu and Sankhini diverge from the Kanda-Kuha travels downward and Sankhini goes upward.

These ten nadis are the major carries of vital energy.

The Sushumna Canal which is located in the centre of the spine is invisible and is extremely fine. It is compared to the hypothetical river Saraswati (which is supposed to meet with the Ganges and Yamuna at Allahabad). In actual fact, 'Saraswati' refers to the spiritual knowledge which the devotee receives from an enlightened soul. When a Yogi bathes his soul in the sacred water of the Aperature of Brahma, he attains liberation.

The wise aspirant should understand how the Prana is transmitted via Ida, Pingala and Sushumna. The Ida, to the left side, is associated with the moon, and the Pingala, on the right, is associated with the sun. Sushumna is associated with 'Hans', or soul. This Hans is the manifestation of the Lord in the body. Sushumna is called the Saraswati. The confluence of these three is called Triveni or Prayaga. The secrets of Hans and Sushumna are fully understood only after the aspirant takes refuge in the True Master.

The Eightfold Path of Yoga

(Ashtang Yog)

The Path of Yoga has eight steps: Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyashara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi. To succeed in Yoga the aspirant should fully understand these eight, and thus he will experience the highest bliss.

Yama—देहादौ विरक्तिः यमः

Non-violence, no-stealing, speaking the truth, chastity, non-acceptance of gifts, and not accumulating anything other than the physical necessities, are called Yama, which also means removing the mind from physical pleasures.

Niyam: स्वात्मत्वेऽनुरक्तिः नियमः ।

Cleanliness, contentment, austerities, study of scriptures, meditation on Holy Name and surrender to God are called Niyama.

Asana-- प्रत्येक दशा आत्मचिन्तनम् आसनम् ।

The third limb of Yoga is asana, or postures. These make the body fit for Yoga and steadies the mind. There are many postures, each modelled on animal species. Of these 84 are considered excellent, 10 are major and of these four are the principal postures. These are Siddhasana, which is done at the time of practising Pranayama; Padmasana, when listening to the Celestial Music; Swastikasana when practising Holy Name, and Vir Asana, which is also said to be conducive to meditation.

Siddhasana is practised by placing the left heel beneath the rectum, and the right heel on the base of the genitals, keeping the spine straight.

Swastikasana is done by placing the left foot beneath the right thigh and the right foot on the left thigh, and sitting erect.

Padmasana, the lotus position, in placing the right foot on the left thigh and the left foot on the right thigh.

Virasana is kneeling with erect spine.

Pranayama सोऽहंभावनाजपः प्राणायामः ।

Practising Pranayama correctly is conducive to longevity. The practitioner acquires yogic powers. Yogis consider Siddhasana the best for practising Pranayama. Many types of pranayama have been described, but the two principal exercises are Chandrabhedan and Bhastrika.

Chandrabhedan is practised by inhaling through the left nostril, or lunar path, retaining the breath, and then expelling it through the right nostril, or solar path. Then inhale through the Pingala, or right nostril, retain it for as long as you can and then slowly exhale through the left nostril. The ratio of inhalation, retention and exhalation is 1:4:2. In other words, you retain your breath for four times as long as you took to inhale, and you take twice as long to exhale as you took to inhale.

Actually, success in Yoga and pranayama doesn't come just from doing these exercises, but by the Grace of the Master, through meditation.

Water cleanses the body, and virtuous behaviour purifies the mind. Sacrifice purifies mind and spirit, and Knowl-

edge purifies the intellect.

योगङ्गानुष्ठानादशुद्धिक्षये ज्ञानदीप्तिराविवेकख्यातेः ।

If you practise Yoga for longer periods of time, you will grow in Knowledge. You will go on progressing until you attain liberation.

दहन्ते ध्यायमानानां धातूनां हि यथा मलाः ।

तथेन्द्रियाणां दहन्ते दोषाः प्राणस्य निग्रहात् ॥

Pranayama gets rid of impurities of the mind and senses in the same way as the dross in gold is removed by heat.

समे सुचौ शर्करवह्निवालुका विवर्जिते शब्दजलाश्रयादिभिः ।

मनोऽनुकूले न तु चक्षुपीडने गुहानिवाताश्रयणे प्रयोजयेत् ॥

The place where you practise Yoga should be clean and level, free from pebbles, fire and dust, conducive to contemplation because of its pleasant scenery and not hard on the eyes. It should be a retreat sheltered from the wind. (Svetasvataropanishad, 2:10) Pranayama means control of respiration. Controlled inhalation, retention and exhalation stabilizing the breathing

Pratyahar: विषयादिन्द्रियनिग्रहः—प्रत्याहारः

The senses naturally dwell on external stimuli. Diverting and abstracting the senses from stimuli is called Pratyahara.

Dharana : अन्तःकरण धर्मवर्जिता धारणा ।

Dharana is preventing the mind from thinking about worldly things and repeatedly fixing it at one point.

Dhyana : त्रिकुटीविरामे सच्चिदानन्दभावनं ध्यानम्

The aspirant who, through meditation, realizes the Source of illumination of the sun and other radiant objects, becomes freed from the bondage of birth and death. (Yajur

Veda, chapter 11, mantra1)

In Chapter 17, mantra 19, the Yajur Veda says, *Greater than great, more subtle than subtle, formless, infinite, almighty, omnipresent, Who exists in the form of Divine Light, is the One Who is the Creator of this universe and he has the power to destroy it. There is no one more unfortunate than he who abandons the Almighty God to worship some lesser power.*

The Athuravveda, in part 10, chapter 4, mantra 10, says that God, who pervades all the world and Who exists within all beings should be searched for within oneself.

न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः ।

तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ।।

The Sveta. Upanishad (6:14) and the Kathopanishad (2:5:15) say that the sun does not make God shine, nor can the moon, stars or lightning. How could fire ever illuminate God? In actual fact, His Light causes all these to shine.

हिरण्मये परे कोशे विरजं ब्रह्म निष्कलम् ।

तच्छुभ्रं ज्योतिषां ज्योतिस्तद्यदात्मविदो विदुः ।।

In the deepest recesses of the heart dwells the pure, untainted God Who is Light. He is the Light of Lights. Only a sage knows His Pure Form. (Mundaka Upanishad, 22-9)

ब्रह्मैवेदममृतं पुरस्ताद्ब्रह्म पश्चाद् ब्रह्म दक्षिणतश्चोत्तरेण ।

अधश्चोर्ध्वं च प्रसृतं ब्रह्मैवेदं विश्वमिदं वरिष्ठम् ।।

The Mundaka Upanishd (2-2-11) says that those who realize the self-effulgent Lord, know Him as extending in front, behind, to the right and left, above and below. He permeates the entire universe. The Divine Light is supreme.

स वेदैतत्परं ब्रह्मधाम यत्र विश्वं निहितं भाति शुभम् ।

उपासते पुरुषं ये ह्यकामास्ते शुक्रमेदतिवर्तन्ति धीराः ॥

It goes on to say (3-2-1) that the knower of the Self realizes the Supreme Abode of God, resting in Whom the universe shines radiantly. Devotees who worship Him desirelessly overcome the cause of rebirth and death.

स य एतमेवं विद्वांश्चतुष्कलं पादं ब्रह्मणः प्रकाशवानित्युपास्ते
प्रकाशवानस्मिल्लोके भवति प्रकाशवतो हि लोकाञ्ज्यति । य एतमेवं
विद्वांश्चतुष्कलं पादं ब्रह्मणः प्रकाशवानित्युपास्ते ।

The Chandogya Upanishad (4-7-4) says that the devotee who realizes the True Form of God, which is Light, and who worships and adores Him, becomes endowed with splendour. The Light reveals Itself to him, and he becomes the master of the resplendent worlds.

तस्य हेतस्य पुरुषस्य रूपं यथा माहारजनं वासः यथा पाण्डुवायिकम्:
यथेन्द्रगोपो यथाऽग्न्यर्चिः यथा पुण्डरीकं यथा सकृद्विद्युत्तम् । सकृद्विद्युत्तेव ह वा
अग्न्य श्रीर्भवति य एवं वेदाथात आदेशो नेति-नेति ।

(वृह. उ. अ. २ ब्रा. ३/६)

आविः सन्निहितं गुहाचरं नाम महत्पदमत्रैतत्समर्पितम् । एजत्प्राणन्निमिषच्च
यदेदज्जानथ मदसद्वरेण्यं परं विज्ञानाद्यद्वरिष्ठं प्रजानाम् ।

(मुण्डको. मुण्डक-२, ख. २-१)

The sage of the Brihad Upanishad (2-3) and the Second Mundaka Upanishad (2-1) say that God manifests through His own Creation. He is extremely near to us and is the Witness of all. He is the Supreme abode, in whom is entwined that dynamic Word which draws in the breath and makes the eyes blink. Know Him!

यदर्चिमद्यदणुभ्योऽणु च यस्मिल्लोका निहिता लोकिनश्च । तदेतदक्षरं
ब्रह्म स प्राणस्तदु वाङ्मनः तदेतत्सत्यं तदमृतं तद्वेद्व्यं सोम्य विद्धि ॥

Second Mundaka Upanishad (2-2) states that God is Light and is more subtle than subtle. The inhabitants of all the spheres dwell in Him. He is indestructible and indescribably glorious. He is the life force, the power of speech and the mind of all beings. He is Truth and the Nectar of Immortality. One can enter into Him through meditation, therefore we should meditate on Him. To attain Him, meditate on His Supreme Light.

धनुर्गृहीत्वौपनिषदं महास्त्रं शरं ह्युपासानिशितं संधयीत ।
आयम्य तद्भावगतेन चेतसा लक्ष्यं तदेवाक्षरं सोम्य विद्धि ॥

Knowledge should be your bow, and grasp it tightly with the hands of your heart, and place in it the arrow of devotion. Being fully concentrated in the Divine Light, draw the bowstring of attention and enter into the Holy Name.

एतानि रूपाणि पुरःसराणि ब्रह्मण्यभिव्यक्तिकराणि योगे ॥

The same idea is expressed by the sage Angira. He says, in II Mundaka Upanishad (2-4) that the devotee makes the Holy Name the bow, his soul the arrow, and the True Form of God his target. You should renounce evil actions, because they are as detrimental to meditation as carelessness is to archery. To hit the target the meditator should be totally absorbed in Holy Name.

वेदाहमेतं पुरुषं महान्तमादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ।
तमेव विदित्वाति मृत्युमेति नान्यः पन्था विद्यतेऽयनाय ॥

I know that Light of the Almighty God which is completely beyond darkness, declares the sage of the Yajur Veda. When a devotee realizes it he transcends death. There is no other way to liberation apart from this.

The Gita says, *If the splendour of a thousand suns were to*

blaze together in the sky, it could not be compared to that Divine Light. (11:12)

न तद्भासयते सूर्यो न शशाङ्को न पावकः ।

यद्गत्वा न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमम् ॥

Where neither sun, moon nor fire shine, there is that Light which is my supreme Abode. Having reached there, a person does not return to this world. (15:6)

अभ्यासयोगयुक्तेन चेतसा नान्यगामिना ।

परमं पुरुषं दिव्यं याति पार्थानुचिन्तयन् ॥

One who practises the Yoga of meditation and constantly meditates with his consciousness attains the Supreme Being. (8:8)

He who remembers God, Who is present in all, Who is more subtle than subtle, unthinkable, the basis of all and completely beyond darkness and the brilliance of the sun, Who is pure Truth, Consciousness and Bliss, that man, at the time of death, still the breath between his eyebrows and, constantly meditating on God, attains Him. (8:9-10)

The Ramacharitamana describes devotion to God as a shining crown jewel. The Divine Light shines day and night without needing oil, lamps or wick.

Guru Nanak sang in praise of his Guru *Even if I had the chance to dedicate my life again and again in service of the Master, I could never repay him. In a moment he turned me from a man into a god. Even if a hundred moons and a thousand suns were to rise together, without the Master you would still be in the dark.*

St. Brahmanand said :

God is not in Benaras, Puri, Dwarka or on the mountain peaks, in the netherworld or in heaven, so why do you wander in delusion?

In the centre of the city of this human body is the beautiful golden palace of the Divine Eye, and here dwells the Lord in a world resplendent with Light.

Close your eyes and concentrate. Meditate day and night. Sit straight and be still in a lonely place.

First appear sun, moon and stars. Lightning flashes and then the Supreme Light Itself becomes visible within.

He sang in an another hymn:

The Inner Light is quite close to you, but you don't see it, so you wander here and there in search of it. Without the Master, you will never know the secret, although you may try many ways.

So sit in lotus posture, and introvert your vision. Concentrate on the Third Eye and see the eternal sport of God. Neither sun nor moon shine there, nor does lightning flash. God extends everywhere in the form of effulgent Light.

A Yogi who has this vision opens the door to Liberation. Listen, dear aspirants! This is our true home.

The Agya Chakra, or Third Eye, is called the Abode of the Holy Name. Yogis who meditate on the Word, the Soul itself, the bestower of all blessings, attain liberation.

Guru Nanak said, *The Earth is the Word, the sky is the Word, and Light is emitted by the Word. The whole creation emanates from It and It dwells within every being.*

Real meditation takes place in the 'spiritual sky' above the Agya chakra. Yogis attain liberation by meditating on the Cosmic Form of God which is untainted, like the sky, homogeneous, all pervading, effulgent and radiant.

भ्रुवोर्मध्ये मनोर्ध्वं यत्तेजः प्रणवात्मकम् ।
ध्यायेज्ज्वालावलीयुक्तं तेजोध्यानं तदेवहि ।।

The Lord of the Breath, the Holy Name, (which gives rise to the breath) is situated between the eyebrows and is above the mind. It is the ultimate in radiance and power. It is meditation on the brilliant Divine Light, according to the Gherand Samhita.

आसने स्थितो योगी स्थिरकायः समाहितः ।
निमील्य नयने पश्येद् भ्रुवोर्मध्यं सदा धिया ॥
स्वयं ज्योतिर्मयो भूत्वा योगी तद्गन्तमानसः ।
ब्रह्मण्येव लयं याति परे ज्योतिःस्वरूपिणि ॥

Sit erect, close your eyes, introvert your mind. Concentrate your inner vision at the point between the eyebrows. The Yogi who is absorbed in meditation on the Divine Light, dissolves himself in it.

सूक्ष्मतां चान्वेक्षेत् योगेन परमात्मनः ।
देहेषु च समुत्पत्तिमुत्तमेष्व धमेषु ॥

The Manu Smriti (6-65) advises us to first get rid ourselves of mental disorders associated with the body. Then meditate on the True Form of God.

The Gita says, Having excluded external contacts and with gaze fixed between the eyebrows, having made equal the ingoing and outgoing breath moving within the nostrils, with senses, mind and reason ever controlled, and pursuing liberation in a step-by-step manner, the sage, having forever cast away fear, desire and passion, verily is liberated.

परब्राह्मी स्थिति समाधिः-

The tranquil state which come from stilling the mind is called Samadhi by the sages. According to the Kathopanishad,

यदा पञ्चावतिष्ठन्ते ज्ञानानि मनसा सह ।
बुद्धिश्च न विचेष्टेत तमाहुः परमां गतिम् ॥

When the five organs of perception are stilled, together with the mind, and the intellect itself does not stir, that, they say, is the highest state, or Samadhi. (2-3-10)

समाधिश्च परो योगो बहुभिर्यो न लभ्यते ।

गुरोः कृपाप्रसादेन प्राप्यते गुरुभक्तिः ।।

There is no state of union higher than samadhi, and it is gained through devotion by the grace of the Master. One who has faith in Knowledge and in himself, stills his mind and by daily practice reaches the Divine State.

साधनात्खेचरी मुद्रां रसनोर्ध्वगता सदा ।

तदा समाधिसिद्धिः स्याद्धित्वा साधारणक्रियाम् ।।

You should practise the Nectar technique. Nectar drips from the Inner Well and a person who drinks it succeeds in achieving Samadhi.

When a Yogi masters this technique, weapons cannot harm him, and wild animals cannot kill him. No magic spells or incantations can affect him. For him fire becomes cool and poison turns into nectar. Nothing that came in the way of devotees such as Meera and Prahlad could prove to be an obstacle.

बाध्यते न स कालेन लिप्यते न स कर्मणा ।

साध्यते न च केनापि योगी युक्तः समाधिना ।।

When a Yogi becomes stabilized in Samadhi, old age and death cannot cause him suffering. He becomes immortal and death has no sway over him. He is not bound by sinful actions. nor can desires and longings torment him. Nobody can exert influence over a man established in Samadhi.

यत्रोपरमते चित्तं निरुद्धं योगसेवया ।

यत्र चैवात्मनात्मानं पश्यन्नात्मनि तुष्यति ।।

यं लब्धा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः।
यस्मिन्स्थितो न दुःखेन गुरुणापि विचाल्यते॥

The Lord said : Arjuna, when the consciousness of a Yogi becomes peaceful through practice of Yoga, he then experiences the peace and satisfaction of the Self. He who does not consider anything to be more beneficial than this Divine Bliss, does not feel the pain of even great sorrow. (Gita, 6:20-22)

तदेवार्थमात्रनिर्भासं स्वरूपशून्यमिव समाधिः

The Vedas describe the state of Samadhi as the state of introversion and becoming fixed in God's Absolute Form. The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali describe this also.

यमश्च नियमश्चैव आसनंचतथैव च।
प्राणायामस्तथा गार्गि प्रत्याहारश्च धारणा।
ध्यानं समाधिरेतानि योगांगानि वरानने॥
योगी याज्ञवल्क्यः १।४५

Yogis understand fully the eight steps of Yoga and realize their secrets. One who follows this path sincerely becomes stable in Yoga and attains the highest state and supreme peace.

In Summary :

For **Dhyana** (meditation) one should practise Yama, Niyama and Asana, and, to achieve Samadhi, Pranayama, Pratyahara, and Dharana are necessary. Dhyana and Samadhi are absolutely essential for achieving the state of Yoga. Therefore the aspirant must follow this eightfold path of Yoga in its entirety.

Samadhi : stilling inhalation and exhalation, thus

to the natural process of inner breathing.

Dhyana : withdrawing the mind from sense objects and fixing it on God.

All the above steps are necessary components of the path of Yoga.

Surrender to God

If you want to stay at a certain place, first of all you have to contact the person in charge or the local authority. If you don't do this, how can you stay there comfortably? You definitely have to meet whosoever is in charge there. This is the best way.

The Creator and Lord of the entire Universe is God. A person of discrimination knows this very well. The wise reach the Lord, while people who don't, suffer all kinds of calamities.

The Creative Power has made everything, but Who is the Creator of the Creator? We should spare no efforts to know Him. We cannot be free from the clutches of Maya until we do. It is to our disadvantage not to be acquainted with the Lord of the Universe. A person is degraded and inferior if he doesn't know the Creator Who sent him into this world.

True Spiritual Knowledge is received only by the Grace of the perfect Spiritual Master. After the devotee has realized God, only then can he judge what is eternal and what is transitory. Someone who lives in society and explains spiritual mysteries, who has seen the soul, and in whom the pure and holy Knowledge has been awakened, is indeed rare. Such an illustrious person is a saint. His soul has merged with the Almighty and is liberated.

Worldly knowledge, which is learnt for material purposes, to earn a living and fill the stomach, is also called knowledge, but it is not the 'sovereign science', described by the scriptures, and which leads us to God.

Once Narad complained to St Sanatkumar. "I am thoroughly well-versed in all scriptures, in history, grammar, mathematics, ethics, debating, fortune-telling astrology, logic, political science, etc. I am an expert in all these. I have acquired all the intellectual knowledge which come from reading the scriptures, but I haven't realized my own soul. I have heard that Knowledge of Soul frees one from grief and the cycle of birth and death, but, Master, I grieve. Please save me."

St Sanatkumar said, "Narad, all those things that you have studied are only for entertaining the mind and filling the belly. There are many kinds of knowledges and initiations. A separate book would be necessary to list them all. There are various powers and energies, and mantras for invoking them. There are spells for protection against ghosts and for counteracting the poison of snakes and scorpions. People practise all kinds of techniques and postures and some also perform miracles. Intellectuals discuss the origin of the human body and discourse on the unqualified and qualified form of God. Some talk about pilgrimage and fasting. There are all kinds of incantations spells and charms. There are countless mystical diagrams, formulas and initiations. But without Spiritual Knowledge, they are all useless when it comes to realizing the soul."

Lord Krishna said in the Gita, that nothing is as holy

and pure as spiritual knowledge. It is greater than any mantra and this is the knowledge which we should realize. But how can mere mortals understand a knowledge whose results are a thousand times more beneficial than anything gained from bathing at holy shrines or giving alms? Thousands of pilgrimages and good works can never give the rewards that True Knowledge gives. It reveals the deepest of deep mysteries. Mental oscillations cannot be stabilized until one has practical realization of the soul. But people get confused by the word 'Knowledge'. How can its real meaning be clarified?

Knowing the past, present and future, is called 'knowledge', but it is not True Knowledge. Examining the behaviour of people is also not knowledge. Training animals, birds and aquatic animals is also not knowledge. Studying the properties of plants and viruses is also not knowledge. Analysis of various sciences, arts and grammatical systems is not Knowledge. Eloquence, repartee, and poetical improvisation are not knowledge. Understanding secret codes or symbolic art is not knowledge, nor is being adept at poetry, musical composition or dance. Sophistry, composing sweet lyrical ballads, or being accomplished in the art of love is also not Knowledge. Being totally adept in the arts such as paintings, or playing various instruments, is not knowledge. You may be accomplished in all sciences and arts, but they are still only worldly arts. They can never be called knowledge, although sometimes they might appear to be so. True knowledge, something else again. It has no connection with the natural sciences or the arts.

Being able to read the thoughts of others is also regarded as Knowledge, but it is not a sign of Spiritual Knowledge. It is not the Knowledge by which we can achieve full and final liberation.

So many things are called 'knowledge' that we cannot list them all here, but that True Knowledge which bestows liberation is something else. Knowledge means, 'the pure and perfect Knowledge of the Soul'. Realizing God, seeing the Truth as it is, and being able to discern between the eternal and the ephemeral is True Knowledge. Alike knowledge, which takes us beyond the realm of Nature cannot have anything to do with the five elements of Nature. It is beyond mind and intellect. No arguments can stand against it. It cannot be written down and it is beyond the four types of sound. Compared to it, even self-realization to the point of knowing 'I am God' is only ignorance. That which is perfect, completely unpolluted and is purity itself is True Knowledge.

In ancient times, the great saints and sages, such as Vashishtha, Narad, Janak and many other achieved salvation through this knowledge. It is the secret and the core of the Scriptures. Spiritual discrimination comes through experience, together with faith in the knowledge and the Spiritual Master.

You cannot get this Knowledge through fasting, pilgrimages, austerities, charity or using drugs. Spiritual Knowledge is the end and the reward of all practices and sciences. It gets rid of all doubts. It is the profound mystery hidden in all the scriptures. The Vedas say, not this, not this, and are silent.

By the grace of my Master, I have been revealed its secrets. I have no knowledge at all of Sanskrit or other languages and their scriptures. I have seen my Gracious Lord seated within my heart, therefore I have no need of Sanskrit or worldly texts. My Lord's Grace has fully manifested itself within me. Only by the Grace of my Master have all these mysteries become clear to me, without any effort on my part, and without any study of scriptures. The words of the Master, which give greater benefit than anything else, are all that you need to contemplate, as they contain the deepest mysteries culled from vedanta and other scriptures. His words are themselves Vedanta, as they come from the practical realization of God.

I have revealed to you everything which is in my heart. These are the most profound things and from them I have derived unlimited joy. Only through the words of the great Lord, the spiritual Master, can you understand the supremely holy and perfect knowledge, and, alone with it, ultimate and everlasting peace.

Seeing God

Those who seek God, find Him

Many people are atheists. In the modern world, materialistic, atheistic societies have sprung up. This doesn't bother me, because at least these people are honest. They are a thousand times preferable to religious hypocrites who discourse very nicely on religion and devotion. They argue and debate about God, but they don't know what religion and devotion really are, nor do they want to know. They make no effort to understand devotion nor do they try to attain it. We should remember the words of Christ: *Ask and it shall be given unto you; seek and you shall find, knock and it will be opened unto you.*

Saint Kabir said,

If you seek, you will find,

But you have to dive deep.

I was afraid of drowning so I sat on the shore.

I was searching in the wrong place.

So how could I find what I was looking for?

You find what you seek when you meet someone

Who knows where that thing is.

If you stick with him,

The thing you want will come to you.

The lessons of thousands of lifetimes will bear fruit.

Christ said clearly, that if you look, you will find; if you

call, He will answer. These words are not fiction, metaphors or imagination. These are the words of someone who knew God, who had the practical experience of God, conversed with Him and dwelt in His Presence. You and I see a building clearly, but he saw God even more clearly. It has always been the case that whosoever searched for God with dedication, found Him. The Scriptures are full of examples.

A river is crossed by a boat, butter is extracted by churning, darkness is removed by the sun, and ignorance is removed by Knowledge. Knowledge results from serving the Master. Undivided love and devotion are necessary for seeing God in the same way as breathing is necessary for staying alive.

Sometimes up, sometimes down-this is not love.

Imitation love in the heart at all times.

Imitation love never lasts.

When a crisis comes, you discard it,

Like a snake sheds its skin.

Everyone says 'love, love',

But who knows what it is?

Only someone who has experienced Divine Love

Knows what it is.

Once a disciple went to his Master and said, "Master, please let me see God! I want to see God." The master just glanced at him and laughed. Then he fell silent. The disciple persisted in his request.

One hot day they went to the river to bathe. Just as the disciple dived under the water, the Master pressed his head down. The disciple tried with all his might to raise his head

above the water, and finally the Master let him come up. He asked, "When you were under the water, what was the most vital thing you could think of? What did you need more than anything else?"

The disciple replied, "Without air I couldn't breathe. If you had released me even a moment later, I would have died."

The Master said, "My dear boy, did you ever long for God as much as you longed for that air? If you become as anxious as that to see God, then in an instant you will realize Him."

Until we have this kind of thirst for God, until this kind of longing is awakened within us, it doesn't matter how much we debate and argue, how many books we read or how many religious ceremonies we perform--we won't get any results. Until we have an intense longing for God in our hearts, we are no better than the atheists. At least they are honest, but we are not! Just as a fish cannot live without water, or animals cannot live without breathing, or a faithful wife cannot live without her husband, so a devotee cannot live without seeing God.

One day Emperor Akbar asked Birbal, his minister, "Your scriptures say that if a disaster befalls on a devotee, then God Himself comes rushing to save him. If God is the Lord of all, why doesn't He just send one of His servants to do it?" Birbal answered by requesting an interval of fourteen days, and the Emperor agreed.

Birbal made a wooden dummy in the image of the Crown Prince, and dressed it up like him. He told a nurse to

throw the dummy into the Royal Lake at the time when the Emperor was taking his evening stroll. But it had to be done carefully, so that the Emperor didn't find out.

When the nurse-maid saw the Emperor approaching the lake, she did as Birbal had instructed. Seeing the 'Child' falling in the water, the Emperor dived into the lake alongwith, clothes and all, and lifted the dummy up.

Birbal said, "See, your Majesty ! Just as you, overcome with fear for your beloved son's safety, jumped into the water without a moment's hesitation, so God comes rushing, unable to bear seeing His devotee in trouble. You have many servants, and I am also present, but you didn't order me. You went yourself to save your child. This is how God comes for His devotees."

If your child asks for bread, you won't give him a stone. If he asks for water, you won't give him something else. So If a devotee is begging to see God, why should God give him something else? Isn't God just?

If a worldly father doesn't have bread, he will say, "Wait," but God has everything all the time. But who wants God? Do you really think that everyone wants God but they are just not getting Him? It's never like that!

Imagine that there is a thief living in a house, and in the adjoining room is a valuable diamond or ruby. The dividing wall is very thin and weak and somehow the thief finds out about the gem. Just imagine his state of mind at that time! He won't eat or sleep until he gets that jewel. He'll have just one thought on his mind--how to get it. He'll think of nothing except how to break that thin wall and steal the

gem.

Really, do people believe that God is present here with us? No! If they really believed that, they would spare no efforts to know him. Would they remain trapped in mundane activities? When someone completely and absolutely believes that God exists, he becomes obsessed with the desire to see Him.

But people are passing their time somehow or other. When a person definitely comes to understand that he is wasting his time, and that he could be shown a better life, he will start to search. When a person understands that the soul is indestructible and bliss itself, and that in comparison to this endless bliss, sensual pleasures are nothing, then he will become mad for this bliss, sensual pleasures are nothing, then he will become mad for this bliss. This madness, this craving thirst, is called the awakening to spiritual life. When this happens, spiritual life really begins.

The fact of the matter is, that we should not forget God and waste our lives searching for peace in material and worldly things. Always bear in mind, that God is Love. This amazing Love is never found in worldly attachment.

If a person, in order to quench his thirst, digs a well on the bank of a river, he is called a fool. Suppose someone lives next to a diamond mine, and scurries here and there looking for pieces of glass. If he is not a fool, then what is he? God is a diamond mine, but we have become involved in useless things and have forgotten Him. Therefore we have become weak and powerless. We run after useless things. Being eager to know what others think is merely

stupidity. Become noble, stand on your own two feet and search for that God Who is Love! Only he can bestow the highest glory and power. There is no power beyond God.

Only love and purity make the world go round. A spineless person can never be worthy of God's Love. So don't be frail physically, mentally or spiritually. Talking of ghosts makes us faint-hearted. So make the great renunciation. Concentrate only on things connected with the Divine. God alone is Truth, and all the rest is unreal. Worldly activities are not founded in Truth. Therefore love, serve, and be devoted to God.

Lord Krishna said, Neither by Vedas, nor by charity, physical service nor by sacrifice can this absolute Form of Mine be seen, but through single-minded devotion I can be seen, and in reality known and even entered into.

निरातङ्के निरालम्बे निराधारे निरामये ।

योगी योगविधानेन परे ब्रह्मणि लीयते ॥

Anyone who practises the eight-fold path of Yoga, as shown by the Master, is released from suffering and duality. He has a tangible experience, and merges in the indescribable, self-existent God.

योगशास्त्रं पठोन्नित्यं किमन्यैः शास्त्रविस्तरेः ।

तत्स्वयं चादिनाथस्य निर्गतं वदनाम्बुजात् ॥

What need has a person of voluminous books, if he reads the Yoga texts and acts according to his Master's instructions? The results of the Yoga sutras can be realized practically, because there are the actual words of the Masters, who had the practical experience. Experience is the greatest proof, but without the help of the Master you

cannot experience this Knowledge practically.

Disciple who follow the Path of Yoga succeed in getting proof of the reality of liberation.

स्नातंतेन समस्ततीर्थसलिले दत्ता द्विजेभ्यो धरा ।
यज्ञानां च हुंत सहस्रमयुतं देवाश्च संपूजिताः ॥
स्वाद्धन्नेन सुतपिताश्च पितरः स्वर्गं च नीताः पुनः ।
यस्य ब्रह्मविचारणे क्षणमपि प्राप्नोति धैर्यं मनः ॥

Suppose someone has bathed at all the sacred places, given money and oblations to all the major deities, performed thousands of ceremonies, worshipped the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer and all other Power, offered delicious food to the spirits of his ancestors and secured a place in heaven. The same results of doing all this can be had in one moment of meditation on the soul through Yoga.

शशिहीना यथा रात्री रविहीन यथा दिनम् ।
नृपहीनं यथा राज्यं गुरुहीनस्तथा नरः ॥

A person bereft of the Master is just like a night without the moon, a day without the sun, or a king without a kingdom.

रजनीशेषयामस्य शेषार्द्धमरुणोदयः ।
तदा साधक उत्थाय मुक्तस्वापः कृतासनः ॥

The devotee should rise from his bed before dawn, shake off sleep, sit comfortably and concentrate in the region above the eyebrows to where the Master is seated on the pure lotus. He is peace and mercy, and in his hands are all blessings and fearlessness.

नराकृतिः परब्रह्मरूपायाज्ञानहारिणे ।
कुलधर्मप्रकाशाय तस्मै श्री गुरवे नमः ॥

O Master! You break the bonds of worldly attachment.

You reveal the Knowledge, you alone give blessedness and liberation. You are in human form, but you are actually the image of God. You are the remover of ignorance. You are the Light of all religions. My obeisance to you!

The first and foremost duty of the disciple is to follow the commands of the Master and to do service. Then he can cross the worldly ocean.

इन्दुं कैरविणीव कोकपटलीवाम्भोजिनीवल्लभम् ।
मेघं चातक-मण्डलीव मधुपश्रेणीव पुष्पाव्रजम् ॥
माकन्दं पिकसुन्दरीव रमणीवात्मेश्वरं प्रोषितं
चेतोवृत्तिरियं सदा प्रियवर! त्वां द्रष्टुमुत्कण्ठते ॥

Just as a lily longs for the moon, Just as the ruddy goose longs for the sun, just as the rainbird longs for the clouds, and just as a faithful wife longs to see her husband, likewise, O Lord! My Beloved! I keenly desire to see you!

नौ मुक्त्यै स्पृहयामि नाथ विभवैः कार्यं न सांसारिकैः ।
कित्वायोज्य करौ पुनः पुनरिव त्वामीशमभ्यर्चये ॥
स्वप्ने जागरणे स्थितौ विचलने दुःखे सुखे मन्दिरे ॥
कान्तारे निशिवासरे च सततं भक्तिर्ममास्तुत्वयि ॥

I don't want liberation. I have no desire at all for worldly pleasures. I beg you again and again that awake, in dreams, in pleasure or in pain, at home or in the forest, night and day, let me be constantly busy in devotion. All-knowing, indwelling Lord! I beg to live at Your Feet!

The Yagya of Knowledge

Lord Vishnu said to Narad, “I do not live only in My heavenly abode, or in the hearts of yogis. I live wherever My devotees sing My praises.”

Although God dwells in the hearts of all, we don't know the way to go within to see Him. There are plenty of examples of this in the Scriptures. Vibhishan meditated for a long time, but only when he approached Lord Rama did he receive the boon of devotion. Vashishtha was a very great sage, but when he actually received Divine knowledge, all that he requested of Lord Rama was the gift of devotion.

The three types of passions which torment us are cooled down when we listen to holy discourses, and whenever such satsang is held, the five great Yagyas described below are automatically being performed.

द्रव्ययज्ञास्तपोयज्ञा योगयज्ञास्तथापरे ।

स्वाध्यायज्ञानयज्ञाश्च यतयः संशितव्रताः ।।

The Gita (Chapter 4 verse 28) says that using one's wealth in the service of the Master, arranging for spiritual programs to be held so that you and other may realize God is called Dravya Yagya.

The second is Tapa Yagya which means making physical efforts to arrange satsang programs.

The third type is union of one's mind with the Holy Name and Divine Light, and it is called Yoga Yagya.

The fourth is swadhya Yagya, which means listening to satsang and giving satsang to encourage other to receive knowledge.

The fifth is Gyan Yagya, the Yagya of Knowledge, which means realizing God through service, satsang and meditation. This is regarded as the highest yagya. The presence of the Spiritual Master guarantee the success of the five yagyas.

Anyone who desires liberation should have a chance to do service and devotion. The fundamental service is to establish facilities for holding satsang. This gives the devotees the chance to do all kinds of service, through wealth, body and mind.

Devotees always want devotion, so to fulfill this desire of theirs, the Lord incarnates from Age to Age to give them the chance. Anyone who gets this chance yet still continues to follow the dictates of his mind, does great harm to his soul.

What is God?

The Universe is the Body of God. Everywhere are His feet, hands and face. He is completely aloof from the universe, yet at the same time dwells within it. God is that Entity which exists within all beings keeping them alive. He is the seed and the origin of all things, and finally all things merge back into Him. He is present everywhere at all times.

He is the union of Knowledge, knower and object of Knowledge. By realizing Him, which is Bliss Itself, the devotee is showered in bliss.

Because He is far beyond the mind, intellect and senses, He cannot be proven through ordinary methods. He is experienceable only to the person who has Knowledge. When the aspirant receives Knowledge, he can see God face-to face. He can realize God's Form, which is Light.

यं ब्रह्मा वरुणेन्द्ररुद्रमरुतः स्तुन्वन्ति दिव्यैः
स्तवैर्वेदैः सांगपदक्रमोपनिषदैर्गायन्ति यं सामगाः ।
ध्यानावस्थिततद्गतेन मनसा पश्यन्ति यं योगिनां
यम्यान्तं न विदुः मृगसुग्गणाः देवाय तमै नमः ॥

Creator, Preserver and Destroyer along with all the deities adore Him. Again and again my obeisance to Him, the Almighty God, The Supreme Light, Whose beginning, middle and end even the angels can't know, and Whom the yogis see within themselves after they have stilled their minds in meditation.

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते ।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥
ॐ शान्तिः! शान्तिः!! शान्तिः!!!

Infinite is this, infinite is that. Out of the Infinite come the Infinite. When from the Infinite the Infinite is taken, the Infinite Itself remains.

Peace! Peace!! Peace!!!